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The author argues that Faulkner characteristically connects a capacity for emotion with inarticulateness of his inarticulate figures while the verbosity of his articulate characters relate to his observations about the rigid forms of speech and behavior of Southern society, and the Southern dependence on tradition and romantic legends as forms of human behavior. Some parallels have been drawn with Hemingway in this respect and pointed out the similarities and / or differences between the two authors.

There is a remarkable incogruity in a writer who abstains from thinking as a dangerous pastime yet works from a vocabulary which challenges an unabridged dictionary; who is a farmer and a complex and confusing novelist. Faulkner's work poses a major critical challenge because of its seeming disjunction between theme and structure. It is hard to see the relationship between the excessive rhetoric of Faulkner's storytelling and the provincial life which serves as his subject. Faulkner is a talker who distrusts words: a writer who connects a capacity for emotion with inarticulateness and an ability to speak with debilitating thought.

As Harry Levin says of Whitman and Hemingway, the challenge and dilemma of »expressing the inexpressible« is something all good writers must face. Like Hemingway, Faulkner, to borrow Mr. Levin's phrasing once again, knows »that no book is big enough to do final justice to its living subject.«<sup>1</sup> But the challenge of the inexpressible that strikes Hemingway dumb drives Faulkner into verbosity. »No one«, Windhem Lewis has said of Faulkner, »ever had less care for the mot juste: To compare (Faulkner) with Ernest Hemingway as an artist would indeed be absurd: but actually he betrays such a deep unconsciousness in that respect as to be a little surprising.« He goes on.

Faulkner is as full of »passion« – of sound and fury – as Hemingway is dry and without undue heat. He works up and up, in a torrent of

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Carlos, B a k e r , ed., *Hemingway and His Critics: An International Anthology*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1961, 103.

»ill-selected« words, to his stormy climaxes. With Hemingway the climaxes are registered by a few discreet touches here and there.<sup>2</sup>

There is, of course, a great deal of »passion« and implicit self-pity in Hemingway which Lewis simply ignores, but it is true that Faulkner shows his feelings in his prose more directly than Hemingway. Leslie Fiedler, like Lewis, finds this »hot and sticky« surface of Faulkner's work especially significant, and says that Faulkner is »primarily... a sentimental writer.«<sup>3</sup> But Faulkner's romanticism is hardly more nostalgic than Hemingway's, and his candor about emotion is disarming next to the self-serving hard-boiled elitism that we often find in Hemingway. We should not, I think, discount Faulkner's »ill-selected« vocabulary as quickly and obstinately as Lewis does without first trying to discover how his verbosity relates to his observations about social inequality and men's struggles with the elemental forces of chance and destiny. Faulkner's excessive language, and his curious interest in inarticulate figures, reveals his passionate intellectual quest as an artist to »look at«, »listen to«, »believe in«, and »understand« the significance of the illogical and often anguished ways that men destroy and create themselves.

Faulkner's thematic juxtapositions of language and silence are remarkably similar to Hemingway's. Like Hemingway, Faulkner associates contentment with the natural world of animals, and connects inarticulateness with a primitive definition of manhood which stresses action and technical skill. In this sense, Faulkner continues in the romantic tradition of the inarticulate woodsman one can observe in Thoreau. As Leslie Fiedler has said: »The American extension of Rousseauism through James Fenimore Cooper and Mark Twain leads directly to William Faulkner.«<sup>4</sup> Thoreau may only have thought that his inarticulate woodchopper is wiser than his words, but Faulkner, like Hemingway, asserts this intuitive understanding as a doctrine of faith.

Faulkner's enormous achievement in creating his Southern world of Yoknapatawpha blinds us to the fact that he, like Hemingway, emerged from the postwar environment of the 1920's. His first novel, *Solder's Pay*, for example, is another »Soldier's Home«, in which Donald Mahon's muteness comments on the petty, barren world of his Georgia town. Many of Faulkner's early stories, like »All the Dead Pilots« and »Ad Astra«, reveal a war environment similar to *A Farewell to Arms* and *In Our Time*. Soldiers, deadened by their war years, strike out at the meaninglessness of life

<sup>2</sup> Wyndham Lewis, »William Faulkner (The Moralist with the Corn-Cob)«, in *Men Without Art*, New York: Russel and Russel, 1964., 64- 65, 48-49.

<sup>3</sup> Leslie Fiedler, *No in Thunder: Essays on Myth and Literature*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1960., 113.

<sup>4</sup> Leslie Fiedler, *Ibid.*, 114.

through exaggerated acts of violence and drinking. Faulkner like Hemingway, directly links the aggression of his soldiers to their disillusionment with war rhetoric:

it was as though we all flung everything overboard at once, facing unabashed and without shame the specter which for four years we had been decking out of high words, leaping forward with concerted and orderly promptitude each time the hunting slipped.<sup>5</sup>

And, as in Hemingway, silence in this world is a product of an overload of language which has produced both a cynicism about the value of words and a frustrated sense of impotence:

There was something of the crucified about Monaghan, too: furious, inarticulate not with stupidity but at it, like into him more than any of us had distilled the ceased drums of the old lust and greed waking at last aghast at their own impotence and accrued despair.<sup>6</sup>

Faulkner's war novels never attain the stature of Hemingway's because Faulkner identifies himself too fully with his self-pitying soldiers, but he too responds to the post-war enui. This angry code of violent inarticulateness becomes displaced into other issues in Faulkner's later works, but the connection of speechlessness and impotent rage, as we shall see, remains an important ingredient in all of Faulkner's attacks on the pieties of the South.

Faulkner continued to return to these «hard-boiled» themes throughout the 1930's, in works like *The Wild Psalms*, *Pylon*, and, of course, *Sanctuary*. In all these novels, language shares in the death-like pallor of the rest of existence. Communication through speech is impossible because of the indifference that propels people. These works are all, like Hemingway's novels and stories of the time, characterised by an emphasis on sensation, violence, and drink. Only the exaggerated physical experience can break through the flat indifference of everyday life and everyday language. The impulse that makes Hemingway unable to see death in any but the violent form of the bullfight or war, or which demands hunting in order to break the »dam« of Macomber's impotence, turns Temple Drake into Popey's whore in *Sanctuary*, makes Charlotte Rittenmeyer leave her family for an adulterous life with Harry Wilbourne in *The Wild Psalms*, and turns the quiet newspaper reporter into Laverne's adoring servant in *Pylon*. There is nothing that need or can be said in these works; only violent sensation can arouse the self out of its stupor.

<sup>5</sup> William Faulkner, *Collected Stories*, New York: Modern Library, 1937., 243.

<sup>6</sup> William Faulkner, *Ibid.*, 416.

This wasteland environment of death and noncommunication, which Hemingway portrays with such vivid force is not a comfortable fictional milieu for Faulkner. His war stories seem false; *Mosquitoes*, his novel about cynical artists, has none of the tension of *The Sun Also Rises*; his hard-boiled love stories, like *The Wild Psalms*, lack the disillusion or bound emotions and failed dreams we feel in a *Farewell to Arms*. Faulkner does not have Hemingway's ability to concentrate frustrated feeling into his conversations, and his stories suffer from the sentiment and self-pity that Hemingway manages to hold in bounds, hidden behind his style. His existential hopelessness and misery that Hemingway conveys in these works comes out most fully in Faulkner in terms of the social structure of the South, as in *Light in August* or *Absalom, Absalom!*, or as a raging struggle between man and the natural elements, as in the «Old Man» segments of *The Wild Psalms*.<sup>7</sup>

But even within his saga of the Southern community, Faulkner retains many of the sentimental and romantic notions that we see in his and Hemingway's war stories. There is, for example, the association we can make with Fitzgerald, and which Hemingway continues, between fulfilling moments of love and silence. This idea of a total communion beyond words is the belief that prompts Ike McCaslin to eulogize the time in marriage »when flesh no longer talks to flesh«<sup>8</sup> We see it also in Faulkner's portraits of the communion of Quentin, Caddy, and Benjy Compson in *The Sound and Fury*, and Judith and Henry Sutpen in *Absalom, Absalom!*

»They (Judith and Henry) were as two people become now and then, who seem to know one another so well or are so much alike that the power, the need, to communicate by speech atrophies from disuse and, comprehending without need of the ear or intellect, they no longer understand one another actual words.«<sup>9</sup>

At times, Faulkner extends this myth of communion to the Southern aristocratic society as a whole, representing the continuity of generations through a continuity of speech and thought processes among individuals. Social density, by defining the nature of personality and limiting the avenues of communication, intensifies the significance of the verbal act. The homogeneity of Southern life, like Nick Carraway's relationship with his father, allows people to speak on the basis of shared definitions and

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed analysis of the parallels between *The Wild Psalms* and Hemingway's work, see Thomas I. McHaney, »Anderson, Hemingway and Faulkner's *The Wild Psalms*«, PMLA, 87 (1972) 465-74.

<sup>8</sup> William Faulkner, *Go Down Moses*, New York, Random House, 1965., 326.

<sup>9</sup> William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*, New York, Modern Library, 1936, 122.

common assumptions; allows people, as Nick says of himself, to be »unusually communicative in a reserved way.«<sup>10</sup> In *Absalom, Absalom!*, for example, Quentin knows Sutpen's story without having to hear it because he has lived within the same social environment as Sutpen: »you were not listening, because you knew it all already, had learned, absorbed it already without the medium of speech somehow from having been born and living beside it, with it, as children will and do; so that what your father was saying did not tell you anything so much as it struck, word by word, the resonant strings of remembering.«<sup>11</sup>

Faulkner values the inarticulate communication and suggests with pride that it is one of the particularities of his region. But he also understands that the rigid forms of speech and behavior of the Southern society, and the Southern dependence on tradition and pride in legend, can become inhuman codes of behavior.

We can see these themes of violence and inarticulate protest within the Southern community taking form for the first time in *Sartoris*. Like *Soldier's Pay*, *Sartoris* focuses on the disjunction of speech and actual experience which faces the returning soldier. Bayard Sartoris, growing up within the matriarchal community of the Sartoris home, with its stress on ideals of foolhardy manhood and his legends of his ancestor's deeds, now returns to the South again with a Hemingway-like cynicism produced by his experiences in the World War. He is characterized in »All the Dead Pilots« as a man who »couldn't talk very well, who never had been able to talk very much, who lived and died with may be two hunderd words«.<sup>12</sup> When he returns from the war, he is confronted by Miss Jenny's Civil War stories. These romantic legends function in much the same manner as did the exaggerations and lies of Krebs' world in »Solder's Home«. In both cases, the home-town language establishes a series of forms and »consequences« which are alien to the returning soldier.

But Bayard's predicament is not only a product of a disjunction of words and deeds created by his participation in the war, but reflects a

<sup>10</sup> In *Intruder in the Dust*, Faulkner uses these concepts of homogenous communication and shared beliefs to separate the South from the North and defend its right to resolve racial tensions in its own way:

... not North, outland and circumscribing and not even a geographical place but an emotional idea,...

(the Southerner) looks down upon (the Northerner) and his countless row upon row of faces which resembled his face and spoke the same language... (pp. 122-24).

William F a u l k n e r , *Intruder in the Dust*, New York, Modern Library, 1948, 122-24.

<sup>11</sup> William F a u l k n e r , *Absalom, Absalom!*, Ibid., 520-21.

<sup>12</sup> William F a u l k n e r , *Collected Stories*, Ibid., 530-21.

long tradition of rhetorical dependence within the Southern community. Unable to live up to the storybook exploits of their Sartoris predecessors, or express their own feelings in words, the Sartoris men are obsessed with the legends of the past which are preserved by the Sartoris women, like Jenny. Trapped within the house, the women live their lives by establishing the prowess of their mates through speech. Each Sartoris male in his turn must struggle to exceed his ancestors' madness in his own life, to create by his own actions a legend worthy of retelling after his death. Life, then, becomes a process of preparing oneself for history. Bayard must live for the time when the present will have become legendary past, when action will have become language.

Miss Jenny's legends are supported by Narcissa Benbow's romantic novels. In both cases, the women use words to dispell their fears of life. Reading to Bayard each day, Narcissa protects herself from involvement with him by »hiding behind the screen of words her voice raised between them«. <sup>13</sup> The present becomes a secondary reality next to Miss Jenny's mythic recreation of the Civil War, and language loses its power to communicate before Narcissa's meaningless novels.

Alone within this feminine world of words, Bayard resorts to angry isolation and inarticulate aggression. He sneaks into town, speaks in violent outbursts of monosyllables, and expresses his actual feelings only in his desperate screams at night when he awakens from his war nightmares. Unable to talk, afraid to feel, Bayard can touch the outward reality of Jefferson only through extreme sensory experiences, like his wild automobile driving. He feels lost in the feminine social world of his family and retreats to an imitation of war brotherhood which he finds in a male companionship of hard drinking. Carousing through the countryside with Rafe McCallum and some Negroes in his car, for example, provides a sensory relief from thought and feeling.

Old Bayard retreats from the matriarchal storytelling of the past and the danger of the present through his deafness which he turns on and off at will to suit the necessities of the situation. Young Bayard has no such recourse and turns instead to the fraternal world of men, represented in the book by the McCallums. The brotherhood of the drinking scenes, in which black and white and upper and lower classes unite, and the solem, inarticulate, coarse life of the McCallum household to which Bayard escapes late in the book represent an alternative code of behavior to the female-dominated aristocratic tradition. The McCallum family is patriarchal, a hold-over of the simple hunting community of the frontier South. Little conversation takes place, and life is controlled by the natural rhythm of

<sup>13</sup> William Faulkner, *Sartoris*, New York, Random House, 1929, 224.

the weather. Faulkner associates the McCallums with animals--their dogs, the game they hunt--to emphasize the primitive nature of their lives.

The McCallums offer Bayard a respite from the aristocratic world of words but, like Jake Barnes' escape to Burguete for fishing in *The Sun Also Rises*, it is only temporary; he runs there, in fact, after he has killed his father. Bayard's world is defined by the verbal authority of Jenny's stories and not by the values of the woods the McCallums trust to. He has no way out of the boundaries of language except silence and violent anger; rage and self-destruction are the only adequate responses he can find to the stultifying codes of his aristocratic world.

Women like Miss Jenny in *Sartoris*, or Aunt Rosa in *Absalom, Absalom!*, represent the result of life dominated by the abstract values preserved in Southern manners, ideals of conduct, and legends of the past. Their only means of expression is the traditional rhetoric of the society. They convert present into past and fact into legend. By reshaping history into story through obsessive retelling of the dead past, they preserve their place within an altered social fabric. They are without voice save for these impersonal verbal, revisions of human action. Their lives take the shape of their words and they become »ghosts«, as Mr. Compson says of Rosa, without substance except within the structure of their language.<sup>14</sup>

Faulkner's protagonists, like Bayard, live in this world shaped by language and legend and dominated by the past, but often with a self-consciousness that exceeds the limits of their social position. No matter what period of time is the ostensible setting for his actions, the conflicts that appear in Faulkner's novels are, as Allan Tate says, »of time and place out of joint.«<sup>15</sup> Often, this confrontation of subjective sensibilities with a world ruled by traditional codes of conduct produces, as it does in Bayard, the tragedy of impotent self-knowledge. We see the same kind of inarticulate frustration in Judith Sutpen in *Absalom, Absalom!*. Judith recognizes the intricate web of circumstances that limits her powers of personal control, but recognizes it as a sense of doom. Limited to her social identity, she has no way to express her private selfhood except through recognition by a »stranger«, an outsider:

»... you make so little impression, you see. You get born and you try this and you don't know why only you keep on trying it and you are born at the same time with a lot of other people, all mixed up with them, like trying to, having to, move our arms and legs with strings only the

<sup>14</sup> William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*, Ibid., 12.

<sup>15</sup> Allan Tate, »A Southern Mode of Imagination: Circa 1918 to the Present.« Carleton Miscellany, 1 (1950), 13.

same strings are hitched to all the other arms and legs and the others all trying and they don't know why either except that the strings are all in one another's ways like five or six people all trying to make a rug on the same loom only each one wants to weave his own pattern into the rug; and it can't matter, you know that, or the Ones that set up the loom would have arranged the things a little better, and yet it must matter because you keep on trying or having to keep on trying and then all of a sudden it's all over and all you have left is a block of stone with scratches on it... and it rains on it and the sun shines on it and after a while they don't even remember the name and what the scratches were trying to tell, and it doesn't matter. And so if you could go to someone, the stranger the better, and give them something-a scrap of paper-something, anything, it not to mean anything in itself and them not even to read or keep it, not even bother to throw it away or destroy it, at least it would be something just to destroy it, at least it would be something just because it would have happened, be remembered even if only from passing from one hand to another, one mind to another, and it would be at least a scratch, something, something that might make a mark on something that was once for the reason that it can die someday, while the block of stone can't be is because it never can become was because it can't ever die or perish.«<sup>16</sup>

Judith is a product of Southern allegiances atrophied into a prison of the self, a fatalism of forms. The web of allegiances, the strings she feels tangling each time she moves, have a permanence and solidity beyond her own mortality. There is no way out of the circle of her self-hood, dependent as her personality is on the aggregate community. She hands her letter to the Compsons out of impotence and frustration, seeking to find a »stranger«, a linkage beyond the frame of her society. But her explanation is a statement of inarticulateness and failure: Mrs. Compson even believes it is her preparation for suicide. Like the meaningless »scratches« on the gravestone, the letter is a form of communication without any substance: not substantial enough to sustain her own selfhood, and barely understandable outside her own family. The only meaning the letter has for her is the idea of mortality. Within her own life, the »scrap of paper« is fixed and therefore substanceless; to an outsider, perhaps, her act of giving it might be remembered as a »mark« on time, an attempt to transcend the self. Finally, it is a »mark« of humanity which equates individuality with death. Judith has no other way to say that she, as opposed to all the other nameless Sutpens, has lived.

It is this destiny of time and place, of social identity, that Wyndham

<sup>16</sup> William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*, Ibid., 127-28.

Lewis recognizes when he speaks of »a fatality residing in the blood« of Faulkner's characters.<sup>17</sup> Lewis connects this destiny with »race«, but race is only part of a larger social matrix that defines personality. Often, as in Judith, or even more markedly as in figure like Joe Christmas, social destiny removes the possibility of personal expression. People are left struggling to leave an imprint, a »scratch«, without any adequate verbal or physical form by which they may make their presence known.

Joe Christmas's problem is the converse of Judith's he has no way into society, while she has no way out of it but he too is impotent and inarticulate because of a definition of selfhood which is a product of the rigid beliefs and verbal formulas of the community. He wanders the fatal circle of his life in violent anger, searching for some identity within the community. His silent anguish encounters only verbal formulas: the inhuman Calvinistic doctrines of McEacherns, the obsessed revivalism of Joanna Burden, the frightened humanitarianism of Hightower, the frenzy of Percy Grimm. He can find no comfort in being a black or a white, so flaunts both identities at people as a challenge.

Christmas does not talk because his lack of identity leaves him with no vocabulary except primitive violence. He works his job in Jefferson with »nothing to say to anyone, even after six months«.<sup>18</sup> He lives his life in a constant state of »outrage« at the verbal formulas of the community and the accidents of his fate. He works with a »brooding and savage steadiness«, he is »outraged« by his experience with the Negro whore while an adolescent; he finds Bobbie and the restaurant she works in an »outrage to credulity«; he finds menstruation and blood an outrage to sex.<sup>19</sup> His simple, instinctual faculties cannot assimilate the defined structures which surround him. Since he has no adequate conceptual framework by which to understand his life, the attitudes of others seem arbitrary and meaningless. His whole life is defined as an opposition to the unreal beliefs of his community, and he is left with no way to express himself except through physical violence. His inarticulateness, like Babo's in Melville's »Benito Cereno«, masks an irrational anger »past all speech«.

His affair with Joanna epitomizes his frustrations with language. what Faulkner calls the »first phase« of their relationship is purely physical and violent. He seeks her antagonism and wants to »dispoil« rather than love rage alone.<sup>20</sup> He lives in two separate worlds, like his separate selves: a

<sup>17</sup> Wyndham Lewis, »William Faulkner (The Moralizer With the Corn-Cob)«, in *Men Without Art*. Ibid., 49

<sup>18</sup> William Faulkner, *Light in August*, New York, Vintage, 1929, 31.

<sup>19</sup> William Faulkner, *Light in August*, Ibid., 34, 93, 164, 155.

<sup>20</sup> William Faulkner, *Light in August*, Ibid., 205, 207.

meaningless daytime world of words, and a nighttime world of cruelty and violence which is absolutely impersonal:

»They talked very little, and that casually, even after he was the lover of her spinster's bed. Sometimes he could only believe that they did not talk at all, that he didn't know her at all. It was as though there were two people: the one whom he saw now and then by day and looked at while they spoke to one another with speech that told nothing at all since ti didn't try to and didn't intend to: the other with whom he lay at night and didn't even see, speak to, at all.«<sup>21</sup>

For Joanna, speech justifies her sin and provides form for their physical actions. They enter the »second phase« of their relationship with her confession; since she fears and hates her body, sex is only real to Joanna in speech: »'when women finally come to surrender completely, it's going to be in words.'«<sup>22</sup> Joanna's »imperious and insatiable desire« desire to recount the details of their lives each evening, and her »avidity for the forbidden wordsymbols« reaches its climax when she begins speaking of having a child, and finally converts their physical encounter into a demand that Joe pray with her.<sup>23</sup>

All of Joanna's speech only heightens Joe's awareness of the disjunction between words and the physical violence which is his only satisfying outlet for his passions. Ostracized by the community, he has no means of assertion except through excessive action and radical movement; this culminates in his killing Joanna and circling Jefferson in a futile, self-destructive effort to escape. The circle of his life reveals how the Southern society has turned all his efforts to communicate or express himself inward; his self-hatred mirrors the hatred which surrounds him. Savagery is the only expression that remains real to him after living within the verbal absolutism of the community. His silent action is his instinctive response to the equally phanatic, meaningless, and inhuman definitions through which society has denied him legitimacy.

Leslie Fiedler observes that Faulkner's work always possesses »a rage at the world for baffling his power of nobility, a black violence bred of his nausea before what culture makes of man's primitive strength and loyalty.«<sup>24</sup> This rage, or »outrage«, as Faulkner repeatedly calls it in his books, is similar to the tense challenge to society that Hemingway's silence symbolizes. In a figure like Joe, the rage produces not only speechlessness

<sup>21</sup> William Faulkner, *Light in August*, Ibid., 203.

<sup>22</sup> William Faulkner, *Light in August*, Ibid., 211.

<sup>23</sup> William Faulkner, *Light in August*, Ibid., 225-26.

<sup>24</sup> Leslie Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, Rev. ed. New York, Stein and Day, 1966, 114.

but the counterthrust of physical violence. Silence and brutal self-assertion are the only weapons he has with which to challenge his social environment and his fate. They are an abortive expression of humanity; silence and violence reflect the immense impregnability of the surrounding world.

This inarticulate outrage is common in Faulkner. We see it also, for example, in Sutpen and his planned revenge against being turned away at the front door. In »Old Man«, the convict lives his life in prison hating the words of the magazine stories which put him there, and then spends his weeks out of prison on the Mississippi River equally frustrated and inarticulate because of the woman and child he is forced to care for. In *As I Lay Dying*, Addie Bundren feels trapped and isolated within pious beliefs. She, like Joe, discovers that the only way to feel alive is thorough violent force: »only through the blows of the switch could my blood and [her students'] blood flow as one stream.«<sup>25</sup>

None of these characters can understand why their lives have taken the shape they have; innocent, simple, and direct, they, like Melville's Billy Bud, cannot deal in double meaning, and thus they become the martyrs of their own simplicity. Since they verge on inarticulateness to begin with, their intuitive faculties cannot cope with the paradoxical and confusing beliefs of the community; their illiterate acceptance of their lives becomes converted into a baffled search for some reasonable explanation for their demands of society. All they encounter in their search, however, are rules and forms which frustrate their limited perceptions and confuse them all the more.

Maurice Edgar Coindreau recognizes this fact when he says that Faulkner's most »noteworthy« characters are »idiots« beings whose atrophied brains function only by the association of ideas initiated by the excitation of the senses.<sup>26</sup> Coindreau's statement is somewhat exaggerated, since he speaks of only one side of the dialectic of language and silence in Faulkner's work. But his observation points to a striking fact about Faulkner's novels: when Faulkner analyzes and judges society, he usually does so by the yardstick of the instinctive and simple men--an uneducated character, a farmer, a black, a child. We note the failures inherent in social institutions, including speech, because we view the world through the confused senses of an illiterate human being. This device is most obvious in a work like *The Sound and the Fury*, but it is equally important in *Light in August*, *As I Lay Dying*, and several other novels. Because the central character of these works is always confused and unknowing, his frustration accents the failures of the more articulate community.

<sup>25</sup> William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, New York, Vintage, 1929, 164.

<sup>26</sup> Maurice Edgar Coindreau, *The Time of William Faulkner: A French View of Modern American Fiction*, Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1971, 71.

Benjy, or Jim Bond in *Absalom, Absalom!*, or Ike Snopes in *The Hamlet*, suggests that the product of human greed and pride is mute incomprehension; when people destroy their contact with actual human emotions, their words (and their lives) are, indeed, a »tale told by an idiot«. The »idiot«, like Benjy, deserves to tell the tale because his pursuit of love and peace, illogical and confusing as it is, is the central, meaningful human motivation which is the basis of human action.

Similarly, we are haunted by Joe's story because he pleads for only the simplest and most basic, if the most unattainable, of humanity to serve as his protagonist, Faulkner suggests the absolute failure of the social world to provide any outlet for the direct, immediate expression of feeling. We recognize that the rhetoric of society is a rhetorical shield against the impulses of the heart. The only ways emotion can be expressed within this world are through actions, like Joe's, and inarticulate sounds, like Benjy's wailings.

The mute or inarticulate figure appears again and again in Faulkner's work as an image of the »heart in conflict with itself« because human institutions-social and linguistic-have failed to recognize the instinctual emotive energy that impels human action.<sup>17</sup> In »That Evening Sun«, for example, we find a conflict between instinct and society similar to Benjy's. Nancy, a black woman, cannot express her fears to the Compsons; their self-satisfied verbal condescension separates them from her primitive, instinctual understanding. They label her premonitions »superstitions« and divorce themselves from her physical danger. But her superstitions, like Jim's in Twain's *Huck Finn*, prove to be a truer gauge of the social situation than Mr. Compson's intellectual conceptualizations. She has a primitive, direct feeling for her danger that Mr. Compson's logic ignores, but his complacency makes it impossible for her to express herself in any way but her anguished keening. Her final cries, and her death, reveal the inhumanity of society's language and ideals.

With Benjy, Ike Snopes or Nancy, inarticulateness is a dual symbol, at once representing the failures of verbal forms and abstract social concepts and affirming that human emotion needs no validation by language. Faulkner's fullest expression of both these attitudes is *As I Lay Dying*. Addie Bundren, brooding in the absolute silence of her death, is, like the other characters we have seen, surrounded by a world of words which only distorts the physical realities of the earth and of human feelings. Her section of the novel is bound, as her groping life had been, by Cora Tull's and the Reverend Mr. Whitfield's pious sermons:

<sup>17</sup> William Faulkner, *Essays, Speeches and Public Letters*, ed. James B. Meriwether, New York: Random House, 1965, 119.

»One day I was talking to Cora. She prayed for me because she believed I was blind to sin, wanting me to kneel and pray too, because people to whom sin is just the matter of words, to them salvation is just words too.«<sup>28</sup>

Words, in Addie's opinion, fail to represent reality; they are, she says, »just a shape to fill a lack.«<sup>29</sup> She slowly comes to understand that experience is always denied by the language which pretends to express it, and that words themselves are only devices people use to avoid reality. Words, therefore, »don't ever fit even what they are trying to say at.«<sup>30</sup>

Addie contrasts human articulation with the shapeless, nameless, voiceless sound of deeds, deeds have substance that language only distorts. By believing in words, and forgetting they are separate from experience, people ignore the »terrible doing« of human life. Afraid to face actual emotions, men escape them through inessential speech, and language even loses its barely significant referential value:

»... I would think how words go straight up in a thin line, quick and harmless, and how terribly doing goes along the earth, clinging to it, so that after a while the two lines are too far apart for the same person to straddle from one to the other; and that sin and love and fear are just sounds that people who have never sinned nor loved nor feared have for what they never had and cannot have until they forget the words.«<sup>31</sup>

To Addie, the inevitable separation of words from deeds takes the form of a dialectic of motion and stasis, the horizontal and the vertical. She defines her dissatisfaction and the sense of helplessness as a cage of language which has limited her passions. She speaks of her students and herself, for example, as using one another by »words like spiders dangling by their mouths from a beam, swinging and twisting and never touching«, and she gets her »revenge« on her static, lazy husband only by extracting a promise from him that he will bury her in Jefferson.<sup>32</sup> Her burial becomes her last passionate pilgrimage across the earth, forces her family out of their vertical stasis, and making each of the Bundren's encounter the »terrible doing« that resides in life and movement. But although her passions give form to her family's journey, her commitment to »the red bitter blood boiling through the land« remains inarticulate.<sup>33</sup> She cannot

<sup>28</sup> William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, Ibid., 163.

<sup>29</sup> William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, Ibid., 168.

<sup>30</sup> William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, Ibid., 165-66.

<sup>31</sup> William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, Ibid., 164.

<sup>32</sup> William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, Ibid., 169.

<sup>33</sup> William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, Ibid., 166.

integrate her complex, scarcely understood impulses with the outside world. Only within herself can Addie give voice to the »terrible doing« of human life.

Once again, we have the figure whose impotence is expressed by silence and rage, and finally by the absolute silence of death. But Addie also reveals that life is itself silent when lived passionately. Thus she feels that she does have one outward form of expression, her children; »My children were of me alone, of the wild blood boiling along the earth, of me and of all that lived; of none and of all.«<sup>34</sup> Within the deed of childbirth, Addie reaches for the same kind of nameless, selfless, wholeness that, for example, Melanctha offers in Stein's *Three Lives* to Jeff Campbell. The continuity of generations provides Addie with a bridge between the mortal self and the timeless loss of self engendered in the teeming land.

Addie's inarticulateness, then, is a product of the life of the passions and a protest against those who fear these passions; she symbolizes the selflessness of immersion in the unending flow of experience, and the denial of the personality produced by the fixed forms of words and names. We see this also in her children, each of whom struggles with a passionate, animal-like connection with the natural world, and a static, enclosing, verbal definition of the self. Addie is the mother of her children's animality; as Darl says, »Jewel's mother is a horse.«<sup>35</sup> Jewel uses his horse as a surrogate expression of his emotions. Verbally, like Bayard and Joe Christmas, he is reduced to monosyllabic swearing. Vardaman's childish confusion of words and things comes out in his equation of a dead fish with his dyign mother: »My mother is a fish.«<sup>36</sup> Dewey Dell, connected by her name with the land and by her actions with the family cow, carries on the generations in her pregnancy, yet she is afraid to admit her condition because of an illiterate, superstitious belief that words would confirm this fact she wants to deny.

Darl, the quiet child whose eyes are »filled with distance beyond the land«, finds the shapelessness of his identity with the earth unsatisfying.<sup>37</sup> His selflessness allows him an absolute, intuitive penetration into the feelings of the rest of the family, but its other consequence is madness. He struggles to create an identity through grammar, arguing with himself about the »isness« and »wasness« of his existence. But, as with Judith Sutpen, his commitment to this abstract resolution of selfhood is itself an admission of his incapacity to define his personality through action, or except his subservience to a power of blood beyond himself. Only Cash

<sup>34</sup> William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, Ibid., 167.

<sup>35</sup> William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, Ibid., 56.

<sup>36</sup> William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, Ibid., 28.

among the children reaches a satisfying compromise between his deeds and his speech. He replaces words with practical efficiency, a commitment to craftsmanship and technique reminiscent of Hemingway. But unlike so many Hemingway technicians, he is able to express himself in everyday terms. He performs his tasks serenely, unperturbed by the weather and indifferent to language.

The tremendous breadth of Faulkner's work allows us to see several different associations of the inarticulate figure. There is, for example, the repeated sense of violence which surrounds the figure in *Sartoris* or *Light in August* or *Sanctuary*, suggesting both the power of physical action and the possible excesses of physical life required as an adequate response to the abstract, formal quality of language. A figure like Addie suggests the power of silence as a form of protest, a denial of social behavior and social pieties. The several *Crist* figures, from Benjy to the corporal in *A Fable*, continue the association of inarticulateness with transcendence and martyrdom, and most important, perhaps, is Faulkner's continued use of silence as the romantic mark of a figure's association with the harmony of the natural world. Thus Faulkner creates the rhetoric of silence, the feeling that, despite all the talk in the world, the life of the »terrible doing« resides in the unsaid.

*Sonja Valčić: FAULKNEROV NEARTIKULIRANI PROTEST I REZIGNACIJA*

S a ž e t a k

Autor članka raspravlja o Faulknerovu specifičnom načinu povezivanja sposobnosti za emotivno izražavanje i proživljavanje, koje svojstvo Faulkner vezuje za neartikulirane likove, dok je verbalizam izražen kod artikuliranih likova vezan za Faulknerovo opažanje o rigidnim oblicima govora i ponašanja »južnjačkog« društva i »južnjačke« vezanosti, odnosno, ovisnosti o tradiciji i romantičnim legendama kao oblicima ljudskog ophođenja. Povučene su i neke paralele s Hemingwayem u tom smislu, te istaknute sličnosti odnosno razlike kod oba pisca.