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GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY IMPRESSIONISTIC NOVEL

CONRAD AND FAULKNER

A DISSERTATION

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BY

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Norman, Oklahoma

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THE TWENTIETH CENTURY IMPRESSIONISTIC NOVEL

CONRAD AND FAULKNER

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THE TWENTIETH CENTURY IMPRESSIONISTIC NOVEL

CONRAD AND FAULKNER

INTRODUCTION

It is the thesis of this paper that as a novelistic craftsman William Faulkner belongs more to the impressionistic tradition of Joseph Conrad than to the stream-of-consciousness tradition of James Joyce. In the criticism of Faulkner the name of Joyce is frequently invoked, as in Peter Swiggart's recent book, The Art of Faulkner's Novels (1962).[1] Whereas Swiggart does not mention Conrad's name, he calls Faulkner a "Joycean" and devotes the greater part of a chapter to an examination of the relationship between Faulkner's narrative techniques and those of Joyce, though he admits that "after The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying Faulkner makes no important use of the interior-monologue technique."[2] Undoubtedly, Faulkner's techniques in these two novels do owe something to his reading of Ulysses, but it can be shown, I think, that they owe something also to the practices of Conrad. Furthermore, the

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[1](Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962).

[2]Ibid., p. 74. Swiggart is not, of course, unique in his approach. Both Leon Edel in The Psychological Novel, 1900-1950 (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1955) and Robert Humphrey in Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel ("Perspectives in Criticism: 3"; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955) discuss Faulkner in terms of the Joycean stream-of-consciousness tradition. Neither discusses Conrad.

reference to the techniques of Conrad illuminates Faulkner's art in such later works as Light in August and Absalom, Absalom! more than does the reference to Joyce.

The suggestion of a relationship between the techniques of Conrad and Faulkner is not, of course, a new one. It was made as early as 1941 by Joseph Warren Beach as follows:

> Most extraordinary of all his psychological mysteries, and most strongly suggestive of Conrad, is Absalom, Absalom!. It reminds one of Conrad not merely by its cavalier treatment of chronology, but by its way of developing the story with the help of interpreters, who are engaged throughout in a process of reconstructing the facts in conformity with certain hypotheses they have set up for explaining the characters. The chief of these interpreters (the Captain Marlow of this tale) is Quentin Compson. . . .[1]

A few pages later Beach called Light in August and Absalom, Absalom! "ultra-Conrad" (p. 169), but his book was admittedly a survey and so, aside from pointing out what should be obvious resemblances between the techniques of the two men, he made little of his perception. Neither did anyone else at the time, perhaps because of the concentration on the war, perhaps because of the relative obscurity of both writers.

Not until eleven years later, following the revivals of both Conrad and Faulkner after World War II, were the two names linked again. In an important English Institute Essay, "Concepts of Time in The Sound and the Fury," Perrin Lowrey made the point that "Faulkner's tendency in telling a story, like Conrad's, is to take the action at a high point, work through a series of flashbacks, and then come forward in time to

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[1] American Fiction, 1920-1940 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), p. 164.

the concluding action."[1] This time the suggestion was picked up by William Van O'Connor who wrote in The Tangled Fire of William Faulkner (1954) that with the appearance of The Sound and the Fury "it became clear that Faulkner was a committed artist, now writing in the tradition of the modern novel to which Henry James, Joseph Conrad, Stephen Crane, Ford Madox Ford, and James Joyce had contributed."[2] But O'Connor presented Faulkner's relationship to the impressionist school--of which all the above-named authors were presumably members--as a rather vague one based on his commitment to techniques such as rendering rather than reporting and to principles such as that of the objective author. Furthermore, in his discussion of Faulkner's literary apprenticeship, O'Connor listed, as influences on the young Faulkner, Sherwood Anderson, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Robert Frost, Stark Young, Aldous Huxley, Wyndham Lewis, Swinburne and the English Aesthetes, and the Russian novelists.[3] He did not mention Conrad.

Indeed, not until after the 1956 publications of The Paris Review interview and Faulkner at Nagano, in both of which Faulkner listed Conrad as one of his perennial favorites, did Faulkner's critics again bring up the Conradian influence on him and even then they were rather

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[1] English Institute Essays, (1952), p. 67.

[2] (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1954), p. 37.

[3] "William Faulkner's Apprenticeship," Southwest Review, XXXVIII (Winter, 1953), pp. 1-14.

cautious.[1] There are paragraphs calling attention to this influence in Richard Chase's The American Novel and Its Tradition (1957), Richard Coanda's "Absalom, Absalom!: The Edge of Infinity" (1958), and Cyrille Arnavon's "Absalon! Absalon! Et l'Histoire" (1958-59).[2] There is a long footnote in Walter J. Slatoff's Quest For Failure: A Study of William Faulkner (1960) relating Faulkner's emphasis on the quiescence or turbulence of a character's body to that of Conrad.[3] And Warren Beck, in the sixth chapter of Man in Motion: Faulkner's Trilogy (1961), though attributing the direct influence on Faulkner to Dickens, discussed briefly the way in which Conrad foreshadows Faulkner's use of the grotesque.[4]

These few examples are, however, the exceptions to prove the rule illustrated by Swiggart's book that Faulkner's critics, while making much of the influence of Joyce (and Eliot), have virtually ignored that of Conrad. The books of Hyatt H. Waggoner (1959) and Frederick J. Hoffman (1961), for instance, make a great deal of the influence of Eliot;

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[1]Jean Stein, "William Faulkner," Paris Review, IV (Spring, 1956), pp. 28-52. This interview is now most readily accessible in William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism, ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1960), pp. 67-82, hereafter referred to as WF:III. The reference to Conrad occurs on p. 78. Faulkner at Nagano, ed. Robert A. Jelliffe (Tokyo: Kenkyusha Ltd., 1956), pp. 42, 44-45.

[2]Chase, (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957), p. 215. Coanda, Renascence, XI (Autumn, 1958), pp. 5-6. Arnavon, La Revue Des Lettres Modernes, V (Hiver, 1958-59), pp. 264-265.

[3](Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1960), pp. 49-50.

[4](Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1961), pp. 145, 149.

neither mentions Conrad.[1] Nor does Carvel Collins, who has written important essays linking Faulkner's works to those of Joyce, mention Conrad as an influence, though he does refer in his "Introduction" to New Orleans Sketches to Faulkner's statement in 1924 that "Heart of Darkness" and Anderson's "I'm a Fool" were the two finest stories he had ever read.[2] Finally, Cleanth Brooks in the most recently published book on Faulkner mentions Conrad only in suggesting the possibility that the title of Sanctuary is Faulkner's ironic reflection on the following meditation of Marlow in Chance:[3]

> A young girl, you know, is something like a temple. You pass by and wonder what mysterious rites are going on in there, what prayers, what visions? The privileged man, the lover, the husband, who are given the key of the sanctuary do not always know how to use it. For myself, without claim, without merit, simply by chance I had been allowed to look through the half-opened door and I had seen the saddest possible desecration, the withered brightness of youth, a spirit neither made cringing nor yet dulled but as if bewildered in quivering hopelessness by gratuitous cruelty; self-confidence destroyed and, instead, a resigned recklessness, a mournful callousness (and all this simple, almost naive)--before the material and moral difficulties of the situation. The passive anguish of the luckless![4]

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[1]Waggoner, William Faulkner: From Jefferson to the World (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1959. Hoffman, William Faulkner ("Twayne United States Authors Series"; New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1961).

[2]For Collins's emphasis on the influence of Joyce, see "The Interior Monologues of The Sound and the Fury," English Institute Essays, (1952), pp. 29-31; and "The Pairing of The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying," Princeton University Library Chronicle, XVIII (Spring, 1957), p. 115. For the reference to "Heart of Darkness" see "About the Sketches," New Orleans Sketches (London: Sidgwick and Jackson Limited, 1959), p. 18. All references to New Orleans Sketches will be to this edition. Page numbers will appear hereafter in parentheses in the text.

[3]William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 136-137.

[4]Joseph Conrad, (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923), pp. 311-312. Italics Mine. All references to Chance will be to this edition. Page numbers will appear hereafter in parentheses in the text.

Critics of Conrad have been just as reluctant to claim Faulkner as an heir of Conrad, a reluctance the stranger in view of their recognition and documentation of Conrad's impact on such of Faulkner's contemporaries as Fitzgerald and Hemingway. Representative is the following statement by Paul L. Wiley in Conrad's Measure of Man (1954): "In various ways authors so well known as Ford Madox Ford, Santayana, T. S. Eliot, Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and Graham Greene--to mention only a few familiar names--have either learned from him or have responded to the force of his style and vision."[1] Wiley does not mention Faulkner in his book, nor does Leo Gurko in his recent full-length study of Conrad (1962).[2] In the latest book on Conrad, Eloise Knapp Hay's The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad, Faulkner's name is included once, in a list of American political novelists.[3]

The one major exception to this general trend is Albert J. Guerard's Conrad The Novelist (1958), and the reader will discover this paper to be, in part, a documentation of and elaboration of some insights expressed in that book about the relationship between Faulkner and Conrad as literary artists.[4] Guerard's approach in this book--the

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[1](Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1954), p. 4. See also Carlos Baker, Hemingway: The Writer As Artist (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1952), pp. 27, 70-74; and James E. Miller, The Fictional Technique of Scott Fitzgerald (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1957), pp. 6, 79-81, 90-97, 103-104.

[2]Joseph Conrad: Giant In Exile (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962).

[3](Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 14.

[4](Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958). Hereafter this book will be referred to as CTN.

third of a series on Hardy, Gide, and Conrad, designed to trace generally the development of the modern novel from 1875 to 1925--is explained in the last paragraph of his "Preface":

> The names of Hardy and Gide appear very occasionally, as points of reference, and to help us place Conrad between the primitive generous story-telling of the one and the subtle fictional dialectic of the other. But the name of William Faulkner appears much more frequently, and I had better affirm at once that Conrad's affinities with Faulkner are closer than his affinities with either Hardy or Gide. The similarities of temperament and conviction and method and even style are striking. In 1946 I asked Mr. Faulkner whether he did not feel he had been influenced by Conrad, and mentioned Nostromo in particular. Faulkner replied, "I can see why you would think so." A good Faulknerian answer; and this lesser question of proving or disproving "influence" now interests me not at all. But the responses of kindred temperaments and major talents to similar problems of material and method could well prove illuminating; might at least help us to discover and define those problems. I believe that one of the best ways to understand the potentialities and limitations of Conradian impressionism is to observe what happens when Faulkner carries the same experiments much further. Thus I was often conscious of Faulkner as I watched Conrad meet and overcome obstacles, in the pages to follow, and in the end I stopped resisting the temptation to bring his name in. But I trust the frequent reference can be made without my seeming to argue that Faulkner is ipso facto a "greater Conrad" or ipso facto "another and lesser Conrad." Writers of this magnitude inevitably differ.[1]

Actually, Guerard does not spend a great deal of time on Faulkner. His attention is focussed steadily on Conrad. But, delivered as they are in this somewhat indirect manner, his remarks about Faulkner reveal some of the most pregnant perceptions about him yet published. Just as Conrad The Novelist is one of the two or three best books on Conrad, so its few but penetrating judgments of Faulkner seem to me to be of the

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[1] CTN, p. xiv.

highest order of Faulknerian criticism. It becomes a pleasure, therefore, for me to acknowledge here my debt to this book and in many of the following pages to record my substantial agreement with it.

Only one critic of Faulkner has so far made use of Guerard's book. In an article entitled "The Apprenticeship of William Faulkner," (1962), the best survey to date of Faulkner's reading and of the literary influences on him, Richard P. Adams, building on Guerard's work, came to the following conclusion about the relationship of Faulkner to Conrad: "In the whole of Faulkner's work, the influence of Conrad is the strongest and most pervasive I have found coming from any writer of prose fiction."[1] Still, owing to the fact that Adams's article is a survey rather than a detailed examination of the influences on Faulkner, Guerard's book continues to offer the fullest and best discussion of the relationship of the two writers. This paper, therefore, will depend upon Guerard's work as a base from which, hopefully, it can extend his insights in several directions. First, in chapter one it will take up that "lesser question of proving or disproving 'influence'." Second, in the following three chapters it will reverse Guerard's basic emphasis by using the comparison with Conrad to illuminate Faulkner's narrative techniques. Finally, in chapter five, it will attempt to demonstrate that the techniques of Conradian impressionism--celebrated by Ford Madox Ford as the highest development of a process of novelistic evolution--are, after all, only twentieth-century novelistic conventions replacing earlier conventions and possessing, like those

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[1] Tulane Studies in English, XII (1962), p. 129.

earlier conventions, both advantages and disadvantages.[1] If these chapters are successful, the results should justify this one further paper on Conrad and Faulkner.

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[1]See, for instance, Ford's The English Novel ("The One Hour Series"; Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1929).

CHAPTER I

In August, 1955, at Nagano, Japan, William Faulkner told a group of Japanese professors of American literature that he had not kept up with modern literature but was content to re-read certain works which had long been interesting and valuable to him. Later he named some of these works:

> I read Don Quixote usually once every year. I read Moby Dick every four or five years. I read Madame Bovary, The Brothers Karamazov. I read the Old Testament, oh, once every ten or fifteen years. I have a complete Shakespeare in one volume that I carry with me and I read a little of that almost any time. I read in and out of Dickens some every year, and in and out of Conrad, the same way, some every year.[1]

The next day, pressed for his opinion of Proust, Joyce, and Auden, he elaborated as follows:

> To me, Joyce was touched by the divine /afflatus/. Proust I have read. The names I mentioned yesterday were the names of the men who I think influenced me. When I read Joyce and Proust it is possible that my career as a writer was already fixed, so that there was no chance for it to be influenced other than in the tricks of the trade, you might say, but I think the bad /habits/ had been established. When I named the writers that I'd read, I did not mean by that that I had not read anything else and did not read anything else, but they were the ones that, to me, had been masters, and I felt towards them the same loyalty and affection and respect the young student feels towards his professor, his master, which doesn't mean that the young student doesn't exchange ideas with his contemporaries. Joyce was, well, in a way, a contemporary of mine; Proust, almost a contemporary of mine, that is, he was writing towards the top of his talent at the time

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[1] Faulkner at Nagano, p. 42.

> when I was writing towards mine. No, I did not mean that I did not read these people and, of course, I have a great respect for their talent. I meant only that I had named the ones which I felt were my own masters, that had influenced me.[1]

This list of masters Faulkner repeated, with additions, in interviews throughout the last years of his life, notably in that published in the Paris Review and in his class conferences at The University of Virginia in 1957, transcripts of which were published as Faulkner in the University.[2] The repetition of these same names under widely varying circumstances attests, I think, to Faulkner's seriousness--always a question regarding statements he made during interviews--in naming these men as his masters.[3] So does their appearance in a list of authors which, according to Robert Coughlan, was made prescribed reading for the young Faulkner by his life-long friend and early teacher, Phil Stone.[4] Moreover, the seriousness of Faulkner's specific inclusion

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[1]Faulkner at Nagano, pp. 44-45. Editor's brackets.

[2]Stein, "William Faulkner: An Interview," WF:III, p. 78. Faulkner in the University, ed. Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L Blotner (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 1959), pp. 50, 150. Hereafter this book will be referred to as FU.

[3]Not only are many of Faulkner's public statements untrustworthy, but some of them are deliberately misleading. See John Faulkner, my brother Bill: An Affectionate Reminiscence (New York: Trident Press, 1963), pp. 172-173. A notorious example is his telling a creative writing class at The University of North Carolina "that during his entire writing career, he had never given the subject of form a single thought." Anthony Buttitta, "William Faulkner: That Writin' Man of Oxford," The Saturday Review of Literature, XVIII (May 21, 1938), p. 7. Buttitta wrote in the same article, page 8, of Faulkner's "four-year old boy Joe." Did Faulkner deliberately mislead him into thinking his daughter, Jill, was a boy?

[4]The Private World of William Faulkner (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1954), p. 48.

of Conrad in this list is indicated by a statement he made in 1940 to a young writer he had befriended. In answer to the question, "'What books might a young writer read with profit?'" he began, "'Well, there are Shakespeare's sonnets and Henry the V--some Dickens, and Conrad's Lord Jim and Nostromo. . . .'"[1]

Finally, the fact that Faulkner's interest in Conrad was indeed an interest of long standing can be documented by reference to passages in two reviews he wrote for The Mississippian, the university newspaper, in 1922. In the first of these, "American Drama: Eugene O'Neill," published February 3, he wrote:

> Some one has said--a Frenchman, probably; they have said everything--that art is pre-eminently provincial: i.e., it comes directly from a certain age and a certain locality. . . . But there are exceptions to this, as there are to all rules holding a particle of truth; two modern ones being Conrad and Eugene O'Neill. These two men are anomalies, Joseph Conrad especially; this man has overturned all literary tradition in this point.[2]

In the second, "Joseph Hergesheimer," published December 15, he wrote:

> The Bright Shawl is better. The sublimated dime novel, peopled, like Cytherea, with morbid men and obscene women. But skilful; the tricks of the trade were never employed with better effect, unless by Conrad.[3]

Thus, into reviews of the works of two American authors, a dramatist and a novelist, Faulkner rather arbitrarily introduced the name of Conrad for the sake of comparison and in both cases the comparison redounded to

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[1]Dan Brennan, "Journey South," The University of Kansas City Review, XXII (Autumn, 1955), p. 15. See also O'Connor, The Tangled Fire, pp. 174-175.

[2]William Faulkner: Early Prose and Poetry, ed. Carvel Collins (Boston: Atlantic-Little, Brown and Company, 1962), p. 86.

[3]Ibid., p. 102.

the latter's credit. Clearly, Faulkner's inclusion of the name of Conrad in his list of masters was no mere accident.[1]

In his own best works, however, the superficial evidence of his reading of Conrad--echoes, allusions, references--is not nearly so extensive as is such evidence of his reading of, for example, T. S. Eliot, whom he did not name as an influence or master. It is easy to understand, therefore, why the influence of Conrad on him--more profound, I think, than that of Eliot or Joyce--has been practically overlooked. There is, to be sure, the recurrent image of the human figure stamped out of tin, which, as R. P. Adams suggests, he might have taken from The Nigger of the Narcissus.[2] On the first page of this novel Conrad describes the crew's emergence from the forecastle in the following manner: "A hum of voices was heard there, while port and starboard, in the illuminated doorways, silhouettes of moving men appeared for a moment, very black, without relief, like figures cut out of sheet tin."[3] In As I Lay Dying Darl, in describing Jewel's sprint to Gillespie's

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[1]This point is corroborated by the following statement from John Faulkner's my brother Bill, page 236, published four months after this chapter was written:

> "Mother was always an avid reader. She taught us to read. She showed us that words put together the right way could make a story worth the time it took to read it. She kept us supplied with books matched to our age and comprehension. She was a selective reader too; I never knew her to read a book because 'she ought to.'
>
> "Her reading was all for pleasure and her literary taste was much like a man's. She was particularly fond of Joseph Conrad, a man's writer, and we came to know him through her: Lord Jim, Victory and The Nigger of the Narcissus. A collection of Conrad was always on Bill's bookshelf."

[2]Tulane Studies in English, XII (1962), p. 130.

[3](Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923). All references to The Nigger of the Narcissus will be to this edition. Page numbers will appear hereafter in parentheses in the text.

barn to save his mother's coffin from the fire, uses the same figure in the same way: "For an instant longer he runs silver in the moonlight, then he springs out like a flat figure cut cleanly from tin against an abrupt and soundless explosion as the whole loft of the barn takes fire at once, as though it had been stuffed with powder."[1]

There is also the rather close parallel between the maternal relationship of Winnie Verloc to her fair-haired idiot brother, Stevie, and that of Caddie Compson to her fair-haired idiot brother, Benjy. Still, the best example of this superficial Conradian influence on Faulkner is the last of the New Orleans Sketches, "Yo Ho and Two Bottles of Rum," (pp. 211-223), published originally in the Sunday feature section of the New Orleans Times-Picayune for September 27, 1925. Perhaps his voyage to Europe, begun on July 7 of that year, had stirred in Faulkner memories of his reading in Conrad. In any case the sketch is strongly reminiscent of the early Conrad.

The Diana, a dirty British tramp steamer, manned by Chinese and "officered by the scum of the riffraff of the United Kingdom (p. 212)," is en route from Canton to Bangkok with a cargo of American sewing machines when Freddie Ayers, the English mate, in the dark "accidentally" kills Yo Ho, the Chinese messboy, with a blow from a club meant for the Bosun. The next day, in spite of the storming and cursing of Mr. Ayers, the Chinese crew calmly and imperturbably insists that Yo Ho must be buried on land. The ship, therefore, has to change course and run for

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[1]William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury & As I Lay Dying (New York: The Modern Library, 1946), p. 498. All references to these two novels will be to this edition. Page numbers will appear hereafter in parentheses in the text.

land, bearing the putrefying corpse through tropical latitudes towards an island off the coast of Siam. There the body is loaded onto a bullock cart, carried into the jungle and buried, despite the callous drunken behavior of the white officers.

Undoubtedly Carvel Collins is right in seeing in this episode a foreshadowing of the burial journey of the Bundren family in As I Lay Dying, but it is impossible, also, not to feel the Conradian atmosphere of the piece, even though there is no one specific analogue in Conrad.[1] The officers, for instance, the Welsh captain, the English mate, the alcoholic Scottish engineer, and "the third mate, who was Eusian, and led or was led a dog's life in consequence, being neither one nor the other, yet having a sacred drop or two of British blood to saddle him with the white man's responsibilities while at the same time his lesser strain denied him the white man's pleasures (p. 213)," remind one of that kind of British officer in ships of the Far East about whom Conrad comments in the first chapter of Lord Jim:

> They had now a horror of the home service, with its harder conditions, severer view of duty, and the hazard of stormy oceans. They were attuned to the eternal peace of Eastern sky and sea. They loved short passages, good deck-chairs, large native crews, and the distinction of being white.[2]

The engineer of Faulkner's Diana seems, in particular, to be reminiscent of the alcoholic engineer of Conrad's Patna who drinks himself

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[1] Collins, "About the Sketches," New Orleans Sketches, p. 28.

[2] (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923), p. 13. All references to Lord Jim will be to this edition. Page numbers will appear hereafter in parentheses in the text.

into delirium tremens rather than face the court of inquiry.[1]

Again, in theme, Faulkner's sketch seems to owe something to Lord Jim and perhaps to An Outcast of the Islands. Insofar as there is one in so slight a sketch, the theme of "Yo Ho" is an ironic consideration of the feelings of racial superiority held by the white men. In justification of his killing of the messboy, Ayers says to the captain, "'Dammit, sir, ain't I a white man? Can't I kill a native if I want to (p. 215)?'" Already, however, the author has presented Yo Ho as "serving them efficiently and with remote yellow tolerance of the vagaries of the white man (p. 214)." And Mr. Ayers's later blustering before his crew brings forth nothing but the Faulknerian--or Conradian--meditation: "There is something eternal in the East, something resilient and yet rocklike, against which the westerner's brief thunder, his passionate, efficient methods, are as wind (p. 217)."[2]

Thus, Mr. Ayers having spent his emotional force in vain, the captain turns the ship towards land, but she seems to make little progress:

> The Diana rolled and wallowed on. Days burned slowly, terrifically overhead; night followed with no diminution of heat. Mr. Ayers lurked sweating and cursing in his cabin, counting the hours until they could get rid of the body, until the ship became again a sane world for a man to inhabit. (p. 219)

The Diana reminds one here, finally, of those bewitched ships of Conrad,

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[1]Lord Jim, pp. 23-24, 48-55.

[2]One might compare here Willems's protests to Lingard from the depths of his degradation that he is a white man. Conrad, An Outcast of the Islands (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923), p. 271.

the Narcissus and the unnamed vessels of "The Secret Sharer" and The Shadow Line.[1] The Narcissus, bearing on her deck the dying nigger, James Wait, makes no headway after the storm until Wait dies (pp. 160-161). The ship of The Shadow Line, likewise, is held in the enchanted Gulf of Siam by the spell of her dead captain, just as the ship of "The Secret Sharer" must rid herself of Leggatt--the mate of the Sephora who, like Ayers, has accidentally murdered one of his men--before she can leave this same Gulf of Siam towards which the Diana is sailing.[2] Significantly, in Faulkner's sketch it is not until after Mr. Ayers throws his club, the "bosun's wife," into the ocean that the Diana raises land. Clearly, at this time, immediately following the completion of Soldiers' Pay, his first novel, Faulkner, who himself

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[1]When asked by a student at The University of Virginia, "Which one of Conrad do you read?" Faulkner named The Nigger of the Narcissus, "Falk," "The End of the Tether," and "Youth." This list is obviously not meant to be complete, for two days later, asked to name some of his favorite books, he named "Heart of Darkness" and The Nigger among others. FU, pp. 144, 150. Nor can one depend absolutely on Faulkner's listing of titles. He told the students once that he remembered characters and incidents rather than titles and authors. FU, p. 50. Proof of this fact is the following exchange, FU, p. 144:

"A. What's the one about the young man that was given command of the--
Q. Lord Jim.
A. --bark in--
Q. Deserted?
A. --Bangkok--'Youth.'
Q. 'Youth,' yes."

The story Faulkner describes here is not "Youth" but "Falk," "The Secret Sharer," or The Shadow Line.

[2]The Shadow Line (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923), pp. 74-116. "The Secret Sharer," 'Twixt Land and Sea (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923), pp. 89-143.

had never been to the Far East, knew the works of Conrad well.[1]

Such other superficial reminiscences of Conrad as exist in Faulkner's work testify to his continued regard for the works of the earlier writer. Mention has been made already of Cleanth Brooks's suggestion that the title of Sanctuary comes from Chance. A clearer example refers specifically to "Heart of Darkness," always one of Faulkner's favorites.[2] Near the end of Knight's Gambit Gavin Stevens, in giving his nephew, Charles Mallison, the second version of why he had not married Mrs. (Melisandre Backus) Hariss in 1919, tells him it is not necessary to go to Paris to visit the site of his interview with her there:

> "You can do that here," his uncle said. "In the library. Simply by opening the right page in Conrad: the same waxed red-and-black tiled floor, the ormolu, the faience, the buhl; even to the long mirror which seemed to hold as in a silver dish the whole condensation of light, of afternoon, in whose depths seemed to float, like the lily upon its own concordant repetition, that forehead innocent and smooth of thought, ravaged only by grief and fidelity--"[3]

The reference here obviously is to the interview between Marlow and Kurtz's fiancee at the end of "Heart of Darkness." There, after having described the room and the furniture, Marlow describes the woman:

> She had a mature capacity for fidelity, for belief, for suffering. The room seemed to have grown darker, as if all the sad light of the cloudy evening had taken refuge on her forehead. This fair hair, this pale visage, this pure brow, seemed surrounded by an ashy halo from which the dark eyes looked out at me.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> But with every word spoken the room was growing darker,

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[1]For the chronology of Faulkner's life during this period, see Collins, "About the Sketches," New Orleans Sketches, pp. 30-31.

[2]Ibid., p. 18. FU, p. 150.

[3](New York: Random House, 1949), p. 244. My italics.

> and only her forehead, smooth and white, remained illumined by the unextinguishable light of belief and love.[1]

It is apparent, however, from the scarcity of such clear examples that if the influence of Conrad on Faulkner is important, its importance is different from that of the part of Faulkner's reading which became little more than a source of verbal echoes and allusions. The Conradian influence, in fact, is a more profound influence than even a good deal of such evidence would imply and is to be found especially, I think, in Faulkner's style and his techniques, though at this point I wish to discuss only the style. The impressionistic techniques of Conrad and Faulkner, the primary subject of this paper, will be considered in the remaining chapters.

A discussion of Faulkner's style inevitably becomes a discussion of eloquent, overlong, complex sentences which, through extensive qualification, attempt to realize with precision the complexity and subtlety of all experience in a moment of time.[2] This description is, I believe, a fairly accurate description of the Long Faulknerian sentence, such a sentence as this one from "The Bear":

> He had already inherited then, without ever having seen it, the big old bear with one trap-ruined foot that in an area

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[1] Youth (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923), pp. 157-158. My italics. All references to "Heart of Darkness" will be to this edition. Page numbers will appear hereafter in parentheses in the text.

[2] See Nagano, p. 37; and FU, pp. 84, 138-139. See also Warren Beck, "William Faulkner's Style," WF:III, p. 153; Conrad Aiken, "William Faulkner: The Novel as Form," WF:III, p. 137; and Karl E. Zink, "William Faulkner: Form as Experience," South Atlantic Quarterly, LIII (July, 1954), p. 393. At several points in this paper I am indebted to Zink's fine study. I gratefully acknowledge that debt here.

> almost a hundred miles square had earned for himself a name, a definite designation like a living man:--the long legend of corn-cribs broken down and rifled, of shoats and grown pigs and even calves carried bodily into the woods and devoured and traps and deadfalls overthrown and dogs mangled and slain and shotgun and even rifle shots delivered at point-blank range yet with no more effect than so many peas blown through a tube by a child--a corridor of wreckage and destruction beginning back before the boy was born, through which sped, not fast but rather with the ruthless and irresistible deliberation of a locomotive, the shaggy tremendous shape.[1]

At the same time, that description is a good description of the chief characteristic of the Conradian style, the overextended sentence which, at its worst a mannerism, suggests at its best, in the words of Thomas C. Moser, "that there is more meaning and more feeling to be expressed than language can quite contain."[2] The following sentences, for example, all written by Conrad, might well have been written by Faulkner:

> Scattered all over the dark polish of the roadstead, the ships at anchor floated in perfect stillness under the feeble gleam of their riding-lights, looming up, opaque and bulky, like strange and monumental structures abandoned by men to an everlasting repose.[3]

> And in the hush that had fallen suddenly upon the whole sorrowful land, the immense wilderness, the colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life seemed to look at her, pensive, as though it had been looking at the image of its own tenebrous and passionate soul.[4]

> But both the diabolic love and the unearthly hate of the mysteries it had penetrated fought for the possession of

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[1] Go Down, Moses (New York: The Modern Library, 1942), pp. 192-193. All references to "The Bear" will be to this edition. Page numbers will appear hereafter in parentheses in the text.

[2] Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 173. See also pp. 44-49; and Guerard, CTN, pp. 120-123.

[3] The Nigger of the Narcissus, p. 15.

[4] "Heart of Darkness," Youth, p. 136.

> that soul satiated with primitive emotions, avid of lying fame, of sham distinction, of all the appearances of success and power.[1]

In the sentences of both writers there is the same rhythm based on the deliberate extension beyond the natural stopping place--sometimes an extension beyond several natural stopping places--which frustrates "the reader's reasonable expectations," thus helping alert him to the eloquence, the imagery, the motifs.[2] There is also the same dependence on the sonority of the Latinisms: Conrad writes "opaque," "monumental," "colossal," "fecund," "tenebrous," "diabolic," "satiated"; Faulkner writes, a few lines after the sentence quoted above, "The land where the old bear had earned a name, and through which ran not even a mortal beast but an anachronism indomitable and invincible out of an old dead time, a phantom, epitome and apotheosis of the old wild life. . . . (p. 193)"[3] The difference, then, between the characteristic Faulknerian sentence and the characteristic Conradian sentence is one of degree, not of kind: the Faulknerian sentence is longer but not essentially different.

Within these sentences, moreover, both writers used the same kinds of words. Both depended heavily on abstractions to help enlarge the actions and characters of their works. These are such words as those named by McCaslin Edmonds in the fourth section of "The Bear": "Honor and pride and pity and justice and courage and love (p. 297)."

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[1] "Heart of Darkness," Youth, pp. 147-148.

[2] Guerard, CTN, p. 121.

[3] My italics.

Or one might add from the Conradian sentences above "life" and "soul" and "hate"; or from The Nigger of the Narcissus, "The dumb fear and the dumb courage of men obscure, forgetful, and enduring (p. 90)." Frequently, also, as Florence Leaver has noted, Faulkner paired abstractions in paradoxical phrases to "give expression to some of the thematic tensions in the whole Yoknapatawpha story--such phrases as 'glamorous and old disastrous things,' 'glamorous fatality,' 'defeat and glory,' . . . ."[1] Conrad did the same kind of thing for the same reason. Here, for instance, is a sentence from "Youth": "This was the East of the ancient navigators, so old, so mysterious, resplendent and sombre, living and unchanged, full of danger and promise (p. 41)"[2]

This particular sentence from "Youth" was, as a matter of fact, the example used by a student at The University of Virginia in a question about Faulkner's reading of Conrad. The exchange is illuminating:

> Q. Mr. Faulkner, to get back to this business of style for just a minute. You mentioned in some class I attended that Dostoevsky and Conrad were two people you read a good deal when you were eighteen and nineteen years old. Would you say that you had got something in the way of arrangement of words from Conrad? Every now and then in your stories--I was thinking of a couple of passages in The Bear, passages here and there in other stories--there are arrangements of cadence, rhythm, which seem to me to be rather like Conrad. I'm thinking of a passage in "Youth," an arrangement of adjectives, "resplendent yet somber, full of danger, yet promising," the description of the East when that young

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[1]"Faulkner: The Word as Principle and Power," WF:III, p. 202. I am indebted to this study for many of my remarks about Faulkner's vocabulary.

[2]My italics.

boy comes upon it. There's something of the same kind of use of--kind of heavy arrangement of adjectives I've noticed in your writing. Does that seem a fair--?
A. Quite true. I got quite a lot from Conrad. . . .[1]

A second practice with words in which Faulkner very much resembles Conrad is his organization of key words, many times abstract words, into word-motifs. The key motif in "The Bear," for example, involves the group of words dealing with the land: wilderness, woods, land, earth.[2] In the "markless" wilderness, the "big," "ancient," "timeless" woods, Isaac McCaslin learns the humility and pride and courage which enable him to learn further that the earth should belong to all "in the communal anonymity of brotherhood," and to understand the curse on his land, the South.[3] At the beginning of the fourth section, then, he sees "himself and his cousin juxtaposed not against the wilderness but against the tamed land which was to have been his heritage . . . (p. 254)."

In Conrad's "Youth" the motif is, of course, youth. In "The Secret Sharer" it is made up of the words double, stranger, and sharer. In "Heart of Darkness" even the title is part of the motif kept before the reader from Marlow's sudden "'And this also has been one of the dark places of the earth,'" at the beginning, to the description of the Congo as the "'heart of darkness,'" to the description of the gift of expression as, in Kurtz's case, "'the deceitful flow from the heart of an

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[1] FU, p. 20.

[2] In some ways "The Bear" resembles "Heart of Darkness." Both are initiation stories in which the protagonist's experiences in the wilderness lead him to a discovery of man's capacity for evil.

[3] Go Down, Moses, pp. 192, 200, 208, 257, 261, 283, 298, 323.

impenetrable darkness,'" to the last words of the story, "'seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness.'"[1] The effect of the iterative insistence on a word or group of words presented through the elaborate eloquence of the Faulknerian and Conradian sentence is to hypnotize the reader, to draw him into the compelling trance of the language. Both men were consummate masters of the effect.

The third word-practice in which Faulkner resembles Conrad, perhaps the most striking stylistic resemblance between the two, is his use of what Miss Leaver calls "negative ultimates," negative words of ultimate degree.[2] These words, too, help to heighten the intensity of action and character and thus contribute to that sense of universal significance which informs the best work of both men. In "The Bear," for instance, only Old Ben, Lion, and Sam Fathers are "taintless and incorruptible" (p. 191). Sam is also "inscrutable" (p. 213). Then, within three pages, Old Ben is "ruthless" and "indomitable and invincible"; the woods are apparently "impenetrable"; the voices of the hounds are "sourceless" (pp. 193, 195, 196). Conrad was, if possible, even more addicted to these words than Faulkner:

> And for a moment it seemed to me as if I also were buried in a vast grave full of unspeakable secrets. I felt an intolerable weight oppressing my breast, the smell of the damp earth, the unseen presence of victorious corruption, the darkness of an impenetrable night . . . .[3]

The impenetrable blackness beset the ship so close that it

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[1] Youth, pp. 48, 95, 114, 162.

[2] WF:III, p. 199.

[3] "Heart of Darkness," Youth, p. 138.

> seemed that by thrusting one's hand over the side one could touch some unearthly substance. There was in it an effect of inconceivable terror and of inexpressible mystery.[1]

Just as significant, perhaps, as the fact that both writers used these words to produce intensity is the fact that they tended to overuse them in the same way, to cover up the artistic failure in evocativeness through an emotional rhetorical insistence.[2] It may be, that is, a measure of the impact of Conrad's example on Faulkner that the latter learned--or was confirmed in his own natural tendency towards--not only the virtues of Conrad's style but also its excesses.

A fuller account of the styles of the two men would, of course, involve a discussion of the way each of them complements his overextended sentences with direct, simple accounts of action.[3] Also it would need to recognize that one reason for the effectiveness of the abstract, meditative periods is the foundation underneath them of sharply observed concrete details.[4] And it would, finally, have to attend to the pervasive imagery of the two.

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[1] The Shadow Line, p. 108.

[2] On Conrad see F. R. Leavis, The Great Tradition (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1954), pp. 216-220. See Wyndham Lewis, Men Without Art (New York: Harcourt Brace, Inc., 1934), pp. 45-48, for the first such criticism of Faulkner.

[3] See, for example, "Youth," Youth, p. 11; and Faulkner, Light in August (New York: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 96. See also Zink, South Atlantic Quarterly, LIII (July, 1954), p. 401; and Moser, Joseph Conrad, p. 47. All references to Light in August will be to this edition. Page numbers will appear hereafter in parentheses in the text.

[4] On Conrad see Leavis, The Great Tradition, pp. 212-215. A good example of Faulkner's concreteness is the description of the approach of Armstid's wagon to Lena Grove, Light in August, p. 7.

The emphasis here, however, rather than on the styles in themselves, is on the similarities between elements of these styles which suggest the probability that Conrad's style influenced that of Faulkner, a probability which becomes almost a certainty with regard to certain passages in some of Faulkner's earlier novels. The following passage from Mosquitoes, for instance, has the appearance of having been lifted almost bodily from the passage in "Heart of Darkness" beginning, "'Going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings."[1]

> Trees heavy and ancient with moss loomed out of it hugely and grayly: the mist might have been a sluggish growth between and among them. No, this mist might have been the first prehistoric morning of time itself; it might have been the very substance in which the seed of the beginning of things fecundated; and these huge and silent trees might have been the first of living things, too recently born to know either fear or astonishment, dragging their sluggish umbilical cords from out the old miasmic womb of a nothingness latent and dreadful.[2]

Still, it must never be forgotten that to demonstrate Conrad's influence on Faulkner is not thereby to explain or account for Faulkner's genius. Faulkner's style and technique are obviously expressions of his own temperament. So, likewise, is his receptivity to the Conradian manner and methods. That is, a profound, lasting literary influence is undoubtedly the result of deep temperamental affinities. This is, I believe, the case with Conrad and Faulkner. At this point, therefore--before undertaking the full discussion of the impressionistic techniques

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[1]Pp. 92-93. See also pp. 95-96.

[2](New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1927), p. 169.

of the two men--I believe a discussion of these temperamental affinities should help to explain why Conrad appealed particularly to Faulkner, why Faulkner should have found the Conradian style and techniques so attractive. It should also remind the reader and help keep him aware, throughout the study of the artistic methods, of the influence of temperament on technique and style and even material and so of the complex relationship of literary influence to temperament and to the finished work of art.

The temperamental affinities of Conrad and Faulkner are indicated clearly by the relationship of each to his works. Obviously, both men were deeply involved in their best works. As Conrad was committed to the studies of betrayal found in Lord Jim and Under Western Eyes, so Faulkner was committed in Absalom, Absalom! and Go Down, Moses to the study of the curse on the South. Conrad's complex and ambiguous feelings about his relationship to Poland, that is, seem to be paralleled by Faulkner's complex and ambiguous feelings about his relationship to the South. As Conrad seems to have had feelings of guilt about his "betrayal" of Poland, so Faulkner seems to have had feelings of guilt about the betrayal of the Negro race by his ancestors. Certainly the White-Negro relationship is central in his work as the individual-society relationship is in Conrad's work.

What is known of Conrad's life bears out the indications of this deep conflict within him, from his later unconscious editing of his life to make it appear that his becoming an author was mere chance--his writing in English for the English was regarded as a greater betrayal

by Poles than his leaving Poland to go to sea--to the intention of his last years to return to Poland to live.[1] In Faulkner's case the terms of the conflict within him may be indicated on the one hand by his attachment to Aunt Caroline Barr and Uncle Ned, his Negro mammy and an old family retainer respectively, and on the other hand by his statement that, rather than allow the Federal government to force Southern compliance with civil rights legislation, he would shoot Negroes in the street.[2] The conflict in Faulkner's mind, that is, seemed to be between his realization of the inhumanity of a culture based on slavery and the romantic glamor of his Southern heritage, a part of which is the myth of the racial inferiority of the Negro. His sympathy for the Negro is obvious from his works; nevertheless one wonders how much of the horror of miscegenation felt by Henry Sutpen and Quentin Compson and Isaac McCaslin was William Faulkner's own feeling.

In both men these central conflicts manifested themselves in a whole host of related conflicts. In Conrad there was the conflict between his declared belief in the simple virtues of fidelity and solidarity and his profound awareness of the complexity and ambiguity of life together with a deep sympathy for the individual. Another existed in his fear of the corrosion of the intellect--his emphasis on work as

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[1]See Jocelyn Baines, Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1960), pp. 101-102, 352-353; Gerard Jean-Aubry, The Sea Dreamer, trans. Helen Sebba (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1957). pp. 237-240; and Jessie Conrad, Joseph Conrad and his Circle (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1935), p. 263.

[2]See Robert Cantwell, "The Faulkners: Recollections of a Gifted Family," WF:III, p. 61; and Russell Warren Howe, "A Talk with William Faulkner," The Reporter, XIV (March 22, 1956), p. 19.

man's salvation--expressed in some of the most profoundly meditative novels in English.[1] There was, in fact, a whole series of such paradoxical conflicts in Conrad and his works, summarized by Guerard as, "briefly: a deep commitment to order in society and in the self--doubled by incorrigible sympathy for the outlaw, whether existing in society or the self."[2]

The same kinds of conflicts existed in Faulkner. Indeed, Hyatt Waggoner has written that the dominant theme throughout Faulkner's works is "his tortured and ambiguous mixture of religious denial and affirmation."[3] Certainly, his deep religious concern is revealed in the Christian symbolism in The Sound and the Fury, As I Lay Dying, Light in August, Go Down, Moses, Requiem for a Nun, and A Fable; in the serious concern with institutional Christianity (As I Lay Dying, Light in August, Requiem for a Nun); and in the emphasis throughout the works on sacrifice, suffering, and endurance (". . . but then the whole chronicle of man's immortality is in the suffering he has endured.").[4] The religious conflict, undoubtedly, stemmed from his intellectual necessity of rejecting Christianity as a literal faith while at the same

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[1]For his emphasis on work see Conrad to R. B. Cunninghame Graham, 14 December 1897, Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters, ed. G. Jean-Aubry (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1927), I, pp. 214-215. Hereafter this work will be referred to as LL. See also "Heart of Darkness," Youth, p. 97.

[2]CTN, p. 58.

[3]William Faulkner, p. 3.

[4]Intruder in the Dust (New York: Random House, 1948), p. 154. All references to Intruder will be to this edition. Page numbers will appear hereafter in parentheses in the text.

time feeling immensely attracted to it emotionally. In the best examination of his relationship to Christianity Waggoner concluded: "He takes credal Christianity, apparently, as unhistorical myth containing profound and redemptive moral and psychological truth which he has undertaken to reinterpret in modern terms."[1] On a more mundane level this conflict may be manifested in the contrast between the Faulkner who wrote of blasphemy, fornication, adultery, incest, and rape with a corn-cob and the Faulkner who in hunting camp neither cursed nor told or listened to off-color stories.[2] It may well be, too, that his prolonged drinking bouts reflected the inner conflicts from which he needed to escape periodically.[3]

Thus, in what is known of Faulkner there is evidence of a series of internal conflicts in his nature much like those of Conrad. There is not, however, at this writing enough reliable biographical information about Faulkner to enable one to describe those conflicts very confidently or to carry such parallels with Conrad very far. In order to demonstrate the temperamental affinities of the two men, therefore, we shall have to show how Faulkner's temperament manifests itself in a philosophic view of life and in an approach to writing which are both remarkably similar to those of Conrad.

The several more-or-less superficial ways in which the two were alike may or may not have had a bearing on the similarities in their

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[1] William Faulkner, p. 248.

[2] John B. Cullen, Old Times in the Faulkner Country, collaborator Floyd C. Watkins (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1961), p. 13.

[3] Ibid., pp. 16-17; and Coughlan, The Private World, pp. 24-25, 104-105, 134. See also John Faulkner, My Brother Bill, pp. 148-152.

approaches to life and writing. Both were small in size, both heirs of an aristocratic tradition, both courtly in manner. Both were brought up in the Christian religion. Both were political conservatives. Both suffered through long periods of neglect to find public favor only when their best work was done. Both became, late in life, the spokesmen of rather ambiguous affirmations. But in view of the lack of biographical information about Faulkner such similarities take whatever meaning they have from the more important similarities treated in the following discussion.

Joseph Conrad did not believe in either the personal God or the personal immortality of orthodox Christianity. The intense skepticism expressed in Nostromo and Under Western Eyes--the emphasis on the ultimate futility of man's actions--is exaggerated only a very little in the bantering letters he wrote to his socialist friend Robert Cunninghame-Graham.[1] In one he speaks of the indestructible machine of the universe which has "made itself without thought, without conscience, without foresight, without eyes, without heart."[2] Three weeks later he continues:

> The machine is thinner than air and as evanescent as a flash of lightning. The attitude of cold unconcern is the only reasonable one. Of course reason is hateful,--but why? Because it demonstrates (to those who have the courage) that we, living, are out of life,--utterly out of it. The mysteries of a universe made of drops of fire and clods of mud do not concern us in the least. The fate of a humanity condemned ul-

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[1] See Baines, Joseph Conrad, pp. 310, 363; and Guerard, CTN, pp. 104, 189-190.

[2] 20 December 1897, LL, I, p. 216.

> timately to perish from cold is not worth troubling about. If you take it to heart it becomes an unendurable tragedy. If you believe in improvement you must weep, for the attained perfection must end in cold, darkness and silence.[1]

Christianity was to him, finally, an "absurd oriental fable. . . . the only religion which, with its impossible standards, has brought an infinity of anguish to innumerable souls--on this earth."[2]

That last phrase, "on this earth," reveals Conrad's emphasis. The attitude of cold unconcern might be the only logical one, if one considered only the ultimate significance of man's life, but there existed also for Conrad what he called "the visible universe," "the temporal world," the world bounded by space and time in which every man lives his life. It is this world, the world of man's life on earth, with which he was primarily concerned. It is this "world, the temporal world, [which] rests on a very few simple ideas; so simple that they must be as old as the hills. It rests notably, among others, on the idea of Fidelity."[3] It is in this world that "the solidarity in mysterious origin, in toil, in joy, in hope, in uncertain fate, which binds men to each other and all mankind to the visible world," is important.[4]

For in life on this earth the important matters are man's relationship with man and with men or society. Here, in spite of his lack

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[1]14 January 1898, LL, I, p. 222.

[2]Conrad to Edward Garnett, 23 February 1914, Letters From Conrad: 1895 to 1924, ed. Edward Garnett (Bloomsbury, The Nonesuch Press, 1928), p. 265.

[3]"A Familiar Preface," A Personal Record (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923), p. xxiii.

[4]"Preface," The Nigger of the Narcissus, p. xiv.

of belief in Christian teleology and eschatology, Conrad did depend on the traditional Christian views. He believed, for instance, in the natural depravity of man. "L'homme est un animal méchant."[1] This is why Utopian revolutionism, or even socialism, was folly to Conrad with its "strange conviction that a fundamental change of hearts must follow the downfall of any given human institutions."[2] He believed also in Christian ethics. In the face of the godless universe, men must love one another, must be faithful to one another, must do their duty by one another.[3] In all of his greater works, from his study of the microcosmic Narcissus to his study of Razumov's betrayal of Haldin in Under Western Eyes, Conrad's assumption was the same: it is that discovery of Alvan Hervey in "The Return," "there can be no life without faith and love--faith in a human heart, love of a human being!"[4] All of Conrad's heroes are, of course, morally responsible for their actions. Their intense struggles of conscience derive from their moral responsibility. So does the feeling of inevitability which the reader experiences as he lives through the struggles of the heroes. The inevitability springs, that is, from the inexorable working of cause and effect, the working out of character in action, not from any external source or cause. Conrad's characters are free and responsible for their actions, not to

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[1]Conrad to Graham, 8 February 1899, LL, I, p. 269.

[2]"Author's Note," Under Western Eyes (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923), p. x. All references to Under Western Eyes will be to this edition. Page numbers will appear hereafter in the text.

[3]See Moser, Joseph Conrad, pp. 12-24.

[4]Tales of Unrest (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923), p. 177. My italics.

God perhaps, but to mankind.

In an ultimate sense, however, "we live, as we dream--alone."[1] Conrad was aware of the moral obligations of each man towards every other man. He was also very much aware of the complexity, the moral ambiguity, of any particular one of man's actions, and he was always probing subtly these delicate tenuosities in the character of a man isolated in some way, for some reason, from other men. As Morton D. Zabel has pointed out, isolation is the condition in Conrad's works for the test of character which is central to his greater works.[2] Through morally isolated characters, then, Conrad examines from every possible angle the question of the relationship of the individual to other individuals and to society and society's laws and traditions. In his moral isolation Jim betrays society, his tradition and duty, by deserting the Patna; Razumov, on the other hand, betrays an individual to his repressive society and finds no more peace than Lord Jim. The young captain of "The Secret Sharer" has the opportunity of betraying Leggatt and comes close to betraying his society (his ship) because of Leggatt but finally escapes with newly found self-knowledge. As Zabel puts it: "The 'Sharing' has recreated him, stirred him to a sense of his latent moral insecurity, and so enforced in him the necessity of human community--that 'unavoidable solidarity' which Conrad persistently invokes as the inescapable commitment of men. . . ."[3]

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[1]"Heart of Darkness," Youth, p. 82.

[2]Craft and Character in Modern Fiction (New York: The Viking Press, 1957), pp. 158-167.

[3]Ibid., p. 166.

Man's actions may be insignificant in the scheme of the universe, may be ultimately futile, but in this temporal world man is necessarily committed to other men, and it is in conditions of isolation that he must discover these truths, as well as the truth about himself, which will enable him to meet his obligations. One must add quickly, however, that Conrad very rarely wrote about a man who succeeded in these tasks. Of the heroes of his greater works (The Nigger of the Narcissus, 1897--Under Western Eyes, 1911) only the Marlow of "Heart of Darkness" and the captain of "The Secret Sharer" succeed in gaining self-knowledge and coming to grips with reality without betraying their obligations to other men. The price of their success is, in Marlow's case, a ghostly struggle in the night with a soul which acknowledges nothing either above or below it; and, in the captain's case, "a creeping quietly. . . near insanity."[1] There are no easy victories in Conrad as there are no easy affirmations--in his best work. Finally, failure and the forces of evil were more real probably for Conrad than success and the forces of good.[2] "Heart of Darkness," "The End of the Tether," Nostromo, and Under Western Eyes, for example, all generate in the reader a sense of the overwhelming force of evil, though never a sense of man as mere passive victim of forces outside himself.

In this brief summary, one last thing should be said about Con-

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[1]Youth, p. 144. 'Twixt Land and Sea, p. 130.

[2]Bertrand Russell's vivid description of this element in Conrad's vision of life is as follows: "I felt . . . that he thought of civilized and morally tolerable human life as a dangerous walk on a thin crust of barely cooled lava which at any moment might break and let the unwary sink into fiery depths." Portraits from Memory (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), p. 87.

rad's view of life. It is that in Conrad's best works the humanistic encounter is always between man and man, not between man and woman. Thomas C. Moser has shown in his book that invariably, whenever Conrad attempted to treat the sexual relationships of men and women, he depicted impotent, voyeuristic men and destructive women.[1] According to Moser, Conrad's misogyny asserted itself not only through images which associate women and fertility with death, but also, in his later works, by his withholding sympathy from the active women which his plots required.[2] Because of the inhibiting effects of his misogyny on his imagination, Moser writes, Conrad could create neither a believable love relationship, nor, with one exception, a believable woman.[3] The exception is Mrs. Gould in Nostromo, though even in her case, "we must remember that her courtship is kept safely in the past, that Conrad avoids any close examination of her married life, and that to the rest of the world she remains an unassailable matron."[4]

The parallels between this view of life held by Conrad and that held by Faulkner are almost too neat, though there have been some sincere attempts in recent years to make of Faulkner an orthodox Christian.[5] He himself contributed to this attempt by sometimes using

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[1] Joseph Conrad, pp. 50-130.

[2] Ibid., pp. 54, 57, 78-80, 160-161.

[3] Ibid., pp. 105-110.

[4] Ibid., p. 88.

[5] See, for instance, Randall Stewart, American Literature and Christian Doctrine (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1958), pp. 136-142.

orthodox terms such as God and immortality in seemingly orthodox fashion in his public statements.[1] More often, however, he used orthodox terms to stand for heterogeneous, if not heretical, concepts. How far afield he could go is demonstrated by his definition of Christianity for Miss Stein:

> No one is without Christianity, if we agree on what we mean by the word. It is every individual's individual code of behavior by means of which he makes himself a better human being than his nature wants to be, if he followed his nature only. Whatever its symbol--cross or crescent or whatever--that symbol is man's reminder of his duty inside the human race.[2]

In the same way, according to Loïc Bouvard, he described his God as not "a personified or a mechanical God, but a God who is the most complete expression of mankind, a God who rests both in eternity and in the now."[3]

The preponderance of the evidence in his works also indicates that whatever Faulkner's God may have been, he was not the personal loving God of orthodox Christianity. In his first novel, for example, the following conversation ensues between Joe Gilligan and Doctor Mahon, two of the sympathetic characters of the book:

> "Circumstance moves in marvellous ways, Joe."
> "I thought you'd a said God, reverend."
> "God is circumstance, Joe. God is in this life. We know nothing about the next. That will take care of itself in good time. 'The Kingdom of God is in man's own heart,' the Book says."
> "Ain't that a kind of funny doctrine for a parson to get off?"
> "Remember, I am an old man, Joe. Too old for bickering or bitterness. We make our own heaven or hell in this

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[1] Nagano, pp. 23-24, 29-30, 82-83; and FU, p. 149.

[2] WF:III, p. 75.

[3] "Conversation with William Faulkner," trans. Henry D. Piper, Modern Fiction Studies, V (Winter, 1959-60), p. 362.

> world. Who knows; perhaps when we die we may not be required to go anywhere nor do anything at all. That would be heaven."[1]

One's suspicion that Dr. Mahon is speaking here for his creator is strengthened by his finding Gavin Stevens echoing some of these sentiments in Intruder in the Dust: "Because he loved the old few simple things which no one wanted to take from him . . . a God a heaven which a man may avail himself a little of at any time without having to wait to die, a little earth for his own sweat to fall on among his own green shoots and plants (p. 156)." Ultimately, one of the few points to emerge clearly from A Fable was that Faulkner, like the old Negro preacher, bore witness, not to God, but to man.[2]

Significantly, there is in this book, Faulkner's re-telling of the Passion Week story, no resurrection. As most of his critics now agree, if one is to call Faulkner a Christian, he must describe his Christianity as an emasculated one without Grace, without a resurrection.[3] If man is to endure and prevail, then, in Faulkner's view he must do so through his own capacity for sacrifice and suffering, not God's. Interestingly, on this question of man's endurance Faulkner in his Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech and The Old Marshal of A Fable sound very much like Joseph Conrad in Typhoon and in his essay on Henry

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[1] Soldiers' Pay (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1926), p. 317.

[2] (New York: Random House, 1954), p. 180. See also Roger Asselineau, "Faulkner, Moraliste Puritain," La Revue des Lettres Modernes, V (Winter, 1958-59), p. 244.

[3] Waggoner, William Faulkner, p. 247; Hoffman, William Faulkner, pp. 112-115; and Cleanth Brooks, "Faulkner's Vision of Good and Evil," The Massachusetts Review, III (Summer, 1962), p. 695.

James.[1] The first of the following passages is from Conrad's "Henry James," the second from Faulkner's Stockholm speech:

> When the last acqueduct shall have crumbled to pieces, the last airship fallen to the ground, the last blade of grass have died upon a dying earth, man, indomitable by his training in resistance to misery and pain, shall set this undiminished light of his eyes against the feeble glow of the sun.[2]

> I decline to accept the end of man. It is easy enough to say that man is immortal simply because he will endure; that when the last ding-dong of doom has clanged and faded from the last worthless rock hanging tideless in the last red and dying evening, that even then there will still be one more sound: that of his puny inexhaustible voice, still talking. I refuse to accept this. I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail.[3]

Again, it is significant that when Faulkner speaks of man's enduring and prevailing, his immortality, he obviously is speaking of Man, not of a man. For Faulkner, as for Conrad, Christianity was "a fairy tale that has conquered the whole Western earth."[4]

Nevertheless, like Conrad, though he rejected Christianity as a literal faith, Faulkner accepted a great many of the Christian premises about man. For Faulkner, as for Conrad, man was naturally depraved, the heir of Original Sin, of "that sickness somewhere at the prime foundation of this factual scheme from which the prisoner soul, miasmal-

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[1] "Typhoon," Typhoon (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923), p. 44. A Fable, p. 354.

[2] Notes on Life and Letters (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1927), p. 13.

[3] WF:III, p. 348.

[4] New Orleans Sketches, p. 54. See also Go Down, Moses, p. 291.

distillant, wroils ever upward sunward. . . ."[1] Also like Conrad's, Faulkner's characters are morally responsible for their actions, though on this point Faulkner's attitude was not so simple and clear-cut as some of his critics make it seem. It is easy enough to demonstrate Faulkner's belief in free will and moral responsibility in all the works published since World War II. Then, by assuming that his work forms one whole, one can read backwards from Requiem for a Nun and A Fable, for instance, to show that characters in the earlier novels are also responsible for their actions. Such a procedure, however, distorts Faulkner's best works, those of the period 1929-1942, as much as a similar procedure in earlier Conradian criticism distorted the best works of Conrad. The parallel between the two writers is clear at this point too, for there is as clean a break between Go Down, Moses and Intruder in the Dust as there is between Under Western Eyes and Chance, and it is the same kind of break, that between the artist's exploration of his world through a novelistic vision and the moralist's supporting a previously held position through rhetorical fables.

When one considers only the works of Faulkner's best period, the evidence is contradictory enough to justify at least partially Sean O'Faolain's claim that Faulkner was a naturalist who had carried determinism to its logical extreme.[2] There is, for instance, that naturalistic background of Popeye furnished the reader in the last chapter

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[1] Absalom, Absalom! (New York: The Modern Library, 1951), p. 143. All references to Absalom, Absalom! will be to this edition. Page numbers will appear hereafter in parentheses in the text.

[2] The Vanishing Hero (Boston: Little, Brown, 1956), p. 90.

of Sanctuary. There is the glamorous wasteland aura, the emphasis on doom and fatality, which pervades the atmosphere of Sartoris, Light in August, Absalom, Absalom!, and the Quentin section of The Sound and the Fury (Quentin's father is probably supposed to be a more sympathetic character than some apologists for Faulkner take him to be).[1] There are the references to The Player in Sartoris and Light in August.[2] There is, finally, the emphasis on the ineffectuality in the modern world of men such as Quentin Compson and Horace Benbow who hold to traditional values.

On the other hand, there is in all of these novels a clear emphasis on man's moral responsibility. Sometimes it is a verbal emphasis as in Hightower's reflection in Light in August: "Man performs, engenders, so much more than he can or should have to bear (p. 262)." Even Joe Christmas thinks at one point, "'No. If I give in now, I will deny all the thirty years that I have lived to make me what I chose to be (p. 232).'"[3] More frequently, however, the emphasis inheres in a character's actions or in the total movement of a story. Clearly, the actions of Dilsey in The Sound and the Fury and of Byron Bunch and Gail Hightower (those in behalf of Lena Grove, Mrs. Hines, and Joe Christmas) in Light in August are good actions. Just as clearly the actions of Gowan Stevens, Temple Drake, and Narcissa Benbow Sartoris in Sanctuary are bad. Temple Drake is clearly responsible for the deaths of three

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[1] See Sartoris (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1951), p. 289; and Light in August, pp. 244, 296.

[2] Sartoris, p. 380. Light in August, pp. 405-406.

[3] My italics.

men.[1] The reader, that is, is led to make moral judgments of the characters in Faulkner's works, led by the author's satire on Gowan Stevens as a Virginia gentleman, on Percy Grimm as a patriotic citizen, and on Jason Compson as a hard-headed realist; led by such contrasts as that between the full-blooded passion of Ruby Lamar and the respectability of Temple Drake and Narcissa Sartoris; led also by the extended "meanings" of the works. The stories of Thomas Sutpen and Carothers McCaslin--"that chronicle which was a whole land in miniature, which multiplied and compounded was the entire South"--are meaningless unless the reader sees the implicit--sometimes explicit in "The Bear"--moral judgment of their refusal to acknowledge their Negro children.[2]

The best example, perhaps, is the movement of Gail Hightower in Light in August towards his recognition and acknowledgment of his responsibility, not only for his dismissal from his church and for his wife's disillusionment and death, but also for "'poorman. Poor mankind (p. 87)'" Early in the book he tries to convince himself that his peace, his withdrawal, has been bought and paid for (pp. 271-272). Then he tries to convince Byron Bunch that it was not by his choice that he is no longer a man of God (pp. 319-320). Then he refuses to perjure himself for Joe Christmas: "'It's not because I cant, dont dare to . . . It's because I wont do it! (p. 342)'" But he does go to help Lena at the birth of her baby, and he does try, too late, to save Joe Christmas, so that that same night he can realize, "'after all, there must be some things for which God cannot be accused by man and held responsible (p.

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[1]See Sanctuary (New York: The Modern Library, 1932), pp. 255-266.

[2]Quotation from Go Down, Moses, p. 293.

427)."

What Hightower comes to, writes Michael Millgate, is "a vision of human interdependence and human solidarity, a realisation of the need for love and involvement in the fate of others. . . ."[1] Human solidarity. Faulkner's vision is once more like the vision of Conrad.[2] For Faulkner, as for Conrad, man had to discover his meaning, his identity, in his relationships with other men, relationships based on the verities of the human heart which are in practice the traditional virtues of the Christian ethic. Faulkner's community, like Conrad's, was based on individual moral action. He had as little hope as Conrad that the human heart could be changed through legislative, educational, or institutional reforms.[3]

Outside the human community man has no meaning. As Harry Wilbourne and Charlotte Rittenmeyer discover, there is no absolute love or absolute human freedom apart from the normal human ties. Joe Christmas, one of the most alienated characters in modern fiction, has no identity at all. Isolated as he is from both the White and the Negro community, he has no way, moreover, of establishing one. He has to live and die without knowing who he is. Some of Faulkner's characters, in other words, are as isolated as those of Conrad, though Faulkner used isolation, not as the pre-requisite to the moral test of character, but

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[1] William Faulkner (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961), p. 50.

[2] It is also, one might add, like the vision of that other impressionist, Stephen Crane. The correspondent in "The Open Boat" reaches the same conclusion: in the face of a hostile or indifferent universe, men must be true to one another. The dying soldier in Algiers suddenly becomes very real to him.

[3] FU, 148.

as a necessary step in a character's discovery of his own identity. In his works a character must become aware of his isolation from his community before he can work out for himself a personal relationship to that community.

Again, however, as in the best works of Conrad only a few characters successfully pass the test of isolation, so in the works of Faulkner only Bayard Sartoris in "Odor of Verbena" and Chick Mallsion in Intruder in the Dust succeed in establishing an individual relationship with their community. In his isolation Quentin Compson commits suicide. Ike McCaslin repudiates his heritage and withdraws from his society. Thus, there are in Faulkner's best works no easy affirmations either. The force of evil is depicted unsparingly and not only in Sanctuary and Light in August but also in that comic masterpiece, The Hamlet. It is a masterpiece of folk comedy, but the comedy is sometimes a very dark comedy. The Snopesian evil overcomes the Armstids, the Varners, and, ultimately, even V. K. Ratliff, and there is no very confident affirmation of the power of good in that last contrast between the impervious Flem Snopes and the mad Henry Armstid:

> Then he got up, onto his hands and knees first as small children do, and picked up the shovel and returned to the trench. He 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.
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> Snopes turned his head and spat over the wagon wheel. He jerked the reins slightly. "Come up," he said.[1]

Probably Faulkner's vision was never as dark as Conrad's. Faulkner em-

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[1](New York: Random House, 1940), p. 373.

phasized always man's ability to endure, to bear, whatever might come, and one's feeling after reading The Sound and the Fury or Light in August is not so much, I think, despair at the utter futility of man's actions as it is a feeling of compassion for what man engenders for himself and then must bear. Still, in Faulkner's best works the power of evil seems more vital than the power of good.

The final way in which Faulkner's vision of life resembles Conrad's is in his misogyny.[1] From one point of view, of course, this misogyny is a traditional one. As Mr. Compson's "delicate equilibrium of periodical filth between two moons balanced," woman is closer to the rhythms of nature than is man and so closer to reality.[2] She knows instinctively, naturally, what men must learn through loss of innocence and a process of initiation.[3] She has what the Faulknerian voice, in speaking of the dietitian of Light in August, calls a "natural female infallibility for the spontaneous comprehension of evil (p. 110)." She represents to man, in other words, as she did to St. Jerome, the lusts of the flesh, the earthward pull of the flesh against the spirit and soul.

From another point of view, however, the misogyny in Faulkner's works appears to be a personal bias of the author. One can perhaps discount the misogynous views of such characters as Mr. Compson, Gail Hightower, Doc Hines, and Joe Christmas by reference not only to the tradi-

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[1]For his denial of misogynous feelings, see Nagano, pp. 68-70.

[2]The Sound and the Fury, p. 147.

[3]See Brooks, The Massachusetts Review, III (Summer, 1962), pp. 696-697; and Brooks, "Faulkner's Sanctuary: The Discovery of Evil," Sewanee Review, LXXI (Winter, 1963), p. 13.

tional Christian attitude but also to their particular situations and experiences. Yet these views are expressed by most of Faulkner's male characters and sometimes, as in the remark about the "natural female infallibility for the spontaneous comprehension of evil," by the author himself. Then one notices the fury, the frenzy, sometimes almost hysteria, with which woman and sex are presented in the works.[1] He notices also that Faulkner depicts all kinds of sexual relationships and all kinds of marriages except "normal," happy, workable ones.[2] He seemed especially contemptuous of the young, respectable middle-class bitch (Cecily Saunders, Temple Drake, the dietitian, Ike McCaslin's wife) and especially fascinated by Memphis whores and whorehouses. In writing of the latter, moreover, he almost invariably became sentimental. A few of the more important prostitutes with hearts of gold are, for instance, Miss Reba, Ruby Lamar, Bobby Allen, Nancy Mannigoe, and last of all Miss Corrie of The Reivers. Just as long a list could be made of his sympathetically treated amateurs such as Caddy Compson and Eula Varner (Snopes). Surely the contempt for the "bitch" and the sentimentality over the "fallen woman" had their roots in a fundamental attitude of Faulkner's towards women, perhaps a profound dissatisfaction with women and sex as they are. In any event one must agree with Roger Asselineau that for some reason Faulkner was both obsessed with and revolted by sex and the sexual experience, that the misogyny in his works

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[1]See, for example, Light in August, pp. 136-137, 160-165, 225-228, 276-277, 327-338.

[2]In William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country Cleanth Brooks takes exception to this criticism of Faulkner, writing that a conception of mature sexual love is always in the background of his treatment of the sexual extremes (pp. 206-207). Still, may not one wonder why these mature relationships are always rather shadowy, always in the background?

is at least partially his own.[1]

Thus, Faulkner's vision of life resembles Conrad's to a remarkable degree. Neither vision is logically consistent, but they are inconsistent in the same ways. Both, while denying the supernatural bases of the Christian religion, affirm a kind of Christian humanism dependent on traditional ethical values and a traditional view of man's depraved nature. In both the darkness seems more pervasive and more powerful than the light. The emphasis in both visions is on man's failures to reach his ideals but therefore, also, because man is morally free, on his capacities and abilities. Finally, in both visions the emphasis is on man rather than on man and woman, which is another way of saying that Faulkner and Conrad wrote moral fables rather than realistic novels of manners.

It should not be surprising, then, for one to find Faulkner's listing of Conrad as one of his masters. It would be stranger, indeed, if he had not done so. Temperamentally so in tune with Conrad that he was to react to experience in much the same way and to form very nearly the same vision of life, Faulkner must have found Conrad exhilarating reading when, in 1914 under the tutelage of Phil Stone, he began reading him.

A second way in which Faulkner's temperament manifested itself as similar to Conrad's was in his approach to writing. In the self-contradictory statements he made about his writing, for instance, he

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[1]La Revue des Lettres Modernes, V (Winter, 1958-59), pp. 234-237.

was following a well-worn Conradian path. On the one hand both men played down the element of consciousness in their writing. As Conrad made Edward Garnett responsible for his becoming a professional author, so Faulkner made Sherwood Anderson responsible.[1] Both men often claimed not to be literary men at all.[2] Faulkner, for example, once gave the following version of his life: "I don't know any literary people. The people I know are other farmers and horse people and hunters, and we talk about horses and dogs and guns and what to do about this hay crop or this cotton crop, not about literature."[3] Both men also claimed at various times not to be conscious craftsmen. According to Faulkner, he was "not enough of a conscious craftsman to . . have ever been offended by any style or method."[4] And he consistently claimed to write for the relief of his own psyche rather than for any audience (though according to the reader who recommended its acceptance The Sound and the Fury had been rejected thirteen times before she read it for Smith and Haas).[5] Conrad, in playing the eager pupil to Garnett's

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[1]FU, pp. 21-22. Conrad, "Author's Note," An Outcast of the Islands, pp. ix-x; see also Baines, Joseph Conrad, pp. 140-143; and John Dozier Gordan, Joseph Conrad: The Making of a Novelist (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1940). pp. 192-193.

[2]Conrad, A Personal Record, p. 108; and Gordan, Joseph Conrad, p. 366, n. 110. Faulkner, FU, pp. 23, 282; see also Cullen, Old Times, p. 49.

[3]FU, p. 65. Compare John Faulkner's assessment of William as a farmer in my brother Bill, pp. 176-201.

[4]FU, p. 56.

[5]FU, p. 14. Lenore Marshall, "The Power of Words," Saturday Review, XLV (July 28, 1962), p. 16. Miss Marshall's statement is disputed by James B. Meriwether in "Notes on the Textual History of The Sound and the Fury," The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, LVI (September, 1962), p. 292.

stern master, wrote in 1895, "All my work is produced unconsciously (so to speak) and I cannot meddle to any purpose with what is within myself. . . . It isn't in me to improve what has got itself written."[1] A year later he wrote, "But when I want to write--when I do consciously try to write or try to construct then my ignorance has full play and the quality of my miserable and benighted intelligence is disclosed to the scandalized gaze of my literary father."[2] It is no wonder then that years later Garnett wrote of Conrad's methods of writing:

> Conrad worked by intuition after a preliminary meditation, just as his criticism of other men's work was intuitive and not the fruit of considered theory. He was, of course, always interested in literary technique and good craftsmanship, such as Flaubert's and Maupassant's--he said, May 1898, of the latter's Bel-Ami, "it's simply enchanting to see how it's done". But he never theorized about it and many years later on asking me why I had never written on the art of fiction and receiving my reply that the subject was too difficult for my brains, he declared that it was also too difficult for his, and that he had never formulated any rules for his own practice. His method of narrative, in the first person, through the mouth of Marlow, was first employed in Youth; it came natural to him, it saved trouble, and finding it answer both there and in Heart of Darkness he elaborated it further in Lord Jim.[3]

On the other hand, in different moods or when it suited their purposes otherwise, both men could claim to be very conscious, indeed, of what they were doing. Both men claimed--untruthfully--not to read the critics of their works, Faulkner going so far as to say at one time, "I don't know that I ever listened to one, ever read one."[4] On another

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[1]Conrad to Garnett, 24 September 1895, Letters from Conrad, p. 15.

[2]Conrad to Garnett, 14 August 1896, Ibid., p. 46. See also Conrad to Richard Curle, 14 July 1923, LL, II, p. 317.

[3]"Introduction," Letters from Conrad, pp. xxix-xxx.

[4]FU, p. 13. Gordan, Joseph Conrad, p. 270.

occasion he said of his work, "In my own case, I know, I have already decided about the value of my work. There's nothing anybody can tell me I don't know about it, and the critic, nor I either, can improve it any by that time. . . ."[1] That these statements are greatly exaggerated is demonstrated by what he wrote Malcolm Cowley after having read the latter's "Introduction" to The Portable Faulkner: "'By God, I didn't know myself what I had tried to do. . . .'"[2] The point here is, though, that at times both Conrad and Faulkner could emphasize their artistic self-sufficiency.

In the same kinds of moods they could also deny almost palpable influences. In 1918, for example, Conrad denied that he had read any of Flaubert's works before he wrote Almayer's Folly (1895), though, as a matter of fact, one of his own early letters proves that he had re-read Madame Bovary as early as 1892.[3] In the same way Faulkner all but denied the influence of Joyce on him.[4] Furthermore, when it suited

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[1]FU, p. 60.

[2]Quoted in Philip Young, "The Assumptions of Literature," College English, XXIV (February, 1963), p. 353. Faulkner had already written the same kind of statement in 1941 to Warren Beck who had written three good articles on him that year: "On July 6, 1941 Faulkner, having read the articles, graciously wrote me from Oxford to say, 'I agree with them.' He added, interestingly, what other fictionists no doubt could corroborate in principle as to their own work: 'You found implications which I had missed. I wish that I had consciously intended them; I will certainly believe I did it subconsciously and not by accident.'" "Faulkner: A Preface and a Letter," Yale Review, LII (Autumn, 1962), p. 159.

[3]Conrad to Hugh Walpole, 7 June 1918, LL, II, 206. Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska, 6 April 1892, Letters of Joseph Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska, 1890-1920, trans. and ed. John A. Gee and Paul J. Sturm (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1940), p. 44.

[4]Nagano, pp. 44-45, 203.

their purposes, both writers could discuss their methods as though everything they did were entirely conscious. Faulkner generally defended The Wild Palms from some such standpoint.[1] Conrad, likewise, defended his methods in an eloquent letter to his publisher, William Blackwood, dated May 31, 1902. Three years earlier, in happier times, he had confessed to Blackwood apropos of Lord Jim, "I've certainly an idea--apart from the idea and the subject of the story--which guides me in my writing, but I would be hard put to it if requested to give it out in the shape of a fixed formula."[2] In 1902, however, having been refused a loan of £350 by Blackwood, who had told him among other things that he was a loss to the firm, Conrad felt it necessary to justify himself as an author. The story in question is "The End of the Tether."

> I know exactly what I am doing. Mr. George Blackwood's incidental remark in his last letter that the story is not fairly begun yet is in a measure correct but, on a large view, beside the point. For, the writing is as good as I can make it (first duty), and in the light of the final incident, the whole story in all its descriptive detail shall fall into its place--acquire its value and its significance. This is my method based on deliberate conviction. I've never departed from it. I call your own kind self to witness and I beg to instance Karain--Lord Jim (where the method is fully developed)--the last pages of Heart of Darkness where the interview of the man and the girl locks in--as it were--the whole 30000 words of narrative description into one suggestive view of a whole phase of life, and makes of that story something quite on another plane than an anecdote of a man who went mad in the Centre of Africa. . . .
> . . . . . .
> I am not writing "in the air". It is not the haphazard business of a mere temperament. There is in it as much intelligent action guided by a deliberate view of the

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[1] FU, pp. 171-184.

[2] Conrad to Blackwood, 22 August 1899, Letters to William Blackwood and David S. Meldrum, ed. William Blackburn (Durham, N. Car.: Duke University Press, 1958), p. 64.

effect to be attained as in any business enterprise.[1]

The same kind of dichotomy between the conscious and the unconscious seems to have existed in the artistic practice of the two authors. On the one hand neither of the two seems generally to have planned a piece before beginning the writing of it.[2] As a result, both men experienced the anguish of having supposed short stories turn into major novels. The best examples are, for Conrad, Lord Jim, and, for Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury. Conrad's agonizing struggle with Lord Jim is well known. Originally entitled "Jim: A Sketch," it was begun in May, 1898, as a story of twenty to twenty-five thousand words.[3] In late August, 1899, Conrad wrote that forty to forty-two thousand words would be the whole of it, and so Blackwood began seralizing it in October, 1899.[4] Thereafter for month after weary month Conrad wrote at it, always, he promised, about to finish. He finally finished the writing on July 14, 1900.[5] Much the same thing happened with Faulkner in the

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[1]Conrad to Blackwood, 22 August 1899, Letters to Blackwood, pp. 154-155.

[2]FU, pp. 48-49, 194. Jessie Conrad, Joseph Conrad as I Knew Him (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1926), p. 141; Ford Madox Ford, Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance (London: Duckworth & Co., 1924), p. 173. At least four of Conrad's novels were envisioned originally as short stories: An Outcast of the Islands, The Nigger of the Narcissus, Lord Jim, The Rover; see Conrad to Poradowska, 18 August 1894, Letters to Poradowska, pp. 76-77; Conrad to Garnett, 25 October 1896, Saturday, May, 1898, and June, 1899, Letters from Conrad, pp. 52, 130, 151; LL, II, p. 167.

[3]Conrad to David Meldrum, 4 June 1898, Letters to Blackwood, p. 22.

[4]Conrad to Meldrum, 22 August 1899, Ibid., p. 63; LL, I, p. 167.

[5]Meldrum to Blackwood, 14 July 1900, Letters to Blackwood, p. 104.

writing of The Sound and the Fury.[1] Begun, too, as a short story, this novel was the one for which Faulkner felt "a tenderness for the one which caused me the most anguish. . . ."[2] In the introduction to The Modern Library Edition of Sanctuary, he put it, "I had just written my guts into The Sound and the Fury. . . ."[3]

One reason for the anguish of both writers was their method of working. Conrad wrote Graham that he always began with definite images rather than an abstract notion and Blackwood that he always thought out the end of a story before he began it.[4] But he told R. L. Megroz, "'You will discover, if you read my books, how I am writing towards some fixed event or scene I can see, but I do not know how I shall ever get there.'"[5] The truth of the latter part of this statement was demonstrated conclusively by John D. Gordan in his very fine study of the manuscripts and typescripts of Conrad's works through Lord Jim. Gordan's thesis in his fourth chapter is that Conrad

> usually started with a strong impression of a character and situation and only a general conception of the events to be connected with them. The details of the story depended upon the inspiration of the moment. . . . Sometimes he began writing without a definite idea of the most important events.[6]

Having demonstrated the truth of this thesis through a detailed study

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[1] See FU, pp. 31-32.

[2] Nagano, p. 103.

[3] p. vi.

[4] Conrad to Graham, 8 February 1899, LL, I, p. 268; Conrad to Blackwood, 20 February 1900, Letters to Blackwood, p. 87.

[5] Quoted in Gordan, Joseph Conrad, p. 103.

[6] Ibid.

of the manuscripts and typescripts, Gordan then concludes:

> The study of Conrad's habits of composition substantiates his claim that he wrote first and theorized later. . . . The cancelations, new attempts, economies, incoherence, and sudden changes of those blackened pages are evidence of his perplexities. He felt his way towards the plot of his stories and towards the best presentation of his material.[1]

In one may credit Faulkner's discussions of it, his method of working was amazingly similar to Conrad's. He described it to Cynthia Grenier as follows:

> There's always a moment in experience--a thought--an incident--that's there. Then all I do is work up to that moment. I figure what must have happened before to lead people to that particular moment, and I work away from it, finding out how people act after that moment.[2]

He, too, began with images rather than ideas--the image, for example of Caddy's muddy drawers in the tree she had climbed. Then he worked out the details as he wrote. The process is described more concretely in the following classroom exchange.

> Q. In another class you stated that you seldom have the plot of your novels worked out before you begin to write, but that they simply develop from a character or an incident. I was wondering if you remember what character or what incident caused you to write Absalom, Absalom!?
> A. Sutpen.
> Q. You thought of that character and then--
> A. Yes, the idea of a man who wanted sons and got sons who destroyed him. The other characters I had to get out of the attic to tell the story of Sutpen.[3]

Finally, several critics have demonstrated that each man arrived at his characteristic techniques through temperamental necessity. The

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[1]Quoted in Gordan, Joseph Conrad, p. 173.

[2]"The Art of Fiction: An Interview with William Faulkner--September, 1955," Accent, XVI (Summer, 1956), p. 171.

[3]FU, p. 73.

relationship of temperament to method, style, and technique is argued persuasively by Guerard:

> The old rationalist conceptions of the creative process die hard. Among them is the assumption that a beginning novelist is always free to choose his fictional world: free to draw at will upon any part of his personal experience, and free to select (from the examples of the masters) the particular novelistic technique that will best dramatize his material. The misconception is much less common than it was twenty years ago, but it is present whenever a reviewer complains that a novelist perversely refuses to write the novels he "ought to write." No doubt it would be pleasant to dispose thus easily of what reason proposes, and so write at once and without fumbling the novels one ought, logically, to write. But the relationship of temperament to experience and method is entirely too intricate to permit this very often. From the large or small area of each man's experience and revery there are certain materials which seem to be richly usable in fiction, congenial to his temperament and talent; and others which ought to be but are not. And this is as true of technique. The beginning novelist may admire the methods of say Flaubert or Sherwood Anderson, yet be unable to use them; or, however much he admire Kafka or Finnegans Wake, be constrained to write traditional realistic fiction to the end of his days. Only by trial and error (and occasionally aided by criticism) can the novelist discover the particular combination of material and method that will energize his imagination and release his true "voice." For that voice--which, if he is a good writer, is not quite like anyone else's--is the expression of a creative temperament and possibly buried self, manifesting itself in "the shape and ring of sentences." In this sense style is indeed the man, though seldom the man that wife, friends, and biographer observe and know.[1]

Guerard then proceeds to show that Conrad, for some reason, "had no talent at all for the immediate dramatic treatment of a violent scene."[2] He "wrote most impressively when he allowed himself ironic or retrospective distance and exploited his temperamental evasiveness; when he adopted an austere meditative stance."[3] Earlier

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[1] CTN, pp. 60-61.

[2] Ibid., p. 96.

[3] Ibid., p. 87.

Edward Crankshaw had shown that though his ideal was the Flaubertian objective author, Conrad found it impossible to render from the inside characters "alien to himself."[1] He had turned, therefore, out of necessity to the first-person narrator who could comment for him without destroying his ideal of objectivity.[2] Not surprisingly, what these critics have discovered to be true of Conrad is true also of Faulkner. Theoretically Faulkner held, like Conrad, to the ideal of impersonal art, as his interviews reveal.[3] But neither was he able to use the Flaubertian method with success, as his first two novels demonstrate. He, too, needed "a nameless narrator free to meditate on the action."[4] Moreover, he wrote best when he allowed himself either retrospective or technical distance. Thus, in The Sound and the Fury he put between himself and Caddy--whom he always claimed to be the center of the novel--both time and the consciousnesses of the three brothers.[5] No better example than this could be adduced, perhaps, of a point Graham Greene once made, that "technique is more than anything else a means of evading the personally impossible, of disguising a deficiency . . . ."[6]

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[1]Joseph Conrad: some aspects of the art of the novel (London: The Bodley Head, 1936), p. 85.

[2]Ibid., pp. 67-86.

[3]Stein, WF:III, p. 67; Madeleine Chapsal, "A Lion in the Garden," The Reporter, XIII (November 3, 1955), p. 40.

[4]Guerard, CTN, p. 61.

[5]See FU, pp. 2, 6. Jean Paul Sartre in "Time in Faulkner: The Sound and the Fury," WF:III, pp. 227-228, points out that in Sartoris and The Sound and the Fury Faulkner presents everything, even the present, as past. For other discussions of Faulkner's need of distance, see Waggoner, William Faulkner, p. 27; and Irving Howe, William Faulkner: A Critical Study (New York: Random House, 1951), pp. 53-56, 165.

[6]"The Dark Backward: A Footnote," The London Mercury, XXXII (October, 1935), p. 562.

Certainly, one must agree then that the artistic methods of Conrad and Faulkner reveal the heavy role of the unconscious, of temperament, in their development and use. On the other hand, there is a great deal of evidence to prove that both men were conscious artistic craftsmen. Gordan, for instance, concluded after his study of Conrad's early drafts that he was a perfectionist who scrutinized every word.[1] Richard Curle, one of Conrad's close friends and an early collector of Conradiana, in commenting on the extent of the latter's revisions reported that some of his work was "extant in at least six different states--the manuscript, the corrected typescript, the serial form, the American book form, the English book form, and the collected edition book form."[2] Perhaps one of Ford Madox Ford's impressionistic anecdotes suggests most vividly Conrad's commitment to his craft.

> But the occupation of writing to such a nature as Conrad's is terribly engrossing. To be suddenly disturbed is apt to cause a second's real madness. . . . We were once going up to Town in order to take some proofs to a publisher, and half-way between Sandling and Charing Cross Conrad remembered some phrase that he had forgotten to attend to in the proofs. He tried to correct them with a pencil, but the train jolted so badly that writing, sitting on a seat was impossible. Conrad got down on the floor of the carriage and lying on his stomach went on writing. Naturally when the one phrase was corrected twenty other necessities for correction stuck out of the page. We were alone in the carriage. The train passed Paddock Wood, passed Orpington, rushed through the suburbs. The writer said: "We're getting into Town!" Conrad never moved except to write. The house-roofs of London whirled in perspective round us; the shadow of Cannon Street station was over us. Conrad wrote. The final shadow of Charing Cross was over us. It must have been very difficult to see down there. He never moved. . . .

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[1] Joseph Conrad, pp. 110-112.

[2] The Last Twelve Years of Joseph Conrad (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1928), p. 75.

> Mildly shocked at the idea that a porter might open the carriage door and think us peculiar the writer touched Conrad on the shoulder and said: "We're there!" Conrad's face was most extraordinary--suffused and madly vicious. He sprang to his feet and straight at the writer's throat. . . .[1]

Similarly, Faulkner's conscious artistic integrity is revealed even in some of his more flippant statements. The notorious introduction to The Modern Library edition of Sanctuary is one case in point. What is remembered from it is usually the statement, "To me it is a cheap idea, because it was deliberately conceived to make money."[2] What is many times overlooked is the last paragraph:

> I think I had forgotten about Sanctuary, just as you might forget about anything made for an immediate purpose, which did not come off. As I Lay Dying was published and I didn't remember the mss. of Sanctuary until Smith sent me the galleys. Then I saw that it was so terrible that there were but two things to do: tear it up or rewrite it. I thought again, "It might sell; maybe 10,000 of them will buy it." So I tore the galleys down and rewrote the book. It had been already set up once, so I had to pay for the privilege of rewriting it, trying to make out of it something which would not shame The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying too much and I made a fair job. . . .[3]

At the University of Virginia Faulkner explained that in order to get the $270.00 (in 1930) it cost him to pay for his half of the new plates, he took a job passing coal, and in the same conversation he repeated three times the statement, "I rewrote it and did the best I could with it."[4] Furthermore, though his manuscripts and typescripts are not yet generally available for study, the little that has been done with them

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[1] Joseph Conrad, pp. 156-157. Ford's ellipses.

[2] p. v.

[3] Pp. vii-viii.

[4] FU, p. 91. See also Warren Beck, Yale Review, LII (Autumn, 1962), pp. 157-160.

indicates that he was just as constant and meticulous a reviser as Conrad.[1] Indeed, as James B. Meriwether has pointed out, like Conrad, he continued to revise even after his works had been published.[2] Finally, his knowing discussions of his work with the students at Virginia discredit his role of naive genius. His answer in the following exchange, though unliterary, reveals a profound understanding of the techniques he used in his works.

> Q. This is a question about Light in August. Could you tell me your purpose in placing the chapter about Hightower's early life in the end of the novel, that is, rather than when Hightower first appears?
> A. It may be this. Unless a book follows a simple direct line such as a story of adventure, it becomes a series of pieces. It's a good deal like dressing a showcase window. It takes a certain amount of judgment and taste to arrange the different pieces in the most effective place in juxtaposition to one another. That was the reason. It seemed to me that was the most effective place to put that, to underline the tragedy of Christmas's story by the tragedy of his antithesis . . . .[3]

In other words, though temperament assuredly played a heavy role in the determination of the materials, methods, styles, and techniques of Conrad and Faulkner, their conscious craftsmanship shaped those temperamentally congenial elements into artistic form. The point is given its proper perspective in Crankshaw's discussion of Conrad's calculation

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[1] See Linton Massey, "Notes on the Unrevised Galley of Faulkner's Sanctuary," Studies in Bibliography, VIII (1956), pp. 195-208; and George Palmer Garrett, "Some Revisions in As I Lay Dying," Modern Language Notes, LXXIII (June 1958), pp. 414-417.

[2] "The Literary Career of William Faulkner: Catalogue of an Exhibition in the Princeton University Library," Princeton University Library Chronicle, XXI (Spring, 1960), p. 117. Evidently some author's revisions are incorporated into the 1961 Vintage paperback edition of The Town: see Cleanth Brooks, William Faulkner, p. 412.

[3] FU, p. 45.

of his effect:

> I do not suggest that he sat down in what is known as cold blood to calculate heartlessly and with meticulous precision the exact trick he would employ at this or that juncture to sweep the reader off his feet in the required direction, like a woodcutter felling a tree. On the contrary, he seems to have worked in a state of semi-blindness, calculating as the need arose, crossing his bridges as they came, living, so to speak, from hand to mouth. Calculation none the less . . . .[1]

This element of calculation was the area, ultimately, in which Faulkner learned most from his master Conrad. That is, while Faulkner's temperament helped to determine his methods, it also helped to determine the literary influences on him. Undoubtedly, therefore, though he used such techniques as the narrator and the time-shift because they were temperamentally congenial, he used them also because he had found them in Conrad who was also temperamentally congenial--so much so that his vision of life and his approach to writing practically duplicate Conrad's.

The temperamental likenesses between the two men help to explain, then, the <u>why</u> of Conrad's influence on Faulkner. The techniques, the element of calculation, are what he learned. It is this <u>what</u>, the impressionistic techniques of Conrad and Faulkner, which will be the concern of the chapters to follow.

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[1]<u>Joseph Conrad</u>, p. 10.

CHAPTER II

There is no satisfactory single definition of the term *impressionism* as it is used today in literary criticism. The term itself comes, of course, from the history of painting. It was first used of the group of French painters--among them Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Paul Cézanne, Edgar Degas, Berthe Morisot, Auguste Renoir, and Alfred Sisley--which in 1874 defied the official Salon in Paris and organized its own independent exhibition. Dubbed *impressionists* in derision, the group accepted the term as a kind of rallying cry in its fight against the entrenched academicians of the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts*. This fight lasted the rest of the century. When upon his death in 1893 Gustave Caillebotte left his collection of impressionistic paintings to the Nation, Léon Gérôme, a highly successful academician, declared: "Of this bequest I know only the title. . . . Does it not contain paintings by M. Monet, by M. Pissarro and others? For the government to accept such filth, there would have to be great moral slackening. . . ."[1] In the face of the outcry the government did not dare accept all the paintings of the bequest, refusing eight by Monet, eleven by Pissarro, two by Renoir, three by Sisley, and three by Cézanne.[2] Not until 1900 was a

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[1]Quoted in John Rewald, *The History of Impressionism* (2d ed. rev. and enl.; New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1961), p. 570.

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 572.

member of the group, Renoir, nominated to the Legion of Honor.

The impressionists, primarily painters of landscapes, had outraged the official artists and critics of the day by taking their canvases outdoors and painting what they saw there rather than painting in the studio from such Old Masters as Claude Lorrain. Once outdoors, they had seen that the eye does not pick up an object in finely-drawn detail but as a shade of color caused by the reflection of light off it. They saw also that, contrary to the practice of some of the Old Masters, there is color in shadows. They reduced their palettes, therefore, to the colors of the spectrum, leaving out the darker earth colors and thus brightening their paintings. Interested as they were in color as the reflection of light, they saw, further, that the colors of scenes varied from day to day and hour to hour, depending on the direction and intensity of light. Intent on capturing not only the color but also the vibrations of the light--intent, that is, on painting not the "objective reality" of a landscape but the spontaneous effect of it on the viewer--they evolved a technique of short, fragmentary strokes of pure color intended to be blended into the whole by the eye of the viewer rather than by the artist's mixtures of paints on his palette. Their characteristic paintings are, then, bright, sun-drenched renderings of the whole atmospheric effect of a landscape at a particular moment--including the shimmering of the light--in which the drawing of line and detail is not important.[1]

Involved with the impressionistic painters in their struggle against academic dogma were some of the best writers of the day, includ-

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[1]The History of Impressionism, pp. 150, 209-210, 284-297, 338, 386-387, 441.

ing the Goncourt brothers, Emile Zola, Stéphane Mallarmé, and Guy de Maupassant. Zola, a schoolmate of Cézanne, was especially active in their behalf as a journalist during the early years of the fight (1866-1880), though after he became a successful novelist he became patronizing and condescending towards his former comrades.[1] Mallarmé, a particular friend of Edouard Manet, became through Manet and his sister-in-law Berthe Morisot a good friend of Monet, Renoir, and Degas. Maupassant, a younger man, was often in the company of Claude Monet at Étretat in 1885, watching him paint the same subject on different canvases at different times of the day.[2] Closely associated with the notorious painters as these writers were, it was only natural that, when some of them tried to approximate in literature the attempts of the painters, they too were labelled impressionists. As early as 1876, for example, the year in which Stéphane Mallarmé published "L'Après-midi d'un faune," Victor Hugo called him "'my dear impressionist poet.'"[3]

To appreciate the aptness of Hugo's epithet, one need only remember some of Mallarmé's statements about his poetic intentions. "J'invente une langue qui doit nécessairement jaillir d'une poétique très nouvelle, que je pourrais définir en ces deux mots: Peindre, non la chose, mais l'effet qu'elle produit."[4] The words in italics, Mallarmé's italics, might very well stand as a simplified manifesto of the impres-

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[1]The History of Impressionism, pp. 142-144, 444-445, 534.

[2]Ibid., p. 516.

[3]Quoted in Ibid., p. 374.

[4]Mallarme to Henri Cazalis, October, 1864, quoted in Stephane Mallarmé, Oeuvres Complètes, ed. Henri Mondor and G. Jean-Aubry (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), p. 1440.

sionist painters. A more famous statement is little more than a variation of this first one: "Nommer un objet, c'est supprimer les trois quarts de la jouissance du poème, qui est faite de deviner peu à peu: le suggérer, voilà le reve."[1] Mallarmé was, of course, the leader of and spokesman for the Symbolist movement in poetry of the 1880's and 1890's whose doctrine has been described as follows by Edmund Wilson:

> Every feeling or sensation we have, every moment of consciousness, is different from every other; and it is, in consequence, impossible to render our sensations as we actually experience them through the conventional and universal language of ordinary literature. Each poet has his unique personality; each of his moments has its special tone, its special combination of elements. And it is the poet's task to find, to invent, the special language which will alone be capable of expressing his personality and feelings. Such a language must make use of symbols: what is so special, so fleeting and so vague cannot be conveyed by direct statement or description, but only by a succession of words, of images, which will serve to suggest it to the reader. . . . And Symbolism may be defined as an attempt by carefully studied means--a complicated association of ideas represented by a medley of metaphors--to communicate unique personal feelings.[2]

Wilson went on in a later chapter to show the relationship between Symbolism and Joyce's Ulysses.[3] And, building on Wilson's work, Leon Edel demonstrated that the Symbolist attempt to arrest the moment of time was a primary concern of "the modern psychological novel," by which phrase he meant the stream-of-consciousness novel of Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, and Virginia Woolf.[4]

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[1]Jules Huret, "Sur L'Evolution Litteraire," Oeuvres Complètes, p. 869.

[2]Axel's Castle (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), pp. 21-22. See also C. M. Bowra, The Heritage of Symbolism (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd. 1947), pp. 8-10.

[3]Axel's Castle, pp. 202-208.

[4]The Psychological Novel, 1900-1950, pp. 15-17, 116-117, 146.

By this route, then, from French painter to French poet to English stream-of-consciousness novel, the term impressionism, meaning the attempt to render through words the effect on the individual (the felt atmosphere and sensations) of the experience of the moment, could have found its way into the vocabulary of twentieth-century English and and American critics. At the same time Ford Madox Ford, with a slightly different application, also made it available to critics. Ford, whose grandfather was the Pre-Raphaelite painter Ford Madox Brown, used the term from 1913 on in his discussions of the fictional art of Henry James, Stephen Crane, Joseph Conrad, and himself. By impressionism he meant also the rendering of the moment (or scene), though his emphasis fell always on the rendering.[1] By rendering he meant the immediate, dramatic presentation of a scene through vivid details as opposed to the authorial narration of events: "If I say Monsieur Chose was a vulgar, coarse, obese and presumptuous fellow--that is telling. But if I say, 'He was a gentleman with red whiskers that always preceded him through a doorway,' there you have him rendered--as Maupassant rendered him."[2]

For his use of impressionism in connection with Conrad, Ford had good warrant in the "Preface" to The Nigger of the Narcissus. There Conrad, under the temporary influence of Walter Pater, had written:

> My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel--it is, before all, to make you see. That--and no more, and it is

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[1] Henry James: A Critical Study (London: Martin Secker, 1913), pp. 152-153. See also John A. Meixner, Ford Madox Ford's Novels: A Critical Study (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962), p. 19.

[2] The English Novel, p. 129. See also Joseph Conrad, pp. 179-186; and "Techniques," Southern Review, I (July, 1935), p. 31.

> everything. . . .
> . . . . . .
> To arrest, for the space of a breath, the hands busy about the work of the earth, and compel men entranced by the sight of distant goals to glance for a moment at the surrounding vision of form and colour, of sunshine and shadows; to make them pause for a look, for a sigh, for a smile--such is the aim, difficult and evanescent, and reserved only for a very few to achieve.[1]

From this point of view the artist becomes, in the words of Ford, "a sensitised instrument, recording to the measure of the light vouchsafed him what is--what may be--the Truth."[2]

Thus, the term impressionism came into the modern critical vocabulary from two different directions. But, unfortunately for criticism, the practice of literary impressionism (as the rendering of the moment or scene) was not confined to writers of the Joycean and Jamesian groups. H. J. Muller inadvertently illustrated the vagueness of the term in this sense by labelling as impressionists, in addition to those named above, such modern writers as Sherwood Anderson, Thomas Wolfe, D. H. Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield, and Marcel Proust: "In general their aim is an immediate pure re-creation as opposed to a formal report or an orderly analysis or any generalization of experience."[3] Obviously, a term which can be applied as easily to D. H. Lawrence as to James Joyce is a very

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[1] pp. xiv, xvi. See also Marius The Epicurean (New York: The Modern Library, 1921), p. 136; and Baines, Joseph Conrad, p. 188. Compare Conrad's "It must strenuously aspire to . . . the magic suggestiveness of music--which is the art of arts (p. xiii)," with Pater's "All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music," in "The School of Giorgione," The Renaissance (London: Macmillan and Co., 1890), p. 140.

[2] Thus to Revisit (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1921), p. 49.

[3] "Impressionism in Fiction: Prism vs. Mirror," American Scholar, VII (Summer, 1938), p. 357.

general one and is likely--as, indeed, has been the case--to lead more often than not to confusion.

Furthermore, perhaps because most of the above-named writers were novelists or because Ford used impressionism so often without definition or qualification to refer to James, Crane, and Conrad, another meaning for the term grew up side by side with the first one. As applied in the criticism of the modern novel it seems frequently to be synonymous with some such general descriptive phrase as the psychological novel or the subjective novel. It seems often to be assumed, that is, that the adjective impressionistic describes any novel in which experience--the action either physical or mental--is presented to the reader through the eyes or mind of a character or characters. W. Y. Tindall, for instance, characterizes the impressionism of Henry James as "a method whereby an observer's mind is the stage upon which all action occurs."[1] And in an essay on The Good Soldier, Elliot B. Gose, Jr., writes: "Dowell, like Ford, is an impressionist. This means that he is usually trying to give the reader, not a coldly objective description of what happened, but the action as it appeared to one of the other characters."[2]

There is, of course, no hard-and-fast distinction between the assumption that literary impressionism is the rendering of the impressions of the moment and the assumption that it is roughly synonymous with the psychological novel. The two meanings of the term are not

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[1] Forces in Modern British Literature, 1885-1956 (Rev. ed.; New York: Vintage Books, 1957), p. 191.

[2] "The Strange Irregular Rhythm: An Analysis of The Good Soldier," PMLA, LXXII (June, 1957), p. 506.

mutually exclusive (though some distinction between them would probably help clarify critical discussions). Frequently, they are used together in discussions of literary impressionism, sometimes almost interchangeably. Thus, Charles C. Walcutt writes in American Literary Naturalism, A Divided Stream:

> To begin with, impressionism attempts to render the quality of experience more closely, more colorfully, more delicately than it has been rendered. To this end it presents the mind of a character receiving impressions rather than judging, classifying, or speculating; and because it attempts to catch the experience as it is received, that experience will not have a reasonable order but a chronological or associational one.[1]

Thus, Cleanth Brooks and William K. Wimsatt, Jr., write in a discussion of James, Conrad, and Ford: "The novelist was not to 'tell the reader' about what happened but to render it as action. Moreover, the action was not to be rendered with photographic fidelity but as it would make its impression upon a human observer. Hence Ford's name for the new art, Impressionism."[2]

The result of all this pressure on the single term impressionism has inevitably been confusion. As we have seen, O'Connor gathered James, Crane, Conrad, Ford, and Joyce into a single impressionistic tradition which Faulkner was supposed to have followed in writing The Sound and the Fury.[3] Joseph Warren Beach, on the other hand, wrote in The Twentieth Century Novel that "the term 'impressionist' is even more

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[1](Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), p. 232.

[2]Literary Criticism: A Short History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), p. 684.

[3]The Tangled Fire, pp. 37, 41-42, 45.

properly applicable to Lawrence than to Conrad."[1] Henry James he called a pre-impressionist.[2] More importantly, however, he remarked in an early chapter of the same book:

> This is a great outstanding feature of technique since the time of Henry James, that the story shall tell itself, being conducted through the impressions of the characters. . . .
> . . . . . .
> And this is the constant occupation of our cleverer writers of fiction: to render the very feel and texture of experience, not merely erotic, but of all experience that comes within the compass of the author's subject.[3]

In view of these statements and in view of the spreading of the impressionistic canopy over novelists as diverse as Conrad, Joyce, and Lawrence, one must question, not only whether there is any distinction between the "impressionistic" novel and the modern novel in general, but also whether there is, indeed, any validity at all to the use of the term in literary criticism today. It seems, like romanticism and realism, to be so general as to be practically useless for any meaningful descriptive or classificatory function.

Nevertheless, in a discussion of the works of James, Conrad, or Crane especially, it must of necessity be used if only because Ford Madox Ford wrote so prolifically and insistently of these novelists as impressionists that nearly every critic since has taken up the term in some way or other. Recognizing the necessity of using the term as well as its vagueness, some critics concerned with these men have tried in

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[1](New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1932), p. 383.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., pp. 15-16, 24.

a variety of ways to give it more force in its application to them. One obvious approach has been to investigate the possibility of some fundamental link between impressionistic painting and modern English and American literature. This approach has recommended itself particularly with regard to Stephen Crane because of his striking use of images of color.

In his Stephen Crane: An Omnibus, for instance, Robert W. Stallman contended, in an argument curiously compounded of insight and misinformation, that Crane learned to write by studying impressionistic paintings. Mr. Stallman begins with an acute perception:

> Crane's style is prose pointillism. It is composed of disconnected images, which coalesce like the blobs of color in French impressionist paintings, every word-group having a cross-reference relationship, every seemingly disconnected detail having inter-relationship to the configurated whole. The intensity of a Crane work is owing to this patterned coalescence of disconnected things, everything at once fluid and precise.[1]

This is a useful comment which might be extended to the work of Conrad for one example. May one not say that the latter's breaking up of experience into fragmented scenes juxtaposed out of chronological order is parallel to the impressionist painter's fragmentation of his vision into dots and blobs of color, both the novel and the painting depending upon the effect of the whole for their full force? One remembers Conrad's remark about "The End of the Tether" in a letter to David S. Meldrum: "Upon the episodes, after all, the effect of reality depends and as to me I depend upon the reader looking back upon my story as whole."[2]

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[1] (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), p. 185.

[2] [Autumn 1902?], Letters to Blackwood, p. 170.

And it does not matter, at this point, that what we have said of the work of Crane and Conrad might almost equally well be said of that of James Joyce.

Immediately after the comment quoted above, however, Stallman's argument, so well begun, fades into meaninglessness because of his obvious misunderstanding of impressionistic painting. Almost every example he advances from Crane's work invalidates his further argument that "a striking analogy is established between Crane's use of colors and the method employed by the impressionists and the neo-impressionists or divisionists, and it is as if he had known about their theory of contrasts and had composed his own prose paintings by the same principle."[1] The theory to which Stallman refers here is that worked out by Georges Seurat and Paul Signac in an attempt to give scientific precision to the perceptions of the impressionists about the division of light into color. Very generally they tried to establish laws by which the painter would know how to juxtapose his colors so that when the observer's eye mixed them optically, he would perceive the desired affect, without the artist's having either to mix his colors on his palette or to draw (to line out in detail) the objects in his painting. Their basic law was that of simultaneous contrast: two juxtaposed colors mutually influence one another, the light one growing lighter, the dark one darker. And one of their fundamental tools was a color wheel which enabled them to determine easily what the complementary of a given color was. But it is important for us to remember that Seurat and Signac, like their impressionist predecessors, were working with contrasts of

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[1] Stephen Crane: An Omnibus, p. 185.

the complementary colors of the spectrum, not with the contrast between light and dark masses of color as in a chiaroscuro painting, and that they were still interested in effects of light.[1]

Stallman's misunderstanding of the nature of the neo-impressionist contrast is illustrated by some of his remarks about it:

> Crane's perspectives, almost without exception, are fashioned by contrasts--black masses juxtaposed against brightness, colored light set against gray mists. . . . Further examples of color-contrast, particularly white versus black occur throughout The Open Boat. . . .
>
> Crane paints with words "exactly" as the French impressionists paint with pigments: both use pure colors and contrasts of colors. Black clouds or dark smoke or masses of mist and vapor are surrounded by a luminous zone; or, conversely, specks of prismatic color are enclosed by a zone of shade. . . . Cleared atmospheres, unimpeded vision of perspective, are rarely delineated. . . .[2]

The contrast of light and dark masses does not make Crane an impressionist painter, nor does his use of color imagery necessarily do so, any more than Arthur Rimbaud's use of color imagery in "Le Bateau ivre" (1870) makes him an impressionist. On this point Corwin K. Linson, one of Crane's painter friends, was emphatic:

> To the oft repeated query as to Crane's use of color: "Did he not get it from his studio associates?" My answer is "No." I was the only painter among his early intimates; one or two others he met casually with me. The rest were illustrators or journalists. He had written Sullivan County Sketches and Maggie before I met him; then came The Red Badge and The Third Violet, and there is as much of color in the first as in the last. The painter's color sense is born--so was his. The impressionism of that day was to him an affectation, and all affectation was dishonesty, uncreative, and thus dead from the start.[3]

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[1]John Rewald, Post-Impressionism: From Van Gogh to Gauguin (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1956), pp. 79-99.

[2]Stephen Crane: An Omnibus, p. 186.

[3]My Stephen Crane, ed. Edwin H. Cady (Syracuse, N. Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1958), pp. 46-47.

A more fundamental objection to the attempt to trace parallels between a painter's use of luminous pigments and a writer's description of colors is that it is a confusion of a space art with a time art. A truer parallel, that is, would seem to be one consistent with the limitations of the two arts, specifically that already mentioned between the fragmentation of color in painting and the fragmentation of chronology in writing. The one forces the viewer to mix the colors optically; the other forces the reader to arrange the story in chronological order for himself.

As we have seen, however, this parallel between painting and writing applies as well to the stream-of-consciousness writers as to Crane, Conrad, and Ford. Consequently, it does not lead to any means of discriminating among the "impressionisms" of that great number of modern novelists who have borne the label. A more fruitful approach, therefore, to the problem of giving force to the term impressionism would seem to be to approach it more inductively. By describing accurately what the individual writers did and then by drawing comparisons among them, one may arrive eventually at a more meaningful definition of impressionism as it applies to them.

The stress here should fall on the word accurately. A great deal has been done in this regard with the fashionable stream-of-consciousness writers. In such books as Robert Humphrey's Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel and Leon Edel's The Psychological Novel one can find useful distinctions between the subject matter and the techniques of stream-of-consciousness fiction and between stream-of-consciousness fiction and the rest of modern psychological fiction. Humphrey writes,

for instance: "We may define stream-of-consciousness fiction as a type of fiction in which the basic emphasis is placed on exploration of the prespeech levels of consciousness for the purpose, primarily, of revealing the psychic being of the characters."[1] But one cannot yet take advantage of his work on stream-of-consciousness fiction in order to make careful distinctions between it and the impressionism of Crane, Conrad, Ford--and Faulkner--because accurate descriptions of what these latter writers did are only now becoming available. Only since World War II, generally speaking, has serious interest been shown in the work of these men (of the three books on Ford's novels, one was published in 1961, two in 1962), and so critics are still in the stage of describing their work accurately and making judicious comparisons among them. The further intention of this paper will be, then, not to define impressionism, as such but to describe the impressionism of Joseph Conrad and William Faulkner.

Neither Conrad nor Faulkner was an impressionist in the sense of rendering the sensations of the moment for the sake of the sensations or the moment.[2] Both did, of course, render the impressions of the moment. Both were interested in making us hear, feel, and see the experience immediately as it struck Marlow or Quentin Compson. That is the purpose of Marlow's "the rapids were near, and an uninterrupted, uniform, head-

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[1] P. 4.

[2] For a comparison of Ford with Conrad on this point see Richard Cassell, Ford Madox Ford: A Study of his Novels (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), p. 128.

long, rushing noise filled the mournful stillness of the grove. . . ." as it is the purpose of Faulkner's "long still hot weary dead September afternoon."[1] But Faulkner would have agreed, I think, with Conrad in saying that

> to snatch in a moment of courage, from the remorseless rush of time, a passing phase of life, is only the beginning of the task. The task approached in tenderness and faith is to hold up unquestioningly, without choice and without fear, the rescued fragment before all eyes in the light of a sincere mood. It is to show its vibration, its colour, its form; and through its movement, its form, and its colour, reveal the substance of its truth--disclose its inspiring secret: the stress and passion within the core of each convincing moment. In a single-minded attempt of that kind, if one be deserving and fortunate, one may perchance attain to such clearness of sincerity that at last the presented vision of regret or pity, of terror or mirth, shall awaken in the hearts of the beholders that feeling of unavoidable solidarity; of the solidarity in mysterious origin, in toil, in joy, in hope, in uncertain fate, which binds men to each other and all mankind to the visible world.[2]

Moreover, the description of Conrad and Faulkner as impressionists in the sense of writing psychological novels is inaccurate in the unqualified form it takes in general circulation. A case in point is W. Y. Tindall's discussion of the impressionism of James and Conrad. What he writes of James seems to be a relatively just assessment of what James does in such novels as The Spoils of Poynton and The Ambassadors.

> His impressionism, which must not be confused with impressionism in painting, is a method whereby an observer's mind is the stage upon which all action occurs. But the impressions of the observer are recorded in the third person by the author, peering through a window in the observer's head. Since the author tells what is occurring on this subjective stage, he can limit the narrative by selecting what he thinks relevant or suitable and maintain an artist's control over

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[1] "Heart of Darkness," Youth, p. 66; Absalom, Absalom!, p. 7.

[2] "Preface," The Nigger, p. xiv.

> the flow of experience. The most objective of subjective novelists, an extrovert compared with Virginia Woolf, James generally limited the flow to levels of polite intercourse and to things external to the observer, who looked out as James looked in.[1]

When he goes on, however, to characterize Conrad as "James's earliest disciple. . .a nautical variety of his master," to describe Marlow as Conrad's observer "whose consciousness is the scene of several important stories and novels," and to state that Lord Jim "is less the story of Jim and his search for honor than the passage of this story through minds of which Marlow's is the point of interest," he gives us pause.[2]

The description of Conrad as a disciple of James would, perhaps, be no great cause for concern did it not lead so often--as it does here--to the critic's viewing Conrad's work through a Jamesian veil which rather distorts Conrad's artistic practices. In viewing Conrad's works in this way, of course, Tindall is only mkaing the same assumption as Ford Madox Ford frequently made. Ford wrote of James and Conrad once, for example, that they were "united by a common technique and their literary aims were to all intents exactly the same."[3] Ford himself was always greatly interested in the techniques of James, more so probably than Conrad.[4] He undertook the assignment, for instance, of writing a critical study of James in 1913, but more importantly his own fiction was always, surprisingly, as Jamesian as Conradian, if not more so.

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[1]Forces in Modern British Literature, pp. 191-192.

[2]Ibid., 193.

[3]The English Novel, p. 144.

[4]See Cassell, Ford Madox Ford, p. 68; and Paul L. Wiley, Novelist of Three Worlds: Ford Madox Ford (Syracuse, N. Y.: University of Syracuse Press, 1962), p. 55.

Both An English Girl (1907) and A Call (1910) were patterned after the themes and techniques of James (Ford called them pastiches), while The Panel (1912) hilariously spoofs James's unpopularity among the unintelligentsia.[1] Furthermore, Jamesian practice stood behind the Parade's End tetralogy. In It Was The Nightingale, Ford recorded that before beginning his work on Some Do Not he considered how James "would have treated that intractable subject. I imagined the tortuous mind getting to work, the New England scrupulousness, the terrific involutions . . . and for the rest of the day and for several days more I lost myself in working out an imaginary war-novel on the lines of 'What Maisie Knew.'"[2]

Because of his continuing interest in Jamesian technique, therefore, Ford tended, by the time he began writing his several books of reminiscences, to see Conrad through a Jamesian veil. Thus he established a precedent which was followed by Beach who, long before he wrote The Twentieth Century Novel, had written The Method of Henry James. Beach, indeed, sets Jamesian technique at the center of the later work as the irradiating light of the novelistic universe. Tindall's characterization of Conrad as a Jamesian disciple is important, then, not as a critical aberration, but as being representative of a more-or-less traditional view which makes Conrad's novels diluted James.

This reading of Conrad through the Jamesian veil obscures qualities in Conrad's works which need to be seen clearly. For Lord Jim is

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[1] See Meixner, Ford's Novels, pp. 11, 22, 105, 145, 149; and R. W. Lid, "Ford Madox Ford and His Community of Letters," Prairie Schooner, XXXV (Summer, 1961), p. 136.

[2] (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1933), p. 162. Unless otherwise noted, ellipses in quotations from Ford are his.

not merely a Conradian version of The Ambassadors. There are important differences. Lambert Strether is the center of The Ambassadors, not only in that he is James's Central Intelligence, the point of view from which the action is observed, but also in that the depiction of his consciousness is more important, finally than that of the situation he is ostensibly observing.[1] This is not true of Lord Jim. One cannot say that Marlow is the center of, is essential to, Lord Jim in the same way as Strether is essential to The Ambassadors. Because Marlow is not physically present at a great many of the scenes he presents, because he seems to be "one of us," an observer on the periphery of the action, we have, I think, a strong sense of Jim's reality, of his having an independent existence outside Marlow's orbit, that we never have about Chad Newsome. Marlow, that is, is still in Lord Jim a means to an end rather than an end in himself.

Moreover, all of the apparent digressions in Lord Jim, those carefully juxtaposed episodes--the stories of Captain Brierly, of little Bob Stanton, of the French Lieutenant, and of Stein, for example--are revelatory, first of all, of the central incident, Jim's jump from the Patna. Indeed, the very existence in the novel of such episodes as those of the French Lieutenant and Stein, the spotlighting of Jim from different points of view, shows that Conrad's main interest was the moral ambiguity involved in Jim's jump, not the observing mind of Marlow. All of this is to say that there is in Conrad's novel a strong element of old-fashioned story, of plot, which exists only implicitly in James's.

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[1]For a development of this same argument see Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 42-43.

Without Marlow, certainly, Lord Jim would be a very different novel, but one can conceive of learning of Lord Jim through some other medium whereas it is impossible to conceive of The Ambassadors without Strether.

The reading of Faulkner through the Joycean veil distorts in the same way important qualities in Faulkner's work. The Faulknerian parallel to Lord Jim is Absalom, Absalom! and it is even clearer in this novel than in Conrad's that the center, the essential element, is the story of Thomas Sutpen rather than the mind of Quentin Compson. But Faulkner's interest in story, in old-fashioned plot, is present also in his stream-of-consciousness novels where it would seem to be least likely. According to Humphrey, his use of plot in The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying sets them apart from all other stream-of-consciousness fiction:

> It is a unity of action which he employs. In other words, he uses a substantial plot, the thing that is lacking in all other stream-of-consciousness literature. . . . Because there is a coherent plot and because the characters act in an external drama which has a beginning, complications, climax, and ending, the absolute need for further unifying devices does not exist.[1]

And Perrin Lowrey has reminded us of how very traditional the plot of The Sound and the Fury is in some ways: the story of thirty years in the life of a family presented basically in chronological order--the events up to 1906 primarily in Benjy's section, those of 1906-1910 in Quentin's, those of 1910-1928 in Jason's, those of the last day of the story, Easter Sunday, April 3, 1928, in the fourth section.[2]

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[1] Stream of Consciousness, p. 105. See also Peter Swiggart, The Art of Faulkner's Novels (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), pp. 61-70; pp. 69-70, "Both novels are crowded with scenes in which character is revealed solely through dramatic action objectively narrated."

[2] "Concepts of Time in The Sound and the Fury," English Institute Essays, (1952), p. 63.

It is important for us to observe, also, that Faulkner never represented the stream-of-consciousness of one or two important characters alone. In The Sound and the Fury he complemented the three internal monologues with an omniscient, third-person account of the events of the last day of the story. In As I Lay Dying he presented internal monologues of fifteen different characters. In Absalom, Absalom! there are four different narrators. Implicit in this technique of story-telling is the same assumption as in Lord Jim, that there is a reality external to the minds of the characters and that by the juxtaposition of the points of view of different characters that reality can be made known to the reader. Faulkner said one time, for example, of Absalom, Absalom!:

> I think that no one individual can look at truth. It blinds you. You look at it and you see one phase of it. Someone else looks at it and sees a slightly awry phase of it. But taken all together, the truth is in what they saw though nobody saw the truth intact. . . . It was, as you say, thirteen ways of looking at a blackbird. But the truth, I would like to think, comes out, that when the reader has read all these thirteen different ways of looking at the blackbird, the reader has his own fourteenth image of that blackbird which I would like to think is the truth.[1]

If one were, therefore, to draw a line representing a fictional spectrum based on plot, moving from Sir Walter Scott on the left to Finnegans Wake on the right, he would have to place the fiction of Conrad and Faulkner farther to the left than the later fiction of James and still farther to the left than Joycean stream-of-consciousness fiction. The logical, not chronological, progression towards the subjective novel would seem to be, then, from Conrad to Faulkner to James to Joyce.

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[1] FU, pp. 273-274.

This argument can be supported by reference once more to literary relationships among these writers. As Ford repeated over and over, Conrad's masters in the art of the novel were Flaubert and Maupassant.[1] And though in his more expansive moments, as in his breezy The English Novel: From the Earliest Days to the Death of Joseph Conrad (for the Lippincott One Hour Series), Ford was quite capable of making James and Conrad intimate bedfellows, he reined himself in at least twice: once in Joseph Conrad to tell us that Conrad had reservations about the later novels of Henry James, once in "Techniques" to deny that James ever directly influenced Conrad.[2] Now James's later fiction adumbrated the stream-of-consciousness novel.[3] But Faulkner, usually discussed as a stream-of-consciousness writer, read James "without much pleasure. Henry James to me was a prig, except The Turn of the Screw, which was very fine tour de force. . . ."[4] He also denied the influence of Joyce "other than in the tricks of the trade."[5] On the other hand, as we have seen, he repeatedly expressed his admiration for Conrad. These facts, in addition to his interest, like Conrad's, in story, should suggest to us once more that Faulkner belongs rather to the Conradian tradition than the Joycean and that this tradition stands a little to one side of the Jamesian-Joycean impressionism generally represented as the main line of development in the twentieth century novel.

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[1] Joseph Conrad, pp. 36, 94, 195; Southern Review, I (July, 1935), p. 25.

[2] Conrad, p. 43; Southern Review, I (July, 1935), pp. 24-25.

[3] See Edel, The Psychological Novel, pp. 46-57.

[4] FU, p. 16.

[5] Nagano, p. 44.

The question remains, "What is Conradian impressionism?" Ford Madox Ford always discussed it in terms of the literary principles and techniques which he and Conrad worked out in their almost endless conversations and collaborations--their work on Romance lasted five years--at the turn of the century (1898-1909). His fundamental assumption in all these discussions was that a novel should reproduce as nearly as possible the effect of life.[1] From this assumption of the necessity of a kind of psychological verisimilitude were derived the two principles which he emphasized most heavily. The first was the aloofness of the novelist. For Ford it was "an obvious and unchanging fact that if an author intrudes his comments into the middle of his story he will endanger the illusion conveyed by that story. . . ."[2] The author was supposed to maintain the Creator's aloofness and objectivity, taking the part of none of his characters, falsifying neither the issues nor the action in any way.[3] Furthermore, "He must not comment; he must not narrate; he must present his impressions of his imaginary affairs as if he had been present at them."[4]

Here Ford has run together his first principle and his second: not only must the author remain aloof, but he must also render his material rather than report it. "We saw," he wrote in Joseph Conrad, "that Life did not narrate, but made impressions on our brains. We in

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[1]See Henry James, pp. 70-80.

[2]The English Novel, p. 148.

[3]Ibid., p. 129.

[4]The March of Literature (New York: The Dial Press, 1938), pp. 840-841. See also Thus to Revisit, p. 138.

turn, if we wished to produce on you an effect of life, must not narrate but render . . . impressions."[1] An integral part of the life-like rendering of experience was the technique which came to be known as the time-shift. In explaining that his Joseph Conrad followed exactly the formula he and Conrad had evolved, Ford wrote:

> For it became very early evident to us that what was the matter with the Novel, and the British novel in particular, was that it went straight forward, whereas in your gradual making acquaintanceship with your fellows you never do go straight forward. You meet an English gentleman at your golf club. He is beefy, full of health, the moral of the boy from an English Public School of the finest type. You discover, gradually, that he is hopelessly neurasthenic, dishonest in matters of small change, but unexpectedly self-sacrificing, a dreadful liar but a most painfully careful student of lepidoptera and, finally, from the public prints, a bigamist who was once, under another name, hammered on the Stock Exchange. . . . Still, there he is, the beefy, full-fed fellow, moral of an English Public School product. To get such a man in fiction you could not begin at his beginning and work his life chronologically to the end. You must first get him in with a strong impression, and then work backwards and forwards over his past. . . . That theory at least we gradually evolved.[2]

A second assumption which operated together with the assumption of psychological verisimilitude and its derivative principles was the assumption of selection. "We agreed," Ford wrote again in Joseph Conrad, "that the whole of Art consists in selection."[3] Ten years earlier, in Henry James, he had written that "the real essence of art is a sense of appropriateness" which is achieved only when no "extraneous or unsuitable matter" appears in the finished work.[4] Later in the same book he

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[1]P. 182.

[2]Ibid., pp. 129-130.

[3]P. 182.

[4]P. 19.

wrote: "The supreme discovery in the literary art of our day is that of Impressionism, . . . the supreme function of Impressionism is selection, and . . . Mr. James has carried the power of selection so far that he can create an impression with nothing at all. . . ."[1] Implicit here is a distinction between Conradian impressionism and the naturalism of Zola or, perhaps, the naturalistic realism of Arnold Bennett. That is, the novelistic reproduction of the effect of life was to be achieved, not through research, documentation, and the piling up of detail, but through an artistic selection and arrangement of material.

This point is made clear in Ford's discussion of two further principles, the conceptions of the novel as the rendering of an Affair and as a progression d'effet. Life, he said is not "an affair of bashings of skulls, plots, conspirings." It "is really a matter of 'affairs'; of minute hourly embarrassments; of sympathetic or unsympathetic personal contacts; of little-marked successes and failures, of queer jealousies, of muted terminations--a tenuous, fluttering, and engrossing fabric. And intangible!"[2] Thus a novel should be

> a rendering of an Affair. We used to say, I will admit, that a Subject must be seized by the throat until the last drop of dramatic possibility was squeezed out of it. I suppose we had to concede that much to the Cult of the Strong Situation. Nevertheless, a Novel was the rendering of an Affair: of one embroilment, one set of embarrassments, one human coil, one psychological progression. From this the Novel got its Unity. No doubt it might have its caesura--or even several; but these must be brought about by temperamental pauses, markings of time when the treatment called for them. But the whole novel was to be an exhaustion of aspects, was to proceed to one culmination,

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[1] P. 152.

[2] Thus to Revisit, p. 36.

> to reveal once and for all, in the last sentence, or the penultimate; in the last phrase, or the one before it--the psychological significance of the whole.[1]

This novelistic Affair was to be, moreover, the embroilment of an "average" human being in some "normal" private embarrassment, but one which would epitomize modern existence--the carefully selected part thus standing for the whole.[2]

Furthermore, it was to be rendered through a novelistic progression d'effet as the last sentence quoted above shows: "But the whole novel was to be an exhaustion of aspects, was to proceed to one culmination. . . ." Ford explained in Joseph Conrad what he meant by progression d'effet: "In writing a novel we agreed that every word set on paper--every word set on paper--must carry the story forward and, that as the story progressed, the story must be carried forward faster and faster and with more and more intensity."[3] In Henry James, without using the term, he had described the same effect more fully:

> So that, in such a masterpiece of this type as Madame Bovary, or for the matter of that, Germinie Lacerteux, every incident, every word, every apparent digression, made towards the inevitable end. . ... Of course the real fineness of the art lay in concealing the art--in making the digressions appear like real negligences, as they appear in the life we lead.[4]

Involved in the attempt to create the novelistic progression d'effet was every technique Ford and Conrad knew, especially the time-shift, the imagistic pattern, and justification. Their breaking up of

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[1]Thus to Revisit, p. 44.

[2]See The English Novel, pp. 128-133; and Wiley, Novelist of Three Worlds, pp. 5-6, 47-50, 66, 298-299.

[3]P. 210.

[4]P. 161.

conventional chronology allowed them to arrange the order of the scenes and episodes, to juxtapose them for maximum meaning and intensity. Indeed, according to Hugh Kenner, such juxtaposed scenes "function as poetic images" in a manner similar to those of Ezra Pound's Cantos.[1] Through these freely juxtaposed scenes could run the imagistic patterns of the work, tying the scenes together, setting up implicit contrasts and parallels, and leading to that final phase which was to reveal "the psychological significance of the whole": ". . .seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness." Moreover, if they had succeeded in their justification, the significance of every detail would be illuminated by the story's inevitable end.

> Before everything a story must convey a sense of inevitability: that which happens in it must seem to be the only thing that could have happened. Of course a character may cry: "If I had then acted differently how different everything would now be." The problem of the author is to make his then action the only action that character could have taken. It must be inevitable, because of past illness or on account of the gradual coming together of the thousand small circumstances by which Destiny, who is inscrutable and august, will push us into one certain predicament.
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> . . . . . .
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> . . . as scrupulous as was Conrad in this matter of justification. . . . He never introduced a character, however subsidiary, without providing that character with ancestry and hereditary characteristics, or at least with home surroundings--always supposing that character had any influence on the inevitability of the story.[2]

The cumulative effect of the juxtapositions of scenes and episodes, of the incremental repetition of patterns of imagery, and of the justification of the characters' actions--the convincing elimination of alterna-

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[1]The Poetry of Ezra Pound (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, n.d.), p. 268.

[2]Joseph Conrad, pp. 204-205, 206.

tives--together with the increased pace of the novel towards the end, should be the reader's sense of inevitability which was the purposed end of all this art.[1] "I depend upon the reader looking back upon my story as a whole."[2]

The other general principle on which they agreed, wrote Ford, was that "the first province of a style is to be unnoticeable."[3]

> We wanted to write, I suppose, as only Mr. W. H. Hudson writes--as simply as the grass grows. We desired to achieve a style--the habit of a style--so simple that you would notice it no more than you notice the unostentatious covering of the South Downs. . . .
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> Our most constant preoccupation, then, was to avoid words that stuck out of sentences either by their brilliant unusualness or their "amazing aptness." For either sort of word arrests the attention of a reader, and thus "hangs up" both the meaning and the cadence of a phrase. We wanted the Reader to forget the Writer--to forget that he was reading. We wished him to be hypnotised into thinking that he was living what he read--or, at least, into the conviction that he was listening to a simple and in no way brilliant narrator who was telling--not writing--a true story.[4]

A good style, therefore, "began with a fresh, usual word, and continued with fresh, usual words to the end."[5] Such a simple, natural style could be made interesting by making each sentence "a mosaic of little crepitations of surprise."[6] Ford's example is the catalogue of a farm

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[1] See Cassell, Ford Madox Ford, pp. 58, 175, for the best discussion of the progression d'effet.

[2] Conrad to Meldrum, [Autumn 1902?], Letters to Blackwood, p. 170.

[3] The March of Literature, p. 843; see also Joseph Conrad, p. 193.

[4] Thus to Revisit, pp. 52-53. According to Ford, "Flaubert and all his horde spent half their lives in the pursuit of the mot juste--and the other half in making sure that the word chosen was not too juste," The March of Literature, p. 843.

[5] Joseph Conrad, p. 194.

[6] "On Conrad's Vocabulary," The Bookman, LXVII (June, 1928), p. 407.

sale filled with contrasts: "Lot 267. Pair Rabbit gins. Lot 268, Antique powder flask. Lot 269, Malay Kris. Lot 270, Set of six sporting prints by Herring. Lot 271, Silver caudle cup . . . for that, as far as it goes, has the quality of surprise."[1]

Here, then, are the major principles and techniques of Conradian impressionism as Ford represented them: the assumptions of psychological verisimilitude and selection, the principles of the author's aloof rendering of an Affair through a progression d'effet and in a natural style. And Ford's discussions of them are indispensable. As Conrad's intimate friend and collaborator, he probably knew more about what Conrad had tried to do than anyone else except Conrad himself.[2] Yet his discussions are not completely reliable. One must handle his reminiscences with care, not only because he was always the impressionist who was uninterested in literal facts, but more importantly because by the time he wrote his memoirs, he had developed the principles and techniques in a slightly different direction from Conrad, so that in many of his statements he wrote more about his own practices than about Conrad's.[3] He looked back towards Conrad, that is, not only through a Jamesian veil but sometimes through a Fordian one as well.

This fact becomes clear when one compares what he wrote of these

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[1]Joseph Conrad, p. 198.

[2]On the collaboration see Douglas Goldring, Trained For Genius (New York: E. P. Dutton & Col., Inc., 1949), pp. 60-90, 240-243; and Baines, Joseph Conrad, pp. 217-221, 272-292, 347-351.

[3]On Ford's carelessness with facts see his "Dedication," Ancient Lights (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1911), p. xv; Goldring, Trained for Genius, pp. 22-29, 251; and Richard M. Ludwig, "The Reputation of Ford Madox Ford," PMLA, LXXVI (December, 1961), pp. 544-551.

principles and techniques with both his practice and Conrad's. His discussion in Joseph Conrad (1924), for instance, of the impressionistic rendering of the effect of life is actually an explanation, not of the Conradian time-shift, but of his own current practice of the internal monologue in Some Do Not (1924):

> A great many novelists have treated of the late war in terms solely of the war: in terms of pip-squeaks, trench-coats, wire-aprons, shells, mud, dust, and sending the bayonet home with a grunt. For that reason interest in the late war is said to have died. But, had you taken part actually in those hostilities, you would know how infinitely little part the actual fighting itself took in your mentality. You would be lying on your stomach, in a beast of a funk, with an immense, horrid German barrage going on all over and round you and with hell and all let loose. But, apart from the occasional, petulant question: "When the deuce will our fellows get going and shut 'em up?" your thoughts were really concentrated on something quite distant: on your daughter Millicent's hair, on the fall of the Asquith Ministry, on your financial predicament, on why your regimental ferrets kept on dying, on whether Latin is really necessary to an education. . . .[1]

Again, his description of the novel as the rendering of an Affair clearly is based more on his own practice in The Good Soldier and later in the Parade's End tetralogy than on Conrad's practice. Conrad came closer in Chance to rendering an Affair as Ford conceived of it than in any of his better novels.[2]

Above all, Ford's discussions of the impressionistic style reveal his own aims and practices more than Conrad's. In fact he admitted at times that Conrad's interest was primarily in a new form for the novel, his own in "the simple expression of fine shades," in "a limpidity of expression that should make prose seem like the sound of some one talking

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[1]P. 192. See also Meixner, Ford's Novels, pp. 23-24.

[2]See Wiley, Novelist of Three Worlds, pp. 55, 171.

in rather a low voice into the ear of a person that he liked."[1] It is significant that Ford once called Conrad "the master of adorned English," and that, of all Conrad's prose, he expressed admiration for only the "serene and beautiful" "limpidity of language" in The Rover.[2] He could hardly have discussed the prose of "Heart of Darkness" or Lord Jim in terms of simplicity.

Still, in spite of these reservations, Ford's discussions of the principles and techniques remain indispensable as a means of approach to Conradian impressionism--and to Faulknerian impressionism. For it should not be surprising to us by now to find that some of the principles and techniques which Ford emphasized most heavily apply as well to Faulkner's novels as to Conrad's. This point can be illustrated strikingly by reference to Karl E. Zink's very good critical essay, "William Faulkner: Form as Experience."[3] As his title indicates, Zink was interested in this article in the structure and techniques of Faulkner's novels as manifestations of his view of the relationships of time, the past, and the consciousness. Thus he wrote of the long flashback in Light in August which renders Joe Christmas's past: "This rupture in the forward movement of the foreground has a sound psychological and structural basis. It is, in a real sense, the recapitulation of a life, the brilliant activity of the memory, just prior to some extremely serious decision or act."[4]

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[1] Thus to Revisit, pp. 40, 53; The Bookman, LXVII (June, 1928), p. 405.

[2] It Was the Nightingale, p. 129; Joseph Conrad, p. 214.

[3] South Atlantic Quarterly, LIII (July, 1954), pp. 384-403.

[4] Ibid., p. 392.

It is interesting, therefore, to find that Zink, having approached Faulkner's novels from an entirely different direction, arrived in his description of Faulkner's structure and techniques at what amounts to a description of the Conradian rendering through the time-shift and the Conradian progression d'effet. The two "characteristic structural features" of Faulkner's best novels are a "repetitive, accretive, circular movement forward. . . . a method of accretion or incremental repetition," and "the psychologically appropriate flashback."[1] "Working together as they do, they sacrifice, or at least seriously modify, the conventional narrative line of chronological development. . . ."[2] Moreover, Zink accounts for "the unique external shape which Faulkner has brought to the American novel" by reference to his "sensitivity . . . to the fluid quality of experience in time."[3] Finally, in summarizing the effect in Faulkner's work of the incremental repetition and the flashback, he wrote that they create "a unique texture or surface for the Faulkner novel, a surface which is, although linear, a

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[1] South Atlantic Quarterly, LIII (July, 1954), p. 385. With what Zink writes about Faulkner's method of incremental repetition, compare the following comment by Morton D. Zabel on Conrad's use of the recurring incident: "The recurring incident (Jim's jump from the boat, Flora's suicidal appearance at the cliff's edge, Mrs. Schomberg's shawl) goes beyond the ordinary uses of the leit-motif by making each of its repetitions serve to mark an expanding realization, an advancing penetration of the event. The event thus becomes deepened in our consciousness and vision. The fact has gained a wider periphery of relevance. What seems to be a tied plot, gyrating aimlessly around a static point of obsession, is actually growing in meaning and moral import, taking on a wider increment of value." "Introduction," The Portable Conrad (New York: The Viking Press, 1952), pp. 37-38.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

kind of montage of juxtaposed episodes and themes commenting implicitly on one another. . . ."[1] Unique this structure may be in the American novel, but it comes as no surprise to one who has read Conrad and who knows of Faulkner's reading of Conrad.

Now, to say that Faulkner belongs to the Conradian tradition in matters of literary technique is not to deny the sometimes pronounced differences between the two writers or to impugn the other valid approaches to Faulkner's art. It is to attempt to throw light on hitherto shadowed areas of his technique. Zink's discussions of Faulkner's Bergsonian ideas (whether or not he got them directly from Bergson) of the flux of experience and duration--the emphasis on psychological time, the presentness of the past--and of the relationship between those ideas and the form and techniques of his novels are very perceptive.[2] So are many of the discussions of Faulkner as a Joycean stream-of-consciousness writer. He is one, of course, in The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying, but he is also, even in these novels, a Conradian impressionist. He fused the techniques of both men to produce a new kind of work, a stream-of-consciousness novel which emphasizes action (story, plot) as well as subjective experience.[3]

He achieved this result by sometimes making the monologues of his characters internal only in appearance. Swiggart states the point as

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[1] South Atlantic Quarterly, LIII (July, 1954), p. 391.

[2] See also his "Flux and the Frozen Moment: The Imagery of Stasis in Faulkner's Prose," PMLA, LXXI (June, 1956), pp. 285-301.

[3] As Swiggart puts it in The Art of Faulkner's Novels, p. 64, "One might call Faulkner's use of the monologue technique a deliberate misunderstanding of Freudian theory and Joycean practice."

follows:

> In the opening monologue of The Sound and the Fury Faulkner gives the impression that an idiot's unconscious mind is somehow responsible for the narration. But the function of the monologue is to provide dramatic exposition while creating the misleading atmosphere of psychological chaos. A major portion of the monologue is devoted to actions which the idiot cannot understand and to conversations which do not involve him. Instead of trying to explore an idiot's mind--an absurd task--Faulkner adopts a narrative point of view which follows Benjy's actions but reports in a detached and impersonal manner what the idiot sees and experiences. The events which are narrated occur in several contrasted layers of time. Each layer or chronological grouping is divided into fragments, which are rearranged to give the impression of a primitive chain of association. These disorganized episodes are later recognized by the reader as introducing key scenes or symbol patterns which recur in more intelligible contexts.[1]

In other words, Benjy's mind serves as a kind of transparent medium through which the reader experiences objectively rendered scenes:

> "What do you want." Jason said. He had his hands in his pockets and a pencil behind his ear.
> "We're going to the cemetery." Mother said.
> "All right." Jason said. "I dont aim to stop you, do I. Was that all you wanted with me, just to tell me that."
> "I know you wont come." Mother said. "I'd feel safer if you would."
> "Safe from what." Jason said. "Father and Quentin cant hurt you."
> Mother put her handkerchief under her veil. "Stop it, Mother," Jason said. "Do you want to get that damn loony to bawling in the middle of the square. Drive on, T. P."
> "Hum up, Queenie." T. P. said.[2]

The same thing is true at times of the monologues of Quentin and Jason.[3] They appear to be regular internal monologues because Faulkner used associational logic rather than strict chronology to order the

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[1] The Art of Faulkner's Novels. Compare Richard Chase, The American Novel and its Tradition, p. 226.

[2] The Sound and the Fury, p. 31. My italics.

[3] See Swiggart, The Art of Faulkner's Novels, pp. 61-70.

scenes and because he used italics and, sometimes, the lack of punctuation to give them an unconventional appearance. Probably, moreover, the fact that they are presented in the first person makes us accept them even more uncritically as internal monologues than third-person presentation would. Yet long scenes, ostensibly a part of the flow of the past through the character's consciousness, are actually impersonally rendered through dialogue. The following example from Jason's monologue is part of a long scene in which Jason himself figures only indirectly.

> "Hush, Miss Cahline," Dilsey says, "You gwine wake her up."
> "In there?" Mother says, "To be contaminated by that atmosphere? It'll be hard enough as it is, with the heritage she already has."
> "Hush," Father says, "Dont be silly."
> "Why aint she gwine sleep in here," Dilsey says, "In the same room whar I put her ma to bed ev'y night of her life since she was big enough to sleep by herself."
> "You dont know," Mother says, "To have my own daughter cast off by her husband. Poor little innocent baby," she says, looking at Quentin. "You will never know the suffering you've caused."
> "Hush, Caroline," Father says.[1]

Thus, the witness-narrator of Faulkner's later, more Conradian novels is foreshadowed in his stream-of-consciousness fiction.

Above all, Faulkner is a Conradian impressionist in the sense in which Guerard uses the phrase. According to him, "this is what sets Conrad apart from any earlier English novelist: his creation of conflict in the reader, and his fine control of that conflict."[2] His vehicle for the creation of this conflict was the impressionist novel such as Lord Jim:

It appears at the turn of the century as the first novel in a

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[1] The Sound and the Fury, p. 216.

[2] CTN, p. 59.

> new form: a form bent on involving and implicating the reader in a psycho-moral drama which has no easy solution, and bent on engaging his sensibilities more strenuously and even more uncomfortably than ever before. An essential novelty, though borrowed perhaps from the mystery or "police" tale, is to force upon the reader an active, exploratory, organizing role; compel him, almost, to collaborate in the writing of the novel. Ford Madox Ford liked to define the impressionist aim as a higher realism: to come closer to actual life by presenting experience as a sensitive witness would receive it--casually, digressively, without logical order. But the game is a more sinister one than that. We certainly do not receive the facts of Lord Jim's life in the order that a citizen and observer of 1880, say Marlow himself, would have received them. The digressive method does indeed convey the "feel" of life. But the impressionist aim is to achieve a fuller truth than realism can, if necessary by "cheating"; and to create in the reader an intricate play of emotion and a rich conflict of sympathy and judgment, a provisional bafflement in the face of experience which turns out to be more complicated than we ever would have dreamed. This aim is present even in the spare and unintellectual The Great Gatsby, certainly in the endless Remembrance of Things Past, even (since everything is present there) in Ulysses. But the culminating triumph of Conradian impressionism is Absalom, Absalom![1]

The reader is implicated in this psycho-moral drama, first of all, as Mr. Guerard suggests, by his sheer difficulty in reading it. The basic convention of this impressionism, "that the reader (who is merely 'listening in') knows as much as the narrator's nominal listeners," ensures his concentrated attention, if he is to make sense of what he reads.[2] Then he is implicated by the element of conflict between him and

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[1] CTN, pp. 126-127. An interesting note on the critical zeitgeist is the fact that in his excellent The Poetry of Experience (New York: Random House, 1957), Robert Langbaum discusses romantic and post-romantic poetry in terms of sympathy and judgment. See especially Chapter II, "The Dramatic Monologue: Sympathy versus Judgment," pp. 75-108.

[2] Ibid., p. 135. This particular point of Guerard's was anticipated by the French critic Hubert Juin in his "L'Univers Clos de William Faulkner," Esprit, XXIV (November, 1956). On pages 704-705 Juin writes, "L'auteur procede, dans l'expose des faits, comme si le lecteur etait averti deja de toutes les circonstances--circonstances qui ne vont se devoiler que petit a petit et fort lentement, afin que s'entretienne et subsiste l'illusion premiere: le lecteur est dans le livre."

the narrator. Quite naturally the reader will wish at first to identify himself with the "hero" of the story. He soon learns, however, that Jim is an unconventional, unheroic hero, and so he will tend next to identify with Marlow, the narrator. But if he is a very careful reader, he finds that he cannot fully trust Marlow either:

> He is a considerably more lenient witness than his austere moralizing tone suggests. On various occasions he brings in the damaging evidence (he is, after all, obliged to bring it in) very casually and digressively, as though inviting us to overlook it. So too, when we are inclined to judge harshly, Marlow diverts our attention from the suffering, "burning" Jim to those who merely rot in the background, or who live safely in a world of untested rectitude. "You've been tried." Jim has, at least, been tested and tried. Therefore he exists. Marlow evokes both sympathy and a more lenient judgment whenever he reminds us of those who are safe: Marlow's listeners, or Jim's father sending his four-page letter of "easy morality and family news," or the tourists in the Malabar Hotel where Jim begins his story.[1]

The reader must finally, therefore, as in life, work out from the data before him--and Conrad and Faulkner, as we have seen, always make available in the novel the data necessary for the reader's correction of a character's point of view--his own balance of sympathy for Jim (or Sutpen) and judgment of him.[2] Such a full commitment to the novel may require one or several re-readings, and, in fact, as Guerard says, the implicit assumption of the modern art novel is "that a serious novel like a serious poem is meant to be read more than once."[3] Furthermore, these re-readings can be even more rewarding than the first one.

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[1] CTN, pp. 153-154.

[2] Ibid., pp. 152-169. For a discussion of modern novelists who do not make available in their novels enough data for us to judge their characters, see Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction, pp. 377-398.

[3] Ibid., p. 155.

> The mere factual mysteries are solved, and no longer preoccupy us. . . . But now by the same token we can watch the drama of moral ambiguity as such, and the mechanisms of deception; and can watch the observers or narrators of the action, their mistakes, their withheld or grudging commitments. The human situation becomes more rather than less complex. Yet we are at the same time somewhat freer to observe art as art: the game of management and grouping and perspective. And matters that merely baffled or exasperated at first, notably the "irrelevant" digressions, assume an ironic or clarifying force.[1]

This "game of management and grouping and perspective" is I think, what Guerard means by "cheating." Conrad was not interested, that is, merely in presenting the facts of Jim's story in lifelike order. He arranged his incidents in the most effective artistic order. Nor was he primarily interested in the logical self-consistency of his manner of presentation of a story. If he felt it necessary, he would violate the tenets of what Guerard calls "Jamesian logic" in order to communicate more effectively with his reader. There are, for instance, in both The Nigger of the Narcissus and Under Western Eyes, a number of logical violations of the established point of view which have exercised critics.[2] But Guerard's answer to the "logicians" is, I believe, final:

> The classic answer to such logic is that all eggs come from the same basket. It may be given more lucidly thus: the best narrative technique is the one which, however imperfect logically, enlists the author's creative energies and fully explores his subject. We need only demand that the changes in point of view not violate the reader's larger sustained vision of the dramatized experience.[3]

Like Conrad, Faulkner was interested only in the most effective way to present his story to the reader. Illogically, therefore, he rep-

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[1] CTN, p. 130.

[2] Ibid., pp. 106-107, 248-249.

[3] Ibid., p. 107. See also Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction, pp. 58-59.

resented internal monologues in the first person. The result is that the character must sometimes seem to think rationally what are in fact third-person articulations of his inarticulate thought, though Faulkner did sometimes set these passages off in italics, as in the following example from one of Dewey Dell's monologues: "That's what they mean by the womb of time: the agony and the despair of spreading bones, the hard girdle in which lie the outraged entrails of events."[1] Actually the monologues are frequently semiomniscient accounts "in which the third person detached voice is arbitrarily replaced by the first person 'I.' The narrator retains his freedom, but the pretense is nevertheless established that the character is telling his own story."[2] In other words, as early as As I Lay Dying Faulkner used the heightened rhetoric of "the Faulknerian overriding consciousness and voice, free to blend with other consciousnesses without losing irony and free to blend with other voices without losing richness."[3] Darl's monologues offer the best examples:

> The river itself is not a hundred yards across, and pa and Vernon and Vardaman and Dewey Dell are the only things in sight not of that single monotony of desolation leaning with that terrific quality a little from right to left, as though we had reached the place where the motion of the wasted world accelerates just before the final precipice. Yet they appear dwarfed. It is as though the space between us were time: an irrevocable quality. It is as though time, no longer running straight before us in a diminishing line, now runs parallel between us like a looping

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[1] As I Lay Dying, p. 422.

[2] Swiggart, The Art of Faulkner's Novels, p. 70.

[3] Guerard, CTN, p. 209.

> string, the distance being the doubling accretion of the thread and not the interval between.[1]

For Faulkner as for Conrad the intensity of the vision for the reader was more important than the Jamesian or Joycean logic of realistic presentation.[2]

That Conrad's manipulation of his readers' feelings was conscious and deliberate there can be no doubt. In a book review in 1904 he made the distinction between the traditional English novel and the kind of novel he wrote: "The national English novelist seldom regards his work--the exercise of his art--as an achievement of active life by which he will produce certain definite effects upon the emotions of his readers, but simply as an instinctive, often unreasoned, outpouring of his own emotions."[3] And in a letter to David S. Meldrum he explained his procedure in "The End of the Tether" virtually in terms of the attempt to arouse in the reader a conflict between sympathy and judgment:

> I am heartened greatly by what you say of the wretched "Tether". The old man does not wobble it seems to me. The Elliot episode has a fundamental significance in so far that it exhibits the first weakening of old Whalley's character before the assault of poverty. As you notice he says nothing of his position but goes off and takes advantage of the information. At the same time it gives me the opportunity to introduce Massy from way back without the formal narrative paragraphs. But the episode is mainly the first sign of

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[1] As I Lay Dying, p. 443; see also pp. 345-346, 366, 373, 413.

[2] In The Rhetoric of Fiction, pp. 42-60, Booth argues that James too was primarily interested in the effect on the reader, that Jamesian critics are responsible for turning his impersonal narration into an end in itself rather than a means to the end of a more intense illusion of reality; even so, "Jamesian logic" is a good phrase for current critical cliches, possibly degenerate but still derived from James.

[3] "A Glance at Two Books," Last Essays (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1926), p. 132.

> that fate we carry within us. A character like Whalley's cannot cease to be frank with impunity. He is not frank with his old friend--such as the old friend is. For, if Elliot had been a genuine sort of man Whalley's secrecy would have been that of an intolerable fool. The pathos for me is in this that the concealment of his extremity is as it were forced upon him. Nevertheless it is weakness--it is deterioration. Next he conveys a sort of false impression to Massy--on justifiable grounds. I indicate the progress of the shaking the character receives and make it possible thus to by and by present the man as concealing the oncoming of blindness--and so on; till at least he conceals the criminal wrecking of his ship by comitting suicide. And always there is just that shadow, that ghost of justification which should secure the sympathy of the reader.[1]

Finally, there is the testimony of Ford that Conrad's strongest passion was the desire "to convey vicarious experience to the reader," and that his artistic discipline, his study of technique, was a means to this end.[2] (Guerard is less than fair in implying that for Ford the impressionist air was always "a higher realism." Ford was aware that the test of the technique was its effect on the reader, though he usually discussed technique in terms of "interesting" or "pleasing" the reader.)

On the other hand, Faulkner always maintained that he wrote for himself, not the reader. "'I think I have written a lot and sent it off to print before I actually realized strangers might read it," he wrote Malcolm Cowley.[3] And he told a class at The University of Virginia the same thing, continuing, "I still write it because it worries me so much I've got to get rid of it, and so I put it on paper."[4] In another class session, however, he probably came closer to the whole truth:

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[1] [Autumn 1902?], Letters to Blackwood, pp. 169-170.

[2] The English Novel, p. 145. See also Thus to Revisit, pp. 9-10, 81-82.

[3] WF:III, p. 96.

[4] FU, p. 14.

> I have written three manuscripts that never did quite please me and I burned them up. But it's--you try and you try and you try to do the best you can to make something which to you was passionate and moving, so passionate and moving that it wouldn't let you alone you had to write it, and then you do the best you can to make it as passionate and moving to anyone who reads it as it was to you, because it seems worth while, worth doing.[1]

This sounds more like the Faulkner who submitted the manuscript of The Sound and the Fury to publishers fourteen times before it was accepted.

In any case, whether he intended to or not, Faulkner, by using in his works a great many of the techniques of Conrad, achieved the same result as Conrad, that of involving the reader in his novels to an extraordinary degree. On this point Faulkner's critics are agreed.[2] Thus Conradian impressionism goes beyond the attempt to render the effect of external experience on the mind of an observer. Distinguished from Jamesian-Joycean fiction by its emphasis on story and by its use, sometimes, of illogical means, it is the attempt to seduce the reader through specific artistic techniques (rendering, progression d'effet), to draw him into the story and involve him as a participant in the experience, whose intensity--because he is so deeply involved--sometimes approaches that of the Greek and Elizabethan tragedies.

The following chapters turn now to the novels themselves for a more concrete discussion of the principles and techniques of Conradian-Faulknerian impressionism in action.

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[1] FU, p. 85. My italics.

[2] See Howe, William Faulkner, pp. 111-112; O'Connor, The Tangled Fire, pp. 86, 161; Swiggart, The Art of Faulkner's Novels, pp. 79, 84, 203; and Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction, pp. 304-308.

CHAPTER III

Conrad has been fortunate in his critics, especially in those who have been instrumental in the post-World War II revival of his works. Such men as Guerard, Hewitt, Leavis, Warren, and Zabel represent the rather consistently high level of criticism which by now has established the living Conradian canon as those stories and novels written between 1897 (The Nigger of the Narcissus) and 1910 (Under Western Eyes) and has described the essential elements of Conrad's art--sometimes so well that further comment seems unnecessary.[1] Leavis, for example, seized on Conrad's vivid, concrete rendering of his material as his greatest strength and displayed that strength so fully that there is little point here in making an issue of the technique.[2] One example from Lord Jim will demonstrate perhaps how fully Conrad's rendering sometimes answers to Ford's theoretical requirements. In the following passage from Marlow's interview with the French Lieutenant, only the fifth sentence of the second

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[1]Guerard, CTN; Douglas Hewitt, Conrad: A Reassessment (Cambridge: Bowes & Bowes, 1952); F. R. Leavis, "Joseph Conrad," The Great Tradition, pp. 211-272; Robert Penn Warren, "Introduction," Nostromo (New York: The Modern Library, 1951); Morton Dauwen Zabel, "Conrad," Craft And Character in Modern Fiction, pp. 147-227.

[2]The Great Tradition, pp. 212-216. See also Harold E. Davis, "Conrad's Revisions of The Secret Agent: A Study in Literary Impressionism," Modern Language Quarterly, XIX (September, 1958), 244-254. Davis (p. 245) calls rendering "the basic tenet of literary impressionism as Ford, James, and Crane defined it."

paragraph offers comment. The rest of the material is rendered vividly, concretely, dramatically, and the meaning is left implicit.

> "'I am glad to see you taking a lenient view,' I said. 'His own feeling in the matter was--ah!--hopeful, and . . .'
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> "The shuffle of his feet under the table interrupted me. He drew up his heavy eyelids. Drew up, I say--no other expression can describe the steady deliberation of the act--and at last was disclosed completely to me. I was confronted by two narrow grey circlets, like two tiny steel rings around the profound blackness of the pupils. The sharp glance, coming from that massive body, gave a notion of extreme efficiency, like a razor-edge on a battle-axe. 'Pardon,' he said, punctiliously. His right hand went up, and he swayed forward. 'Allow me . . . I contended that one may get on knowing very well that one's courage does not come of itself (ne vient pas tout seul). There's nothing much in that to get upset about. One truth the more ought not to make life impossible. . . . But the honour--the honour, monsieur! . . . The honour . . . that is real--that is! And what life may be worth when' . . . he got on his feet with a ponderous impetuosity, as a startled ox might scramble up from the grass . . . 'when the honour is gone--ah ca! par exemple--I can offer no opinion. I can offer no opinion--because--monsieur--I know nothing of it.' (p. 148).[1]

It is true, however, that Conrad's rendering is generally more concerned with making the reader see than with being pure Fordian art; that is, many times after having drawn a vivid, concrete, particular scene, Conrad will make its meanings explicit rather than leave them implicit in the rendered material. Thus, in the splendid account in Nostromo of Mrs. Gould's progress around Sulaco, he details for us what he denies Captain Mitchell's power to see, "characteristic, illuminating trifles of expression, action or movement" (p. 338): "The solid wooden wheels of an ox-cart, halted with its shafts in the dust, showed the strokes of the axe; and a party of charcoal carriers, with each man's load resting above his head on the top of the low mud wall, slept stretched in a row within the

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[1] Conrad's ellipses.

strip of shade." (p. 89)[1] But he also makes explicit the meaning of such illuminating trifles of expression:

> Men ploughed with wooden ploughs and yoked oxen, small on a boundless expanse, as if attacking immensity itself. The mounted figures of vaqueros galloped in the distance, and the great herds fed with all their horned heads one way, in one single wavering line as far as eye could reach across the broad potreros. A spreading cotton-wool tree shaded a thatched ranche by the road; the trudging files of burdened Indians taking off their hats, would lift sad, mute eyes to the cavalcade raising the dust of the crumbling camino real made by the hands of their enslaved forefathers. And Mrs. Gould, with each day's journey, seemed to come nearer to the soul of the land in the tremendous disclosure of this interior unaffected by the slight European veneer of the coast towns, a great land of plain and mountain and people, suffering and mute, waiting for the future in a pathetic immobility of patience. (pp. 87-88)

Still, as Leavis says, in Conrad's best work the comment "is not separable from the thing rendered, but seems to emerge from the vibration of this as part of the tone."[2] And Leavis's comments on Conrad's rendering of his material remain so just as to make this bare mention of the technique, basic as it is to Conrad's art, suffice here.

The rush of criticism in recent years on the architectonics (the juxtaposition of scenes and episodes attendant on the shifts of time and place, the progression d'effet, the justifications, the omissions) of Conrad's art in Lord Jim, Nostromo, The Secret Agent, and Under Western Eyes--his four best full-length novels--might, likewise, seem to suggest the futility of further comment on this subject, but such an assumption would be premature. That the interpretations of Conrad's works are still open to argument is demonstrated in the most recent book on Conrad, Mrs.

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[1](Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1924). All references to Nostromo will be to this edition. Page numbers will appear hereafter in parentheses in the text.

[2]The Great Tradition, p. 216.

Eloise Knapp Hay's The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad, by the author's new reading of the Marlow of "Heart of Darkness" as not only the narrator through whom we are to see the story but also one whom we are to see through.[1]

It is demonstrated as well by her misreading of Lord Jim. According to Mrs. Hay, Jim's death is a victory; his desertion of Jewel is different from his desertion of the pilgrims of the Patna in that in Patusan he sees his responsibility through to the end.[2] The evidence from the novel on which this argument rests is in Marlow's internal summary in his narrative, at the end of Chapter Twenty-One, during which he remarks of Jim's life in Patusan: ". . . he came on wonderfully, came on straight as a die and in excellent form, which showed that he could stay as well as spurt. I ought to be delighted, for it is a victory in which I had taken my part. . . . (p. 224)" Unfortunately for Mrs. Hay's argument, Marlow's long narration of Jim's case takes place at least a year before Jim's death.[3] In Chapter Twenty-One, then, Marlow is

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[1](Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 128-158.

[2]Ibid., pp. 68-69.

[3]The "privileged man" hears the end of the story "more than two years later (p. 337)." Jim's death had occurred "in the year of grace before last," at the end of his third year in Patusan (pp. 343, 367, 393). Marlow himself had last seen Jim "nearly two years" after his arrival in Patusan, and it was at least eight months after Jim's death before he talked with Brown (pp. 242, 346-347). Working from Stein's age, we can organize the chronology of Lord Jim and date the events roughly as follows: Stein, twenty-two in 1848, was "threescore" when Marlow talked to him about Jim (pp. 202, 205). This conversation took place "more than three years" after the trial (pp. 149, 201-202). Thus, if we take "threescore" to be exactly sixty, we can date the Patna incident and Jim's trial at about 1883, his arrival in Patusan at 1886/87, Marlow's visit there at 1888/89, his long oral narrative shortly afterwards, Jim's death (at twenty-nine or thirty--he was, at the time of the trial, "not yet four-and-twenty," p. 155) at 1889/90, and the "privileged man's" receipt of the letter at 1891/92. Both the Jeddah incident on which the Patna incident was based and the suicide of Captain Wallace of the Cutty Sark on which Brierly's suicide is based took place in 1880: See Guerard, CTN, pp. 27-28.

speaking, not of Jim's death, but of his first two years in Patusan, and we miss a part of the subtlety of the novel if we do not see that Marlow is here building for Jim another castle in Spain as he had done six months after the trial upon receipt of a glowing letter from the friend to whom he had first sent Jim (pp. 187-189). And this second castle is ruined just as the first one was. Whereas at the end of Chapter Twenty-One Marlow could say, "'"I affirm he had achieved greatness,"'" he wrote two years later in his letter to the "privileged man"--the man who "'would not admit he /Jim/ had mastered his fate'": "'I affirm nothing (pp. 225, 337-339).'" In other words, though it may be possible to argue that in some sense Jim's death is a victory, one needs more support than Marlow offers in Chapter Twenty-One.[1]

If "Heart of Darkness" and Lord Jim are still open to critical argument, Nostromo, The Secret Agent, and Under Western Eyes are even more so. Again it is true that the critics named above (Guerard, Hewitt, Leavis, Warren, Zabel), together with such others as Arnold Kettle and Irving Howe, have generally defined the limits within which the future arguments must fall.[2] They have elucidated the essential elements both of Conrad's art and his thought. At the same time, however, by virtue of the fact that some of them were interested in reviving Conrad while others

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[1]Pending the appearance of such supporting evidence, the best published interpretations of Lord Jim remain those of Guerard, CTN, pp. 126-174; and Dorothy Van Ghent, The English Novel: Form and Function (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961), pp. 229-244. Both critics doubt that Jim's death is a victory.

[2]Kettle, "Joseph Conrad: Nostromo," An Introduction to the English Novel (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1953), II, pp. 67-81; Howe, "Conrad: Order and Anarchy," Politics and the Novel (New York: Horizon Press, 1957), pp. 76-113.

were--and are--interested in contemporary politics, they tended to over-emphasize Conrad's contemporary timeliness, his role in these novels as a political seer and prophet. Therefore, as Conrad becomes accepted as the great artist which he was, we can re-dress the balance by accepting him on his own terms rather than on ours. It is possible, thus, to make a study of Conrad's artistic techniques, especially the architectonics, the structural techniques, something more than a mere rehash of previous criticism, even though it must necessarily be based largely on that criticism. The rest of this chapter will be devoted, then, to a study of Conrad's structural techniques in Lord Jim, Nostromo, The Secret Agent, and Under Western Eyes with the hope that some fresh insights into his art will justify it.

The most frequently discussed technique of Lord Jim is Marlow's manner of narration in Chapters Five through Thirty-Five (of forty-five). It is remarked usually that he recounts the incidents of his tale, not in chronological order, but in the order in which they occur to him, thus moving freely backwards and forwards over the five years of his association with Jim and often interrupting himself with interesting but seemingly irrelevant digressions.[1] The digressions are not, of course, irrelevant but very relevant indeed. On the first, realistic, level, it is perfectly natural for Marlow to move from Captain Brierly as one of the assessors at Jim's trial to his account of Brierly's suicide a week later or from his account of what happened to the Patna after Jim's jump

[1]A good early discussion of this technique is in Joseph Warren Beach, The Twentieth Century Novel, pp. 353-356, 359-364.

to his meeting with the French Lieutenant three years later (pp. 57-65, 136-149). In fact, Marlow's digressive manner adds a great deal to the effect of authenticity which is one thing Conrad gains by using him.

At the same time, on a deeper level, Conrad is able, because of Marlow's shifts of time and place, so to locate these episodes as to illuminate by scenic juxtaposition both Jim's actions and his attitudes. In this way he compensates for Marlow's attempts to evoke in his listeners that sympathetic identification with Jim which he himself struggles against throughout the novel. Until we come to know Marlow, we are probably not wary enough of him. "'"Is his evidence material, you think?"'" asks the doctor of Marlow after the latter's visit to the Patna's chief engineer in the hospital. "'"Not in the least,"'" Marlow answers, but on a second or third reading of the book, we wonder (p. 55). The "thread of logic" in the engineer's delirious terror is very similar to Jim's rationalization for his own imaginative terror: "'eight hundred people and seven boats (pp. 54-55, 87-88).'" This similarity, supported by the similarity of the engineer's "'fine and calm'" appearance and "'child-like soul'" to Jim's, reflects unfavorably on Jim's self-pity: "'"Was ever there any one so shamefully tried (pp. 50, 105)!"'" "'". . . so awfully unfair. . . (p. 128)."'" Perhaps the engineer's evidence is material to Jim's case.

Certainly the rest of Marlow's digressions are material. Jim's own account (through Marlow) of the Patna incident (pp. 78-136) is preceded by Marlow's accounts of his visit to the engineer (pp. 48-55) and Brierly's suicide (pp. 57-65); is interrupted by Marlow's account of the testimony of the Malay helmsmen (pp. 98-99); and is followed by Marlow's

accounts of his conversation with the French Lieutenant (pp. 136-149), of the heroic death of Bob Stanton (pp. 149-151), and of his interview with Chester and Captain Robinson (pp. 161-169). The episode with the engineer casts doubt on Jim's claim to be different from the other three officers of the Patna (pp. 25, 79-80, 103). Moreover, the engineer, like Cornelius and Gentleman Brown later in the novel, suggests an alternative possibility for a man in Jim's situation with Jim's temperament: he can become an alcoholic human derelict like the engineer (pp. 51, 223-224), a self-pitying, servile slave like Cornelius (pp. 220, 284-287), or an arrogant outlaw like Brown (in Marlow's written narrative, pp. 344, 404). The actions of the Malay helmsmen, the French Lieutenant, and Bob Stanton suggest alternatives to Jim's jump from the Patna. And Brierly's suicide and Chester's "'"A bit of ass's skin,"'" suggest alternative attitudes towards the jump, after the fact (p. 161). Thus, Jim's case is defined by the alternatives offered through Marlow's carefully juxtaposed digressions.

However, the distinction between Jim's position and those of the men in Marlow's digressions is never as clear-cut as the above paragraph may imply. There is always some point of similarity between Jim and these other men or between episodes in Jim's life and the episodes in the digressions which makes each digression relevant in more than one way. For example, Brierly's remark, "'"Let him creep twenty feet underground,"'" (pp. 66, 202, 219) is linked specifically by Marlow with Jim's "burial" in Patusan, which is described both directly and through imagery as a grave (pp. 219, 221, 245, 322-323). This fact recalls Chester's proposal to make Jim supreme boss over his guano island, and his parting shot

to Marlow: "'"See what <u>you</u> will do with him." "I don't know that I want to do anything with him." "Don't you?" he spluttered (p. 168).'" At the time Marlow justifies himself for his refusal of Chester's offer (pp. 174-177). But three years later in his conversation with Stein, he suggests, "'"Bury him in some sort (p. 219),"'" and he admits that he wanted to dispose of Jim before going home, at the same time reiterating his bond to Jim in the doubt of the "'fixed standard of conduct'" (pp. 50, 219, 221, 229). In other words the Brierly and Chester episodes continue to reverberate throughout Marlow's account of Jim's experiences in Patusan and these reverberations throw out of focus both Marlow's sympathetic aid in getting Jim to Patusan and Jim's "redemption" there. We must recognize that morally the distinction between Chester's proposed use of Jim and Marlow's actual use of him is an equivocal one. Assuredly, Marlow has not the crassly materialistic selfishness of Chester, but his interest in Jim--as he recognizes--is, on a higher level perhaps, selfish too. And finally, we must ask ourselves what kind of "victory" or "redemption" is possible for Jim in his "grave," in Patusan that "'star of the fifth magnitude'" where he is isolated, "' his earthly failings behind him and that sort of reputation he had (p. 218).'"

The reader, then, must contend not only with Marlow's excessive sympathy for Jim but also with the equivocal relevance of the digressive episodes. Like Marlow, he views Jim "'through the shifting rents of a thick fog (p. 76).'" Like Marlow, too, he must strain his "'mental eyesight'" over the delicate shades of difference to try to determine the truth about Jim (pp. 197, 216). In this way, through the technique of the time-shift with its attendant juxtaposition of episodes, Conrad re-

quires on the part of the reader an engagement, a commitment to the novel going far beyond the commitment required by any earlier English novelist, and, for the reader willing to make such a commitment, Conrad's technique represents a clear gain. He must struggle as in life to establish a position relative to Lord Jim.

This engagement of the reader is undoubtedly the most important advantage to Conrad's use of a narrator's time-shifts as a structural organizing principle, though there are at least two others, in addition to the effect of authenticity, which ought to be mentioned. First, the use of the narrator allows Conrad to satisfy his assumption that the author ought to stay out of the story. And second, Marlow's digressive manner allows Conrad to get into his novel an interesting variety of vivid characters and episodes. The digressions, in fact, represent artistic economy at its best: they are natural to a raconteur like Marlow; they are interesting in themselves; and every one of them is functional in the novel, illuminating Jim's actions or character, often both, in more than one way.

It should be emphasized, furthermore, that Conrad gains these advantages in addition to, not in place of, the sense of progress which is a strong effect of the older chronological novel. For the unchronological presentation of Lord Jim is only a relative fact not an absolute one; that is, in relation to the older English novel Lord Jim seems to do away with chronology, but actually Marlow's unchronological accounts, both spoken and written, are presented within a chronological frame. Except for the opening of the novel--the first two and one-half pages--the first four chapters, presented by the omniscient author, move

straight forward to Jim's trial, though of course they do no more than hint at what had happened to bring Jim to trial. Thus suspense, the reader's conventional desire to know what happens, is aroused by means only a little unconventional and will be a part of his interest to the end, though by the time he finds out what happened on the Patna, this interest should have become subordinated to his desire to know why, to understand the motivation of Jim's character.

Marlow's long narrative, Chapters Five through Thirty-Five, takes place ostensibly after dinner on a night a little more than five years after the trial. Actually, however, the framework of his narrative is a continuation of the chronological movement begun in the first four chapters. He opens Chapter Five with the beginning of his account of the first day of the trial, though characteristically, after a page and a half, he goes back to fill his audience in on the events of the weeks immediately preceding it. Then, having described the arrival of the Patna's officers, his visit to the chief engineer, and Brierly's suicide, he concludes his account of the first day with Brierly's offer to give two hundred rupees if Marlow will talk Jim into clearing out (pp. 68-69). Much the same pattern obtains throughout the rest of the narrative. In his account of the second day (pp. 69-155), he tells of his being accosted by Jim over the remark about the yellow cur and of his listening to Jim's version of the Patna story until well past midnight, digressing only to tell of the testimony of the Malay helmsmen, of his meeting with the French Lieutenant, and of Bob Stanton's heroic death. His account of the third day (pp. 156-186) includes the cancelling of Jim's certificate, his own meeting with Chester, a two-and-one-half page

anticipation of Jim's success in Patusan, and Jim's lonely vigil in his hotel room that night. In Chapters Eighteen and Nineteen he covers the three years of Jim's knocking about, mostly as a runner for ship-chandlers. In Chapter Twenty he recounts his visit to Stein. In Chapter Twenty-One he anticipates himself by summarizing his feelings about Jim's success after his own visit to Patusan two years later. In Chapters Twenty-Two through Thirty-Five, then, he describes his visit to Patusan and, working backwards from that fixed point of reference, fills in Jim's activities over the past two years.

Marlow's oral narrative ends at this point. Chapters Thirty-Six and Thirty-Seven offer us his letter to the "privileged man," written "more than two years" after his narrative (p. 337). In this letter he describes his meetings with Brown and Jewel after Jim's death, though the reader is never told that Jim is dead. Indeed, although the wording at the end of Chapter Thirty-Six strongly implies that he is dead, Jewel's wording in the next chapter leaves the question open: "'"He went away from me as if I had been worse than death. He fled as if driven by some accursed thing he had heard or seen in his sleep. ... . (p. 349)"'" In this equivocal manner Conrad achieves suspense once more and prepares the reader for the fast-paced, strictly chronological, inexorable march of events through Marlow's written narrative, Chapters Thirty-Eight through Forty-Five. In these chapters there is no movement back and forth in time, nor are there digressions to interrupt the flow of events, for Conrad is intent here on adding to the illusion of depth achieved through the shifting perspectives of Marlow's oral narrative the sense of progress, the effect of inevitability which is the great strength of the

well-done chronological novel. As Conrad employs it in Lord Jim, then, the technique of the time-shift is combined with the older chronological technique and the result represents a clear gain: the total engagement of the reader and a sense of depth combined with a sense of inevitability.

True as this statement may be, however, it drastically oversimplifies Conrad's technique in Lord Jim. In fact, the culmination of the chronological framework of the novel in the strict chronology of the last eight chapters represents not only the effect of a gradual reversion to an older technique but also, more pertinently, the culmination of the progression d'effet of the novel, a fact which demonstrates the inseparability of the technique of the time-shift from that of the progression d'effet. One element in the progression d'effet as Ford described it was the pace of the novel: ". . . as the story progressed, the story must be carried forward faster and faster and with more and more intensity."[1] Lord Jim almost perfectly exemplifies this requirement. If we define pace as the ratio of actions or events to pages, we will find that the farther into Lord Jim we get (always excluding the first four chapters), the faster the pace becomes. Thus, the slowest-moving chapters of the novel are the first thirteen chapters of Marlow's oral narrative (pp. 34-186). These chapters contain the long conversation between Marlow and Jim on the evening of the second day of the trial and a great many of Marlow's speculations and philosophical reflections as well as his unchronological meanderings and digressions--and even the longest digressions are accounts of conversations, those with the Patna's chief engineer, Brierly's mate, the French Lieutenant, and Chester. Thereafter, though none of Marlow's

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[1] Joseph Conrad, p. 210.

narrative can be called fast-moving, the pace does pick up; there is, of course, a great deal more action in the Patusan chapters than in those dealing with the Patna. Finally, the pace of the last eight chapters is very fast. Marlow's reflecting, speculating mind does not here stand between us and the action. Indeed, at times Conrad seems to forget the fiction of the narrator completely. The account of the Yankee's shooting of the townsman, for instance, ostensibly written by Marlow who had his information from Brown, is actually a clear example of Conrad's forgetting about point of view and rendering the scene for the reader.

> Brown saw him, and instantly called to his side the Yankee deserter, who acted as a sort of second in command. This lanky, loose-jointed fellow came forward, wooden-faced, trailing his rifle lazily. When he understood what was wanted from him a homicidal and conceited smile uncovered his teeth, making two deep folds down his sallow, leathery cheeks. He prided himself on being a dead shot. He dropped on one knee, and taking aim from a steady rest through the unlopped branches of a felled tree, fired, and at once stood up to look. The man, far away, turned his head to the report, made another step forward, seemed to hesitate, and abruptly got down on his hands and knees. In the silence that fell upon the sharp crack of the rifle, the dead shot, keeping his eyes fixed upon the quarry, guessed that 'this there coon's health would never be a source of anxiety to his friends any more.' (p. 371)

Only in the encounter between Brown and Jim (pp. 379-388) and in the last chapter do talk and reflection take precedence over action, and these pages do not slow the pace so much as add intensity to the action, for in them the other elements of the progression d'effet reach their climax. These elements, in Conrad's practice of the technique, are references, images, and scenes which are repeated incrementally throughout a given novel. Perhaps the clearest example in Conrad, because of the scenic structure of the novel is the repetition in The Secret Agent of

the bedroom scenes at the ends of Chapters Three and Eight in the murder scene at the end of Chapter Eleven.[1] In the first two of these scenes (pp. 55-60, 177-181) Verloc, harassed by the necessity of arranging an attack on the Greenwich Observatory for Mr. Vladimir, climbs heavily to his bedroom to find Winnie already comfortably ensconced in bed. Repressing his impulse to unburden himself to her, he listens, without actually hearing, to her maternally anxious chatter about her brother Stevie only because he dreads lying awake in the dark. Thus, their essential lack of communication, their complete misunderstanding of each other's motives, is emphasized. Outside, the clock on the landing audibly ticks away the month Vladimir has given Verloc. Both scenes end with Verloc's "'Put it out,'" in response to Winnie's question about the lamp.

Having thus established a pattern, Conrad, in keeping with the tone of the novel, ironically reverses it in Chapter Eleven (pp. 259-264). The setting here is the parlor, not the bedroom, and the roles of Winnie and Verloc are reversed; nevertheless the scene is fundamentally the same as the two earlier ones. Verloc, exhausted by his anxious month and more recently by his anxiety about how to tell Winnie of Stevie's death, is comfortably stretched out on the sofa, whereas Winnie, having been informed by Inspector Heat, now labors under her knowledge of her brother's destruction. Her vision of his disintegration, a vision of

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[1](Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday Page & Company, 1923). All references to The Secret Agent will be to this edition. Page numbers will appear hereafter in parentheses in the text. On the repetition of the bedroom scenes see John Hagan, Jr., "The Design of Conrad's The Secret Agent," ELH, XXII (June, 1955), pp. 150-155.

"smashed branches, torn leaves, gravel, bits of brotherly flesh and bone, all spouting up together in the manner of a firework," emphasizes the reversal of roles by paralleling the vision of Vladimir's face which haunts her husband in Chapter Three (pp. 57, 260). Stevie's death having brought home to her her misunderstanding of her husband, she brings home to him his misunderstanding of her with the plunge into his heart of the carving knife, the same carving knife she had taken away from Stevie in Chapter Three (pp. 60, 262). Then she begins to hear a ticking sound (p. 264). Her discovery that the ticking she hears is not the clock this time but Verloc's blood impels her to plunge through the door without putting out the light, and this failure leads to her undoing. Her later insistence that Ossipon put out the light insures his discovery of the body--and the extent of his own misunderstanding of her (pp. 283-287).

The effect for which Conrad designed this technique of repetition with deepening variations is that sense of inevitability with which his better books are so heavily endowed. Its strength at the end of Lord Jim attests to the efficacy of the technique, for, though the scenes repeated in Lord Jim are more fragmentary generally and presented more indirectly than in The Secret Agent and though Lord Jim depends much more heavily than The Secret Agent on the cumulative repetition of references, allusions, and images, the basic technique is the same. The most fully developed pattern of repetition in Lord Jim is that having to do with Jim's jumps, but here, in contrast to The Secret Agent, the major variation from this pattern is presented first: As a student in a training ship, Jim is taken unawares "by the brutal tumult of earth and sky" one dark winter's day and so fails to jump into a cutter going to the rescue

of some men thrown overboard by a collision (pp. 8-9). The next time he is taken unawares, however, he does make an impulsive leap--from the deck of the Patna of which he is mate, leaving behind in an apparently sinking ship eight hundred Arab pilgrims (pp. 95, 110-111). This act is repeated once more by Jim, at the beginning of his life in Patusan (pp. 251-254). On the third day of his captivity in the Rajah's stockade, having suddenly perceived the danger of his position, he makes another impulsive leap: "'. . . at once, without any mental process as it were, without any stir of emotion, he set about his escape as if executing a plan matured for a month (p. 253)." He jumps over the stockade wall and then over a small creek to escape the Rajah.

However, although these three scenes are basic to the jump pattern, the extent to which it dominates the novel is revealed only in the repeated scenes and allusions which anticipate and echo Jim's jumps. The account of Brierly's suicide jump, for instance (pp. 58-59), is a foreshadowing of Jim's jump from the Patna, just as Jim's throwing the cross-eyed Danish Lieutenant into the river and his forcing his three would-be Malayan murderers to jump into the creek are re-enactments of his jumps (pp. 199, 303). Moreover, there is throughout the novel a series of seemingly casual allusions to jumps and jumping, best represented perhaps by remarks of Marlow and Egstrom. Marlow, like Brierly, foreshadows Jim's leap from the Patna (of which we learn thirty pages later) by describing the beginning of Jim's story as follows: "'He began by saying, in the tone in which a man would admit his inability to jump a twenty-foot wall, that he could never go home now. . . .(p. 79)'" Egstrom, telling Marlow of Jim's flight, echoes the entire Patna incident: "'"I

made him look sick, I can tell you. 'This business ain't going to sink,' says I. He gave a big jump (p. 195)."'" The whole pattern reaches its climax in the grand relevance of what Brown says to Jim in that encounter between them "'perhaps on the very spot'" of Jim's "'second desperate leap (p. 380).'" Brown's apparent sincerity, his request for a fair chance, and his shrewd probing at Jim's past are calculated to make Jim's actions towards him inevitable:

> "This is as good a jumping-off place for me as another. I am sick of my infernal luck. But it would be too easy. There are my men in the same boat--and, by God, I am not the sort to jump out of trouble and leave them in a d---d lurch," I said. He stood thinking for a while and then wanted to know what I had done ("out there," he says, tossing his head down-stream) to be hazed about so. "Have we met to tell each other the story of our lives?" I asked him. "Suppose you begin. No? Well, I am sure I don't want to hear. Keep it to yourself. I know it is no better than mine. I've lived--and so did you though you talk as if you were one of those people that should have wings so as to go about without touching the dirty earth. Well--it is dirty. I haven't got any wings. I am here because I was afraid once in my life. Want to know what of? Of a prison. That scares me, and you may know it--if it's any good to you. I won't ask you what scared you into this infernal hole, where you seem to have found pretty pickings. That's your luck and this is mine--the privilege to beg for the favour of being shot quickly, or else kicked out to go free and starve in my own way."' (pp. 382-383)

Two other important repetitive patterns, both carefully related to the jump pattern, clarify Jim's character and thus help not only to create the effect of inevitability but also to define the quality of his death. Reflecting on Jim's arrival in Patusan, Marlow says, "'Strange, this fatality that would cast the complexion of a flight upon all his acts, of impulsive unreflecting desertion--of a jump into the unknown (p. 229).'" This question of Jim's fate is one which Marlow brings up several times. After his visit to Patusan he was sure that Jim had

"'mastered his fate,'" even if the "privileged man" would not admit it (pp. 274, 316, 324, 338). Jim's fate is, of course, as Marlow writes to the "privileged man," "'his own personality,'" his own impulsive character (pp. 341, 342).

Now, to master one's fate, one's character, one must come to recognize and accept himself as he is. This, Jim refuses to do. His first long conversation with Marlow had been an attempt to vindicate himself. He had jumped, but it had not been his fault. He had been unfairly tricked by the unexpected, by his shipmates, by the Dark Powers (pp. 95, 108, 121-124). In the years which follow the trial, rather than admit his identity, which would imply self-acceptance, he chooses flight from situation after situation, a choice the more telling because in time he becomes "'perfectly known'" (pp. 187-200). For Jim, as he tells Marlow with regard to the scuffle with the cross-eyed Dane, there is no other option (p. 199).

Marlow can never make up his mind "'whether his line of conduct amounted to shirking his ghost or to facing him out (p. 197),'" but the reader can find help in the second repetitive pattern allied to the jump pattern. After diagnosing Jim's case for Marlow, Stein makes the statement, "'"This magnificent butterfly finds a little heap of dirt and sits still on it; but man he will never on his heap of mud keep still (p. 213)."'" We are reminded of this statement by Jim's recounting to Marlow his leaps over the Rajah's stockade wall and across the creek: "'"I remember how sick I felt wriggling in that slime. I mean really sick--as if I had bitten something rotten (p. 251)."'" Significantly, Brown rounds this pattern out in that remarkable passage quoted above: "'"I've lived--and

so did you though you talk as if you were one of those people that should have wings so as to go about without touching the dirty earth. Well--it is dirty (p. 383)."'" So it is, and the human body is of the dust of the earth, but this is the thing which Jim refuses to recognize and accept; that is, he fails to come to terms with the inherent limitations of human nature, with the "'one truth the more'" of the French Lieutenant--with Stein's destructive element. He never gains self-knowledge. Inevitably at the end, he goes "'to defy the disaster in the only way it occurred to him such a disaster could be defied. . . . (pp. 408-409)'" "'He was going to prove his power'" by conquering "'the fatal destiny itself (p. 410).'" Once more we are reminded of Stein: "'"One thing alone can us from being ourselves cure (p. 212)!"'"

What we come to understand, then, in the course of the novel is that the "'"chance to get it all back again"'" of which Jim dreams, the opportunity which Patusan represents to him, is the opportunity to vindicate to himself his own idealized conception of himself (pp. 179, 202, 230, 235, 241). He had never jumped from the Patna, only his body.[1] That opportunity "'veiled by his side like an Eastern bride,'" whose face he perhaps sees with "'his last proud and unflinching glance,'" represents for Jim the "'alluring shape'" of the kind of "'extraordinary success'" found in the light literature to which he is addicted (pp. 243, 416). For the reader, however, that veiled opportunity is likely to represent his opportunity to gain self-knowledge, and Jim, like Brierly, chooses death rather than life with the knowledge of his own human fallibility.

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[1]See Van Ghent, The English Novel, pp. 233-234.

"'"Who can tell,"'" asks Marlow with reference to Brierly, "'"what flattering view he had induced himself to take of his own suicide (p. 64)?"'" In Jim's case we know. At last he finds himself the hero in the kind of story book situation for which he has been prepared since his youth. Always in his imagination he had been "an example of devotion to duty, and as unflinching as a hero in a book (p. 6)." He dies, significantly, with a "'proud and unflinching glance (p. 416).'"[1] He dies, that is, pathetically rather than tragically, though his death has been rendered inevitable by the success of Conrad's progression d'effet.

Another of Conrad's techniques which contributes to the effect of inevitability in Lord Jim, one which in fact tends to fade indistinguishably into the progression d'effet, is that of justification. Actually, a discussion of the progression d'effet leading to Jim's death is necessarily a discussion of justification, for, as Ford describes it, justification is the biographical background employed to make a character's action "the only action that character could have taken."[2] Fortunately, because Conrad justified every character, "always supposing that character had any influence on the inevitability of the story," we can illustrate the technique of justification without quoting the whole of Lord Jim or even the whole of the previous discussion of the progression d'effet.[3] The justification of Doramin, for instance, well exemplifies

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[1]My italics. Jim's comments to Marlow about the ring Stein gives him and about Doramin and Dain Waris are revealing: "'"It's like something you read of in books. . . (pp. 233-234)."'"; "'"They are like people in a book, aren't they (p. 260)?"'" As Marlow remarks in Chance, "'We are the creatures of our light literature much more than is generally suspected. . . (p. 288).'" Jim, at least, is.

[2]Joseph Conrad, p. 204.

[3]Ibid., p. 206.

the nature of the technique.

According to Ford, the defect of the method, unless handled carefully, was that it "might well retard the action," so that it became the job of the author "to arrange that the very arresting of the action is an incitement of interest in the reader. . . ."[1] Conrad, therefore, cautiously weaves his justification of Doramin into Marlow's account of Jim's defeat of Sherif Ali and spreads it out over twenty pages (pp. 255-275). We learn of Doramin's dignity (p. 256), of his monumental size, of his "'impassive repose,'" of the fact that he "'was never known to raise his voice'" (p. 259), and of his idolizing his only son, Dain Waris, born to him late in life (p. 260). Then, as a part of the description of the way Jim got the cannons to the top of the hill, we catch a glimpse of him seated imposingly on the slope, his silver-mounted flint-lock pistols on his knees (p. 264). Finally and most importantly, after the account of the battle, we learn through Marlow of his secret ambition to see his son ruler of the land (p. 273). Thus, we can understand the care he takes to see that no harm comes to Dain Waris during Jim's absence after Brown's arrival in Patusan (pp. 361-362, 364). These actions, in turn, add to our understanding of his rage and sorrow at the end of the story. His characteristic quiet, impassive dignity is transformed when he sees Jim's ring taken from his dead son's hand: "'The old nakhoda stared at it, and suddenly let out one great fierce cry, deep from the chest, a roar of pain and fury, as mighty as the bellow of a wounded bull. . . (p. 411).'" His shooting of Jim that evening is inevitable.

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[1]Joseph Conrad, p. 207.

Finally, something should be said about the way the opening of Lord Jim contributes to its end. According to Ford, openings were of primary importance to Conrad and him.

> The opening paragraph of book or story should be of the tempo of the whole performance. That is the regle generale. Moreover, the reader's attention must be gripped by that first paragraph. So our ideal novel must begin either with a dramatic scene or with a note that should suggest the whole book.[1]

In addition, the best way to get a character in was to "get him in with a strong impression, and then work backwards and forwards over his past."[2] Obviously, the first paragraph of Lord Jim represents the attempt to grip the reader with a note suggesting the entire book. The first sentence ought to grip all but the most casual of readers: "He was an inch, perhaps two, under six feet, powerfully built, and he advanced straight at you with a slight stoop of the shoulders, head forward, and a fixed from-under stare which made you think of a charging bull." It ought, also, to suggest that Jim is to be the center of the work.

Furthermore, the first three paragraphs of the book represent the attempt to get Jim in "with a strong impression" before the beginning of the movement "backwards and forwards over his past." The question naturally arises, then, why Conrad chooses to depict Jim first to the reader as a ship-chandler's water-clerk rather than as a ship's officer or as the de facto ruler of Patusan. The answer is, I believe, that it is easier thus for Conrad to establish the tone of humorous irony which pervades the first four chapters. He can at once display Jim's rather

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[1] Joseph Conrad, p. 171.

[2] Ibid., p. 130.

ludicrous concern over an incognito "which had as many holes as a sieve (p. 4)," a concern which later strikes Marlow too as funny, without undercutting Marlow's more sympathetic treatment of Jim's jump from the Patna and his life in Patusan. That the omniscient author is less sympathetic to Jim I think there is no doubt, though it is probable that we miss most of his subtle irony the first time we read the novel. As we re-read it, however, we notice, not only the comparison of Jim to a charging bull, but also some of the modifiers in that first paragraph: "He was spotlessly neat, apparelled in immaculate white. . . (my italics)." And we think it most fortunate for Jim, whose certificate has been cancelled, that "a water-clerk need not pass an examination in anything under the sun. . . (p. 3)."

The importance of recognizing the subtly ironic tone of the first three paragraphs of the novel is that it helps us to recognize the same tone in the last three. There is a rather significant break in the text immediately preceding those final three paragraphs which suggests that, in spite of the pretence of Marlow's writing them, the omniscient author is balancing off the opening of the book with its closing. Indeed, the first paragraph and a half of these last three reads like a parody of the ending to be found in that "light holiday literature" through which Jim's "vocation for the sea had declared itself (p. 5)." The first two sentences of the second paragraph illustrate the point:

> "But we can see him, an obscure conqueror of fame, tearing himself out of the arms of a jealous love at the sign, at the call of his exalted egoism. He goes away from a living woman to celebrate his pitiless wedding with a shadowy ideal of conduct. (p. 416)

Surely the ambiguity of such reflections is a serious obstacle to the

popular interpretation of Lord Jim as a tragedy of guilt and atonement, sin and redemption.[1]

Nostromo, not Lord Jim, is the key novel in the Conrad canon. It is a bigger novel in both scope and execution than Lord Jim, and, as Robert Penn Warren has shown, it contains in more fully developed form more of Conrad's characteristic themes than any other of his novels.[2] Nevertheless, after Lord Jim Conrad uses only two techniques so distinct as to be thought of as advances on the techniques of Lord Jim rather than as adaptations of them. In Chance Marlow re-creates scenes--that for instance in Chapter Four between Flora's governess and Charley (pp. 101-106)--on which he could have had no information whatsoever, not even the kind of fourth-hand information on which he bases much of his narrative.[3] "Thus," Guerard remarks, "the slighter Chance, rather than Lord Jim or Nostromo, anticipates the full Faulknerian extension of the impressionistic method": "the Faulknerian device of narration through speculative commentary, of reporting disguised as conjecture."[4]

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[1]The persistence of this interpretation is illustrated both by Mrs. Hay and Jocelyn Baines, who writes in Joseph Conrad, p. 251: "Some critics have asserted that Jim's life ended in defeat but despite the reference to his 'exalted egoism' which recalls Brierly's suicide there can be little doubt that Conrad approved of Jim's action. . . . Conrad would never have disparaged such a 'shadowy ideal of conduct,' and the context with the reference to Jim's 'eternal constancy' shows clear approval." Like Mrs. Hay, Baines supports his argument by Marlow's statement in Chapter Twenty-One, "'I affirm he had achieved greatness (p. 225).'"

[2]"Introduction," Nostromo, pp. x-xvi.

[3]See Beach, The Twentieth Century Novel, pp. 357-359; and Guerard, CTN, pp. 266-271.

[4]Ibid., pp. 267, 270.

The second of the new techniques is Conrad's omission in Nostromo and The Secret Agent of what would be traditionally climactic scenes.[1] In Part III of Nostromo the action jumps, at the end of Chapter Nine, from Nostromo's conversation with old Viola on the night of his return from the Great Isabel to Captain Mitchell's elliptical allusions, at the beginning of Chapter Ten, to Nostromo's ride to Cayta and General Barrio's defeat of the Monterists, now accomplished facts for some years past. The omitted scene in The Secret Agent is, of course, the scene of Stevie's destruction in Greenwich Park. Now, to describe these scenes as omitted scenes is not to say that the matter of them is missing entirely from the novels, but to stress that they are omitted as scenes. The reader may very well be able, finally, to work out both the action and the order of events, but he does so by piecing together the indirectly reported fragments of the shattered scenes which may be, as in The Secret Agent, scattered throughout the book. There, the first foreshadowing of Stevie's fate occurs on page nine in his setting off fireworks on the staircase of the preserved milk firm, out of pure compassion for all victims of "injustice and oppression." This incident, mentioned once more by the author (p. 220), culminates--as do the fragments of the scene of Stevie's death--in the vision Winnie has just before she stabs Verloc, "where after a rainlike fall of mangled limbs the decapitated head of Stevie lingered suspended alone, and fading out slowly like the last star of a pyrotechnic display (p. 260)."

Such a fragmentation of scenes not only emphasizes Conrad's lack

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[1]For a discussion of this technique, see Paul L. Wiley, Novelist of Three Worlds: Ford Madox Ford, pp. 78-80.

of interest in action as such but also carries to its logical end the indirect method of Lord Jim, especially the time-shift technique. Interestingly enough it, too, seems to be an anticipation of Faulknerian practice. One thinks inevitably of the "omission" of Caddy Compson of The Sound and the Fury. Caddie is in many ways the central character of the novel, intentionally so according to Faulkner: "To me she was the beautiful one, she was my heart's darling. That's what I wrote the book about and I used the tools which seemed to me the proper tools to try to tell, try to draw the picture of Caddy."[1] Yet Caddie is presented almost entirely indirectly, through the eyes of her brothers; only in some of the childhood scenes rendered through Benjy is she depicted more-or-less objectively. One of Faulkner's tools, probably, was a knowledge of Conrad's practice in Nostromo and The Secret Agent.

With the exception of these two, Conrad's techniques in the novels written after 1900 are adaptations of those of Lord Jim, though frequently brilliant adaptations. The rather slow, reflective first chapter of Nostromo, for instance, its tempo consistent with the novel's length, has justly been praised for its economic evocation of the story's geographical background, its suggestion of the historical background, and its introduction of the theme of treasure.[2]

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[1]FU, p. 6. See also Meriwether, Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, LVI (September, 1962), p. 307. There Meriwether paraphrases parts of an incomplete typescript which he identifies as Faulkner's introduction to Random House's proposed 1933 limited edition of The Sound and the Fury. According to Meriwether, Faulkner wrote that "lacking either sister or daughter, he had set himself to create the tragic, lovely figure of Caddy."

[2]Edward Crankshaw, Joseph Conrad, pp. 180-186.

So has the creation of and population of an entire country and its history in Part I through the justification and time-shift techniques. "In Nostromo," writes Guerard, "the impressionistic method . . . serves first the great humble fictional aim of creating reality in depth: of suggesting, behind the incident it flashes down to observe, a hundred similar incidents unrecorded."[1] Also widely appreciated is the way the time-shift method allows juxtapositions of character and scene to illuminate the mixed motives and cross purposes of the people caught up in the drive towards progress in Sulaco, as well as the larger themes of abstract idealization (illusion) and "material interests." It goes without saying that almost always these techniques are complemented by the vivid particularity of Conrad's rendering of his materials.

It may be, however, that the very particularity of the material interests in Sulaco--still remarkably contemporary--has led to what is, I believe, an over-emphasis on Conrad's prophetic analysis of capitalistic imperialism. Conrad himself lent support to this approach to the novel in a letter written late in his life to Ernst Bendz: "I will take the liberty to point out that Nostromo has never been intended for the hero of the Tale of the Seaboard. Silver is the pivot of the moral and material events, affecting the lives of everybody in the tale."[2] But as Jocelyn Baines has pointed out, the silver--usually taken to symbolize the "material interests"--"has only a superficial or formal connexion with some of the most important moral events," though it is "the thread which

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[1] CTN, p. 179. See also pp. 181, 210-215.

[2] March 7, 1923, LL, 11, 296.

binds the book together."[1]

The character most usually slighted in the interpretation of the novel as a "fictional study of imperialism" is Dr. Monygham.[2] Irving Howe, for instance, mentions him only in connection with his skeptical analysis to Mrs. Gould of material interests, though surely throughout Part III he is one of the most important characters.[3] One may grant to Guerard that Part III is the weakest section of the novel without detracting from the attractiveness and importance of Dr. Monygham, for he is vital to Conrad's major theme in the novel: the natural depravity of man, the inherent corruptibility of mankind.[4] Conrad is primarily interested in Nostromo, that is, not in the temporal institutions of mankind in themselves, but in the timelessness of human nature which dooms temporal institutions to futility. The critical insistence on the corrupting effect of the silver is, I think, partially wrong. Dr. Monygham's relationship to the silver is a very indirect one; yet he becomes corrupted. And, as Baines remarks, even Nostromo's "theft of the silver is more the effect than the cause" of his corruption.[5] The skepticism of Nostromo, then, is not so much a political or economic skepticism as it is a moral skepticism. Conrad is pessimistic about the progress of material interests because basically he is pessimistic about

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[1] Joseph Conrad, p. 301.

[2] Quotation from Irving Howe, Politics and the Novel, p. 100.

[3] Ibid., p. 106; Nostromo, p. 511.

[4] CTN, pp. 202-210.

[5] Joseph Conrad, p. 302.

human nature.[1]

The theme of the corruptibility of human nature is worked out in the novel through two repeated patterns of which the first is the image of devotion to treasure which relates Charles Gould, Nostromo, Martin Decoud, Dr. Monygham, and Colonel Sotillo to the spectral gringos of Chapter I. Charles Gould becomes a slave of the treasure of the mine through his abstract idealism; Nostromo, through his vanity; Decoud, through patriotism and love; and Sotillo, through greed.[2] Even Dr. Monygham can be said to become a slave of the San Tomé mine: "It presented itself to his fifty-years' old eyes in the shape of a little woman in a soft dress with a long train, with a head attractively overweighted by a great mass of fair hair and the delicate preciousness of her inner worth, partaking of a gem and a flower, revealed in every attitude of her person (p. 431)." But Conrad here is straining to create a relationship between Monygham and the silver which does not actually exist. Better is the later image of his devotion to Mrs. Gould: "Dr. Monygham had grown older, with his head steel-grey and the unchanged expression of his face, living on the inexhaustible treasure of his devotion drawn upon in the secret of his heart like a store of unlawful wealth (p. 504)."

The silver, the treasure, is incorruptible. Only man is corruptible. Corrupted subtly, insidiously, by even the best of motives, man

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[1]After arriving independently at this conclusion about Nostromo, I found I had been anticipated by Leo Gurko, Joseph Conrad, pp. 122-125.

[2]See pp. 214-222; 501-502; 176, 501; 460, 484. Related passages occur on pp. 379, 400, 402, 521-522, 526, 531, 541-542.

becomes amorally abstract like Charles Gould at one extreme or immorally brutal like Sotillo at the other end, in either case, inhumane. He begins to confuse means and ends and then to use other people as a means to his overmastering end. The author's remarks about Dr. Monygham illustrate the point. Having taken it upon himself to save Mrs. Gould, Monygham must persuade Nostromo to ride to Cayta to summon General Barrios, but his devotion to Mrs. Gould blinds him to all other considerations:

> It was a good idea--and Barrios was the only instrument of its realization. The doctor's soul, withered and shrunk by the shame of a moral disgrace, became implacable in the expansion of its tenderness. Nostromo's return was providential. He did not think of him humanely, as of a fellow-creature just escaped from the jaws of death. The Capataz for him was the only possible messenger to Cayta. (pp. 431-432)

> He was not a callous man. But the necessity, the magnitude, the importance of the task he had taken upon himself dwarfed all merely humane considerations. (p. 439)

Such confusions of ends and means form a second pattern in the novel linking those who have erected their desires into duties. (The clothing of a passionate desire "in the fair robes of an idea" to which all other considerations are subordinated is what Conrad means in this novel by the term illusion (p. 239). Decoud, for the sake of his country and his love, consciously, cynically, incites "poor ignorant fools to kill and to die," through the pages of the Porvenir (p. 181). As for Sotillo, "nothing that served his ends could appear to him really reprehensible (p. 350)." But Charles Gould is the chief example. His early justification for disobeying his father's wishes by working the mine sounds humanely compassionate:

> "What is wanted here is law, good faith, order, security. Any one can declaim about these things, but I pin my faith

> to material interests. Only let the material interests once get a firm footing, and they are bound to impose the conditions on which alone they can continue to exist. That's how your money-making is justified here in the face of lawlessness and disorder. It is justified because the security which it demands must be shared with an oppressed people. A better justice will come afterwards. That's your ray of hope." (p. 84)

But this speech is elicited by his wife's questioning of the means (bribery) he is using to make the mine a success (pp. 83-85), and by the time of the Monterist revolution the mine has turned

> into a wall of silver-bricks, erected by the silent work of evil spirits, between her and her husband. He seemed to dwell alone within a circumvallation of precious metal, leaving her outside with her school, her hospital, the sick mothers and the feeble old men, mere insignificant vestiges of the initial inspiration. (p. 222)

Standing opposed to this group of characters which confuses means and ends is another group which represents the possibilities of human nature, the humane ideal. Mrs. Gould and more especially Giorgio Viola, Don Pépé, and Father Romàn represent, like the French lieutenant in Lord Jim, the fidelity to and solidarity with other people and the devotion to duty which constituted for Conrad humanity's fixed standard of conduct. Mrs. Gould, we are told, "was guided by an alert perception of values. She was highly gifted in the art of human intercourse which consists in delicate shades of self-forgetfulness and in the suggestion of universal comprehension (p. 46)."[1] Don Pépé has the "vein of genuine humanity so often found in simple old soldiers of proved courage who have seen much

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[1]Irving Howe's aspersions on Mrs. Gould are unjust (Politics and the Novel, p. 108). It is the Indians of the mine, not all Costaguañeros, who look alike to her, but we are told explicitly of her "earnest interest" in them and of her talking over with Father Romàn "the innumerable Marias and Brigidas of the villages. . . ." (pp. 100, 399) See also pp. 67, 157, 380 for further evidence on Mrs. Gould's character and her position in Sulaco.

desperate service (p. 99)." So does Father Roman (pp. 103, 399), and as for Viola, "the spirit of self-forgetfulness, the simple devotion to a vast humanitarian idea . . . had left its mark upon Giorgio in a sort of austere contempt for all personal advantage (p. 31)." Yet one must not make too much of the role of these characters in the novel. A childless woman and three old men handicapped by age, humble origins, and ignorance, they serve only as foils to the more important characters, all of whom corrupt themselves and thus underline Conrad's pessimistic theme.

Like Nostromo, Under Western Eyes suffers at present from an overemphasis on its contemporary relevance and so lends itself to a concluding demonstration of the critical value of approaching Conrad's works through his structural techniques. The stress on the novel's contemporaneity has led frequently to the discussion of Razumov as an embodiment of things Russian rather than as a psychologically plausible character in his own right. Often, therefore, his motives for betraying Haldin to the police have been described, too simply, as mere selfish ambition and fear.[1] Similarly, his motives for his later self-betrayal to Natalia Haldin have been ascribed by Hewitt to a fuzzy Russianness which Conrad did not intend us to understand and by Guerard to "a generalized self-destructiveness" springing from his guilt over the betrayal of Haldin.[2]

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[1]See, for instance, Leavis, The Great Tradition, pp. 266-267; Zabel, Craft and Character, pp. 203-204; Guerard, CTN, pp. 233-234; Baines, Joseph Conrad, 365; and Tony Tanner, "Nightmare and Complacency: Razumov and the Western Eye," Critical Quarterly, IV (Autumn, 1962), pp. 201-202.

[2]Hewitt, Conrad: A Reassessment, p. 83; Guerard, CTN, 235.

There is, of course, truth in what these critics have said about Razumov's motives but a full understanding of them requires, I think, an understanding of four pages early in the novel and of a pattern of repetition based on them which is very similar to the repetition of the bedroom scenes in The Secret Agent. The four pages, extremely important ones, are pages ten through fourteen of Part I which separate the account of de P_____'s assassination from that of Razumov's arrival in his rooms to find Haldin awaiting him. They constitute the "strong impression," the basic characterization of Razumov, on which his motivation for his three major decisions rests heavily: his decision to betray Haldin, his decision to become a police spy, and his climactic decision to betray himself to Natalia Haldin--all linked in a pattern of repetition. A study of this pattern together with the four page impression of Razumov will, I believe, reveal Razumov's motives in betraying Haldin to be subtler than most critics have remarked and his self-betrayal, in consequence, to be more understandable.

The first thing we learn about Razumov on page ten is that he is "as lonely in the world as a man swimming in the deep sea." In the following paragraph we learn of his desire to win the silver medal for a prize essay, a desire related to his loneliness by his memory at the end of the paragraph of the last year's elated winner's telegram to his parents: "'I say! Won't the old people make it a festive time for the neighbours for twenty miles around our place (p. 11)?'" This memory, in turn, leads into the discussion of Prince K_____ as Razumov's protector and of Razumov's only meeting with him. At the end of that meeting Prince K_____ (Razumov's father) had applied light pressure to Razumov's

hand: "The emotion of it was terrible. Razumov's heart seemed to leap into his throat (p. 12)." From this time forward Razumov thinks of Prince K_____ as "He" and takes an interest in the K_____ family whom he sees once on a shopping tour.

> "His" daughters. They resembled "Him." The young man felt a glow of warm friendliness towards these girls who would never know of his existence. Presently they would marry Generals or Kammerherrs and have girls and boys of their own, who perhaps would be aware of him as a celebrated old professor, decorated, possibly a Privy Councillor, one of the glories of Russia--nothing more!
>
> But a celebrated professor was a somebody. Distinction would convert the label Razumov into an honoured name. There was nothing strange in the student Razumov's wish for distinction. A man's real life is that accorded to him in the thoughts of other men by reason of respect or natural love. Returning home on the day of the attempt on Mr. de P_____'s life, Razumov resolved to have a good try for the silver medal.
>
> Climbing slowly the four flights of the dark, dirty staircase in the house where he had his lodgings, he felt confident of success. The winner's name would be published in the papers on New Year's Day. And at the thought that "He" would most probably read it there, Razumov stopped short on the stairs for an instant, then went on smiling faintly at his own emotion. "This is but a shadow," he said to himself, "but the medal is a solid beginning." (pp. 13-14)[1]

Now, this linking together of Razumov's lineliness, his desire to win the silver medal, and his relationship to Prince K_____ is not accidental, nor do these four pages serve a merely expository function. They strongly imply that, whether he knows it or not, Razumov wants that silver medal and the distinction to which it might lead, not as ends in themselves, but as means towards his real end which is to gain the approval of his father. His dismay at finding Haldin in his rooms and his rationalization of his betrayal of him arise, then, not merely out of selfish ambition and fear but also out of his emotional commitment to

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[1]My italics.

Prince K_____ and what "He" stands for. The comment of the author (ostensibly the language teacher) near the beginning of Razumov's argument with himself, which ends in his decision to give Haldin up, would seem to apply to something deeper than an ambition to win a silver medal:

> For a train of thought is never false. The falsehood lies deep in the necessities of existence, in secret fears and half-formed ambitions, in the secret confidence combined with a secret mistrust of ourselves, in the love of hope and the dread of uncertain days. (pp. 33-34)

Twice during this argument with himself, the fact of his complete moral isolation occurs to Razumov, and, significantly, he arrives simultaneously at his decision to give Haldin up and at his "need of some other mind's sanction": "'I want to be understood (p. 39).'" Yet there is no one to whom he can turn. In his desperate moral solitude he embraces

> for a whole minute the delirious purpose of rushing to his lodgings and flinging himself on his knees by the side of the bed with the dark figure stretched on it; to pour out a full confession in passionate words that would stir the whole being of that man to its innermost depths; that would end in embraces and tears; in an incredible fellowship of souls--such as the world had never seen. It was sublime! (pp. 39040)

But it is not Haldin's understanding and approval Razumov wants, and in the next instant his thought of Prince K_____ makes "his knees shake a little (p. 40)."

All the elements of this first long scene--Razumov's loneliness, his longing to be understood, his impulse to confess, his meeting with his father--reappear in the first chapter of Part IV, whose most obvious function is to reveal finally that he is in Geneva as a police spy. In chronological time this chapter follows immediately on Mikulin's

"'Where to?'" at the end of Part I, but as the novel is organized it is separated from that question by two hundred pages of text. Undoubtedly one reason for this organization is Conrad's desire to keep up the suspense as long as possible. A more important reason is probably his intention to make Razumov's decision to become a spy a patterned repetition of his earlier decision to betray Haldin and thus a strong foreshadowing of his climactic confession to Natalia. Located within fifty pages of that confession, the decision to become a spy ought to add force to the effect of inevitability in the confession scene, force which would be unattainable were the decision to become a spy to be presented in its proper chronological order. Unfortunately, however, the two hundred and fifty pages which intervene between Razumov's first two major decisions tend to obscure the development of the pattern of repetition and, therefore, its effectiveness. Nevertheless, this pattern goes far, I think, towards explaining the motivation of Razumov's character.

Part IV opens with the statement that "Mr. Razumov's youth had no one in the world, as literally no one as it can be honestly affirmed of any human being (p. 293)." Then it picks up and continues from Part I the account of Razumov's first meeting with Mikulin, at the end of which, we now learn, he had felt the impulse to <u>confess</u> to Mikulin because of the latter's apparent understanding: "To be understood appeared extremely fascinating (p. 297)." After this meeting a period of argument with himself ensues (pp. 299-303), followed by more meetings with Mikulin and, ultimately, another emotional meeting with his father:

> The obscure, unrelated young student Razumov, in the moment of great moral loneliness, was allowed to feel that he was an object of interest to a small group of people of high

> position. Prince K_____ was persuaded to intervene personally, and on a certain occasion gave way to a manly emotion which, all unexpected as it was, quite upset Mr. Razumov. The sudden embrace of that man, agitated by his loyalty to a throne and by suppressed paternal affection, was a revelation to Mr. Razumov of something within his own breast. (pp. 307-308)

Razumov becomes a police spy. At the same time, however, he begins to understand, probably without realizing it consciously, that in his eagerness to be understood--to relate himself to his father--he has sacrificed a soul-mate for a "simple-minded, worldly ex-Guardsman and Senator," to whom he is related only by birth. The terrible irony of his betrayal of Haldin is that in allowing for only one possible source of satisfaction for his deep emotional need he has isolated himself even more than had the circumstances of his birth. He becomes fully aware of this fatal rigidity of mind only during his conversation with Haldin's grieving mother:

> And was it not something like enviousness which gripped his heart, as if of a privilege denied to him alone of all the men that had ever passed through this world? It was the other who had attained to repose and yet continued to exist in the affection of that mourning old woman, in the thoughts of all these people posing for lovers of humanity. It was impossible to get rid of him. "It's myself whom I have given up to destruction," thought Razumov. (p. 341)

At the end of the scene which follows, then, his newly achieved flexibility of mind enables him at last, after another profoundly introspective argument within himself, to settle both his desire to be understood and his impulse to confess on the same person, on Natalia who will understand:

> "Listen, Kirylo Sidorovitch. I believe that the future will be merciful to us all. Revolutionist and reactionary, victim and executioner, betrayer and betrayed, they shall all be pitied together when the light breaks on our black

> sky at last. Pitied and forgotten; for without that there can be no union and no love." (p. 353)

At last Razumov can relate himself to another person, even if only by deliberately separating himself from her.

The amount of distortion involved in such an isolation of and concentration on one pattern of repetition from a novel is shown by the fact that Razumov's motivation as presented above approximates that of Heyst in Victory where the theme of isolation is studied much more fully and more explicitly than in Under Western Eyes. But, kept in its proper perspective in a fully rounded analysis of a work, the result of this kind of approach to Conrad through his structural techniques can offer a useful corrective to other approaches. That the same thing holds true for the novels of Faulkner will be demonstrated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

In three of his best novels, The Sound and the Fury (1929), Light in August (1932), and Absalom, Absalom! (1936), William Faulkner adapted, exploited, and extended the techniques of Conradian impressionism, thus revealing both a profound understanding of the artistic practices of Conrad and the extent of his own genius. For, like all great writers, Faulkner was able to convert to his own ends Conrad's technical experiments and make his novels original creations rather than derivative ones. Nevertheless, the fact that he adapted from Conrad so many of his own basic techniques makes the Conradian techniques keys to the understanding of the structure of Faulkner's novels and makes the approach to these novels through Conradian impressionism almost as illuminating as it is for Conrad's own.

The importance to Faulkner's novels of his often brilliant adaptations of Conradian techniques can be demonstrated through a brief consideration of The Sound and the Fury, probably his best novel and one rightly regarded as being indebted to the works of James Joyce. The influence of Joyce on The Sound and the Fury is fairly obvious and has been explored persuasively by several of Faulkner's critics.[1] It may

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[1]See Carvel Collins, English Institute Essays, (1952), pp. 29-31; Collins, Princeton University Library Chronicle, XVIII (Spring, 1957), p. 115; Richard Chase, The American Novel and its Tradition, pp. 223-224; and Peter Swiggart, The Art of Faulkner's Novels, pp. 22-24, 61-81.

well be, however, as Faulkner indicated at Nagano, that Joyce's influence on his art was much less profound than has generally been assumed. The monologues of Benjy and Quentin, for instance, frequently described as psychologically valid interpretations of the streams-of-consciousness of an idiot and his psychotic-depressive brother, might be just as accurately described, technically, as adaptations and extensions of the Marlovian narrative of Lord Jim. The possibility exists, that is, that Conrad, not Joyce, offered the primary inspiration for Faulkner's techniques and that even The Sound and the Fury belongs as much to the tradition of Conradian impressionism as to that of the Joycean stream-of-consciousness novel.

Mention has been made in Chapter Two of Faulkner's rendering of the material of the three internal monologues in the novel. A famous example of this rendering, not yet mentioned, is the following passage from the Benjy section:

> "Ow, mammy." Luster said. "Ow, mammy."
> I put my hand out to where the fire had been.
> "Catch him." Dilsey said. "Catch him back."
> My hand jerked back and I put it in my mouth and Dilsey caught me. I could still hear the clock between my voice. Dilsey reached back and hit Luster on the head. My voice was going loud every time.
> "Get that soda." Dilsey said. She took my hand out of my mouth. My voice went louder then and my hand tried to go back to my mouth, but Dilsey held it. My voice went loud. She sprinkled soda on my hand. (p. 78)

The felicity of this passage as an example of rendering rather than reporting--the fact, for instance, that the words burn and scream are never used--is so well known that there is little need to enlarge on the point here.

What does need to be emphasized, however, is that the internal

monologues of The Sound and the Fury are presented in the first person and are developed very largely through rendered scenes meaningfully juxtaposed with each other through shifts of time akin to those of Marlow's narrative in Lord Jim. In the Benjy section, as has often been pointed out, Benjy's seemingly chaotic juxtaposition of scenes from the past and the present reveals his lack of a sense of time; not so often remarked, though, is the fact that, as in Lord Jim, these jumbled scenes form a pattern of meaning through implicit comparisons and contrasts. Through their structural proximity to each other they modify each other and thus help the reader discover the significance of seemingly irrelevant or unimportant events and remarks. A group of scenes within the twenty-three page span from page thirty-seven through page fifty-nine will illustrate the point. The first eleven and the last five of these pages (37-47, 55-59) are given over to an interweaving of scenes from two important episodes in the Benjy section, Damuddy's death (1898) and Caddy's wedding (1910). At the branch on the evening of Damuddy's death Caddy prophetically gets "all wet and muddy behind," but at the end of the first segment from this episode, she still smells "like trees in the rain (p. 38)." Twenty-one pages later the last segment of the episode of Caddy's wedding ends with the words, ". . . and Caddy put her arms around me, and her shining veil, and I couldn't smell trees anymore and I began to cry (p. 59)." Between the interwoven scenes from these two episodes, occur--together with short fragments of scenes from the present and from the episode of Roskus's death--scenes from the episode of Quentin's funeral (1910) and from that of Mr. Compson's death and funeral (1912). In these latter scenes the baby Quentin, Caddy's daughter, is much in evidence.

Thus, these twenty-three pages epitomize the entire Compson story, in which Caddy is the central character and her loss of virginity the central event, precipitating the deaths of her brother and father and the hatred of Jason for young Quentin, the symbol of his thwarted ambition.

In the Quentin section the scenes are just as carefully rendered and just as carefully juxtaposed, though more conventionally Conradian in that they are longer and more nearly complete in themselves. Two of them, Quentin's conversation with the boys at the bridge concerning the big old trout, and his attempt to find the little Italian girl's home, are closely parallel to Marlow's digressive episodes in Lord Jim. Both these scenes seem to be diversions in present time from Quentin's obsessive thoughts about Caddy, but they are not, of course, diversions at all, artistically. Like Marlow's seemingly irrelevant digressions in Lord Jim, they allow Faulkner to change the pace of the section and introduce variety into it while at the same time deepening its meaning through implicit comparison and contrast. The little girl, for instance, whom Quentin calls "sister," is, in contrast to Caddy, a little sister who will allow him to protect and direct her as Caddy had never done. At the same time she represents St. Francis's Little Sister Death "from which no man escapeth," though Quentin tries to escape her (pp. 151-153), just as he is trying to escape time, in which alone his resolve to commit suicide is meaningful: if he succeeds in taking himself out of time otherwise, he will not have to kill himself to do it. Finally and perhaps most importantly, the passionate attack of the little girl's real brother, Julio, on Quentin ironically foreshadows Quentin's ineffectuality in the same situation:

> We went down. His hands were jabbing at my face and he was saying something and trying to bite me, I reckon, and then they hauled him off and held him heaving and thrashing and yelling and they held his arms and he tried to kick me until they dragged him back.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "I killa heem," Julio said. He struggled. Two men held him. (p. 158)

By contrast, as we learn almost immediately in Quentin's flashback to the Dalton Ames episode, Ames alone holds Quentin easily, and then Quentin faints (pp. 179-181). Even more damaging to Quentin's claim on the reader's sympathy is the contrast between Julio's passionate love of his little sister and Quentin's obsession with Caddy as a symbol of lost honor and family pride. It is, of course, a contrast between a vital involvement in life and a denial of life through an espousal of abstractions.

Correlated with this adaptation of the time-shift technique in The Sound and the Fury is Faulkner's adaptation of the Conradian progression d'effet. Of the major elements of this technique as Conrad practiced it, Faulkner uses all three in this novel, though his critics have centered their attention in his incremental repetition of symbolic images and motifs.[1] The reason is, almost certainly, that many of them have discussed the novel exclusively in terms of the stream-of-consciousness tradition in which the use of repeated images and motifs--such motifs as the mirrors, the fire, the clocks, and the shadow in this

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[1]For discussions of these images and motifs in The Sound and the Fury, see Collins, Princeton University Library Chronicle, XVIII (Spring, 1957), p. 116; Collins, English Institute Essays, (1952), pp. 32-35; Robert Humphrey, "The Form and Function of Stream of Consciousness in William Faulkner's 'The Sound and the Fury'," University of Kansas City Review, XIX (Autumn, 1952), pp. 35-40; and Lawrance Thompson, "Mirror Analogues in The Sound and the Fury," WF:III, pp. 211-225.

novel--is a basic structural technique.[1] But if one comes at The Sound and the Fury from Conradian impressionism, he recognizes a second of the elements in the fact that Faulkner paces the novel in much the same manner as Conrad paces Lord Jim. The pace increases steadily as one moves from the bewildering Benjy section through the less chaotic Quentin section and Jason's unintentional self-satire into the omniscient, third-person, straightforward account in the last section.

This last section culminates in that climactic scene of Benjy's agonized bellowing on being driven the wrong way around the square. Here one ought to recognize the third element of the progression d'effet, the incremental repetition of scenes, for this scene is a virtual repetition of a scene which occurs early in the Benjy section (pp. 19-32). As he passes the carriage house with Luster in 1928, Benjy notices the new wheel on the carriage. This observation triggers in his mind a scene from the period immediately following his father's death in 1912 which establishes the pattern of his carriage rides to the cemetery by way of the square. In spite of Mrs. Compson's objections to being driven by T. P. rather than Roskus, this first ride finally gets under way.

> "Hum up, there." T. P. said. He hit Queenie with the whip.
>
> "You, T. P." Mother said, clutching me. 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 wheels. Then those on one side stopped at the tall white post where the soldier was. But on the other side they went on smooth and steady, but a little slower.
>
> "What do you want." Jason said. He had his hands in his pockets and a pencil behind his ear.

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[1] See Robert Humphrey, Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel, pp. 85-107.

"We're going to the cemetery." Mother said.
"All right." Jason said. "I dont aim to stop you, do I. Was that all you wanted with me, just to tell me that."
"I know you wont come." Mother said. "I'd feel safer if you would."
"Safe from what." Jason said. "Father and Quentin cant hurt you."
Mother put her handkerchief under her veil. "Stop it, Mother." Jason said. "Do you want to get that damn Loony to bawling in the middle of the square. Drive on, T. P."
. . . . . .
"Hum up, Queenie." T. P. said. The shapes flowed on. The ones on the other side began again, bright and fast and smooth, like when Caddy says we are going to sleep. (pp. 31-32)

The last scene of the book develops through the same pattern as this early one, though it is Dilsey, not Mrs. Compson, who doubts the ability of Luster, not T. P., to drive Benjy safely to the cemetery and back and though the meeting with Jason at the square occurs this time because Luster has, indeed, got "that damn Loony to bawling in the middle of the square." The route is the same; the carriage is the same; even the horse is the same, though in 1912, according to Dilsey, Queenie was already older than T. P. "and Benjy put together (p. 29)." Luster's "hum up, Queenie," is very reminiscent of T. P.'s. And at the end of each scene Benjy sits serenely holding his flower and watching the shapes flowing smoothly by, "each in its ordered place."

A great many critics have remarked of this last scene that it reiterates Benjy's fear of and resistance to change, and, of course, it does. Surely, however, it does more. Faulkner's care in making the last scene of the novel a third-person, omniscient account of a scene rendered earlier through Benjy's mind indicates, I think, that he had a deeper intent than re-emphasizing a point fairly well established already by Benjy's reactions to Caddy's wearing of perfume and her loss of the

smell of trees through loss of her virginity. In fact, I believe, this scene is Faulkner's final comment on an entire society's fear of and resistance to time and change, a major theme in every section of the novel. It is, to be specific, his comment on the South's fear of and resistance to change, for, in the paragraph immediately preceding his agonized bellowing, Benjy is very carefully equated with the statue of Confederate soldier:

> They approached the square, where the Confederate soldier gazed with empty eyes beneath his marble hand into wind and weather. Luster took still another notch in himself and gave the impervious Queenie a cut with the switch, casting his glance about the square. "Dar Mr. Jason's car," he said then he spied another group of negroes. "Les show dem niggers how quality does, Benjy," he said, "What you say?" He looked back. Ben sat, holding the flower in his fist, his gaze empty and untroubled. Luster hit Queenie again and swung her to the left at the monument. (p. 335, My italics)

This paragraph, in my opinion, is the key to at least one of the meanings of that enigmatic final sentence in the book: "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. 336)."

Thus, anticipating his own further experiment in Absalom, Absalom!, Faulkner extends Conrad's technique of repeating a scene with deepening variations by changing the point of view from which the scene is presented. But perhaps even more important for The Sound and the Fury itself, especially for the structure of the monologues of Benjy and Quentin, is the way he fuses the techniques of incremental repetition of scenes with that of the time-shift. In the Benjy section, for instance, he makes Benjy's repetition in the present of an action performed in the

past the chief means by which the character's mind is switched from the present to the past. Since Benjy lives primarily in the past, having very few memories of scenes occurring after 1912, his relatively few actions in the present are almost without exception repetitions of past actions.[1] Consequently, when an important action or scene does occur in the present, Faulkner can plausibly interweave it with the scene from the past of which it is a repetition, thereby emphasizing immediately the comparisons and contrasts between episodes from different levels of time. Probably the best example of this technique is the interweaving of the scenes of Benjy's finding Caddy in the swing with Charlie and, twenty years later, Quentin in the swing with the man from the carnival (pp. 65-70). The interweaving of these two scenes suggests both the pathetic inevitability of Quentin's plight and the progressive degradation of the Compson family. Unlike her mother, Quentin has no one like Ben to act as her conscience. And her female "natural affinity for evil" is encouraged, not only by Mrs. Compson's attitude--the same attitude as she had manifested with regard to Caddy ("'Did Grandmother send you all out here to spy on me.'")--but also by the family's expectations of her. These expectations, growing out of the conditions of her birth, she fulfills in her promiscuity and elopement. In other words the sin of the mother is visited on the head of the daughter, and there is a measurable deterioration from the one to the other. Whereas Caddy's youthful sex

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[1]The Benjy section is not so much a realistic portrayal of an idiot's lack of a sense of time as it is a brilliant variation of the flashback technique by means of which Faulkner, in the first section of the novel, renders certain crucial scenes for the reader. An idiot with the mind of a three-year-old would probably live almost wholly in the present, and if he did remember the past, he would probably, like most people, remember the good, not the bad.

play--as with Charlie--had been consummated in her passionate attachment to a relatively attractive man, Dalton Ames, Quentin at the same age is already merely promiscuous with the immature males of her acquaintance. The man with the red tie is only the latest, not the first.[1]

In the Quentin section the fusion of the technique of the repeated scene with that of the time-shift results not so much in an interweaving of scenes from different levels of time as in a superimposition of one upon the other. The best example is Quentin's re-living of the Dalton Ames episode during the picnic with the Blands. This scene begins as a repetition of Quentin's welcome at the train station in Jefferson two days before Caddy's wedding. As Caddy, Herbert Head, and Mrs. Compson had, at that time, picked Quentin up in Caddy's new car, so now Gerald, Mrs. Bland, Spoade, Shreve, and the two girls pick him up in the village where he has been arrested; and as Mrs. Compson had prattled on all the way home, so Mrs. Bland, the same kind of sham Southern gentlewoman, prattles on now in much the same vein, until Quentin begins to confuse the earlier ride with the present one (pp. 112-114, 164-167). As in the earlier ride his obsession had been with Caddy's sin, so now that obsession surges up once more, causing him to relive mentally some scenes from the summer of 1909 while re-enacting in the present (1910) his earlier role (pp. 168-185). At the picnic, confusing Gerald Bland with Dalton Ames, he bridles at Bland-Ames's innuendoes, asks "did you ever have a sister did you." and then attacks (pp. 179, 185). Bland, of course, knocks him unconscious, a state which repeats his fainting in the Ames

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[1]On page 340 of William Faulkner: The Yoknapatowpha Country, published two months after this chapter was written, Cleanth Brooks makes much the same point about Quentin.

episode, and so as he re-lives his emergence from unconsciousness, Quentin finally passes fully into the present once more--a present in which he is as ineffectual as he has been in the past. For Quentin's actions in the present, like Benjy's, are repetitions of his actions in the past. Like Benjy, he cannot accept time and change, and so his life is ordered by the past.

Finally, throughout the novel Faulkner justifies his characters in the Conradian manner for the Conradian reason, to contribute to the effect of inevitability, to make a character's "action the only action that character could have taken." Perhaps the best example of Faulkner's employment of this technique is his justification in the first two sections of Jason's greed and sadistic vengefulness, in preparation for the discoveries the reader is to make in the third section about his self-righteous misappropriation of funds from Caddy, Quentin, and his mother. And perhaps the most important device in Faulkner's adaptation of this technique is his adaptation of a Conradian practice exemplified in scenes such as that of Jim's failure to jump from the training ship and Stevie's setting off the fireworks in the stairwell. Swiggart calls Faulkner's device the use of "microcosmic scenes." These are scenes, in flashbacks involving childhood experiences, which "tell the reader almost nothing about the cause of a character's personality," that is, about the origins of his attitudes; rather, they are scenes "in which the attitudes or obsessions of important characters are shown to be already present" in childhood.[1]

In the first view of Jason we have in the novel, for instance,

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[1] The Art of Faulkner's Novels, p. 24.

one of Benjy's observations about him is, "He had his hands in his pockets and a pencil behind his ear (p. 31)." This glimpse of him from the period immediately following his father's death in 1912 is followed by parts of three scenes from the episode of Damuddy's death (1898) when he would have been only five years old:

> "Jason wont tell." Quentin said. "You remember that bow and arrow I made you, Jason."
> "It's broke now." Jason said. (p. 39)

> "I'm hungry." Jason said. He passed us and ran on up the walk. He had his hands in his pockets and he fell down. Versh went and picked him up.
> "If you keep them hands out your pockets, you could stay on your feet." Versh said. "You cant never get them out in time to catch yourself, fat as you is."
> Father was standing by the kitchen steps.
> "Where's Quentin." he said.
> "He coming up the walk." Versh said. Quentin was coming slow. His shirt was a white blur.
> "Oh," Father said. Light fell down the steps, on him.
> "Caddy and Quentin threw water on each other." Jason said.
> We waited.
> "They did." Father said. (p. 43)

> "Do you think buzzards are going to undress Damuddy." Caddy said. "You're crazy."
> "You're a skizzard." Jason said. He began to cry.
> "You're a knobnot." Caddy said. Jason cried. His hands were in his pockets.
> "Jason going to be rich man." Versh said. "He holding his money all the time." (p. 55)

These scene fragments are followed, in turn, by Dilsey's reference in the present to his parsimony:

> You all go ahead and eat this cake, now, before Jason come. I dont want him jumping on me about a cake I bought with my own money. Me baking a cake here, with him counting every egg that comes into this kitchen. (pp. 75-76)

Finally, Jason's attitude in the present is dramatized in his refusal to give Luster a quarter for the carnival.

Quentin has only a few memories of situations involving Jason, but he thinks twice, significantly, of one such episode. The first memory arises out of his memory of his mother's prattle in Caddy's car on the day of his return to Jefferson for the wedding:

> . . . did I write you that he is going to take Jason into his bank when Jason finishes high school Jason will make a splendid banker he is the only one of my children with any practical sense you can thank me for that he takes after my people the others are all Compson Jason furnished the flour. They made kites on the back porch and sold them for a nickel a piece, he and the Patterson boy. Jason was treasurer. (p. 113)

Quentin's second such memory occurs near the end of his monologue and arises out of his reflections on the character of his mother and Jason.

> . . . Father said Uncle Maury was too poor a classicist to risk the blind immortal boy in person he should have chosen Jason because Jason would have made only the same kind of blunder Uncle Maury himself would have made not one to get him a black eye the Patterson boy was smaller than Jason too they sold the kites for a nickel apiece until the trouble over finances Jason got a new partner still smaller one small enough anyway because T. P. said Jason still treasurer. . . . (pp. 193-194)

Thus, by the time he gets to the third section of the novel, the reader is fully prepared to accept as characteristic the viciousness and niggardliness which Jason displays, beginning in his first paragraph:

> Once a bitch, always a bitch, what I say. I says you're lucky if her playing out of school is all that worries you. I says she ought to be down therein that kitchen right now, instead of up there in her room, gobbing paint on her face and waiting for six niggers that cant even stand up out of a chair unless they've got a pan full of bread and meat to balance them, to fix breakfast for her. (p. 198)

In these ways, then, Faulkner adapts Conradian techniques to his own needs in The Sound and the Fury, a novel both more and less original than it is generally held to be by those critics who see only the influ-

ence of Joyce upon it. It is more original in that it is Faulkner's unique combination of his own experience and some techniques assimilated from the works of both Conrad and Joyce. It is not, that is, merely a simplification or deliberate misunderstanding of Joyce's practice. It is less original in that Faulkner's departures from Joycean practice have the weight of Conradian practice behind them. And it may be, indeed, that what Faulkner learned from Conrad more than offsets what he learned from Joyce, even in The Sound and the Fury. Generally described as stream-of-consciousness fiction, this novel may belong to the stream-of-consciousness tradition more in appearance than in substance. The unconventional appearance on the page of the frequently unpunctuated writing and the suggestions, through the time-shifts and the repeated (obsessive) motifs and images, that a character's stream-of-consciousness is being presented have obscured the fact that in many respects Faulkner's techniques are not those of the stream-of-consciousness tradition at all: even the Benjy and Quentin sections of the novel, the sections most reminiscent of other stream-of-consciousness fiction, are presented in the first person through vividly rendered scenes which tell a story as much as they reveal the internal workings of a character's mind.

Always, of course, interesting as it may be in itself, the information that Faulkner adapted some of his basic techniques from those of Conrad is critically valuable only as it contributes to the elucidation of the novels. If, therefore, it proves valuable for a reading of The Sound and the Fury, it ought to prove even more valuable for a reading

of Light in August, a novel in which the adaptation of Conradian techniques is more obvious. And, in fact, the approach to Light in August through the Conradian techniques can help, I think, to illuminate certain shadowy--and controversial--areas in this novel's structure and thus help to clarify its major themes.

Light in August is reminiscent, generally, of Nostromo in the manner in which it employs the techniques of Conradian impressionism. Like Nostromo presented primarily from the point of view of the omnisient author (or implied author), Light in August, again like Nostromo, uses shifts in time and from character to character to help create a sense of depth in its coverage of the whole community of Jefferson.[1] The first three chapters indicate the nature of the novel's structure. Chapter One introduces Lena Grove as a young woman whose classic serenity and implicit faith in and acceptance of life are to represent throughout the novel the kind of wholeness which is lacking in so many of the other characters. At the same time, however, Faulkner always makes the most of the earthy humor of Lena's naiveté and of the situation into which it has led her:

> "I wonder where she got that belly," Winterbottom said.
> "I wonder how far she has brought it afoot," Armstid said.
> "Visiting somebody back down the road, I reckon," Winterbottom said.
> "I reckon not. Or I would have heard. And it aint nobody up my way, neither. I would have heard that, too."
> "I reckon she knows where she is going," Winterbottom said. "She walks like it."
> "She'll have company, before she goes much further," Armstid said. (p. 8)

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[1]For a discussion of the distinction which ought to be made between the author of a novel and its implied author, see Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction, pp. 151-165.

This humor contrasts throughout the novel with the grimness of the history of Joe Christmas, for instance, and it is significant that the novel begins and ends with Lena Grove, suggesting, perhaps, that life drives on towards the future despite all the dark passages in its past.

Within the novel, however, this humor serves a more important function. Its earthy concreteness creates and maintains the illusion that Light in August is a "realistic" novel, for the realistic scenes--if one may use the term scenes--are concerned almost invariably with the story of Lena Grove and her lovers, Lucas Burch (Joe Brown) and Byron Bunch. Actually, there are no fully developed dramatic scenes in Light in August. Rather, like Nostromo and in anticipation of Absalom, Absalom!, the entire novel is presented through narration made concrete by vivid fragments of scenes, vivid snatches of conversation, and vividly rendered bits of detail, which make the reader see while allowing the author to keep the story moving. This method, exploiting the advantages of rendering while avoiding its major disadvantage, is, as Conrad demonstrates in Nostromo, especially suited to a big novel which depicts the fates of several characters and covers long periods of time. Even Ford admitted,

> Sometimes to render anything at all in a given space will take up too much room--even to render the effect and delivery of a speech. Then just boldly and remorselessly you must relate and risk the introduction of yourself as author, with the danger that you may destroy all the illusion of the story.[1]

Faulkner, then, without actually dramatizing the events depicted

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[1] Joseph Conrad, p. 184. Later in the same discussion Ford writes, "directly reported speeches in a book do move very slowly; by the use of indirect locutions, together with the rendering of the effect of other portions of speech, you can get a great deal more into a given space (pp. 186-187)."

in Light in August, gives them the force of fully rendered scenes. But of these scenes the most authentic--in Mark Twain's sense of the term--are those dealing with Lena Grove and her lovers, and it is these scenes which make effective the brooding abstraction of the stories of Joe Christmas and Gail Hightower. For if Faulkner adapts the general method of Nostromo, he does so for a purpose a little different from that of Conrad. Whereas Conrad is as interested in creating an authentic South American country as in conducting a fictional examination of capitalistic imperialism, Faulkner is much more interested in his fictional examination of the mental set of Southern Calvinists than in making his novel a sociologically accurate representation of a Southern community.[1] He is, in other words, more interested in the effective presentation of his themes than in the realistic presentation of authentic characters, and so he subordinates his characters, especially Joe Christmas and Gail Hightower, to the thematic patterns of the book.[2] Thus, whereas Conrad devotes the entire first section of Nostromo to the creation of an authentic Costaguana, Faulkner brilliantly suggests the real South of the 1930's in his first chapter and then turns in Chapter Two to his major thematic pattern.

In Conradian terms Chapter Two offers the reader a strong first impression of Joe Christmas, the most important--though not the most

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[1]William Van O'Connor first pointed out the fact that Light in August is a fictional examination of Southern Calvinism, in The Tangled Fire of William Faulkner, pp. 72-73.

[2]On this point see Alfred Kazin, "The Stillness of Light in August," WF:III, pp. 253-254; Ilse Dusoir Lind, "The Calvinistic Burden of Light in August," New England Quarterly, XXX (September, 1957), p. 327; Swiggart, The Art of Faulkner's Novels, pp. 4-6, 21, 60, 200-204, et passim.

realistic--character of the book. This first impression of Joe, to be followed in Chapters Five through Twelve by a working "backwards and forwards over his past," depends largely for its force, in good Conradian fashion, on the contrast between Joe and Lena Grove as she has been presented in Chapter One. Whereas Lena has allowed people to help her--even depended on their doing so--and has been ingenuously frank with them, Joe coldly, contemptuously, refuses proffered aid: penniless, he turns down Byron Bunch's offer to share his lunch, saying, "'I aint hungry. Keep your muck (p. 30).'" Likewise, he refuses all forms of personal intercourse.

> He still had nothing to say to anyone, even after six months. No one knew what he did between mill hours. Now and then one of his fellow workers would pass him on the square down town after supper, and it would be as though Christmas had never seen the other before. He would be wearing then the new hat and the ironed trousers and the cigarette in one side of his mouth and the smoke sneering across his face. (p. 31)

Even two years later when, in town, Brown's inane jollity draws a small group together, Christmas turns "and with that still, sullen face of his" walks away (p. 35). Thus, the reader's first impression of Joe Christmas is of a man who deliberately chooses to isolate himself from other men, and this impression, though often slighted in critical discussions, is important to the novel, especially to its thematic structure.

In Chapter Three the reader is introduced to another isolated character, the Reverend Gail Hightower, former minister of the Presbyterian church, whose isolation, in contrast to that of Joe Christmas, seems at first to be a result of circumstances beyond his control. At any rate this is the position Hightower has taken (pp. 64-65), and so, as Byron Bunch begins on Sunday night (Chapter Four) to recount the news of his

meeting with Lena Grove and of the murder of Joanna Burden, Hightower listens "as though he were listening to the doings of a different race (p. 70)." Soon, however, he listens with an "expression of shrinking and denial (p. 73)," and by the end of Byron's narrative, sweat is running down his face "like tears (p. 87)." Having responded at first to his sense of the danger for Byron in the latter's involvement with Lena Grove, Hightower at last, in spite of himself, feels a kind of generalized compassion: "'Is it certain, proved, that he has Negro blood? Think, Byron; what it will mean when the people--if they catch . . . Poor man. Poor mankind (p. 87).'"[1]

Thus Faulkner initiates in Chapters Two, Three, and Four the thematic pattern which culminates, in the next-to-last chapter of the novel, in Hightower's discovery of mankind's moral responsibility for the evil in the world. This discovery, the major statement in what is thematically the climactic chapter of the novel, reveals not only the ultimate significance of Hightower's story, but also that of the story of Joe Christmas. Consequently, it makes the thematic pattern which it climaxes a major unifying element in the novel, for Hightower's movement towards his discovery, from an initial isolation akin to that of Joe Christmas, subsumes the less complete movement of the other character in the same direction. And, owing to his greater self-awareness and greater articulateness, Hightower is able finally to make explicit to himself--and to the reader--the significance of that movement, a significance left largely implicit in the story of Christmas.

After the long flashback-biography of Joe Christmas in Chapters

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[1]Faulkner's ellipses.

Five throuth Twelve, then, Hightower's story picks up in Chapter Thirteen where it had left off in Chapter Four. On this Tuesday night as Byron Bunch begins to tell of his growing involvement with Lena Grove, Hightower thinks still in general terms of mankind:

> "It is because so much happens. Too much happens. That's it. Man performs, engenders, so much more than he can or should have to bear. That's how he finds that he can bear anything. That's it. That's what is so terrible. That he can bear anything, anything." (p. 262)

Very shortly, however, he begins to feel, in specific terms, the claims of humanity upon himself. Hearing on Wednesday of the discovery of Christmas's trail, he must justify to himself his refusal to take an active role in life:

> "I wont. I wont. I have bought immunity." It is like words spoken aloud now: reiterative, patient, justificative: "I paid for it. I didn't quibble about the price. No man can say that. I just wanted peace; I paid them their price without quibbling." (p. 271)

Through this thought Faulkner makes explicit for the first time the parallel between Hightower and Christmas, for Hightower's "'I just wanted peace,'" is parallel to Christmas's "all I wanted was peace" in Chapter Five (p. 97).[1] In both cases, of course, the peace desired is the peace of moral irresponsibility, and, fighting to maintain his lack of involvement, Hightower refuses on the following Sunday night to perjure himself, implicate himself in homosexuality, in order to allow old Mrs. Hines one

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[1]The connection had been made more subtly a little earlier, in Hightower's thinking that the devil was helping both Byron Bunch and Joe Christmas (pp. 269, 271). He himself, of course, had been aided by the same gentleman twenty-five years earlier: as he came out of the church on the morning of his wife's death, "his face looked like the face of Satan in the old prints (p. 59)." It is made explicitly once more in the parallel between Hightower's "'I wanted so little, asked so little. It would seem. . . (p. 431).'" and Christmas's "'That didn't seem to be a whole lot to ask in thirty years (p. 289).'" See also pp. 97, 100.

day with the grandson she had never known: "'It's not because I cant, don't dare to . . . it's because I wont! I wont! do you hear (p. 342)?'"

Nevertheless, he does become involved the following morning by going to the cabin to deliver Lena's baby, achieving thereby a sense of purpose and of pride for the first time in twenty-five years (pp. 347, 355, 363), and that afternoon he attempts to stop the lynching of Christmas by telling the men that Joe had been with him on the night of the murder. He is ready now for that important meditation which takes place at sunset. As he waits for the return of his grandfather's cavalry troop, he reviews the crucial events in his past and begins to recognize the lies he has told himself to justify his disengagement from life. He had told Byron Bunch earlier that it was not by his own choice that he was no longer a man of God (pp. 319-320). But he now begins to recognize his responsibility in that matter as in the frustration and death of his wife (pp. 427-428). His major discovery follows then, hard upon his last rationalization:

> "And after all, I have paid. I have bought my ghost, even though I did pay for it with my life. And who can forbid me doing that? It is any man's privilege to destroy himself, so long as he does not injure anyone else, so long as he lives to and of himself--" He stops suddenly. Motionless, unbreathing, there comes upon him a consternation which is about to be actual horror. He is aware of the sand now; with the realisation of it he feels within himself a gathering as though for some tremendous effort. Progress now is still progress, yet it is now indistinguishable from the recent past like the already traversed inches of sand which cling to the turning wheel, raining back with a dry hiss that before this should have warned him: ". . . revealed to my wife my hunger, my ego . . . instrument of her despair and shame. . ." and without his having thought it at all, a sentence seems to stand fullsprung across his skull, behind his eyes: I dont want to think this. I must not think this. I dare not think this As he sits in the window, leaning forward above his motionless hands, sweat begins to

> pour from him, springing out like blood, and pouring. Out of the instant the sand-clutched wheel of thinking turns on with the slow implacability of a mediaeval torture instrument, beneath the wrenched and broken sockets of his spirit, his life: "Then, if this is so, if I am the instrument of her despair and death, then I am in turn instrument of someone outside myself. And I know that for fifty years I have not even been clay: I have been a single instant of darkness in which a horse galloped and a gun crashed. And if I am my dead grandfather on the instant of his death, then my wife, his grandson's wife . . . the debaucher and murderer of my grandson's wife, since I could neither let my grandson live or die . . ." (pp. 429-430, Faulkner's ellipses)

What he finally comes to realize is that no man <u>can</u> live "to and of himself." He comes to the shattering realization that human agents, his idolized grandfather among them, are responsible for the evil of the world. Just as he is partially responsible for his wife's death, so his grandfather is partially responsible for the direction his life has taken. He, like the South, is a "victim," in other words, not of some omnipotent external fate or gigantic old curse or heroic old ghost as he would have liked to believe, but of shortsighted, selfish, careless men, his grandfather among them. Faulkner's point, that is, in bringing into this late chapter an account of Hightower's childhood and youth is not to represent him as a naturalistic victim of vague forces called heredity and environment, not to deny his moral responsibility for his actions, but to affirm that responsibility and the responsibility of other <u>men</u> for the evil in the world.

Thus Hightower's discovery is a specific commentary, again in the Conradian manner, on the concept of the Player as it is presented at the end of the preceding chapter in the account of Christmas's death. This concept of the Player epitomizes that vulgarization of the Calvinistic doctrines of Election and Predestination which manifests itself in the

set of mind enabling a person to justify any of his actions at all: on the assumption that he is a chosen instrument of God, one can justify whatever he undertakes in the name of God (or country) as being sanctioned by God. By virtue of this assumption Doc Hines justifies his allowing his daughter to die in childbirth unattended by a physician (p. 333); McEachern justifies his cold, impersonal, ruthless rearing of Joe Christmas (p. 133); Joanna Burden justifies her attempt to kill Christmas (pp. 246-247); he justifies his killing of her ("he believed with calm paradox that he was the volitionless servant of the fatality in which he believed that he did not believe. He was saying to himself I had to do it already in the past tense. . . ." pp. 244-245); and, finally, Percy Grimm justifies his killing and mutilation of Joe ("he seemed to be served by certitude, the blind and untroubled faith in the rightness and infallibility of his actions (p. 402).").

The point is that in writing of the Player who guides Grimm's actions, Faulkner is rendering Grimm's secularized Calvinism from the inside, not depicting him from the outside as a naturalistic pawn of some outside force. In fact the image of the Player is introduced a little earlier in the book in connection with Joe Brown, and there Faulkner makes it clear that the image is Brown's image, not his: "It seemed to him now that they were all just shapes like chessmen--the Negro, the sheriff, the money, all--unpredictable and without reason moved here and there by an Opponent who could read his moves before he made them and who created spontaneous rules which he and not the Opponent, must follow (p. 383)."[1] Moreover, in the manner of a Conradian repetition of

[1]This passage is, of course, an almost perfect example of the other side of the assumption of Divine sanction--a man's rationalization of his failure by reference to the enmity of God.

scenes, Grimm's pursuit of Christmas is a repetition of earlier actions of Hines and McEachern. As McEachern and his horse offer "some juggernautish simulation of terrific speed" in pursuit of Joe and Bobby Allen at the dance (p. 176), so Grimm on his bicycle pursues Joe "with the delicate swiftness of an apparition, the implacable undeviation of Juggernaut or Fate (p. 403)." Calm, rapt, impersonal as McEachern himself--or Christmas (p. 131)--in his conviction of infallibility, Grimm moves, like McEachern, or like Hines in pursuit of his eloping daughter (pp. 328-329), with "unfailing certitude" straight to wherever Christmas attempts to hide (pp. 402-406).[1] And as Hines thinks of himself as "the instrument of His will (p. 333)," so Grimm thinks of himself as an instrument of the Player, thus justifying his killing and mutilation of Joe Christmas in defence of God, country, and Southern womanhood.

Hightower's discovery in the next chapter that man, not God, is responsible for the evil of the world is, of course, Faulkner's climactic comment on this attitude, the primary object of his fictional examination in Light in August. And Hightower's discovery is the culmination, not only of his story, but also of the story of Joe Christmas; that is, it draws together the separate threads of plot and theme in the novel, ties them all together, and makes of the novel finally one unified work of art rather than three artificially related stories. Three facts argue that Hightower's discovery is the end towards which the story of Christmas moves. The first is Faulkner's care in portraying him as "the sternest and most doctrinaire 'Calvinist'" in the novel, desiring Justice

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[1] Blinded to all other considerations by his devotion to Lena, Byron Bunch is also "led" to Hightower's bedroom on the morning Lena's child is born, p. 345.

not Mercy, hating and fearing the limitations of man's flesh, his natural appetites for food (self-preservation) and sex (preservation of the race).[1] This care would seem to be merely irrelevant waste motion if, as some critics hold, Christmas's story has no inherent relationship with that of Hightower. Carl Benson writes, for instance, that whereas Hightower, as a moral agent possessing free will, is the moral protagonist of the novel, Christmas lives without free will in a deterministic world.[2] But this position denies the basis for the thematic unity of the novel, denies that Hightower's final insight illuminates the world of Christmas as well as his own.

The second relevant fact is that strong first impression of Christmas in Chapter Two, together with two unequivocal statements in Chapter Twelve. These later statements, the first by the author-narrator, the second by Christmas, support the first impression of him as a man who deliberately chooses isolation from other men:

> As time went on and the novelty of the second phase began to wear off and become habit, he would stand in the kitchen door and look out across the dusk and see, perhaps with foreboding and premonition, the savage and lonely street which he had chosen of his own will, waiting for him, thinking This is not my life. I dont belong here (p. 225, italics in lines 4 and 5 mine.)

> And then something in him flashed Why not? It would mean ease, security, for the rest of your life. You would never have to move again. And you might as well be married to her as this thinking, "No. If I give in now, I will deny all the thirty years that I have lived to make me what I chose to be." (p. 232 , Faulkner's italics.)

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[1] Cleanth Brooks, The Massachusetts Review, III (Summer, 1962), p. 707. See also O'Connor, The Tangled Fire, pp. 72-78; Swiggart, The Art of Faulkner's Novels, pp. 131-135; and Olga W. Vickery, The Novels of William Faulkner (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), pp. 70-71.

[2] "Thematic Design in Light in August," South Atlantic Quarterly, LIII (October, 1954), pp. 545-548.

Thus, if Christmas is really the naturalistic victim he is often taken to be, then Faulkner's portrait of him in Chapters Two and Twelve is glaringly inconsistent with that in several other chapters, notably Chapters Six through Nine.[1]

There is, I think, no real inconsistency, though it is understandable why Christmas should have been interpreted as a naturalistic victim. Published in 1932 when naturalism was the literary shibboleth (and when Conrad's stock was at its lowest point), Light in August does lend itself to the naturalistic interpretation. Chapters Six through Nine, especially, the chapters which present the vivid scenes of Joe's life at the orphanage and at the home of the McEacherns, do seem to provide the necessary deterministic life-history for a naturalistic victim. It might be argued, for instance, that Joe's encounter with the dietitian at the orphanage (Chapter Six, pp. 104-109) and his beating at the hands of McEachern for his failure to learn the Presbyterian catechism (Chapter Seven, pp. 128-136) account for his misogyny, his rebellion against the Calvinistic Jehovah God, and his masochistic need for punishment.[2] Yet all these attitudes are really derivatives of his basic obsession with his Negro blood, and, though this obsession is stressed in Chapter Five (pp. 99-101), again at the end of Chapter Seven (p. 146), and throughout the rest of the novel, the reader is given no clue as to its origin until Chapter Sixteen.

There Doc Hines describes a situation which might well, in a nat-

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[1]On Christmas as naturalistic victim, see Benson, Ibid.; Irving Howe, William Faulkner, pp. 49-50; Chase, The American Novel, pp. 213-214; and Kazin, WF:III, pp. 262-263.

[2]For early examples of the misogyny, see Chapter Five, pp. 93, 95, 100; for Joe's rebellion against God, see Chapter Five, pp. 91-93, 97.

uralistic novel, have been developed as an explanation of the origin of Joe's obsession with his Negro blood and, therefore, of his rebellion against God and his need for punishment:

> "So old Doc Hines he watched and he waited. From God's own boiler room he watched them children, and the devil's walking seed unbeknownst among them, polluting the earth with the working of that word on him. Because he didn't play with the other children no more now. He stayed by himself, standing still, and then old Doc Hines knew that he was listening to the hidden warning of God's doom, and old Doc Hines said to him, 'Why dont you play with them other children like you used to?' and he didn't say nothing and old Doc Hines said, 'Is it because they call you nigger?' and he didn't say nothing and old Doc Hines said, 'Do you think you are a nigger because God has marked your face?' and he said, 'Is God a nigger too?' and old Doc Hines said, 'He is the Lord God of wrathful hosts, His will be done. Not yours and not mine, because you and me are both a part of His purpose ahd His vengeance.' And he went away and old Doc Hines watched him hearing and listening to the vengeful will of the Lord, until old Doc Hines found out how he was watching the nigger working in the yard, following him around the yard while he worked, until at last the nigger said, 'What you watching me for, boy?' and he said, 'How come you are a nigger?' and the nigger said, 'Who told you I am a nigger, you little white trash bastard?' and he says, 'I aint a nigger,' and the nigger says, 'You are worse than that. You dont know what you are. And more than that, you wont never know. You'll live and you'll die and you wont never know,' and he says, God aint no nigger,' and the nigger says, 'I reckon you ought to know what God is, because dont nobody but God know what you is.'" (pp. 335-336)[1]

But this short, biased account is hardly the equal in force of the vivid, detailed scenes in Chapters Six and Seven.

The question is, then, why Faulkner chooses to emphasize the latter scenes and to relegate the scene described by Hines to a secondary

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[1]The story in Absalom, Absalom! of Charles Etienne Saint-Valery Bon, a brief redaction of the story of Joe Christmas, casts retrospective light on this point. Clearly Bon, part Negro but reared as a white person to accept white racial categories and assumptions, crucifies himself deliberately in order to punish himself for the sin of being part Negro. See pp. 205-210.

role. The answer is, I think, as Swiggart suggests, that the scenes in Chapters Six and Seven attempt to explain how Joe is in the present, not how he got that way:

> In the orphanage scenes of Light in August there is a clear description of traumatic experiences that could be said to explain Joe Christmas's later revulsion from sex, food, and money. But in my opinion such scenes have the primary functions of making Joe's stylized role more acceptable and of heightening the reader's awareness of his archetypal puritanism. Joe Christmas is not a realistic character, and although Faulkner strives to make his obsessions believable, he does not try to give him a realistic past.[1]

Faulkner is more interested, that is, in preparing the reader to accept Christmas's murder of Joanna Burden and subsequent lynching than in scoring a point for the deterministic philosophy. Thus the main purpose of the scene at the beginning of Chapter Seven, in which McEachern beats Joe on the hour for his failure to learn the catechism, is not to depict the origin of the latter's need for punishment or the origin of his rebellion against McEachern's God, but to emphasize forcefully the similarities between Joe's attitude and that of McEachern. Both are described in terms of rigidity, and, as McEachern whips Joe, "It would have been hard to say which face was the more rapt, more calm, more convinced (p. 131)."

The point is that the vivid scenes from Christmas's childhood and youth are not naturalistic scenes depicting the origins of his attitudes but microcosmic scenes epitomizing--and justifying--those attitudes in the same way as the microcosmic scenes of the first two sections of The Sound and the Fury justify Jason's attitudes. Chapter Seven is, in fact,

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[1] The Art of Faulkner's Novels, p. 25.

a series of three microcosmic scenes from Joe's life with the McEacherns, one from the eighth year of his life, one from his fourteenth year, and one from his seventeenth. These carefully selected scenes--his refusal to learn the catechism, his encounter with the little Negro prostitute, and his selling of his heifer--reveal him to be the archetypal Southern Calvinist, even in his rebellion against Jehovah, for his kind of rebellion implies an acceptance, not a denial, of the basic theological and moral assumptions of men such as McEachern and Hines. He finds, for instance, a certain satisfaction in the dependable system of rewards and punishments (Justice) which McEachern establishes (pp. 128-133, 139, 146). At the same time he scorns the attempted kindness of Mrs. McEachern (Mercy) and, at fourteen, beats the little Negro prostitute both because she is Negro and because she is female.

Thus, these microcosmic scenes form the basis for a Faulknerian progression d'effet which makes Joe's murder of Joanna Burden the inevitable culmination of his relationship with her. In the early chapters dealing with Christmas, Two, and Five through Twelve, repeated scenes and motifs link his life with the McEacherns to his life with Joanna Burden and make her background and attitudes mirror his own. One repeated scene is that of his refusal of proffered food. As he refuses the food Byron Bunch offers him (p. 30), so, after his whippings for not learning the catechism, he refuses the food Mrs. McEachern offers him, dumping the dishes and food on the floor (pp. 135-136). Then on the Thursday night before he goes to work in the Jefferson planing mill on Friday, he hurls against the wall the dishes of food Joanna Burden has set out "for the nigger (p. 208)." And, as after whipping him McEachern makes Joe kneel

with him to pray (p. 133), so after her climacteric Joanna tries to get him to kneel with her to pray (pp. 243-247). It is after his final refusal that she attempts to shoot him, following which he kills her. In this manner, then, she is linked with both the McEacherns (she is, after all, a woman, at least physically.)[1] The repeated motifs, however, link her more closely with McEachern and Christmas than with Mrs. McEachern. Like Joe she is obsessed with the Negro race (pp. 221-222), with her relationship to God (pp. 231, 244-246), and with sex (pp. 225-226). And like both Joe and McEachern she is calm and impersonal and rigid in the abstract principles on which she lives (pp. 244-245). The narrator's description of her as she pulls the pistol on Joe makes clear the parallel between her and the other Calvinists in the book, including Percy Grimm:

> Then he saw her arms unfold and her right hand come forth from beneath the shawl. It held an old style, single action, cap-and-ball revolver almost as long and heavier than a small rifle. But the shadow of it and of her arm and hand on the wall did not waver at all, the shadow of both monstrous, the cocked hammer monstrous, backhooked and viciously poised like the arched head of a snake; it did not waver at all. And her eyes did not waver at all. They were as still as the round black ring of the pistol muzzle. But there was no heat in them, no fury. They were calm and still as all pity and all despair and all conviction. (p. 247)

Given a man with Joe's background and attitudes and a woman with Joanna's background and attitudes, the result is inevitable.

Two other repeated scenes help to tie the McEachern-Christmas-Burden story to the rest of the novel. The first, mentioned above, is the repeated scene of infallible pursuit which helps relate the stories of Grimm, Hines, and McEachern and helps make Christmas's lynching inevitable. The other is the repeated scene of the birth of a baby which

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[1]For an explicit linking of the two women, see p. 229.

helps relate the Christmas story to the Lena Grove story and also helps lend the note of hope at the end of the novel. The first birth mentioned in the book is the birth of the stillborn Negro baby, at which Hightower assists (pp. 63-64). The second is the birth of Joe Christmas whose mother, attended only by Mrs. Hines, dies (pp. 331-332). The account of the birth of Lena Grove's baby follows hard on the account of Christmas's birth, and this time, attended by both Hightower and Mrs. Hines, both Lena and the baby survive (pp. 347-349). For Mrs. Hines, of course, the birth of Lena's baby becomes the birth of Joe, her Milly's baby, and her confusion suggests the hope of life. With Lena Grove and Byron Bunch to look after him, this baby has a better chance than Christmas had. Man can be responsible for bringing good out of evil. The possibility, at least, exists.

The third fact arguing that Hightower's discovery is the end towards which Christmas's story moves is the order of the last three chapters. Like the first three chapters, these last three deal in turn with the three plots of the novel: Chapter Nineteen depicts the murder of Christmas; Chapter Twenty, Hightower's meditation; and Chapter Twenty-One, Lena Grove and Byron Bunch's move to Tennessee. This order is not merely accidental. As the story of Lena Grove opens the novel, so her story closes it. As Chapter One suggests the realistic background against which Faulkner's fictional examination of Southern Calvinism is to be placed, so Chapter Twenty-One recalls the reader from the grim darkness in which he has been immersed and leads him back into the more lightly humorous, lightly satirical world of Lena Grove. Thus, her story acts as a kind of normal, realistic frame for the study of the rigidity of

mind which Faulkner undertakes in the other two stories. And as this study gets under way in Chapters Two and Three dealing with Christmas and Hightower, so it reaches its climax in Chapters Nineteen and Twenty in the accounts of Christmas's violent death and Hightower's meditation. Surely the order and juxtaposition of these last three chapters are as meaningful as the order and juxtaposition of the first three. If not, Faulkner is guilty here again of emphasizing "art" to no meaningful purpose. Surely, however, what these last three chapters offer is an affirmation, the Shakespearean affirmation that man is the victim, not of the gods, but of his own folly and that, therefore, hope can exist for the future.

Finally, Faulkner's experiments with narrators in Light in August move towards his full development in Absalom, Absalom! of the Conradian narrator. There are several different narrators in Light in August, some of whom, as in Absalom, Absalom!, offer different versions of the same action or event. In Chapter Nineteen, for example, Gavin Stevens and the authorial narrator offer markedly different versions of the murder of Christmas, Stevens speculating on the conflict in Joe between his white blood and his black blood, the authorial narrator significantly emphasizing the role of Percy Grimm. Moreover, again as in Absalom, Absalom!, the narrators--though offering different interpretations of facts--all use the same kind of language. Ostensibly it is the town which tells Byron Bunch about Hightower, Bunch who tells Hightower about Lena Grove and Joe Christmas, Mr. and Mrs. Hines who tell Bunch and Hightower about Christmas's birth and early years, Joanna Burden who tells Joe about her family background, Gavin Stevens who tells a friend about Christmas's

death, and the furniture dealer who tells his wife about Lena Grove and Byron Bunch's trip to Tennessee. Actually, however, "the overriding voice" of the authorial narrator stands just behind and moves easily into all these accounts, giving most of them the same involved style he uses in those parts of the story narrated directly to the reader.[1] Not yet, perhaps, the fully developed, elevated, evocative eloquence of Absalom, Absalom!, the style of Light in August nevertheless strongly suggests the later style and so is an early indication of what is to become probably the most noticeable characteristic of Faulkner's later novels.

In Absalom, Absalom!, then, Faulkner's basic technique is to allow different narrators--Rosa Coldfield, Mr. Compson, Quentin-Shreve--to recount varying speculative versions of the story of Thomas Sutpen, but to recount them in the language of the authorial narrator who stands just behind the character-narrators and occasionally steps into the story in his own right, especially late in the novel in order to approve of the conjectures of Quentin and Shreve: ". . . since both he and Shreve believed--and were probably right in this too--that the octoroon and the child would have been to Henry only something else about Bon to be, not envied but aped if that had been possible. . . ."[2] As Guerard has shown, this narrative technique is an extension of, a working out of the implications of, Conrad's techniques in Lord Jim, Under Western Eyes, and Chance. He writes that Faulkner's device of endowing all his narrators

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[1]For a good introductory discussion of this point, see William Van O'Connor, The Tangled Fire, pp. 84-86.

[2]P. 336, my italics. See also p. 335.

with the elaborate rhetoric of the overriding voice, "this further step away from ordinary realism," "was the next and natural one for the meditative, impressionist novel to take."[1] It allowed Faulkner to avoid the realistic trap which Guerard discusses, together with an earlier way of avoiding it, in the course of his remarks on Under Western Eyes:

> One of the great dangers of an obtuse narrator and Jamesian fool is, of course, the invitation to write imperceptive prose for the sake of accurate characterization. The danger would seem most severe where the general mode is realistic, as it is in Under Western Eyes. But this is a problem that James, Gide, Mann, Ford, and others have solved, and Conrad here solves it with little waste of time. A few brief passages suggest in their phrasing the narrator's old-maidish side. It comes out even in his comments on his lack of professional skill. "In the conduct of an invented story there are, no doubt, certain proprieties to be observed for the sake of clearness and effect." But from such a passage the narrator moves very quickly to an efficient, evocative prose not unlike that of James. "Mr. Razumov's record, like the open book of fate, revives for me the memory of that day as something startlingly pitiless in its freedom from all forebodings."[2]

Furthermore, not only does the Faulknerian eloquence avoid the trap of realistic characterization, but it also heightens the reader's susceptibility to suggestion and thus helps to involve him more fully in the story.

Complementing the eloquence in this engagement of the reader, and in Faulkner's development of the Conradian narrator, is his device "of narration through speculative commentary, of reporting disguised as conjecture."[3] A development of the conjectures of the Marlow of Chance (as

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[1] CTN, p. 269

[2] Ibid., pp. 251-252. See also pp. 258-260.

[3] Ibid., p. 270.

his conjectures are a development of the dependence on hearsay of the Marlow of Lord Jim), this device, according to Guerard, frees the author from the necessity of dramatizing his scenes while at the same time lending itself to the engagement of the reader:

> The method involves a nominal freeing of narrative consciousness and loosening of logical restrictions (since a speculating mind may move where it pleases); in practice it may also permit a convenient limiting. Where authority is so slight, reporting of detail may be kept to a minimum!
> . . . . . .
> The conjectural method is particularly useful where the narrator does not want to report a scene at length, or cannot, and where it is desirable for the reader to do a good deal of active imagining.[1]

A measure of Faulkner's feeling about the desirability of the reader's doing "a good deal of active imagining" is the fact that in Absalom there are actually even fewer dramatized scenes than in Light in August, though as in Light in August the events depicted, owing to the vividness of the narration, have the force and intensity of fully dramatized scenes.[2]

Now in addition to its role in Faulkner's development of the Conradian narrator, the conjectural method is an integral part of his development of the Conradian progression d'effet. Though based on the same essential device (incremental repetition) and though employed to the same end (the creation of the effect of inevitability) as the Conradian progression, the Faulknerian progression in Absalom extends Conrad's technique in one important respect. The incremental repetition of Absalom, Absalom! is primarily the repetition--with additions and conjectural emendations by the different narrators--of the story of Thomas Sutpen,

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[1] CTN, pp. 270-271.

[2] See p. 156 above.

and always the additions and corrections have to do, not with the facts of Sutpen's life, but with the motives which lie behind the facts. Though only Quentin and Shreve know all the relevant facts of Sutpen's life when they construct their version of the story (pp. 181, 266, 274), the basic facts do not vary from one narrator's version to another. The general outline of Sutpen's life presented by Rosa Coldfield in the first chapter jibes with Mr. Compson's account in Chapters Two through Four and with Quentin's account in Chapters Six through Eight, but the interpretations of those facts differ widely: Olga W. Vickery suggests pertinently that Rosa Coldfield tells a gothic thriller; Mr. Compson, a classical tragedy; and Quentin and Shreve, a chivalric romance.[1]

An example which epitomizes the technique, and perhaps the novel, is the attempt of each narrator to account for Sutpen's forbidding Judith to marry Charles Bon. Rosa Coldfield, in love with the ideal of love represented to her by Bon, exclaims early in the novel, "I saw Judith's marriage forbidden without rhyme or reason or shadow of excuse. . . . (p. 18)." Mr. Compson, more detached and more knowledgeable than Miss Coldfield, attributes the ban to Sutpen's knowledge of Bon's octoroon and child in New Orleans (pp. 117-118), but he is not satisfied with that explanation: "It's just incredible. It just does not explain (p. 100)." Thus his explanation contributes to the suspense rather than relieving it and so prepares the reader for Quentin's revelation that Bon is Sutpen's son, born to his Haitian wife (p. 265). On this discovery, then, Quentin and Shreve build their more satisfying version of Sutpen's

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[1] The Novels of William Faulkner, pp. 86 ff.

action. He had forbidden the wedding to prevent incest (pp. 293, 342).

In the meantime, however, without realizing it, the reader, through such passages as Mr. Compson's speculations about the reactions of the Sutpens, father and son (Henry), to Bon's New Orleans octoroon (pp. 90-118), has been conditioned to accept Quentin and Shreve's climactic insight which reveals all at once the true reason for Sutpen's action and the moral horror of his attitude.[1] It is not the threat of incest which moves him but the fear of miscegenation (pp. 355-356). With this revelation everything in the novel falls into place, including the answer to the question which nags at Quentin (and Faulkner) throughout: why did the South lose the war?[2] The answer is not that of Rosa Coldfield: "that only through the blood of our men and the tears of our women could He stay this demon and efface his name and lineage from the earth (p. 11)." Nor is it the answer advanced by Mr. Compson: ". . . the War . . . maybe instigated by that family fatality which possessed, along with all circumstance, that curious lack of economy between cause and effect which is always a characteristic of fate when reduced to using human beings for tools, material (p. 119)." Neither God nor Fate is responsible, but man. The answer to the question is that discovered by Hightower at the end of Light in August and made explicit by Ike McCaslin in Chapter Four of "The Bear," that man is morally responsible for the evil of the world, that the kind of men who, like Sutpen, could fear

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[1] The point ought to be made explicitly, perhaps, that Mr. Compson's speculations about the Sutpens' reactions to Bon's liaison with the octoroon serve not only as one version of Sutpen's motives but also as justification of the attitudes of the Sutpens towards Negroes.

[2] See pp. 11-12, 118, 260, 289-290, 345, 361.

miscegenation more than incest were responsible for the war and for the defeat. In other words, the important distinction of the Quentin-Shreve version of Sutpen's story is its insistence on Sutpen's moral responsibility for the catastrophe which destroys him and his family; and the revelation which floods his private history with light illuminates at the same time the history of the South for the same period of time.

This revelation, then, occurring significantly in the only extended dramatic scene in the novel (pp. 351-358), serves effectively as the climax to Faulkner's progression d'effet which consists generally, as suggested above, in the incremental repetition of Sutpen's story. Within the three versions of the story, of course, Faulkner makes use of the basic elements of the Conradian progression d'effet: an ever-increasing pace, the repetition of scenes (or actions), and the repetition of images and motifs. The pace does increase in the latter part of this novel, not because of any simplification of the syntax, but because the obscure references and allusions become less obscure finally, owing to the reader's assimilation of nearly all the facts of Sutpen's life by the middle of Chapter Seven (p. 265). The major actions, though dramatized only fragmentarily as in Light in August, are repeated incrementally throughout the novel: Sutpen's forbidding Judith to marry Bon is perhaps the best example. And several important motifs and images recur, becoming more and more relevant as they are repeated. One is the motif of the boy before the door, the symbol to Sutpen of his design. Owing to his peremptory dismissal by a "monkey nigger" from the white front door of a Virginia plantation house, he sets out to make himself the equal of that plantation owner, and, ironically, he does: when, thirty years later, his

part-Negro son appears before his white door, Sutpen, like the owner of the Virginia plantation, refuses to admit him.[1] Furthermore, he refuses to admit Wash Jones who, though sixty years of age, is in his immaturity of attitude just such another poor white-trash boy as Sutpen had been.[2]

Supporting the ironies of this motif and leading directly to the climactic moral revelation is the best example of the repeated image, the banking or bookkeeping image which condemns the puritan morality of Sutpen (and the Coldfields) as "inhumanly logical and brutally abstract."[3] The image is established in the first two chapters through references by Rosa Coldfield and Mr. Compson. Ellen, Sutpen, and Mr. Coldfield:

> I saw the price which she had paid for that house and that pride; I saw the notes of hand on pride and contentment and peace and all to which she had put her signature when she walked into the church that night, begin to fall due in succession. (p. 18)

> His guests would bring whiskey out with them but he drank of this with a sort of sparing calculation as though keeping mentally, General Compson said, a sort of balance of spiritual solvency between the amount of whiskey he accepted and the amount of running meat which he supplied to the guns. (p. 40)

> Mr. Coldfield apparently intended to use the church into which he had invested a certain amount of sacrifice and doubtless self-denial and certainly actual labor and money for the sake of what might be called a demand balance of spiritual solvency, exactly as he would have used a cotton gin in which he considered himself to have incurred either interest or responsibility. . . . (pp. 49-50)

Thereafter it is repeated more often than any other single image, accruing relevance and meaning, like interest. In Chapter Seven, for instance,

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[1] See pp. 93, 229-232, 261, 267, 341.

[2] See pp. 288-290 and compare p. 238 with them.

[3] Swiggart, The Art of Faulkner's Novels, p. 156.

Quentin, having recounted to Shreve his grandfather's description of Sutpen's innocence--"that innocence which believed that the ingredients of morality were like the ingredients of pie or cake and once you had measured them and balanced them and mixed them and put them into the oven it was all finished and nothing but pie or cake could come out"--brings the image for the innocence and the banking image together in his description of Sutpen in 1864: ". . . as though even while riding he was still bemused in that state in which he struggled to hold clear and free above a maelstrom of unpredictable and unreasoning human beings, not his head for breath and not so much his fifty years of effort and striving to establish a posterity, but his code of logic and morality, his formula and recipe of fact and deduction whose balanced sum and product declined, refused to swim or even float (pp. 263, 275)."[1]

Finally, Faulkner integrates with the progression d'effet his use of the technique of juxtaposition which Conrad had employed so effectively in Lord Jim. As in Lord Jim there is throughout Absalom, Absalom! a contrast between the time of the actions narrated and the time of the narration of them. In September, 1909, Rosa Coldfield and Mr. Compson recount their versions of that period of Sutpen's life from 1833 to 1869, and in their room at Harvard in January, 1910, Quentin and Shreve work out their version of the history of the entire family, from the birth of Thomas Sutpen in 1807 to the deaths of Henry and Clytie Sutpen in December, 1909. This contrast allows Faulkner both to involve the reader immediately in the Sutpen story (through the eloquence of the overriding voice) and to give him perspective on it by occasionally removing him to a distance

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[1]My italics.

from it. A second contrast does much the same thing. Like the contrast in Lord Jim between Jim's actions and Marlow's understanding of them, a contrast exists in Absalom between Sutpen's innocent commitment to his design and Quentin and Shreve's awareness of his moral responsibility for the catastrophe in which he involves his family.

The most important contrast in Absalom, however, is that established through the juxtaposition of the different versions of Sutpen's life. As Conrad in Lord Jim juxtaposes Marlow's seemingly irrelevant digressions with the events of Jim's life, so Faulkner in Absalom juxtaposes the narrators' conjectural interpretations of Sutpen's life and its meaning. And as Marlow's unchronological mental meanderings allow Conrad to arrange the episodes in Lord Jim in the most effective artistic order, so Faulkner's use of three narrators and his employment of Quentin Compson as his point-of-view character allow him to order both the narrators' accounts and the events of Sutpen's life within those accounts in an unchronological but artistically effective manner.[1] Rosa Coldfield's early afternoon précis (Chapter One) of Sutpen's life from 1833 to 1866, emphasizing her childhood memories from about 1845 on, is followed in the next three chapters by Mr. Compson's more detailed review, that evening,

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[1]Richard Coanda recognized this debt of Faulkner to Conrad in his "Absalom, Absalom!: The Edge of Infinity," Renascence, XI (Autumn, 1958), pp. 5-6: "Faulkner owes something to Conrad, whose works lend three structural devices to Absalom, Absalom! The incantatory repetition, the telling and retelling of an event so that its meaning and emotive power build up terrifically, had forged the panoramic Nostromo into a unified pattern. The use of interrupted dialog which resumes after an expository suspension the length of one or more chapters had supplied suspense and intensity to Under Western Eyes. And intricate cross-chronology, with the story moving in space from narrator to narrator and shifting backward and forward in time, had given life and complexity to Lord Jim." (Coanda's next sentence, however, begins, "The multiple narrators derive from Henry James's reflector technique. . . .")

of the same period. In Chapter Two he relates the facts of Sutpen's activities from June, 1833, when he rode into Jefferson, through June, 1838, when he married Ellen Coldfield. In Chapter Three he relates the facts of Rosa Coldfield's Calvinistic family background which casts light backwards onto her Old Testament demonizing in Chapter One and forwards onto the fuller manifestation of her attitude in Chapter Five. Then in Chapter Four he speculates about the reasons for Sutpen's refusal to allow a marriage between Judith and Bon, reaching only the unsatisfactory conclusion that Sutpen objected to Bon's morganatic marriage with the octoroon. Quentin's dissatisfaction with his father's "fatality" theory, revealed at the end of the chapter in his obsession with the scene of Bon's death, leads him then to remember (Chapter Five) Rosa Coldfield's vindictive interpretation, earlier in the afternoon, of the fate of Sutpen and his family as the work of Old Testament Justice. But the recurrence of the scene of Bon's death at the end of Chapter Five reveals his dissatisfaction with this interpretation also.

That night Quentin, with Miss Coldfield, meets Henry Sutpen (pp. 181, 266, 274, 373), receiving thereby both the necessary information and the necessary imaginative stimulus to work out a more satisfactory interpretation of the Sutpen fate than either his father or Miss Coldfield had arrived at. Realizing that all the pertinent facts must be taken into account, Quentin carries the story forward farther and delves farther back into the past than either of the other two narrators. In Chapter Six he tells Shreve (and the reader) of the events in the lives of the Sutpens between Bon's death, May 3, 1865, and his own visit to the Sutpen place in September, 1909. In Chapter Seven he goes back to describe the

origin of Sutpen's design about 1821 during his youth in Virginia, his first attempt to fulfill it in Haiti, and his third attempt, ending in his death at the hands of old Wash Jones, the wielder in 1869 of that heavily symbolic scythe. Finally, then, Quentin and Shreve are ready to work out in Chapter Eight their own conjectural interpretation of Sutpen's refusal to allow the marriage, their own interpretation of the meaning of his life and fate: a man is morally responsible for his acts and for the influence of those acts on the lives of others. To help make this point Faulkner deliberately withholds the information about Sutpen's youth until Chapter Seven; there Quentin emphasizes, not the circumstances of Sutpen's birth and youth as his father might have done, but the element of choice in Sutpen's rejection of his Haitian wife and in his refusal thirty years later to offer the subtle acknowledgment for which Bon yearns (pp. 319-357). The circumstances render Sutpen's motives more understandable, but they do not excuse him from responsibility.

Thus, Absalom, Absalom! makes relevant comments on several issues larger than Sutpen's life. Written like Light in August during the 'thirties, it controverts, like Light in August, the claim of deterministic naturalism that man is not responsible for his actions. It also makes the point implicitly which Ike McCaslin makes explicit in "The Bear" that the predicament of the South is a result of her refusal to acknowledge the relationship of the Negro son. And, as several critics have noted, Absalom is "an exploration of unprecedented depth and scope

into the meaning of history."[1] A history relevant to the life of the present must be neither a record of abstract facts nor a record of Divine Providences, but a record of morally involved, morally responsible human beings. Only this kind of history, informed by imaginative compassion and understanding, can move a man towards the realization of his own responsibility, his own obligations towards other men.

These extensions of the story of Thomas Sutpen suggest one reason why Absalom, Absalom!, as well as The Sound and the Fury and Light in August, strikes the reader, even today, with terrific emotional force. It is that in Absalom, as in the other two novels discussed here, Faulkner was involved in working out his own attitudes towards naturalism, history, and the South. He was emotionally involved in them. At the same time he poured energy into them for another reason. He was engaged, in all three novels, in evolving his own unique artistic techniques out of the assimilated techniques of his masters. As he indicated several times in interviews, one of the chief of these masters was Joseph Conrad.

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[1]Ilse Dusoir Lind, "The Design and Meaning of Absalom, Absalom!," WF:III, p. 279. See also William R. Poirier, "'Strange Gods' in Jefferson, Mississippi: Analysis of Absalom, Absalom!," WF:II, p. 221; and Joshua McClennen, "Absalom, Absalom! and the Meaning of History," Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters, XLII (1956), pp. 357-369.

CHAPTER V

In his own discussions of Conradian impressionism, Ford Madox Ford always assumed it to be the culmination of novelistic progress; the history of the novel was, for him, the history of its progress towards the techniques of Henry James, Stephen Crane, Joseph Conrad--and Ford Madox Ford. Through these techniques the aloof, objective novelist could create the fullest possible illusion of reality, the true end of the novelistic art.[1] More recently, enthusiasts of these techniques, through critical pronouncements on Lord Jim and Absalom, Absalom! in particular, have awarded that highest of all literary distinctions, the laurel wreath of the tragedian, to both Conrad and

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[1]See, for example, The English Novel, pp. 85, 122, 128, 142-148.

Faulkner.[1] Robert Heilman, for example, representing the more popular view of Lord Jim as a story of guilt and atonement or spiritual redemption, asserts that "it is the progression towards self-knowledge that is the ultimate source of unity in Lord Jim" and that "Jim is that rare creature in English fiction--the tragic hero."[2] In like manner Absalom, Absalom! has been called a tragedy by Cleanth Brooks, a tragic novel by Richard Coanda, and a "classic moral tragedy" by Ilse Dusoir Lind.[3] And Thomas Sutpen, according to Lennart Bjork, the most recent commentator

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[1]The best example of this tendency in the criticism of Faulkner is now John Lewis Longley, Jr.'s The Tragic Mask: A Study of Faulkner's Heroes (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1963). Longley's strongest chapter is, I believe, the one in which he presents his case for viewing Joe Christmas (Light in August) as a tragic hero, but his central argument, that Christmas's story evokes the tragic response in the reader ("Katharsis is the ultimate criterion for measuring tragedy. . . ." p. 174) seems to me finally unconvincing. Even inordinate suffering is not in itself necessarily tragic; and Christmas's wretched life and calamitous death are too much of a piece. The lack of contrast keeps the reader, I think, from identifying himself with Christmas to the extent necessary to arouse pity and fear for himself. Therefore, though the reader may possibly feel with Longley "a sense of overwhelming compassion and an almost inconsolable sense of loss" (p. 176, my italics) at Grimm's murder of Christmas, he is likely not to feel an exultant acquiescence in the necessity of the action's ending so. Instead, he is likely to be depressed by Grimm's action. Before he can gain anything like a sense of an affirmation of man's potentialities, he must read the last two chapters of the novel which deal in turn with Hightower and Lena Grove. In other words the story of Joe Christmas is not a tragedy but an integral part of a carefully written novel. For this reason I find Cleanth Brooks's chapter on Light in August in William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country, also published in 1963, more satisfying than Longley's. Brooks emphasizes the organic unity of the novel as a whole, and though not averse to using the term tragic with regard to Faulkner's novels as his chapter on Absalom, Absalom! demonstrates, he ultimately sets Light in August within the comic mode: "Finally and generally, I believe, the mode is that of comedy (p. 71)."

[2]"Introduction," Lord Jim ("Rinehart Edition"; New York: Rinehart & Co., Inc., 1958), pp. xix, xxiii.

[3]Brooks, "Absalom, Absalom: The Definition of Innocence," Sewanee Review, LIX (Autumn, 1951), p. 558; Coanda, Renascence, XI (Autumn, 1958), p. 9; Lind, "The Design and Meaning of Absalom, Absalom!" WF:III, p.304.

or the novel, is Faulkner's "foremost tragic figure," "a true tragic hero."[1]

On the other hand, other critics have disputed ably and interestingly the readings of these two novels as tragedies, sometimes in such a way as to demonstrate the close tie between this question and the further one of the possible limitations of the impressionistic techniques. John Paterson argues, for instance, with special reference to Absalom, Absalom!, that the modern novelist--owing to his commitment to the dramatic point of view, the stream of consciousness method, and the thematic or symbolic structure--renders "character and incident not as values in themselves, but as counters in a thematic or symbolic unity."[2]

> The thematic or symbolic structure undermines, for one thing, the large or heroic vision of life which is the sine qua non of tragedy. Since all values are arbitrarily assigned, since nothing has a value in itself, the anti-heroic becomes in a symbolic frame as meaningful as the heroic: to eat a peach becomes as "valuable" as to kill one's father or to sell one's wife. Like the dramatic point of view and the stream of consciousness method, furthermore, the thematic or symbolic structure modifies the objective reality of character and action, forces upon them values and meanings not intrinsically their own and weakens them to this extent as agents of tragedy.[3]

So, he thinks, does the modern novelist's heightening and intensification of prose:

> But if Aristotle was right in claiming that the tragic effect was less a function of language and style than a function of character and plot, and there is little in

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[1] "Ancient Myths and the Moral Framework of Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!," American Literature, XXXV (May, 1963), pp. 196, 203.

[2] "Hardy, Faulkner, and the Prosaics of Tragedy," The Centennial Review, V (Spring, 1961), p. 164.

[3] Ibid., pp. 164-165.

> the literature of tragedy to prove him wrong, then the modern novel's rhetorical complexity and richness would seem, from the point of view of tragedy, more a bane than a blessing. Joining with the dramatic point of view, the stream of consciousness method, and the art of the symbolist to attenuate or obscure the primary images of character and action, the rhetorical emphasis prevents the novel from exploiting the very sources that have made in the past for the great vitality of tragedy.[1]

In Paterson's opinion, therefore, though "more formidable as a work of art and certainly more complete as a novel," Absalom, Absalom! "seems . . . conspicuously inferior as tragedy" to Hardy's The Mayor of Casterbridge.[2]

Through his comparison, then, of Faulkner's novel with Hardy's, Paterson suggests--contrary to Ford's position--that the modern novelist, in exchange for the very real advantages attendant on his techniques, has given up some equally valuable advantages of the older techniques. Thus he raises the final question to be discussed in this paper, whether, as Ford assumed, the doctrine of progress can be applied to the history of the novel; whether, that is, the techniques of impressionism make the novels of Conrad and Faulkner better novels than those of the nineteenth century, or merely different. For Ford the impressionistic techniques were normative; they became the standards by which the novelist's success must be measured. The modern reader, however, in view of the seriousness of such charges as Paterson levels against the modern techniques, may justifiably question Ford's assumption. And if he does so, he will soon find that the answer he reaches will hinge on his reaction to the characterization of the impressionistic novel. The question very quickly be-

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[1] "Hardy, Faulkner, and the Prosaics of Tragedy," The Centennial Review, V (Spring, 1961), p. 165-166.

[2] Ibid., p. 166.

comes the following: did the Conradian impressionist, in exchange for the one great advantage of his technique (that of involving the reader intensely in the fictional experience), give up something equally valuable, the ability to depict the growth and development of character?

Perhaps the best means of getting at this question is to develop further that of whether or not Lord Jim and Absalom, Absalom! are, in fact, tragedies, for, as Paterson indicates, the question of characterization is central there too. Actually, as suggested in Chapter Three and implied strongly in Chapter Four above, neither Lord Jim nor Absalom, Absalom! is a tragedy in the traditional sense of the term, for neither contains a really tragic protagonist. While admiring Lord Jim as "one of the most living characters in fiction," Dorothy Van Ghent reminds the reader that "he is nevertheless an extraordinarily simplified type, obsessed with a single idea, divested of all psychological attributes but the very few that concretize his relationship with his idea."[1] And Albert J. Guerard points out that both Conrad in his Author's Note and Marlow (twice) in his oral narrative call Jim "simple."[2] "In fact," Guerard writes, "not very much may seem left of Jim, after we have discounted Marlow's partialities and distortions."[3]

> Our sense of depth comes rather from the complexity of Marlow's spiraling response to this not abnormal man, who is "one of us." It comes partly too from Marlow's long deceptive insistence on Jim's "truth" and "constancy": deceptive, since they turn out to be a truth and constancy to the exalted egoism rather than to Marlow's own strong

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[1] The English Novel, pp. 229, 230.

[2] Guerard, CTN, p. 140; Conrad, p. viii; Lord Jim, pp. 81, 132.

[3] CTN, p. 140.

> sense of community obligation. And our sense of depth comes also from the paradoxical nature of Marlow's psychologizing. For Marlow insists on the "mysterious" or "inscrutable" side of Jim only when speaking of matters that are familiar enough to all of us (though they may indeed be "mysteries"): the selfish potentialities of idealism or the saving potentialities of egoism, the human capacity for evasion and self-deception, and so forth.[1]

Thus, while agreeing that Conrad achieves in the novel the classical tragic irony of "the awful incongruity between human intention and its consequences in action," Mrs. Van Ghent finds it doubtful that "Conrad goes beyond that particular tragic incongruity to the other ancient tragic perception, of ennoblement through suffering."[2] The question at the end of the novel is whether Jim's suffering, "entailed in his long and strenuous exile and his guilt and his final great loss, /has/ given him the knowledge, and with the knowledge the nobility, which is the mysterious and sublime gift of suffering."[3]

Mrs. Van Ghent's implied answer to this question is the same as that offered above in Chapter Three (that Jim fails to achieve self-

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[1] CTN, pp. 141-142.

[2] The English Novel, pp. 230, 231.

[3] Ibid., p. 231.

knowledge, that he is not a tragic hero).[1] For not only does Jim fail to achieve tragic insight and nobility, but also his death "brings about (projectively) the destruction of the community" as well as bitter sorrow to those most intimately involved with him, Jewel and Stein.[2] With his death, as Paterson writes of the death of Sutpen in Absalom, Absalom!, "the light goes out as if forever."[3] Like Sutpen, Jim "passes on not a new and better world born out of the violence and ashes of the old, but a ruined universe incapable of regeneration."[4] The last paragraph of the novel drives this point home:

> "He is gone, inscrutable at heart, and the poor girl is leading a sort of soundless, inert life in Stein's house. Stein has aged greatly of late. He feels it himself, and says often that he is 'preparing to leave all this; preparing to leave . . .' while he waves his hand sadly at his butterflies."

Only if, like Robert Heilman, one takes Stein to be Conrad's unequivocal spokesman, can he assume the author's approval of Jim's roman-

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[1] In A Definition of Tragedy ("The Gotham Library"; New York: New York University Press, 1961), an important book which I read too late to make maximum use of, Oscar Mandel denies that the tragic recognition is an essential element of tragedy (pp. 147-154). In his view tragedy is a situation in which the protagonist's suffering arises inevitably (the inevitability is for Mandel the sine qua non of tragedy, p. 24) out of his own purpose or action. Such a situation is not necessarily coterminous with the work which contains it (pp. 42, 99-102, 108). In his view, then (pp. 35, 100, 139, 160), Lord Jim consists of a tragedy (the Patna episode) and a redemption (the Patusan section). Behind this view are two assumptions which I would challenge. The first is that the Patusan experience represents Jim's redemption. The second is that Jim's leap from the Patna is an act of the kind Mandel requires of the tragic hero (pp. 103-107): the novel emphasizes Jim's passivity in all his jumps. See p. 194 below.

[2] The English Novel, p. 233.

[3] The Centennial Review, V (Spring, 1961), p. 168.

[4] Ibid.

tic pursuit of his dream, and only on this assumption can he read the story as a tragedy of guilt and atonement.[1] But though Stein appears in almost the exact center of the novel (pages 202-230 of 417, and between the Patna and Patusan sections), though Marlow introduces him as "one of the most trustworthy men" of his acquaintance (p. 202) and recalls Stein's diagnosis and prescription twice later in the novel (pp. 334, 393), and though (p. 215) Stein repeats the motto, "usque ad finem," of Conrad's maternal uncle and guardian, Thaddeus Bobrowski, his remarks in the novel are qualified in two ways to keep them from being taken as authorial comment.[2] In the first place the burial imagery undercuts Stein's sympathetic identification with Jim.[3] The first mention of Stein is immediately preceded by Marlow's memory of Brierly's remark, "'"Let him creep twenty feet underground and stay there"'" (p. 202). Stein's description of how to be is followed immediately by one of Marlow's important reflections, done in terms of the grave:

> The whisper of his conviction seemed to open before me a vast and uncertain expanse, as of a crepuscular horizon on a plain at dawn--or was it, perchance, at the coming of the night? One had not the courage to decide; but it was a charming and deceptive light, throwing the impalpable poesy of its dimness over pitfalls--over graves. His life had begun in sacrifice, in enthusiasm for generous ideas; he had travelled very far, on various ways, on strange paths, and whatever he followed it had been without faltering, and therefore without shame and without regret. In so far he was right. That was the way, no doubt. Yet for all

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[1] "Introduction," Lord Jim ("Rinehart Edition"), pp. xii, xxi.

[2] The motto appears in Bobrowski to Conrad, 9 November 1891, LL, I, 148. A better translation of the letter is that in Baines, Joseph Conrad, p. 127.

[3] See Van Ghent, The English Novel, p. 243; Guerard, CTN, pp. 164-165.

> that the great plain on which men wander amongst graves and pitfalls remained very desolate under the impalpable poesy of its crepuscular light . . . . (p. 215)

And the next morning, having quoted Brierly's remark to Stein (p. 219), Marlow suggests that they "bury" Jim, as, of course, they do--in Patusan (pp. 219, 221, 245, 322-323).

Thus, through the graves imagery and Marlow's description of Jim to Stein as a "specimen" (p. 211), Jim is made subtly parallel to the beetles and butterflies entombed in the "catacombs" (p. 204) and "graves" (p. 214) lining Stein's study. And thus a parallel is drawn implicitly between Jim's romantic egoism and that of Stein. Stein wants the beautiful butterfly "for myself" (p. 211). He wants to help Jim for the same reason, not because Jim is a human being in need of help, but because Stein sees him as a younger version of himself:

> "Stein characteristically enough had a sentimental motive. He had a notion of paying off (in kind, I suppose) the old debt he had never forgotten. Indeed he had been all his life especially friendly to anybody from the British Isles. His late benefactor, it is true, was a Scot--even to the length of being called Alexander M'Neil--and Jim came from a long way south of the Tweed; but at the distance of six or seven thousand miles Great Britain, though never diminished, looks foreshortened enough even to its own children to rob such details of their importance. Stein was excusable, and his hinted intentions were so generous that I begged him most earnestly to keep them secret for a time. (pp. 229-230)

Stein's romanticism, that is, far from demonstrating Conrad's approval of Jim's romanticism, underlines Jim's excited, idealized, egoism.

At the same time Stein's remarks are qualified in their applicability to Jim by the subtle contrasts which are established between the two. If, as Marlow says, Stein's life has been "'rich in generous enthusiasms, in friendship, love, war--in all the exalted elements of

romance'" (p. 217), it has been so because of "'an intrepidity of spirit and a physical courage that could have been called reckless had it not been like a natural function of the body'" (p. 203), because of his following his destiny "'with unfaltering footsteps'" (p. 217). Stein's life has been a romance, in other words, because he has had the ability to act at crucial times, not merely to re-act passively. Jim, on the other hand, has modeled his dream-life on the romances of light literature but has never been able to act decisively at any critical juncture of his life. Thus, despite Stein's sympathetic identification with Jim, the implicit contrast which the story of his life furnishes the reader emphasizes the essential passivity of Jim's nature: he is a simple, sensitive, egoistic, passive character--pathetic rather than tragic.

Thomas Sutpen in Absalom, Absalom! is far from being a passive character, but he is just as egoistic as Lord Jim, even more simple or "innocent," and, finally, for two reasons primarily, even less a tragic protagonist than Jim. In the first place, like Jim, he fails to achieve the knowledge or insight which might have ennobled his character and given to it a tragic magnificence and grandeur.[1] Instead, as Peter Swiggart

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[1]Though Mandel would deny the necessity of Sutpen's achieving insight (A Definition of Tragedy, pp. 147-154), he would, I think, agree that Sutpen is not a tragic protagonist. In terms of his definition, Sutpen's downfall is not inevitable: "The protagonist is actually a victim, no matter how active he seems to be . . . /when/ ultimately it is not his action, his purpose which defeats him, but a more or less casual chain of circumstances which it triggers (p. 40)." Moreover, he might argue that Sutpen does not suffer as a tragic protagonist must: "In short, tragedy does not deal with unflinching heroes, Achilles without heels. A man so tough, and, we might add, so monomaniacal that no harm can touch him is not a tragic hero (p. 157)." (As the first quotation indicates, Mandel excludes from the ranks of tragic heroes those characters who are victims, who do not bring about their own downfall inevitably through their own purposes or actions. Among those specifically excluded on this basis (p. 105) is Joe Christmas of Light in August).

writes, he "seems to diminish rather than increase in stature, and at the time of his death he seems only a caricature of his wasted ambition."[1] His complete innocence of moral principle--"'"Whether it was a good or a bad design is beside the point; the question is, where did I make the mistake in it . . . ."'" (p. 263)--joined with the farcical quality of his third attempt to found a dynasty, this time on the fifteen-year-old Milly Jones, reduces his stature sharply in the last three chapters of the novel. In the second place, the symbolism of his life, the fact that as the novel progresses he becomes less and less an individual and more and more a representative of certain tendencies in a society, militates strongly against any role for him as a tragic [illegible].[2]

It follows, of course, that if neither Jim nor Sutpen is a tragic protagonist, then neither Lord Jim nor Absalom, Absalom! is a tragedy, at least in the traditional sense, for, as explained in Chapter Two above, Lord Jim is Jim's story, not Marlow's, just as Absalom is Sutpen's story, not Quentin Compson's.[3] The most interesting discussions of these two novels as tragedies, therefore, are those which, recognizing that the novels are not traditional tragedies, discuss them as modern tragedies

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[1] The Art of Faulkner's Novels, p. 149. See also p. 170.

[2] Suggestive for both Lord Jim and Absalom, Absalom! is one of Northrop Frye's distinctions between tragedy and irony: "As tragedy moves over towards irony, the sense of the inevitable event begins to fade out, and the sources of catastrophe come into view. In irony catastrophe is either arbitrary and meaningless, the impact of an unconscious (or, in the pathetic fallacy, malignant) world on conscious man, or the result of more or less definable social and psychological forces." Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 285. Cannot one say that the catastrophes in Lord Jim and Absalom, Absalom! are the result of "more or less definable social and psychological forces"?

[3] See above, pp. 77-80.

of some kind or other. Richard Sewall, for instance, discusses Absalom, Absalom! as a modern rendering of the tragic vision, the tragic sense of the world. Basic to this tragic sense of life is a "sense of ancient evil, of 'the blight man was born for,' of the permanence and mystery of human suffering."[1] The tragic vision, Sewall writes, "calls up out of the depths the first (and last) of all questions, the question of existence: what does it mean to be?"[2]

> It impels the artist, in his fictions, toward what Jaspers calls "boundary-situations," man at the limits of his sovereignty--Job on the ash-heap, Prometheus on the crag, Oedipus in his moment of self-discovery, Lear on the heath, Ahab on his lonely quarter-deck. Here, with all the protective covering stripped off, the hero faces as if no man had ever faced it before the existential question--Job's question, "What is man?" of Lear's. . . . "Is man no more than this?"[3]

It is this vision, then, which Sewall finds in Absalom, Absalom!. He recognizes that Sutpen, though the actor in the story, is not a tragic hero ("What it cost him in spiritual anguish, what he learned, is not dramatized.") and that Quentin, for a different reason is not either: "he neither initiates nor is involved in an action of magnitude; he is helpless to do anything about his tragic perceptions except tell about them."[4] Nevertheless, though incomplete as traditional tragedy, the novel is tragic in that Quentin's achievement of tragic understanding completes the tragic movement begun by Sutpen's acts. Sutpen's "'acts of simple passion and simple violence' provide the impulse, or the first

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[1]The Vision of Tragedy (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 6.

[2]Ibid., p. 4.

[3]Ibid., p. 5.

[4]Ibid., pp. 142, 137.

phase, of tragedy--its final phases (the deep spiritual upheaval and knowledge gained) to be realized in Quentin's sensitive and brooding consciousness."[1]

Sewall's theory is an intriguing one, most particularly for the fact that it would serve almost equally well for Lord Jim. One is bound to wonder, however, whether implicit in this fragmentation of the tragic protagonist is not a reductionist view of human nature. Sewall thinks not. In his view, though the reader is left at the end "in doom and despair," "the very shock sends us back to the full story, to all that has been recounted and revealed about the possibilities in humankind for good and evil; and again we see that life has been presented as neither trivial nor base nor unlovely. . . ."[2] Perhaps. Still the question must be asked whether a work which assumes, even unconsciously, that individual man is incapable of both heroic grandeur and insight can be a profound tragic exploration of the human condition.

Even if one accepts Sewall's reading, of course, the problem of characterization remains. Whereas the nineteenth century novel is preeminently the novel depicting the growth and development of character, the creation of what used to be called the rounded character, the novels of Conrad and Faulkner, as critics have noted frequently, treat characterization as a subordinate part of the work as a whole.[3] In their novels

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[1]The Vision of Tragedy. p. 137.

[2]Ibid., p. 147.

[3]For suggestive discussions of characterization in the nineteenth century novel see David Daiches, The Novel and the Modern World (rev. ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 1-24; and Hewitt, Conrad: A Reassessment, pp. 131-135.

the character is a part of the intricate, complex structure of the whole rather than a created personality the expression of which is the novel; he is important, not so much as a living creation in himself, but in his thematic significance.[1] It could hardly be otherwise, for the particular techniques of Conradian impressionism, the practical means of working out the impressionistic commitment to the "effect of life" (which implies the commitment to objectivity), allow for little alternative.

This fundamental commitment to the objective creation of the effect of life (through such techniques as the narrator and the time-shift) rather than to an omniscient, chronological report on life further commits the impressionist to attempt to achieve through depth, through a multiplicity of relevant detail, what the older novelist achieved through extension. If, moreover, as in Conrad and Faulkner, the impressionistic novelist combines the emphasis of the older novel (the history of a character's life from birth to death) with that of the newer novel (the analysis of motivation or consciousness rather than the depiction of successive actions), he commits himself to a static character, for if the details throughout the novel are to be relevant, then the character must remain essentially static throughout. If, for instance, the microcosmic scenes involving Jason in the Benjy section of The Sound and the Fury are to suggest essential traits in Jason's character, then Jason must be essentially the same in sections III and IV at thirty-five years of age as he is in Section I at five. Thus, as W. M. Frohock writes in

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[1]Warren, "Introduction," Nostromo, p. xvi; Swiggart, The Art of Faulkner's Novels, p. 21; John A. Meixner, Ford Madox Ford's Novels: A Critical Study, p. 272.

his essay on Faulkner, the impressionist reveals rather than develops character.[1] Whereas the nineteenth century novelist depicts the growth and development of a rounded character, Conrad and Faulkner gradually reveal to the reader a fully rounded view of an essentially flat or static character. This process, it is true, may give the reader the illusion--his first time through the novel--that, as he comes to know Jim or Sutpen more and more fully, he is witnessing the growth and development of character. Later reflection or a second reading will show him better.

Addressing themselves to this problem, Peter Swiggart, tentatively, and Albert J. Guerard, more positively, go a step beyond Sewall. Swiggart recognizes that "Sutpen lacks the status of a tragic hero able to recognize the source of destruction," yet suggests that Faulkner approximates the effect of character growth and development

> by filtering his actions through the speculations of a number of witness-narrators, who impose their own obsessive social and moral concerns upon the events they narrate. The reader is forced to take at face value the conflicting interpretations of these witness-figures, who belong to the Southern aristocracy (with the exception of Quentin Compson's Harvard roommate) and read the tragedy of their region into the Sutpen events. The reader's understanding of the social allegory thus passes through a series of metamorphoses which may be said to correspond, however imperfectly, with the psychological transformations of the traditional hero.[2]

Guerard makes much the same point more directly:

> Lord Jim is a novel of intellectual and moral suspense, and the mystery to be solved, or conclusion to be reached, lies not in Jim but in ourselves. Can we, faced by the ambigui-

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[1] The Novel of Violence in America (2d ed. rev.; London: Arthur Barker Limited, 1959), p. 144.

[2] The Art of Faulkner's Novels, p. 150. See also Karl E. Zink, South Atlantic Quarterly, LIII (July, 1954), pp. 386-387.

> ties and deceptions of life itself (and more!), apprehend the whole experience humanly? Can we come to recognize the full complexity of any simple case, and respond both sympathetically and morally to Jim and his version of "how to be"? The reader, in a sense--and how true this will be of Absalom, Absalom!--turns out to be the hero of the novel, either succeeding or failing in his human task of achieving a balanced view.[1]

The reader himself is the hero! Yet the reader of such a work might perhaps be pardoned for wondering briefly whether the author of a novel in which the reader must be his own hero has not abdicated his role as artist. For answer Guerard undoubtedly would refer him to the following passage in which he draws a major distinction between literary art and life:

> Art induces greater sympathies (but also sterner judgments) than most of us are capable of in the daily conduct of our lives; it compels us to live less indifferently, and frees us from the irrelevant. This does not mean that art, cheating us, is untrue to life, but that it asks for an intensified response to something "like life."[2]

The modern novelist, in other words, has the same role as the literary artist has always had. It is he who must select and arrange the material so as to induce the greater sympathies and the sterner judgments in the reader.

Still, a skeptical reader might find debatable the proposition that the intensity of his involvement in Lord Jim and Absalom, Absalom! is much superior in either kind or degree to that of his involvement in, say, Emma or The Portrait of a Lady, both of which present the growth and development of a heroine through a limited authorial omniscience. It might well be argued, on the contrary, that the intense involvement of

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[1] CTN, p. 142.

[2] Ibid., p. 129.

the reader is one characteristic of all great literature, including the great novels of the nineteenth century. The reader might wonder, furthermore, whether the implication of Guerard's praise of the impressionistic novel is not the same as the assumption underlying Ford Madox Ford's approach to Conradian impressionism: here is the culmination of novelistic progress. And such a reader might wonder finally, therefore, whether the necessity of his being his own hero in the impressionistic novel is the result of superior modern techniques or a necessity imposed on the novelist in the attempt to compensate for what he had lost through these techniques: in the impressionistic novel such as Lord Jim or Absalom, Absalom! the reader must be the hero, for if any growth or development of character is to take place, it will have to be in him.

To what extent this particular limitation of Conradian impressionism is a general limitation of modern techniques or the modern novel is hard to determine. Probably it is a limitation peculiar to the novels of Conrad and Faulkner, arising, at least in part, out of their attempt to emphasize both character and "plot" (action and chronology) through techniques which exact their toll on these authors' devided allegiances by necessitating static characterization. Unfortunately, the best novels of both authors fall into this category. Among the major characters of Conrad's four best novels only Razumov of Under Western Eyes can be said both to act and to gain insight, and none of the major characters of Faulkner's best can be said to do so. Not until his creation of Chick Mallison in Intruder in the Dust did Faulkner delineate a character who clearly does both, but by that time, significantly, his best works--and many of his impressionistic techniques--were behind him. On

the other hand Lambert Strether seems both to act and gain insight in The Ambassadors, and David Daiches maintains that Stephen Dedalus in Ulysses is "perhaps the most complete and rounded character in all fiction."[1] The point would seem to be, then, that good as they were and are the techniques of Conradian impressionism do not represent the final end towards which the energy of the novel has been driving since its inception but a set of very useful artistic techniques and conventions containing inherently both great advantages and at least one major disadvantage.

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[1] The Novel and the Modern World, p. 18.

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