

Writing "Something Which Went Faster Than the Words in the Book": Faulkner's Discovery of the Narrative Voice in *Light in August*

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In this paper, I propose to examine the process in which while he wrote the original and the revised *Sanctuary* and *Light in August* Faulkner altered the authority of the narrative so that he in *Light in August* discovered a new narrative style at the center of which there lies the unconscious. The word "the unconscious" I use here is not some (vulgar) Freudian notion that in dreams something symbolizes something, but it is close to the unconscious that Lacan uses and tries to define by using it in his theory. As Shoshana Felman says, it is something related to the dimension of discourse.¹ First, I will discuss the alteration and the abandonment of the role played by Horace Benbow in the original and the revised *Sanctuary*. In the original version, Horace is created as an alter ego of the author just as he is in *Flags in the Dust*. When Faulkner revised *Sanctuary*, however, he, by rewriting the passages which were initially intended to depict Horace as the author's double, modified his textual function in order to make him an imaginary double of Popeye. This alteration implies that the author realized that in the original *Sanctuary* Faulkner could not find any persuasive constitutive connection between Horace's and Popeye's part; to solve the problem, Faulkner constructed a structure which resembles to the specular delusion in which Popeye's violence (imaginatively) reflects in Horace's inner world. Yet, as I would demonstrate later, the structure still could not offer strong enough grounds to describe Popeye's inexpressible, unnameable violence. Next, then, I will discuss the narrative style in *Light in August* to show that in the book Faulkner invented a new mode of narration which enabled him to finally banish his fictional alter ego like Horace from the authoritative position of the narrative and, in his next major novel *Absalom, Absalom!*, to fully develop his most profound theme of the miscegenation.²

1. The Abandonment of an Alter Ego

It was probably in 1925 or 26 that Faulkner heard a story which may well

have developed into a novel afterwards. It is a story of a young gangster who "was said to be impotent" and "still persisted in having relations with women." The girl who told him the story at a night club "freely" said that the gangster, whose name was probably Neal Kerens "Popeye" Pumphrey, "had raped [a woman] with a particularly bizarre object and kept her in a brothel." Faulkner, after the girl left, "brooded over the horrifying story" (Blotner 176). Though it's not clear that which of the facts—that there existed such an evil man or that the girl nonchalantly told the dreadful story of the man—served more to produce his fifth novel, in a story that he may well have written not long after the encounter in the night club, we can at least find a character whose name is adopted from the man in the night club story. The short story "The Big Shot" is rather an apprentice's work and the character "Popeye" does not leave a strong, traumatic impression on the readers as his successor does, even though some of his traits are inherited to the Popeye of *Sanctuary*. "Popeye" is portrayed, like his successor, as a "slight man with a dead face and dead black hair and eyes and a delicate hooked little nose and no chin," and he goes "each summer to Pensacola to visit his aged mother, telling her that he [is] a hotel clerk" and hates "liquor worse than a Baptist deacon" (US 504-06). But the similarity ends there; the two Popeyes are virtually two different characters that accidentally share the same name. Furthermore, the story itself has almost nothing to do with the girl's story. Faulkner had to wait to write what he was truly affected by at the night club. He could not present the horrible violence of the story just as it was. He needed to create some character to express and interpret for him the shock he suffered from the story (which he would have thought was the essence of the violence).

Noel Polk suggests that *Flags in the Dust*, *Sanctuary*, and *The Sound and the Fury* may well "spring from the same matrix" (105). Though he does not explain what the "matrix" is, it could be inferred that it is a narcissistic concern with writing; those three novels constitutively incorporate the author's alter ego in themselves³: Horace Benbow in *Flags in the Dust*, Quentin Compson in *The Sound and the Fury*, and, again, Horace Benbow in *Sanctuary*. While all of them reflect the author's essentially personal attitudes toward writing, their novelistic functions are slightly varied according to each work. Quentin, though he "in some ways might have been a younger version of Horace Benbow" (Blotner 235), is less relevant to the author when compared with the other two. He is rather inseparably integrated into the whole structure of the novel; in other words, the composition of *The Sound and the Fury* is exceptionally, if not

miraculously, well organized with no apparent incongruities. The exceptionality, however, conversely indicates the limits within which Faulkner (and Horace Benbow in *Flags in the Dust* and *Sanctuary*) was confined. *Flags in the Dust*, for example, has a structural vulnerability into which *The Sound and the Fury* almost accidentally evades falling. But in spite of the publisher's protest that *Flags in the Dust* is "diffuse and nonintegral with neither very much plot development nor character development" (Bleikasten 205), the novel does *not* owe its structural weakness to the fragmented plots. When Faulkner said "I realized for the first time that I had done better than I knew" in response to his editor's complaint that *Flags in the Dust* was "six books in one," it was never for self-defense; after all, as Eric J. Sundquist correctly points out, the editor's charge "might also be leveled, say, at *Light in August* or *Go Down, Moses*" (7-8). So probably we should say that the problem of the novel, which "would recur in the original version of *Sanctuary*," rather consists in "excessive attention to the character of Horace Benbow and his incestuous attachment to his sister" (7); unlike Quentin, Horace Benbow does not have a persuasive constitutive connection with the other parts of the novel.⁴

In the original *Sanctuary*, Horace Benbow is still not so much a fictional character as the author's alter ego. In a sense, he is a portal through which Faulkner enters the narrative world. Horace exists in the novel as something without which the author cannot compose what he is writing into a novel. The necessity of Horace's consciousness as the center of the narrative (if not as a storyteller) that integrates all the plots into one, the fact that Faulkner summoned his fictional alter ego to translate the "girl's story" into the form of a novel, implies not only that his authorial design was to write a "Freudian nightmare" as some critics claim,⁵ but also that the design itself came from his *narcissistic* attitudes toward writing. When Bleikasten says that "the haughty solitude" in which Faulkner wrote *The Sound and the Fury* could become an "impasse," he actually means that the impasse is the consequence of the author's narcissistic writing style:

In other words, for Faulkner the recourse to a "cheap idea" [that *Sanctuary* was deliberately conceived to make money] was perhaps not only a desperate move to solve his financial problems but also the index of an important change in the economy of his writing, a change prompted by the awareness that the haughty solitude in which he had entrenched himself while writing *The Sound and the Fury* could become an impasse.

One might even argue that the provisional *encanaillement* of his genius was indispensable, for it allowed him to escape the lure of an overly self-centered relationship to writing which, had it lasted too long, might have become fatal to the pursuit of his enterprise as a novelist. (215)

Though Bleikasten seems to argue that secularization forced Faulkner to change his “haughty” writing style, we only need to note here that his writing style then carried a risk of becoming an “impasse” and that that “might have become fatal to the pursuit of his enterprise as a novelist.” The impasse was something whose presence Faulkner sensed in the original *Sanctuary* and could not see in *Flags in the Dust*. Only (re)writing *Sanctuary* made it possible for him to see it. Indeed, it was the girl’s story—the story of Popeye, its baseless violence—that forced his novelistic narcissism to confront its own impasse.

The most radical change that happened to Horace during the revision is succinctly summarized in Polk’s comment on the first scene: “In the first version of the scene at the pond, for example, we first see Popeye from Horace’s point of view; in the revised version we rather see Horace through Popeye’s eyes. From being ‘Horace’ or ‘Benbow’ in the first version of the scene, he becomes ‘the man’ in the second” (118). According to Polk, the change mainly concerns with the perspective of the narrative; Horace is changed from someone *seeing* into someone *seen*. But it is not that Faulkner only reverses the object/subject relationship between Horace and Popeye. When he describes Horace through Popeye’s eyes and deprives him of his name, he abandons Horace as the focal center of the narrative which is conventionally and metaphorically called *point of view*. He instead places the two characters at the same plane of the narrative at which their actual (*or literal*) gazes intersect with each other. He puts them, as it were, at the both sides of a mirror through which they see the reflection of themselves in the other’s image. In the revision, he clearly makes their relationship what is similar to the Imaginary delusion of psychoanalysis. In that sense, the divided structure of *Sanctuary*, which “recalls and prefigures the structure of antagonistic forms that is characteristic of almost all of Faulkner’s novels” (Sundquist 56), as a whole reflects the idea of the Imaginary delusion (dual perspective).

In terms of psychoanalysis, Horace, who is “incapable of revealing why such evil as the novel continually dwells on should occur” (Sundquist 50), would be a dysfunctional analyst. His, and his author’s, *thematic* design according to

which he through transference reacts to the traumatic rape scene and gives it an explanation (a symbolic substitution) never works out. So in that sense it might be better to say that, as Sundquist argues, *Sanctuary* is not a detective novel with no detectives but rather one with a failed detective.⁶ In a detective novel a detective, like Dupin in Poe's "The Purloined Letter," by its own definition must occupy the psychoanalytical place as *the subject presumed to know*. If Horace ends up with a failed detective/therapist, it is because he (and the creator of him) misunderstands his authority as *the subject presumed to know* comes not so much from his position of the writing self as from his obsessional complexes, just as an analyst as wrongly as the Poe's minister misapprehends his effectiveness in therapy "spring[s] from his intellectual strength" (Felman *Insight* 43) which in fact owes to his relatively authoritative position in the relationship to his patient.

However, it is the abortion of the specular delusion that implied to Faulkner that writing a novel was not a mere narcissistic association with the world but in fact the world itself was a misconceived fantasy produced by narcissism.⁷ As Faulkner eventually realized, it is an act that can require its agent to realize that everything within it primarily and ultimately (re)presents itself as an effect of rhetoric. Both the self and the world are ultimately just shadows of it.

Faulkner must have glimpsed the shadows when he finally failed in giving Popeye's violence its proper textual (or structural) meaning. He realized that there was *nothing* at the bottom of writing as well as at the bottom of Popeye's violence: "[*Sanctuary's*] shock derives not from the deep social and psychological nightmare of Southern history but from the crude intangibility of contemporary violence, which seems to have no particular explanation and no identifiable origin" (Sundquist 47). To write the intangibility is equivalent to being lost in the maze of metaphors, to confronting the dimension of rhetoric: "we are faced, once again, with the inescapable dimension of *rhetoric*, that 'stumbling block' which forces discourse to discover that it can only define rhetoric rhetorically, by participating in it, i.e., by stumbling, by elaborating not a grammar of rhetoric but a *rhetoric of rhetoric*. . ." (Felman *Madness* 127). Against the author's expectation that it would compensate for the failure of Horace as a detective, Popeye's appended biography which is burdened with Freudian notions never elucidates the reasons of his violence. Faulkner now understood that Popeye's violence (*rhetoric*) cannot be explained by his Freudian biography (an assumed *grammar*). It instead should be told in the narrative narratively (or *rhetorically*) in order to render it its proper textual

meaning, but he did not know in what way he could do so at the time he revised *Sanctuary*. In his stock of narrative styles, he only got the unworkable specular delusion based on his narcissistic attitude towards writing.

We should note here, however, that it is not that Faulkner completely abandoned the idea of the specular delusion in his novels succeeding *Sanctuary*. As I would discuss later, Gail Hightower in *Light in August* was originally designed to be the center of the novel, to be placed at the convergence of the apparently unrelated plots, which is close to the role as an organizer of the split plots that Horace was expected to play and barely accomplished in *Sanctuary*. But it is at least true that "the role played by Horace in [*Sanctuary*] is his last role in Faulkner's fiction" (Bleikasten 217).

The role Faulkner gives up during the revision is that of the author's alter ego as the *subject presumed to know*. The revised *Sanctuary*, when put in the context of the author's literary career, marks a point of passing from a text which is governed by the author's alter ego toward, as I would demonstrate in the next chapter, a text as the *knowledge presumed to be a subject*, a text as the unconscious. Through writing and rewriting *Sanctuary*, Faulkner recognizes the possible dimension of rhetoric (or metaphor) in novels. He understands not only that writing is essentially the (d)elusive structure that metaphor slides away from itself toward another metaphor until finally it reaches the void whence it comes, but also that, as long as he wants to write life as something impossible (or rather we should say as some splendid failure), he has to intentionally commit to the delusion. If Faulkner's career can be said "virtually to create the significance of *The Sound and the Fury*" (Sundquist 17), he in *Sanctuary* realizes not only how far the distance between Caddy (the Real) and Benjy (the Symbolic) actually is but also the very fact that there is a distance between the two. To Faulkner, writing a novel is no longer an experience of genuine ecstasy⁸; instead it is an experience of the void. Standing at the verge of rhetoric from where looking down on the nothingness of writing, he has to walk from Benjy to Caddy. Faulkner is never to write a novel simply in the "quasi-trancelike condition" (Bleikasten 44) again but is to deliberately create such a condition to put himself at the verge of the void.

2. The Discovery of the Narrative Voice

"He had apparently made several false starts," writes Blotner about the (aborted) beginning of *Light in August* in his most referred-to biography of

Faulkner. "In one, Hightower and his bride rode the train to his new church in Jefferson. In another, he told her the story of his grandfather's death in the henhouse raid. In still another, Hightower paused in his writing and looked out at the shabby sign in his front yard" (281). Regina K. Fadiman also elaborates on the original beginning of the novel:

As far as extant records show, the story of the novel begins with the three holograph pages, now at the University of Texas, about Gail Hightower. Many words and phrases have been crossed out, interlined, and added from the margins, indicating that these sheets may actually be the first draft of the Hightower story. In less than two and one-half pages and in a completely straightforward manner, an omniscient narrator describes Hightower in his study, the painted sign outside his window, and the Negro nurse and children who peer at the sign. Hightower is at the window, writing, with the open Bible beneath his other hand. (31)

This abortive beginning scene is tempting enough to lure us into some interpretation. It tells us a lot that the novel originally commenced with the portrait of the expelled reverend "at the window, writing, with the open Bible beneath his other hand." For one thing, the author defines the character as one who sees and writes. He secretly avows that the novel he is going to write is under command of the reverend's stare and script, which means that he could not completely dispel from his book the role of Horace, that is, the writing self. When he began to write *Light in August*, Faulkner had not yet fully grasped the significance of Horace's failure. Hightower was expected to be in charge with the split narratives the author was going to write.

So, when Faulkner finally gave up starting the novel with Hightower, he gave up placing the reverend at the center of the narrative. It is not that some other character took over the place that Hightower was presumed to occupy, but, in place of him, there came *nothing*. After he expelled Hightower as the authoritative narrator—the *subject presumed to know*—from the text, Faulkner put an absence at the center of the narrative. It might be incorrect to say, however, that Faulkner then introduced a Jamesian narrator "referred to in the third person who takes great care not to exceed the possibilities of his knowledge and the limits of his position" (Blanchot 383), for such a narrator is only another authoritative narrator that is organized to suit the ideology that there is "some sort of equivalence between the narrative act and the

transparency of a consciousness" (ibid.). What Faulkner did was much more radical. He deprived Hightower of his status as the *subject presumed to know*, his status as a narrator, and then he introduced *conversation* into the narrative as a way of eliminating a Horace from the text. It was truly a revolutionary moment in his literary career.

Faulkner must have noticed that Hightower and Byron talk not just to let the story be told, only to drive the plot forward (in fact Byron often recapitulates what the readers have already known), but that the two men do so because it is the form of conversation itself that talks in the text. The conversation is far from natural and conventional and sometimes seems awkward and artificial. The two men's voices in the conversation, at its extreme, do not seem to be uttered even from a man's mouth.

They sit facing one another across the desk. The study is lighted now, by a greenshaded reading lamp sitting upon the desk. Hightower sits behind it, in an ancient swivel chair, Byron in a straight chair opposite. Both their faces are just without the direct downward pool of light from the shaded lamp. Through the open window the sound of singing from the distant church comes. Byron talks in a *flat, level voice*.

"It was a strange thing. I thought that if there ever was a place where a man would be where the chance to do harm could not have found him, it would have been out there at the mill on a Saturday evening. And with the house burning too, right in my face, you might say. It was like all the time I was eating dinner and I would look up now and then and see that smoke and I would think 'Well, I wont see a soul out here this evening, anyway. I aint going to be interrupted this evening, at least.' And then I looked up and there she was, with her face all fixed for smiling and with her mouth all fixed to say his name, when she saw that I wasn't him. And I never knowed any better than to blab the whole thing." (77-78, italics mine)

Faulkner once referred to the conversational narrative style of *Absalom, Absalom!* in his answer to a college student's question: "Well, the story was told by Quentin to Shreve. Shreve was the commentator that held the thing to something of reality. If Quentin had been let alone to tell it, it would have become completely unreal. It had to have a solvent to keep it real, keep it believable, creditable, otherwise it would have vanished into smoke and fury"

(FU 75). We should note that the reality of Quentin's story is not confirmed by Shreve's knowledge but by his *position* in the conversation. The author obviously produced the quasi-analytic (dialogic) situation in the conversation between Hightower and Byron in order to render the story they are talking "something of reality," just as he did between Quentin and Shreve. Byron plays the role of an analysand (a patient) and Hightower the role of an analyst. They sit face to face but their faces are hard to see in the dark outside "the direct downward pool of light," and there comes the sound of singing and then the voice between the two, which gives us the impression that the voice is somehow independent of the speaker.

So we should not consider "a flat, level voice" to be a quality which pertains to Byron's character. It explains neither what nor how he is. It is rather an indication of silence: the silence of emotion and representation. It is not reduced to the myth of the individual that a character is affirmed in his subjective richness, his inner freedom, his psychology; Byron's "flat, inflectionless, countrybred singsong" (100) is instead reduced to the epic myth: "His song is the expanse where, in the presence of a remembrance, there comes to speech the event that takes place there; memory, muse and mother of muses, holds truth within itself, that is to say, the reality of what takes place" (Blanchot 381). Even if Byron seemingly just reproduces what he heard and seen, *he* is the very narrative in which what he speaks simultaneously happens, in which "the event" takes place. In his own narrative, Byron is not (only) a character but the bearer of speech in whose narration what happened to him happens, so, as Blanchot argues, he must (have) introspectively put himself at "a sort of self-forgetting" (385) state. Therefore, rather syllogistically, an act of narration ineluctably sets its narrator in "the present of narrating speech" (*ibid.*), a state of forgetfulness, to recount what has already happened, that is, his remembrance.

In that sense, we can say that Byron's narration/narrative duplicates and transcribes the actual process of the author's writing. Faulkner's "quasi-trancelike" writing style can be supposed to be directly reflected in Byron's "self-forgetting" narration. When we put the two (Faulkner's writing style and Byron's narration) side by side, we can hear some resonance of them in Felman's comment on the psychoanalytical unconscious:

Indeed, the unconscious itself is a kind of *unmeant knowledge* that escapes intentionality and meaning, a knowledge spoken by the language

of the subject (spoken, for instance, by his “slips” or by his *dreams*), but that the subject cannot recognize, assume as his, appropriate; a speaking knowledge nonetheless denied to the speaker’s knowledge. (*Insight* 77, italics mine)

When he was writing *Light in August*, Faulkner may well have already noticed there was some connection between dreams and language: “They told Byron how [Hightower] seemed to talk that way in the pulpit too, wild too in the pulpit, using religion as though it were a *dream*. Not a nightmare, but something which went faster than the *words* in the book; a sort of cyclone that did not even need to touch the actual earth” (61-62, italics mine). He noticed that a dream is something faster than words, in other words, is some linguistic phenomenon of which language itself cannot grasp the meaning. It is highly probable that Faulkner was aware that his quasi-trancelike writing style was close to this linguistic phenomenon, i.e., the unconscious. Although he of course did not know it in Lacanian terms, he must have recognized it as something he could not controllably write. He understood that he needed to be in a trancelike state to let the unconscious write. So, when Faulkner let Byron narrate the narrative in “the present of narrating speech,” in the state of *forgetfulness*, he encouraged Byron to delegate his status as a narrator to the *speaking knowledge*, to the unconscious.

In brief, Byron introduces the unconscious into the narrative by means of his “epic” narration—the (re)productive narration in which what it narrates simultaneously takes place, and then he delegates his status as a narrator to the unconscious. When Byron narrates the narrative (not when he just reports to the reverend what happened to him and Lena), he is neither a mere character *within* nor an impersonal narrator *without*. He is, as it were, a *voice* inasmuch as it is what Blanchot calls it by the word:

The narrative “he” [or “it,” *il*] . . . thus marks the intrusion of the other—understood as neutral—in its irreducible strangeness and in its wily perversity. The other speaks. But when the other is speaking, no one speaks. . . . The narrative (I do not say narrating) voice derives from this its aphony. It is a voice that has no place in the work, but neither does it hang over it; far from falling out of some sky under the guarantee of a superior Transcendence, the “he” [*il*] is . . . rather a kind of void in the work. . . . This is the narrative voice, a neutral voice that speaks the work

from out of this place without a place, where the work is silent. (385)

The narrative voice, or "he," is primarily a negative (Blanchot would say "neutral") form of narration, not only because it is defined as something neither within nor without the text but also because it invalidates two conventional modes of narrative, that is, a *story* (or history, *histoire*) and a novel: "The mysterious 'he' of the epic institution very quickly splits: the 'he' becomes the impersonal coherency of a *story*. . . . The *story* stands alone, performed in the thought of a demiurge. . . . But the *story* soon becomes disenchanted. The experience of the disenchanted world that Don Quixote introduced into literature is the experience that dissipates the *story* by contrasting it to the banality of the real; this is how realism seizes on the form of the novel. . . . the 'he' marks the intrusion of the character" (381). We should note that Blanchot never describes the narrative voice as a historical consequence. When he says that we can find the model of it in the ancient epic narration, it only shows that it is *retrospective* rather than historical. The pseudo-historical process he describes in which "he" is split into a story and a novel should be taken not as the actual process but as some metaphorically-told story to explain something he cannot explain otherwise.

Blanchot writes: "Let us (on a whim) call [the narrative voice] spectral, ghostlike" (386). So it is a *metaphor* in the sense that Lacan's unconscious is a metaphor. They will turn out to be a mere metaphor unless they are recognized as an impossible expression of the two men's unquenchable desire for *beyond*. Lacan says, "What is truth, if not a complaint? . . . it is not the *meaning* of the complaint that is important, but whatever might be found beyond that meaning, that might be definable as real" (qtd. in *Madness* 119). On the other hand, when Blanchot wrote "The act of writing: this relation to life, a deflected relation through which what is of no concern is affirmed" (385), he must have almost agonizingly realized how paradoxical and desperate it was to endeavor to reach life through writing but, at the same time, he well understood that—more paradoxically—one was not *truly* able to reach there without recourse to writing. He as well as Lacan thoroughly comprehended that life—the real—was the residue of a human being (which can only be experienced by us linguistically) taken away the linguistic part of his or her subject.

So the narrative voice is not substantial; it is not what we can even *metaphorically* hear, for it is a voice that announces to us the place—the void—in the text whence *metaphor* itself springs, that tells us how metaphorical what

we are reading is by revealing itself as an impossible, failed metaphor. To notice the readers that what you are reading—what I have written—is something which fatally missed the chance to tell you something, that there is still some *residue* of the text—this is what Faulkner intended to do when he introduced the narrative voice in his book. In the novel, Byron is just an example of the narrative voice Faulkner abundantly uses in it. The entire novel is, in fact, dominated by the voice.

The more radical examples of the narrative voice can be found in Doc and Mrs. Hines's narrative. Their narrative which is placed nearly at the end of the novel demonstrates how the author deepened the style in the process of writing the book. As clearly shown in the following quotations, it is certain that Faulkner consciously conferred the qualities of the narrative voice upon the madman's narrative:

[Doc Hines] ceases. At once [Mrs. Hines] begins to speak, as though she has been waiting with rigid impatience for Byron to cease. She speaks in the same *dead, level* tone: the two voices in monotonous strophe and antistrophe: the two *bodiless* voices recounting dreamily something performed in a region without dimension by people without blood. . . . (376, italics mine)

[Mrs. Hines] ceases; her harsh, droning voice dies. Across the desk Hightower watches her: the still, stonefaced woman in the purple dress, who has not moved since she entered the room. Then she begins to speak again, without moving, almost without lipmovement, as if she were a *puppet* and the voice that of a *ventriloquist* in the next room. (379, italics mine)

The radicality of their narrative/narration primarily comes from their *madness*. It is not (only) that the author ascribes the unconventionality of the narrative (their inhuman narration) to their madness, but that he senses there is some *constitutive* connection between narrative and madness. Faulkner somehow noticed the connection when he in *As I Lay Dying* invested Darl with clairvoyant knowledge (for example, of Dewey Dell's pregnancy and Jewel's illegitimacy) and made him finally speak of himself, like Doc Hines, in the *third* person. Darl is not insane because he sees and knows what he could not have known and seen but, on the contrary, he can see and know it because he is insane. In a sense,

he is insane even before he goes mad. It is not Darl but Darl's voice that is crazy, for his hallucination and clairvoyance take place nowhere but in his narrating voice, in "the present of narrating speech." His insanity inhabits, as it were, his narrative. As a matter of fact, he only speaks as *if* he had seen and known just as the not-insane, normal "omniscient narrator" does. So his madness is, first of all, an indication—a metaphor—that he is split into two categories, namely, a *character* and a *narrator* in the novel that has an "absence of a controlling narrator" (Sundquist 321) within it. Furthermore, it is also a metaphor indicating that the novel is itself torn into *fiction* and *realism*; the novel is not capable of choosing its own form between the two. Madness is, then, a metaphor as a junction that connects *realism* and *fiction*, or is the very conjunction *and* put between them, just as the unconscious is a metaphor that connects the Imaginary (specular duality) and the Symbolic (a locus of the unconscious language): in terms of realism, it works as *madness as metaphor* to categorize a character as a madman; in terms of fiction, it works as *metaphor as madness* to disclose to the readers that what you are reading is no more than fiction, a web of metaphors. Madness thus equally unsettles the grounds of the both styles. It makes the text that which is neither fiction nor realism, and turns the narrator into the narrative voice which is neither human nor inhuman. As for Darl, however, he is not so much a narrator as a character, for madness pertains to his character in the end. The Jackson insane asylum, where he is sent away at the end of the novel, is, as it were, a prison of realism; it shows that, during the time he wrote *As I Lay Dying*, the author had not yet fully apprehended the significance of madness as a conjunction *and*. (The novel is then, in terms of a narrative style, at best, an experimental modernistic novel and, at worst, is another transitional apprentice's work like *Sanctuary*, even though all of Faulkner's great novels are somehow transitional.)

So it is in Doc and Mrs. Hines's—especially in Doc's—narrative that Faulkner for the first time and thoroughly appreciated the significance of madness. Unlike Darl's case, madness primarily pertains to their narratives, their voices. The author exaggerates the independence of the voice from the speaker as shown in the expression, for instance, "the two bodiless voices." Moreover, he intentionally gives us the impression that the voice comes from, so to speak, the *other* by using a metaphor like a ventriloquist. That Doc Hines refers to himself in the third-person in his narrative is another example of the voice from the other. Felman writes: "*The unconscious is a discourse that is other, or ex-centric, to the discourse of a self.* It is in effect a discourse that is

other to itself, not in possession of itself; a discourse that no consciousness can master and that no speaking subject can assume or own" (*Insight* 123). So the (narrative) voice of the old Hines is a narrative as the unconscious: "The old man [Doc Hines] interrupts again, with that startling suddenness. But he does not shout this time: his voice now is as calm and *logical* as Byron's own. . . : 'Yes. Old Doc Hines took him. God give old Doc Hines his chance and so old Doc Hines give God His chance too. So out of the mouths of little children God used His will. . . '" (371, italics mine). The word "logical" here is not synonymous with *rational*; when the voice is logical, it only means that the voice is independently of the speaker's knowledge submissive to the invisible, rather linguistic code of the narrative, as the unconscious covertly follows the inexpressible grammar of the unconscious language. Doc Hines is, in brief, made to repeat a story that has been already written and told by some unknown demiurge-like narrator.

In conclusion, the narrative voice is a narrative of madness, of the unconscious. It makes the narrative neither fiction nor realism; the narrative is not a mere reflection of reality, nor a genuine fantasy. Rather it places the narrative at the void where the work is silent, where everything thematic—subject, self, society, life, history—springs from as shadows of rhetoric. The narrative voice announces to us the demarcation beyond which a novel is impossible, for it speaks from the place where a storyteller becomes a storyteller and a character becomes a character. It then always carries a risk that it awakens the readers from the illusion—transferral misperception of metaphor for the original—because of which a novel can stand as a novel. His greatest novels like *The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom!* always invite us to some limit beyond which they are not capable of maintaining themselves as novels. Overtly revealing themselves as a highly linguistic constitution, they guide us to the rupture of meaning through which we can glimpse the *beyond*. *Light in August*, where Faulkner finally gave up the role of Horace (his fictional alter ego who imaginatively governs the narrative) and, adopting the quasi-psychoanalytical conversation style and the narrative voice as both the form and the contents of the narrative, placed the void—the unconscious as the *knowledge presumed to be a subject*—at the center of the narrative, is surely one of his greatest novels which hoard within themselves the author's unquenchable desire for the reality that words always fail to represent.

Notes

¹ In the following passage, Felman states that the unconscious is relevant to the dimension of discourse. She also implies here that the unconscious is a series of rhetorical displacement: "*The unconscious is a discourse. . . . The unconscious is not simply a forgotten or rejected bag of instincts, but an indestructible infantile desire whose repression means that it has become symbolically unrecognizable, since it is differentially articulated through rhetorical displacements (object substitutions). Repression is, in other words, the rejection not of instincts but of symbols, or of signifiers: their rejection through their replacement, the displacement or the transference of their original libidinal meaning onto other signifiers*" (*Insight* 123).

² Eric J. Sundquist argues that while Faulkner did not discover the "full burden of his central tragedy" in *Light in August*, it is not wrong "to imagine that Faulkner's own rereading of his first great novel [*The Sound and the Fury*] in the context of his greatest [*Absalom, Absalom!*] would not have been possible without the extraordinary deepening of style and theme that *Light in August* afforded" (67).

³ "Whatever may have been his models in life and literature, Horace clearly belongs with the fictional alter egos through whom Faulkner was both running after and fleeing from his own identity." (Bleikasten 217)

⁴ "As it stands now, *Sanctuary* is one of Faulkner's most straightforward narratives. The first version was a much more complicated affair. There were many shifts in time-sequence and point of view, yet they were carelessly cobbled together, lacking the internal necessity which they possess in *The Sound and the Fury* and in most of Faulkner's later novels." (Bleikasten 216)

⁵ "To call the novel a 'Freudian nightmare' (a phrase about how it works as a text, but it is unquestionably to its closeness to dreamwork and fantasy patterns that it owes its dark power, the uncanny charge of raw intensities assailing us as we read Faulkner's 'most horrific tale.'" (ibid. 220)

⁶ In a discussion dealing with the relationship between Hamett and Faulkner, Sundquist argues that *Sanctuary* "has a detective, Horace Benbow, who is powerless to prevent grotesque misapplications of justice and incapable of revealing why such evil as the novel continually dwells on should occur" (50)

⁷ "Writing, for Faulkner, was at first little more than the literary encoding of a series of private moves: a way of playing hide-and-seek with his theatrical selves, a way of parading and a way of wooing. A young man with a penchant for belles lettres, he used literature as a vehicle for thinly disguised self-expression and self-dramatization, and the static scenarios of the pastoral poem or the dream play perfectly suited his needs. What Yeats wrote of late-nineteenth-century poets fairly applies to him: 'At once the fault and the beauty of the nature-description of most modern poets is that for them the stars, and streams, the leaves, and the animals, are only masks behind which go on the sad soliloquies of nineteenth century

egotism.” (Bleikasten 9)

⁸ “that other quality which *The Sound and the Fury* had given me . . . : that emotion definite and physical and yet nebulous to describe: the ecstasy, that eager and joyous faith and anticipation of surprise which the yet unmarred sheet beneath my hand held inviolate and unfailing, waiting for release.” (Bleikasten 43)

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