CONRAD'S STYLE IN THE NIGGER OF THE "NARCISSUS" AND THE ROVER

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This thesis explores stylistic features in two novels by Joseph Conrad—*The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* published in 1897 and *The Rover* published in 1923. The main focus of the discussion of these novels is the way in which form and meaning are integrated, that is, how style creates and affects theme and subject. In particular, the various literary devices that create style—the individual word, the sentence, and larger elements such as metaphoric and metonymic patterns—are dealt with. These elements are considered under three headings: dialogue, narrative, and imagery. The mimetic character of dialogue, its integration into a text, the various types of dialogue such as reported speech and direct discourse, and variations of dialogue such as interior monologue and free indirect style are discussed in relation to theme. Secondly, narrative, the larger frame into which dialogue fits, is treated at length, with narrative method, the characteristics of narrative prose in both novels, and the effects produced by Conrad's attention to rhythm and vocabulary forming the central concerns of this section. Lastly, metaphor and simile are discussed as stylistic elements not confined to individual sentences or passages but extending over an entire work, and as the means by which visual and auditory impressions are conveyed to the reader. The traditional types of simile and metaphor, "as if" and "as though" clauses functioning as similes, and metonymic images are analyzed with the intention of demonstrating the relationship between technique and vision.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Edward Garnett, a reliable source on Conrad's ideas about aesthetic theory, wrote that:

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. . . . But he never theorized about technique and many years later, on asking me why I had never written on the art of fiction and receiving my reply that it 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.

Similarly, Conrad's ideas about style, scattered in various essays and letters, vaguely hinted at in some of the novels, do not add up to a consistent theory. But such was not his aim. In a reading of his novels, however, one does become aware of his aesthetic concerns and preoccupations; one perceives a careful craftsman ever conscious of the way in which words present or obscure reality, and of the way in which they form and limit a world. Conrad's vision of man's life and his conception of art resulted in the use and development of certain technical devices; his style originated in his diverse experience, his unique sensibility, and in his perception of the world around him.

In this essay the style of Conrad's first mature novel, The Nigger of the "Narcissus," and the style of The Rover, his last completed novel,
are closely examined in order to achieve an understanding of how style and vision are inseparable, and, more particularly, how style gives form to vision and reflects changes in it.

A comparison of these two novels for its own sake would be relatively unrewarding, but putting them into juxtaposition allows one to see Conrad's development and decline as an artist particularly concerned with style. The simplification of his world view, as seen in the later works, affects the very basic elements of style and structure. The structure of The Rover is straightforwardly realistic apart from one time-shift; the structure of The Nigger, on the other hand, is complex, approaching a type of thematic counterpoint. In the major middle-period works, Lord Jim, The Secret Agent, and Nostromo, complexity of style and structure reflects the complexity of theme and vision. The moral universe explored in Conrad's fiction of this period is ambiguous at its very foundations, the ethical situations complex in the extreme, the heroes assaulted by a bewildering array of choices most of which are illusory. What reality consists of, is never definitely established except as a perspective. Theme is explored through patterns of images and symbols; and the sensory universe created by metaphor and simile. In The Rover Conrad completes the phase of his career begun with Victory with love and sacrifice replacing moral ambiguity. Both theme and form have been established long before and what occurs is a presentation. In The Nigger one sees Conrad finding his themes at the same time as he is discovering the techniques with which to present them; the reader, then, discovers with the author, while in The Rover he is shown what the author has already found. The exuberance and occasional over-exuberance of style
in *The Nigger* is, perhaps, an end product of the new artist's search for form and meaning; the lagging prose in *The Rover* betrays the re-exploration of already familiar ground.

Conrad's aesthetic credo, set forth most succinctly in the well-known "Preface to *The Nigger,*," is not dissimilar from the credos of Flaubert and Maupassant, and also has similarities to James's ideas in "The Art of Fiction." But Conrad's unique temperament and the various influences on his imagination from English, French, and Polish literature coalesce into a personal world view which his highly individual style gives form to. His artistic aims led to particular stylistic devices and emphases, dealt with in the body of this essay. His impressionism, for example, is partly grounded in his concern with the seemingly unreal quality of existence and with the necessarily imperfect and incomplete apprehension of an experience. In seeking to capture these qualities and to embody an all-too-fleeting reality his style is based upon precise and concrete vocabulary. In 1905 in an essay on James he wrote:

> Action in its essence, the creative art of a writer of fiction may be compared to rescue work . . . It is rescue work, this snatching of vanishing phrases of turbulence, disguised in fair words, out of the native obscurity into a light where the struggling forms may be seen, seized upon, endowed with the only possible form of permanence in the world of relative values—the permanence of memory.

This fixation with reality and its transitoriness leads to an attempt to describe exactly the surface of things—colour, motion, form, tone. Related to this is an emphasis on the world of the senses, according to Conrad the primary avenue of discovering the truth of an experience. His
particularly effective use of the traditional devices of metaphor and simile also owes its origin to this passion for particularity and for vividness.

It is Conrad's concern with reality that also leads him to employ distancing techniques and multiple perspective, an obvious example where vision determines and becomes form. Various points of view impinge upon the reader both to clarify the difficulty (perhaps, impossibility) of arriving at the "real" and, further, to give a sense of the inherent limitations of any one perspective. Obviously, narrative technique shapes and modifies narrative prose; in The Nigger the narrative technique is of especial interest in determining the meaning of the novel.

Conrad's concern with reality equally colours and determines his use of dialogue. Realizing the importance of dialogue in creating a vivid fictional world, he pays particular attention to individualizing and stylizing a character's utterance. Through the careful use of dialogue he also differentiates between the moral qualities of characters. Hardly an idle or decorative device, dialogue presents the reader with a dramatized situation which often presents or expands themes. In part, the allotment of dialogue to characters highlights one character in particular and gives to others merely supporting roles. In this essay the various types of dialogue are analyzed in order to discover their relationship to the presentation of theme.

Symbolism, often integrated into a novel through metaphor and simile, is not only a technical device giving cohesion to fiction, but with
Conrad was a matter of comprehension and vision. He saw actualities as symbolic of various spiritual and moral states, and thus his novels reflect an artist's response to the real world. In a letter written to Barret H. Clark in 1918 Conrad acknowledged the primary importance of symbolism in fiction:

... I wish at first to put before you a general proposition: that a work of art is very seldom limited to one exclusive meaning and not necessarily tending to a definite conclusion. And this for the reason that the nearer it approaches art, the more it acquires a symbolic character. . . .

So I will only call your attention to the fact that the symbolic conception of a work of art has this advantage, that it makes a triple appeal covering the whole field of life. All the great creations of literature have been symbolic, and in that way have gained in complexity, in power, in depth and in beauty.

The stylistic devices of metaphor and simile contribute most importantly to the creation and presentation of symbol. For example, it is through these devices that the anthropomorphic universe is created in *The Nigger*, that James Wait becomes a figure of dark power, and in *The Rover* that the world of Escampobar becomes a symbolic wasteland in need of renewal. An emphasis on symbol may also be responsible for the tendency to allegory in *Victory* and *The Rover*.

In this essay the reader's familiarity with Conrad's canon, and especially with the two novels under consideration, has been assumed. Therefore, quotations from *The Nigger* and *The Rover* have been indicated only by page number, as either the novel under consideration is clearly indicated in the text or the name of a character sufficiently identifies the specific work referred to.
Footnotes


Chapter II

Direct and Indirect Discourse

Conrad's heavy reliance on dialogue for characterization, the development of plot, and dramatic effect is obvious to the most casual reader, and though British and American scholars seem to overlook this in the few stylistic analyses written on Conrad, it deserves special and minute attention as an aspect of his style. Dialogue, the most mimetic aspect of fiction, the one characteristic the form shares with drama, is used in the words of the familiar "Preface to The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'" "to make you hear"(x). This neglected aspect of Conrad's art is as much a part of his "impressionism," of his emphasis on the world of the senses, as it is of the dramatic world of the novel. Through a discussion of the various types of discourse in \textit{The Nigger} and \textit{The Rover} this chapter will explore the function of discourse, its thematic contribution to the individual novels, and its fundamental effect in creating a dramatized world.

Although Ford Madox Ford's reminiscences of his collaboration with Conrad are not an altogether reliable source of information about Conrad's method and artistic concerns, one ought not dismiss entirely what Ford has to say regarding his and Conrad's preoccupation with dialogue, something that give them "more trouble than any other department of the novel."\footnote{Ford hints that Conrad's preference for dialogue}
in a text, for what he calls "conversations," is a pandering to the
less cultivated reader, but he overlooks the effect obtained--a more
dramatic and realistic rendering of speech, something that corresponds
more closely to actual life than any of the other conventions of the
novel. Ford further confesses that "it seemed to him (Ford) that you
could employ the words 'he said' as often as you like, accepting them
as being unnoticeable . . ."²; indeed, he is correct in his contention
that this indicator has become "unnoticeable," and what Conrad does in
attempting to avoid this phrase is to give meaning to indicators and to
dispense with a conventional and hackneyed phrase that usually receives
little attention from a reader. As Conrad perceived the rendering of
conversation an important and difficult aspect of his art, the integra-
tion of dialogue into the text of his novels, may be considered as a
facet of his style.

The problem of integrating utterances into a text is solved in
direct dialogue by conventional accidentals; quite obviously, in English
the conventions of offsetting and the use of quotation marks serve as
indicators to a reader that a character's actual speech is dramatically
rendered. The Nigger offers a notable difference to this convention by
the addition of a dash predeeding direct dialogue, a French convention
that occurs frequently in the novel and gives the printed text a non-
English texture:

Mr. Baker, speaking up to the man above him, asked:--
"Are all the hands aboard, Knowles?"(3).

Conrad further adapted the conventional use of quotation marks so that
a character's thoughts, a variant of dialogue, are also contained within
them, thus contributing a varied texture to a passage of narrative:

He went away from there, walked to the end of the building, spun round and walked back again to the other end; and it was as if he had been afraid of going beyond the wall against which he reeled sometimes. "Conspiracy, conspiracy," he thought. He was now absolutely certain that the lieutenant was still hiding in that tartane, and was only waiting till all was quiet to sneak back to his room in which Scevola had proof positive that Arlette was in the habit of making herself at home.(183).

The accidentals here facilitate the transition from the omniscient narrator's voice to Scevola's mind and provide a shift in texture otherwise unavailable. For a moment the reader is a sharer of Scevola's thoughts, a transition that is not only economic and dramatic, but more effectively involves the reader in Scevola's paranoia.

Beyond the function of integrating direct dialogue into a text and setting off thought from narrative, Conrad frequently uses accidentals to emphasize the manner in which one actually hears spoken speech, as in Wait's final laboured sentence: "'Light . . . the lamp . . . and . . . go,' breathed out Wait"(154). He also frequently uses ellipses, for example, to indicate that a character's utterance does not conclude, but trails off or is interrupted:

"Yes, I understand you," drawled the lieutenant.
"I think I know you pretty well. I suppose an English prison. . . ."
"That is a horrible subject of conversation," interrupted Peyrol in a loud, emotional tone(73-74).

The accidentals here, as in Wait's final sentence, support the inquit, the conventional phrase prefacing a transition from narrative to a speaker's utterance. The ellipses used to mark pauses or halts in
speech logically follow from an *inquit* such as "stammered" or mumbled":

"Knowles turned about bewildered; stammered first at one, then at another.—"No! ... I never! ... can't talk sensible sense midst you ... Always on the kid"(109).

Wait's description of his imprisonment in the bulkhead during the storm is similarly rendered, the ellipses indicating the broken manner in which his utterance is delivered to his crewmates:

He spoke spasmodically, in fast rushes with long pauses between, as a tipsy man walks. ... "Cook had just given me a pannikin of hot coffee. ... Slapped it down there, on my chest--banged the door to. ... I felt a heavy roll coming; tried to save my coffee, burnt my fingers ... and fell out of my bunk. ... She went over so quick. ... Water came in through the ventilator. ... "(106).

An extremely complex *inquit*, like the one prefacing this sentence of Singleton's, is also supported by accidentals:

There was a noise in the old seaman's throat, as though the words had been rattling together before they could come out.—"Steers ... like a little boat," he said, at last, with hoarse tenderness, without giving the master as much as half a glance—then, watchfully, spun the wheel down, steadied, flung it back again(91).

The effect of hesitation is provided by the ellipses in this sentence. In the passionate scene between Arlette and Réal in Réal's moonlit bedroom, the lieutenant says to Arlette:

"But what did you think of my conduct at times? You see, I did not know what was going to be. I ... I was afraid," he added under his breath(217).

The ellipses here give the reader an indication of the manner in which Réal utters this sentence; and the repeated pronoun as well as the *inquit* further demonstrate Conrad's meticulous concern for the intonation of a character's dialogue. He also uses ellipses to give the effect of an
afterthought to a phrase: "There was nearly a score of us Brothers of the Coast in the same predicament . . . in consequence of a shipwreck" (73). Numerous other instances of this attempt to reproduce mimetically the pattern and intonation of actual speech justify Professor Harkness's conclusion that accidentals have a definite effect on the texture of a work.⁴

Unlike accidentals the inquit has the potential of being semantically meaningful, though the most common inquit—"he said"—has through overuse been rendered relatively meaningless semantically. Semantically meaningful inquits serve the double function of introducing dialogue into a text and of presenting information about the speaker, the manner and intonation of his utterance, and, often, the narrator's attitude toward him. According to Ford, Conrad consistently sought to avoid the hackneyed and meaningless "he said," though, of course, this and its qualified variations occur almost inevitably.⁵ In an effort to produce an aural impression on his reader while at the same time providing variety, Conrad modifies the basic inquit with phrases that add significantly to the dramatization of character as well as qualifying a speaker's utterance. In The Nigger, for example, the inquit introducing the utterances of Wait and Donkin differs significantly from those used to introduce the statements of Allistoun and Old Singleton.

Donkin's entrance into the forecastle is met by the curious question of his fellow seamen, and significantly, his initial utterances are rendered "in a tone that meant to be hearty but was impudent,"(11) and by a snarl(11). A remark addressed to Charley in what becomes his characteristic tone firmly establishes his personality at the very
beginning of the novel:--"I'll make you keep this 'ere fo'c'sle clean, young feller,' he snarled viciously. 'Never you fear. I will learn you to be civil to an able seaman, you ignerant ass'"(13). In a similar manner, Wait's entrance is dramatized by inquits used to introduce and modify the portentous single syllable of his name: "'Wait!'
cried a deep, ringing voice" and "Then again the sonorous voice said with insistence:--'Wait!'"(17). The sonority of this voice later points up the discrepancy between the skeletal figure which possesses it and the psychological power that it has over the crew of the Narcissus. The confusion caused by Wait's voice, the misunderstanding of his meaning, and the command that it holds over the crew, all themes elaborated in the course of the novel, find initial impact through carefully selected inquits.

For Old Singleton action, not words, determines the moral quality of a man, and for him an utterance must be significant in order to be made at all. Replying to Donkin's inquiry about the forecastle's water-cask, "Singleton, without a word, pointed with a big hand that held a short smouldering pipe"(22). Clearly, his silence has the narrator's approval; as one of the few remaining representatives of what the narrator portrays as a golden age of seamanship, he is among those who are "strong and mute," of a generation of seamen that "lived inarticulate and indispensable"(25). Donkin, on the other hand, represents the new generation of seamen who "if they had learned how to speak they have also learned how to whine"(25). Singleton's few utterances are qualified in such a way that the narrator's approval of them is explicit; and, as with Wait and Donkin, the qualification contributes to a reader's overall sense of
character. Singleton's question, for example, regarding Wait's illness purposely lacks drama because of his calmness, its method of delivery being consistent with his personality as the reader has come to know it: "The old man, addressing Jimmy, asked:--'Are you dying?'"(42). And his admonition to "'get on with your dying'" is "said with venerable mildness"(42), a further economic statement conveying both character and tone. Altogether, this is a far cry from Donkin's garrulity and Wait's imperiousness.

Singleton's only moment of volubility occurs after his prophecy regarding Wait as the cause of the calm is fulfilled:

And for the first time that voyage, the old seaman became quite cheery and garrulous, explaining and illustrating from the stores of experience how, in sickness, the sight of an island (even a very small one) is generally more fatal than the view of a continent. But he couldn't explain why(156). This climactic moment elicits the only gratuitous utterances Singleton makes during the course of the voyage. His other moments of speech are prophetic or a challenge to the elements, giving "back yell for yell to a westerly gale"(173), as he does at the significant conclusion of the first chapter, an address to the ship itself, prefaced with an inquit that suggests the magnitude of the struggle and Singleton's view of his position: "'You hold . . . hold!' he growled at it masterfully, in the incult tangle of his white beard"(26).

Not unlike Singleton's, Captain Allistoun's utterances are infrequent and usually significant, introduced by indicators that suggest authority and calm, though his commands during the storm are rendered in yells and shouts. His utterances in his confrontation with Wait are authoritative
"You have been shaming sick," retorted Captain Allistoun with severity (120).

... Captain Allistoun shook a forefinger at the angry bronzed face of the speaker.--"You--you hold your tongue," he said, warningly" (120).

Captain Allistoun said sharply to the second mate: "Keep quiet, Mr. Creighton," and stood composed in the tumult . . . (121).

Only when he reasserts authority over the crew do his utterances take on an emotional tone, appropriately enough, however, for the struggle between him and Donkin is one that involves the life or death of the Narcissus. Allistoun must forcefully regain an ascendant position over his crew by putting Donkin in his place, and on this occasion he "orders," cries out a command, and "urges" Donkin, accompanying his words with threatening gestures. Donkin's reactions are prefaced with inquits that reveal his meanness and cowardice: he answers "with cheeky trepidation," mumbles a response "with effort," screams "at the silent crowd" about his mistreatment, and screams his revenge "at the ship at large" (136-37).

The non-individualized crew members appear only as voices, often in cacophony, commenting, grumbling, or passing time in conversation. Conrad dispenses with inquits on the occasion of the crew's arrival in the forecastle in order to achieve the realistic effect of quickly spoken interjections among a group of men moving en masse into new quarters:

"Here, sonny, take that bunk! . . . Don't you do it! . . . What's your last ship? . . . I know her. . . .
Three years ago, in Puget Sound. . . ." (5).

The dramatic rendering of direct utterances, like these by the non-individualized members of the crew, provides a human background against which the conflict between the forces of Donkin-Wait, and Allistoun,
Singleton, and the ship is worked out. The inquits of the crew, however, deserve little scrutiny as they are largely conventional indicators describing the tone in which utterances are made. Again, Conrad's intention to make his readers hear is central, and even with non-individualized characters or a collective character he is careful to obtain this effect.

Having considered the problem of integrating dialogue into a text, one must also examine the quality of utterances, that is, the conventions and vocabulary used in order "to make you hear." In Almayer's Folly, Conrad's dramatic opening with the words "Kaspar! Makan!" introduces a convention used in numerous other novels—the integration of the language of his setting into the utterances of his characters. Dialogue, in fact, almost always in Conrad's novels reflects the geographical location of the story, the background of his characters, their social status, and their beliefs. The numerous French phrases of The Rover are almost exclusively restricted to the utterances of characters, while the third person narrator is apparently an Englishman. The peculiar difficulty of giving French flavour to an English novel in which the major characters speak entirely in French (aside from Peyrol who speaks English with Symons) is partially and most easily solved by the inclusion of French words and phrases; on a less obvious and more subtle level, however, is the technique of transforming English sentences into French constructions, such as Réal's response on one occasion to Peyrol: "'No, my gunner'" (114) or Peyrol's "'Where is he, that honest man?'"(229).

The French words and phrases that pepper the dialogue in The Rover are by no means limited to the simple French an ordinary English-speaking
reader would know, and hence Conrad sometimes supplies his reader with a translation when the context may not make the words self-explanatory. Catherine's twice-repeated "Ecoutez" to Réal meets with his response "'Yes, I hear you'"(225). On occasion the process is reversed with the English translated into French:

"Ah! but he is a cunning one."

After expressing that opinion the old rover pulled out a red bandana handkerchief and after rubbing his face with it repeated his opinion deliberately: "Celui-là est un malin"(112).

Phrases that would be awkward in English, such as Peyrol's hearty oaths, are generally left untranslated, the context making them clear enough. More often than not, however, forms of address are put into French: "Amiral"(113), "notre maître"(189), "ma chère amie"(284), "camarade"(263), or the frequent "citoien." Another level of language is suggested by French slang: "caboche" for head (114), "blancbec" for greenhorn (115), or the expressions "hein" or "hé," a use of language that clearly evokes social status just as much as Peyrol's oaths reveal his sailor background. Similarly, the political setting of the novel is presented through dialogue. For instance, Scevola, the unrelenting revolutionary, retains the address "citoien" long after the ideals and customs of the Revolution have died, and Peyrol, perhaps mockingly, refers to him as "Citoyen" as the narrator also does, but in English. The narrator sets the political climate and the time at the outset of The Rover by his referring to "Citizen Peyrol"; and the shift in the political scene is portrayed by Peyrol's reversion to the ci-devant "Mademoiselle" for Catherine just as she calls him "Monsieur." At the conclusion of the novel Arlette and Réal (no longer a lieutenant but a captain) are referred to as Madame and Monsieur Réal,
indicating how completely society has reverted to its old established
customs as well as how much Arlette and Réal have become a part of that
society. Moreover, Conrad's belief that revolution does not effect true
change is once again presented to the reader even in so seemingly unimpor-
tant a matter as the forms of address. What he says of revolution in the
"Author's Note" to Under Western Eyes holds true as well for the political
theme of The Rover:

The ferocity and imbecility of an autocratic rule
rejecting all legality and in fact basing itself
upon complete moral anarchism provokes the no less
imbecile and atrocious answer of a purely Utopian
revolutionism encompassing destruction by the first
means to hand, in the strange conviction that a
fundamental change of hearts must follow the down-
fall of any given human institutions. These people
are unable to see that all they can effect is merely
a change of names(x).

Scevola, then, is yet another of Conrad's pathological cases who finds
his truest self-expression through acts of violence and destruction.
His idée fixe will not, in fact, allow him to become assimilated to the
"new" ways, which are actually only the old in a different guise.

Other forms of address in the dialogue contribute to an under-
standing of character and designate the nature of relationships between
characters. Michel's characteristic "maître" for Peyrol is a sign of
respect and affectionate esteem, and Peyrol's addressing Michel as
"camarade" on the tartane indicates his fondness and regard for him.
Arlette's coaxing, but slightly frantic question to Peyrol about Réal's
whereabouts is prefaced by terms of endearment and jocular epithets
designed to soften and appeal to the old sailor: "Monsieur Peyrol,
Papa Peyrol, old gunner, you horrid sea-wolf, be an angel and tell me
where he is" (175). Catherine's sense of seriousness and her anxiety for Arlette after ordering Réal to leave the farm causes her to drop the ordinary social amenities and to respond to Peyrol's joking tone with an utterance prefaced only by his surname: "Catherine, with her back to him and calling him, not 'Monsieur,' but 'Peyrol,' tout court, remarked, not exactly with displeasure, but rather with an ominous accent that this was no time for idle talk" (235-6). During her visit to the priest (a scene that recalls and perhaps is an echo of Emma's meeting with the equally ineffective priest of Madame Bovary) Arlette addresses the abbé formally as "Monsieur le Curé" and "Monsieur l'Abbé" rather than using the more familiar mon père. Her formal address may underscore her position as an outsider in the parish and indicates a formal rather than close relationship with the priest.

In her essay on "The Defining Function of Vocabulary in Conrad's The Rover," Elizabeth Cox Wright sees Peyrol's vocabulary as falling into three categories: "Words and phrases from the French, the technical term of seamanship, and pungent colloquialism . . . ." All three of the categories together form a world in which the action of the novel takes shape, and each of the distinct vocabularies creates—not merely gives a sense of—Peyrol as Frenchman, as seaman, and as an individual personality with idiosyncratic habits of speech and thought. Perhaps, because of the variety of Peyrol's speech, a mirror of his varied experience, he becomes the only character in the novel who, in Forster's sense, is round.

As language creates the entire fictional world, the vocabulary of direct dialogue fleshes out or leaves undeveloped the figures of that world. Both Wait and Singleton in The Nigger, for example, say compara-
tively little, and thus Conrad attains a balance between them in the context of the novel as a whole. The aim of not having one central character, something Conrad draws attention to in the preface to the 1914 Doubleday edition of the novel, is partially achieved, then, by alloting dialogue proportionately as well as by dividing the reader's attention between the parallel stories of Wait and the ship. The ever garrulous Donkin does not become the dominant character for the reader precisely because the range and content of his utterances are so limited. Moreover, his vocabulary full of abusive epithets and vulgar oaths, pronounced in a tone of scorn, nullifies him as a dominating figure as much as any of his actions. His scoffing tone as well, created partly by the qualifying inquits and partly by his Cockney dialect, serves to determine the reader's negative response to him.

The creation of individual characters, then, relies on vocabulary in direct dialogue or on stylization and dialect. The vocabulary of Scevola derives from the jargon of the Revolution, his idée fixe, and hence he speaks of patriots and the "slaves of tyranny" (33), the "enemies of the Republic" (27), the "reactionary dogs" (81). Moreover, as the Revolution replaces religion and is referred to by Catherine in terms of the Apocalypse, Scevola orates on "civic virtue" (27), "the sacred principles" of liberty, equality and fraternity (166), and "the sacred fire" (81). Since he is defined only by his obsession, the narrator appropriately calls him "the patriot" (33), the "sans-culotte" (81), or most commonly and with a hint of irony "Citizen Scevola." The village priest, his counterpart in post-Revolutionary France, uses, of course, the vocabulary of his calling when he speaks: "my flock" (150), "divine
justice"(150), "the sacristy"(157), and "vespers"(158). Conrad through manipulating intonation and vocabulary makes him a believable character; the abbé preaches rather than speaks to Arlette:

"Withdraw from the world. Descend within yourself and abandon the vain thoughts of what people call happiness. Be an example to yourself of the sinfulness of our nature and of the weaknesses of our humanity"(156).

Réal's particular jargon is that of the military, and he is referred to by the narrator as "the officer" and "the lieutenant"; only Arlette calls him by his first name, Eugène, endowing in this way life and personality to a man whose only existence previous to her love consisted of duty and certificates.

In The Nigger of the "Narcissus" dialect provides a means for the individualization of characters. Again, the emphasis is aural; Donkin's Cockney, unpleasant to the ear, indicates social status just as much as Peyrol's "cré nom de nom" and "hein." Archie's Scots dialect and Belfast's Irish accent give identity, and at the same time further the reader's sense of an international crew, representative of all humanity, aboard the Narcissus. Moreover, Conrad's use of dialect and accent is an attempt to give the reader an impression of an actual speech pattern deviating from the norm sufficiently to be recognized as having a particular socio-economic or national origin. The use of dialect words and expressions support this attempt; Archie's characterization of Jimmy, for example, relies on Lowlands vocabulary for its vividness:

"--'Yon's an uncanny joker. I dinna ken what's wrang wi' him, but there's something verra wrang, verra wrang. It's nae manner of use asking me. I won't play"'(36). Similarly, Belfast's "'Beggin' yer pardon, sorr'"(8)
is intended as uniquely Irish. The language of Captain Allistoun, Mr. Creighton, and, to a lesser extent, Mr. Baker in its approach to the grammatically correct English of a higher social class than the crew sets them apart. In the humourous conversation on the characteristics of a gentleman, one of the crew members notes that "'it's the way they speak'" that "'does it'"(32). Various idiosyncratic habits of speech, such as Mr. Baker's grunt and Donkin's Cockney mannerism of dropping his "'h,'" are also used to give individuality to the characters.

Reported speech, often used to present economically a character's utterance or, in effect, to summarize it, places discourse into the voice of the narrator. The focus is still on the speaker, but there is no attempt to reproduce his tone or intonation, usually only reported in this type of discourse. The sentence structure and vocabulary are technically the narrator's; although at times the manner in which the utterance is related, borders so closely on direct discourse that it is, pronouns and quotation marks aside, virtually indistinguishable from it.

Catherine's story about the arrival of Scevola and Arlette at Escampbar is a mixture of direct discourse and reported speech:

Nearly a week later she was dozing by the fire when voices outside woke her up, and she beheld standing in the middle of the salle, pale like a corpse out of a grave, with a blood-soaked blanket over her shoulders and a red cap on her head, a ghastly looking young girl in whom she suddenly recognized her niece. She screamed in her terror: "Francois, Francois!" This was her brother's name, and she thought he was outside. Her scream scared the girl, who ran out of the door.

... "I recognized the son Bron," went on Catherine(91).
The language and syntax are clearly the narrator's; the transition to direct discourse, however, is easily accomplished as the *inquit* "went on Catherine" and the quotation marks attest. Arlette's story of the death of her father and mother and of her own fate during the turmoil in Toulon is more completely that of the narrator's than the story of Catherine:

Later, on many other nights when all the band lay asleep on benches and on the floor, Perose would steal into the room, fall on her knees by the bed on which Arlette sat upright, open-eyed, and raving silently to herself, embrace her feet and cry herself to sleep (154).

The tone here is distinctly that of the narrator, and no easy transition to direct discourse is likely. The previously cited example lends itself to the pattern of direct speech after the first sentence: "I screamed in my terror: 'François, François!' This was my brother's name, and I thought he was outside. My scream scared the girl, who ran out of the door. . . . I recognized the son Bron, went on Catherine." This passage does not.

Still further removed from the pattern of a character's speech is Mr. Bolt's account of his excursion to Escampobar:

The familiar aspect of the buildings, totally unchanged from the time when he had played his part in what appeared as a most successful operation at the beginning of the war, inspired Bolt with great confidence in the success of his present enterprise, vague as it was, but the great charm of which lay, no doubt, in mental associations with his younger years (59-60).

There is no attempt here to imitate the pattern or tone of spoken speech, and both vocabulary and syntax belong to the narrator, who is thus permitted to comment quite unobtrusively on Bolt's conception of the situation.
Reported speech has the function of summarizing and permits the author from over-using dialogue; Conrad takes advantage of both of these functions.

Free indirect style, another type of discourse embedded in narrative permits unlike simple reported speech, the narrator's simultaneous presentation and judgment of a speaker's utterance. Stephen Ullman in *Style in the French Novel* elucidates the view of free indirect style as reported speech masquerading as narrative with a particular capacity for irony and ambiguity; it retains emotive features while avoiding the exact reproduction of speech or thought. Pierre Guirard discerns this type of discourse as superimposing the intonations of two speakers, the primary one being the narrator, and the secondary, the character; here the narrator's judgment of what he presents becomes the central focus. Free indirect style may incorporate either the words or the tone and attitude of a speaker, and Conrad exploits both possibilities. In this way, the narrator seems to take on a character's identity, subtly moving from objective reporting or from his own viewpoint to that of the character. The omniscient narrator of *The Rover* frequently moves into a character's mind presenting his thoughts and emotions often in free indirect style, and the narrator of *The Nigger*, though he uses this type of discourse less frequently, achieves the same effect.

The type of free indirect style incorporating the words of a speaker's utterance borders on simple reported speech as Conrad uses it. For example, in the passage set at the Port Office of Toulon relating Peyrol's recent adventures at sea, the narrator reports his utterances in the third person, slipping into Peyrol's words only once:

""
He had been ordered to make for Dunkerque but, said he, having been chased by the sacres Anglais three times in a fortnight between Cape Verde and Cape Spartel, he had made up his mind to run into the Mediterranean where, he had understood from a Danish brig he had met at sea, there were no English men-of-war just then. And here he was; and there were his ship's papers and his own papers and everything in order (3).

The phrase "sacres Anglais" is not that of the narrator, but of Peyrol himself, and hence not only suggests the French context in which the report is delivered, but also colours the reference to the English in a manner characteristic of a French seaman. Without using his words, the second sentence reproduces the tone of Peyrol; he does not say "And here I am and here are my ship's papers and everything in order," but announces rather through his actions and intonation the conclusion of his duties as sailor, a conclusion made explicit in the next sentence: "He mentioned also that he was tired of rolling about the seas, and that he longed for a period of repose on shore." Intonation, then, as much as what Graham Hough calls "the actual mode of expression, the ipsissima verba of a fictional character,"10 forms the free indirect style adapted by Conrad.

The narrator of The Nigger incorporates into the narrative a speaker's intonation and vocabulary by reconstructing his language and by enclosing fragments of an utterance in quotation marks. Donkin's perorations to the crew after the storm meet with contempt and scorn; the narrator presents the crew's attitude partly through free indirect style:

He made us forget that he, at any rate, had lost nothing of his own. The younger men listened, thinking—this 'ere Donkin's a long-headed chap, though no kind of man, anyhow (100-101).
The omission of quotation marks denotes the absence of a single speaker, and indicates rather a collective speaker whose thoughts the narrator renders by a reconstruction of his characteristic spoken idiom. The dropped "h" is a common feature of the crew's speech as is a phrase like "long-headed chap"; the colloquial tone is underscored by the final "anyhow." What marks this passage as being in free indirect style is the reproduction of the tone, idiom, and vocabulary of the speaker, while none of these are presented in a dramatized manner. Podmore's and Donkin's bewailing of the crew's immorality is presented to the reader in a similar fashion: "There could be no greater criminals than we, who by our lies conspired to send the unprepared soul of a poor ignorant black man to everlasting perdition"(144). The phrase "poor ignorant black man" is an excerpt in free indirect style from the conversation of Donkin and Podmore; the attitude is obviously the religious cook's and the words as well have the flavour of his exhortation to Jimmy, the inflated circumlocution "everlasting perdition" being typical of the stylized jargon used by Podmore on that occasion. Here, one most clearly discerns what Ullman refers to as reported speech masquerading as narrative. Moreover, Conrad makes use in this passage of the ironic potential of free indirect style.

Fragments of utterances in quotation marks may on occasion be taken as the narrator's rendering of an utterance rather than its precise wording as in: "Sighs were heard, as men, perceiving that they were not to be 'drowned in a hurry,' tried easier positions"(62). The phrase "drowned in a hurry" is not something directly from the mind of a single or collective character, but the narrator's presentation of an attitude common to the crew in language they themselves would use to articulate their
situation. In this way, too, the boatswain's remembrance of his wife's letter is presented: "The long-armed and athletic boatswain swung quickly, gripping things with a fist hard as iron, and remembering suddenly snatches of the last letter from his 'old woman'"(65). This differs from snatches of reported speech prefaced by an inquit, where, clearly, the words in quotation marks indicate the precise wording of an utterance:

Little Belfast scrambled in a rage spluttering "cursed nigger"(65)

One or two, passing dry tongues on their salt lips, muttered something about a "drink of water"(62)

He swore, as he alighted heavily on his heels, that he would never, never any more associate with any fool that "hadn't savee enough to know his knee from his elbow"(68).

In the novel a character's thoughts are verbalized in such a way that they may be considered as a type of discourse, consonant with Ullman's above definition of free indirect style. The narrator whose identity and solidarity with the crew is expressed by the first person plural pronoun, the collective "we," gives form to the crew's thoughts and opinions by presenting their attitudes in their language. While the Narcissus flounders during the storm:

... the boatswain observed with marked annoyance, while we were splashing about in a body to try and save a worthless wash-tub:--"Every blooming thing in the ship is going overboard this afternoon"(52-53).

The phrase "worthless wash-tub" belongs to the crew rather than to the narrator; it expresses a collective rather than personal opinion, and is, without being an exact reproduction, a wording that the crew may well have
taken. In a similar way, Knowles’ comment that "the seedy-looking chaps" about the docked ship were probably looking for something to steal rather than a job, is met with the narrator’s "Poor beggars. Who cared? Weren’t we home!"(165). This expression of the crew’s attitude differs from simple narration in its reproduction of a speaker’s intonation. While not direct dialogue, it yet retains features similar to it, the wording being a possible response to Knowles’ comment. It is unlike the objective narration of the crew’s feelings: "We did not know till then how much faith we had put in his (Wait’s) delusions. We had taken his chances of life so much at his own valuation that his death, like the death of an old belief, shook the foundations of our society"(155).

The narrator also reconstructs the thoughts of individual characters in free indirect style. Mr. Baker’s solitary reflections on going ashore are partly presented in this way:

No one waited for him ashore. Mother dead; father and two brothers, Yarmouth fisherman, drowned together on the Dogger Bank; sister married and unfriendly. Quite a lady. Married to the leading tailor of a little town, and its leading politician, who did not think his sailor brother-in-law quite respectable enough for him. Quite a lady, quite a lady, he thought, sitting down for a moment’s rest on the quarter-hatch. . . .--"I haven’t somehow the cut of a skipper about me," he meditated, placidly . . .(166-67).

The transition from objective narration to indirect interior monologue is facilitated by free indirect style. The quotation marks indicate Mr. Baker’s precise thoughts just as they signify the exact words of a speaker; the absence of quotation marks around "Quite a lady" is deliberate, the narrator presenting Mr. Baker’s thought to the reader by
momentarily taking on his identity. The phrase "quite respectable enough" has the quality of speech, and suggests a slightly condescending tone on the part of the speaker. Similar to this passage is the presentation of Captain Allistoun's thoughts after the near-mutiny:

Didn't he know them! Didn't he! In past years. Better men, too. Real men to stand by one in a tight place. Worse than devils too sometimes—downright, horned devils. Pah! This—nothing. A miss as good as a mile... (126).

Here again the narrator enters into the mind of a character and reads his thoughts, reconstructing or imagining what the Captain is thinking. The pronominal referent "he" makes clear that the statement is the narrator's, and the absence of quotation marks may indicate also that the interior monologue is a reconstruction in free indirect style rather than a direct presentation of what is occurring in the mind of the character. The monologue is typical of Conrad in that it is indirect, as the "he" denotes. However, even more common in Conrad is an indicator such as "he thought." The emotive quality of the passage is apparent, the exclamation marks and the repetition as well as the expression "Pah!" indicate tone. This expression demonstrates how closely Conrad models interior monologue on spoken speech, avoiding, however, a too close resemblance by short suggestive phrasing that demands the reader to simplify the statement from his knowledge of situation and character.

Donkin's interior monologue is also a reconstruction of his psychic contents and emotional attitude. Neither his characteristic intonation nor idiom is used, but the attempt to represent consciousness is clear:
Here was land already--home very soon--a bad pay-
day--no clothes--more hard work. How offensive all this was. Land. The land that draws away life from sick sailors. That nigger there had money -- clothes-- easy times; and would not die. Land draws life away. . . He felt tempted to go and see whether it did. Perhaps already . . . It would be a bit of luck. There was money in the beggar's chest(147).

If this were a direct interior monologue, it would probably be in Donkin's Cockney accent and distinctly less literary in tone. Phrases such as "How offensive all this was" and "the land that draws away life" could not come from Donkin. Rather, in this indirect interior monologue Conrad attempts to reproduce the pattern of thought. The lack of syntactical complexity and the dashes give the reader a sense of the quickness with which thought occurs, and he is impelled into the dramatic situation by the phrase "That nigger there." Nonetheless, the reader is conscious of the author's presence, the phrase "He felt tempted . . . " being responsible for this awareness.

Wait's first interior monologue differs from those cited above in that it begins with an inquit and uses the first person pronoun, but soon moves into an objective narration of Wait's sensations and imagined experiences:

He thought:--That lunatic Belfast will bring me some water if I ask. Fool. I am very thirsty. . . .
It was very hot in the cabin, and it seemed to turn slowly round, detach itself from the ship, and swing out smoothly into a luminous, arid space where a black sun shone, spinning very fast. A place without any water! No water! . . . He whirled along with the husks--very tired and light. All his inside was gone. He felt lighter than the husks--and more dry(113).

The reader's direct contact with Wait's mind is confined to only a few sentences, the rest of the passage being a report of his delirium, not unlike the report of Podmore's visions of heaven and hell. The occasional
breaks into free indirect style, then, are few, the most extensive being: "A place without any water! No water!" and the sigh of relief when Wait returns to full consciousness: "Ah! All right!". To be sure, the passage remains a violation of the ostensible first person point of view, as are some of the conversations and all of the unuttered thoughts of the characters, but the violation of point of view is not as serious as Guerard contends, arguing that Wait's symbolic function "should exempt him from the banalities of everyday interior monologue." In part, this monologue serves to apprise the reader of the deterioration of Wait's physical condition in order to make his later death both plausible and expected. The delirium is accompanied by physical responses: "His face was streaming with perspiration, his arms heavier than lead"(113). Moreover, in this way, too, the reader comes to feel a sympathy with the self-deceived dying man; the mere report that Wait was delirious would not achieve the same effect as this dramatic rendering of his delirium. Wait's second interior monologue is also effective because of its dramatic quality, the lines of dialogue specifically yielding a vivid and precise impression:

He was swaggering up the East India Dock Road; saying kindly, "Come along for a treat," pushing glass swing-doors, posing with superb assurance in the gaslight above a mahogany counter(149).

The narrator is again reporting an imaginary vision taking place in Wait's mind, as if he were relating a daydream with dialogue. The fault with the passage, if there by any, lies in the narrator's omniscience-- in the fact that he can present the contents of Wait's mind; but in a scene which has an omniscient narrator already (Donkin and Wait
are alone), Guerard's point seems to be even more a misplaced emphasis. Free indirect style here is replaced by direct discourse, permitting the reader to be a witness to Wait's thoughts without a filtering narrative device.

Free indirect style also occurs in situations where a character's thoughts are presented in *The Rover*. In a type of indirect interior monologue the narrator presents a character's ideas and opinions moving back from a situation in order to place the character into relief. The movement from narrative voice to a character's mind is most often achieved without transitions or indicators as in this passage:

> The lieutenant, as he sat there, unaware of Peyrol's survey of his person, gave no notion of slipperiness. On the contrary, he looked rather immovably established. Very much at home. Too much at home. Even after Peyrol sat down by his side he continued to look immovable—or at least difficult to get rid of (104).

Here, one has the bi-focal method discerned by Guirard: the narrator observes Peyrol observing Lieutenant Réal, but then steps back slightly, momentarily shifting the focus solely on to Peyrol who thinks that Réal looks "too much at home" at Escampobar, and then returns to observe again both Peyrol and Réal. Diction is responsible for the shift, "rather immovably established" belonging to the voice of the narrator, while the simple "Very much at home. Too much at home" reflects Peyrol's thought and language, which the narrator amplifies by the phrase "difficult to get rid of." Another instance of this adaptation of free indirect style, but without superimposition, will serve to clarify the manner in which Conrad adapts this type of discourse to a character's thought. Alone on the tartane, Michel guards Symons, in spite of the fact that he is terrified of "this bewitched corpse":
The "You there, Michel," pronounced in an undertone, acted like a moral tonic. This then was not the doing of the Evil One; it was no sorcery! And even if it had been, now that Peyrol was there, Michel had lost all fear.

The phrase "doing of the Evil One" belongs to Michel's mind, and rather than being presented directly by means of an indicator, for example, "he thought," that narrator effaces himself so that the reader may perceive directly the reaction of Michel to Peyrol's appearance on the scene. Moreover, the thought has the effect of spontaneity in this framework, something that would be hindered or entirely prevented by an indicator informing the reader of a shift in focus. The focus here changes spontaneously, appropriately portraying the immediate uplift of Michel's morale.

The illusion of narrative is maintained at points where the shift from narrator to character is barely perceptible, betrayed only by a few words, as with Symons' locking Scevola into the cabin of the tartane:

His first action was to get possession of the stable fork. At once he felt himself a match for any single man or even two men unless they had firearms. He had no hope, however, of being able to resist the soldiers . . . . He expected to see them appear at any moment led by that confounded marinero.

The phrase "confounded marinero" reveals the shift of focus; third person narrative taking on the characteristic cast of Symons' speech so completely that his opinion of Peyrol might be taken as that of the narrator.

The function of discourse in The Rover and The Nigger might be characterized as essentially aural in emphasis, and Conrad himself felt that his abilities in this regard might have permitted him to write for the stage, something he eventually turned to late in his career.
Writing to J.B. Pinker in 1916, he said:

You will admit I have some faculty of dialogue. Also dramatic interest. (I expect "Youth," "Typhoon" and generally the purely sea-things.) But the bulk is dramatic. And if I can only learn to adapt my faculty for dialogue and drama to the conditions of the stage, then . . . .

Though his brief stage experience was unsuccessful, Conrad's imaginative faculties were decidedly visual and aural and dramatic as his novels demonstrate. In creating a fictional universe, he drew upon the real world of the senses, and hence one has in reading him a world fully-realized --with both its smooth and rough edges, its colloquial language, and hence, its vivid characters. The tendency towards drama is, of course, most obvious in direct discourse, but even in indirect discourse and free indirect style, one notes his concern for the pitch and tone of speech, for intonation and individual speech patterns. Thus, Conrad obeys the dictum about style that he and Ford subscribed to: "The first business of style is to make a work interesting, the second business of style is to make a work interesting, the third business of style . . . ."
Footnotes


2 Ford, p. 200.

3 The term inquit is used here as in Peer Hultberg's Styl Wczesnej Prozy Fabularnej Waclawa Berenta (Warsaw: Institute of Literary Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, 1969).


5 Ford, p. 200.

6 See Madame Bovary II.vi.


14  Ford, p. 207.
Chapter III

Narrative

Narrative technique and method in Conrad's novels have been given closer scrutiny by critics than his use of dialogue, yet the attention to style in narrative remains slight. Conrad's handling of point of view in *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* has been adequately defended by Ian Watt and just as reasonably attacked by Marvin Mudrick; there is no necessity to review their work here, especially as their essays are not stylistically oriented. Point of view considered stylistically concerns such matters as the consistency of language, and an analysis of that language, including the narrator's idiosyncratic diction and vocabulary.

In his monograph *Conrad the Novelist*, Albert J. Guerard writing of *The Nigger* asserts that "with the second chapter . . . the prose takes on poetic qualities"; qualities that Frederick R. Karl relates to *fin de siècle* poetry, borrowing its rhythms and mannerisms, though more acutely in *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands*. The *Nigger*, as most critics judge it, represents a bold striking-out in new directions for Conrad, and an indication of both maturing technique and vision. Its poetry relies on a narrator whose language and sensibility are clearly not that of the ordinary seaman; and however disturbing for some readers the change from "we" to "I", or the entirely absent narrator of Wait's death scene may be, the language attains a consistency throughout, that
ultimately makes the shift of pronouns and the absence of an observer minor flaws. As Ian Watt points out, placing the work in an historical perspective some of the scrupulous critics of the novel reflect an oversensitivity to point of view. Despite its technical deficiencies, the novel succeeds at the simplest level in creating the illusion of a seaman's reminiscence, an illusion that derives from linguistic rather than structural elements.

Writing in 1936, Edward Crankshaw could simply say, after asserting that "the story is told in first person throughout by one of the sailors concerned" that "the whole first person convention in 'The Nigger of the Narcissus' is several times misused."5

Perhaps the major characteristic of the prose style of The Nigger and of the early works in general is the almost oratorical effect of balance—the layering of grammatically similar constructions, giving the prose a movement at once lyrical and authoritative, as in this typical passage:

The men who could understand his silence were gone—those men who knew how to exist beyond the pale of life and within sight of eternity. They had been strong, as those are strong who know neither doubts nor hopes. They had been impatient and enduring, turbulent and devoted, unruly and faithful. Well-meaning people had tried to represent those men as whining over every mouthful of their food; as going about their work in fear of their lives... Men hard to manage, but easy to inspire; voiceless men—but men enough to scorn in their hearts the sentimental voices that bewailed the hardness of their fate(25).

The rhetorical effectiveness of this passage relies essentially on the simple principle of repetition of grammatical constructions and individual words. Antithesis is equally important: "beyond...within," "doubts...hopes," "hard...easy," as is redundancy on the semantic level, "turbulent" and "unruly" and "devoted" and "faithful" being virtually synonymous.
rhetorical effect also derives from the vague and grandiose quality of certain words: "life," "eternity," "fate." Admittedly, the language does not correspond to one's notion of how a sailor speaks, or thinks, or even writes, but Conrad seems unconcerned with being "realistic" on this level: The Nigger is not simply a dramatic monologue from the mind of a sailor. In other ways, however, the language lulls the reader into accepting the possibility of the narrator's identity as sailor—the nautical vocabulary, the sensitive and concrete description of life at sea, and especially the much praised description of the storm contribute to this acceptance. Robert Foulke, however, seeking to demonstrate that the land and sea dichotomy are not entirely clear, claims that the "incantatory prose bolsters up the narrator's unsteady view of life," a position not well supported on closer scrutiny, as ambiguity seems as much a theme and technique here as in Lord Jim, though admittedly not as completely realized. Michael P. Gallagher in a recent essay sees Conrad in this novel "groping toward this special union of theme and technique"--the union of epistemological theme with epistemological form, although he ultimately judges the narrative technique "relatively unsophisticated" with the exploration of perspectivism left incomplete until Lord Jim. To some degree this observation holds true; the wavering point of view, as Foulke points out, poses a problem of authority for the reader; the scene of Wait's death being a striking instance in which the narrator is totally absent. Yet one presumes that the narrative remains confined to a single observer-participant who on more than this occasion is omniscient. This presumption relies on a linguistic rather than structural premise--the consistency of sentence structure, vocabulary, and narrative tone overcomes most objections to an inconsistent narrator.
The eloquent tone of much of *The Nigger* relies essentially on three aspects of style: a meticulous concern for modification and for precision leading to a heavy reliance on adjectives, an interest in cadence, less for its own sake than for its contribution to meaning, and a vocabulary that permits excursion into the vague world of human psychology.

Two types of adjectival modification add variety and emphasis while tightening the texture of the prose; the French convention of modification after the noun, and delayed modification with the substantive and its modifiers being separated by one or more clauses. The latter gives added weight to the adjectives because they are not in their "normal" position in English prose as, for example, in this sentence:

> Archie, with compressed lips, drew himself in, seemed to shrink into a smaller space, and sewed steadily, industrious and dumb(8).

Not only do the adjectives "industrious and dumb" receive emphasis here, but their position after an adverb results in ambiguous reference, referring as much to Archie as to his method of sewing. This type of modification increases the range of structure beyond that usually found in English:

> The days raced after one another, brilliant and quick like the flashes of a lighthouse, and the nights, eventful and short, resembled fleeting dreams(30).

This sentence has two rhetorically effective types of modification for the first clause; it could have been "The days, brilliant and quick like the flashes of a lighthouse, raced after one another," or it could remain as it is above. Another possible alternative, although grammatically correct, is clumsy and ineffective: "Like the brilliant and quick flashes of a lighthouse, the days raced after one another." The balance of the construc-
tion "brilliant and quick" and "eventful and short" necessitates the modification as Conrad constructed it; moreover, the antithesis between day and night, a motif in the novel, finds expression in a form that poses them as equally potent grammatical structures. The structural parallelism provides the integration of content and form.

The adjectival density, almost adjectival excess, of Conrad has its major appeal in *The Nigger* to the senses--to the eye and ear especially. This passage is not untypical in its reliance on numerous adjectives for visual and aural effect, and carried to extremes, precisely this type of modification, carefully cadenced, led to Conradese:

The feverish and shrill babble of Eastern language struggled against the masterful tones of tipsy seamen, who argued against brazen claims and dishonest hopes by profane shouts. The resplendent and bestarred peace of the East was torn into squalid tatters by howls of rage and shrieks of lament raised over sums ranging from five annas to half a rupee; and every soul afloat in Bombay Harbour became aware that the new hands were joining the *Narcissus* (4). Nearly every noun is qualified by an adjective, and some nouns are modified by two; here the modification is effective in its creation of vividness, and there is not as great a need for the pruning that would have improved the earlier works. The impression given is notable for its exactness, for its fidelity to what must have been Conrad's own experience as a sailor in the Eastern oceans. At times, however, he seems unsure of his ability to conjure up an image of sound, as if language were inadequate for the precise impression intended. Wait, for example, is described as "calm, cool, towering, superb" (18), and the ship in the storm as "devastated, battered, and wounded" (94); the string of adjectives attempts a grand effect, but such constructions quickly become tiresome, justifying Joseph Warren Beach's
contention that "Conrad had often the tendency to use too many words"—a
tendency, according to Beach, learned from the Flaubert of Salammbo and
La Tentation de saint Antoine. 10

Quite often adjectives in The Nigger are used or chosen to fill out
cadence, an aspect of the novelist's art that Conrad and Ford appreciated
in Flaubert and Maupassant. 11 The "excessively adjectival"12 Almayer's
Folly and An Outcast of the Islands betray Conrad as too heavily influenced
by Flaubert, imitating too closely a French use of language only partly
transferable to English; but the cadence and rhythms of 'The Lagoon,'
parodied so well by Beerbohm, become, as Conrad matures, an asset, although
at times he lapses into his former habits. The opening of Chapter IV of The
Nigger and the passage envisaging England as a ship (162-63), artistically
weak in the first instance, demonstrate the negative effects of Conrad's
over-concern with the rhythms of his prose. Adjectives in these passages
almost encrust the substantives they modify, but effect a cadence entirely
appropriate to the grandiose perhaps, inflated, statement Conrad makes.

Northrop Frye in his Anatomy of Criticism summarizes briefly the
qualities that combine to give rhythm to literary prose:

A tendency to long sentences made up of short phrases and
coordinate clauses, to emphatic repetition combined with a
driving linear rhythm, to invective, to exhaustive catalogues,
and to expressing the process or movement of thought instead of
the logical word order of achieved thought, are among the signs
of prose melos. 13

The conclusion to Chapter III of The Nigger demonstrates clearly what Frye
discerns as a component of rhythm--"a tendency to long sentences made up
of short phrases and coordinate clauses." The conclusion of this chapter,
the chapter of the storm, shows Conrad's conscious rhetorical aims; the
elevated tone provided by the long periodic sentences climaxes in a short
sentence that sums up the character of Singleton, and perhaps, Conrad's
Apart, far aft, and alone by the helm, old Singleton had deliberately tucked his white beard under the top button of his glistening coat. Swaying upon the din and tumult of the seas, with the whole battered length of the ship launched forward in a rolling rush before his steady old eyes, he stood rigidly still, forgotten by all, and with an attentive face. In front of his erect figure only the two arms moved crosswise with a swift and sudden readiness, to check or urge again the rapid stir of circling spokes. He steered with care.

Guerard, mentioning this passage, talks about the "solid artistry of the novel's structure" citing "the care with which he (Conrad) modulates his narrative downward from the elevated rhetoric of Singleton at the wheel to the prosaic life of everyday." This modulation of tone contributes to the dramatic character of the novel—the sense of a rising and falling action with a climax and an anti-climax is formed partly by Conrad's concern with prose rhythm. The build-up to the storm and to the violence of nature in chaos is developed by images and cadences that show a microcosmic world, the Narcissus, on the edge of destruction. Similarly, that calm has at last come to the weary ship and its crew is apparent solely from the cadence of the prose. The serial version of the novel published from August to December 1897 in The New Review might have even given the first readers a greater sense of completion and achievement after a reading of the hectic third chapter. The reader of the novel in volume form is met with the flaccid beginning of the fourth chapter, and therefore the effect of the ending of the third chapter is slightly muted. Nonetheless, one knows that man has survived the trial of hostile nature; the moral crisis—the struggle with Wait and self—is still to come.
Cadence on a smaller scale has at times an onomatopoeic function, the sound of a sentence and the way a sentence is structured combining to support its contents. A sentence like this reproduces by cadence the action described: "We staggered away from the door, and, alarmed by a sudden roll, fell down in a bunch" (71), as does this description of hail falling on the Narcissus: "Out of the abysmal darkness of the black cloud overhead white hail streamed on her, rattled on the rigging, leaped in handfuls off the yards, rebounded on the deck . . ." (53). Similarly, the cadence of this passage, describing the ship during the storm, portrays the ship's movements:

At times she soared up swiftly as if to leave this earth for ever, then during interminable moments fell through a void with all the hearts on board of her standing still, till a frightful shock, expected and sudden, started them off again with a big thump (54).

The first clause of this sentence with its alliterative phrase "she soared up swiftly" quickens the pace and gives the effect of an upward movement. The pause after the phrase "then during interminable moments" creates aurally the fall that the ship takes; the shock is also reproduced, the words "expected and sudden," set off by commas with a pause before and after, interrupt the flow of the sentence until it again begins to move, as the ship itself does. Lastly, the phrase "with a big thump" has obvious onomatopoeic qualities; the line being scanned thus:--', the last syllable receiving the greatest emphasis. The following passage has the same onomatopoeic quality in its structure: "A crested roller broke with a loud hissing roar, and the sun, as if put out, disappeared. The chattering voice faltered, went out together with the light" (75). The pause after the first clause literally breaks the sentence, and the delaying phrase "as if put out" adds emphasis
to the final word, "disappeared." The second sentence with its lack of a coordinating conjunction provides for a greater integration between sound and sense; the conjunction, which would alter the cadence, is best omitted, leaving the impression of a voice faltering and then disappearing as swiftly as the sun does. A conjunction would also cause the action to be perceived as consisting of two parts; here it is perceived as simultaneous and unified because of the syntax. Onomatopoeic words such as "chattering" and "hissing" contribute to the over-all effectiveness of the passage. 

Cadence in The Nigger is not merely decorative, but is an attempt to render through sound the description of an action. It is thus that Conrad achieves his aim of making his reader "feel" and "hear."

Style coupé, defined by René Georgin in Les Secrets du style as:

... formé de propositions indépendantes généralement juxtaposées, détaille les gestes et les actions dans la narration et les aspects dans la description. ... 

is an important aspect of cadence in The Nigger. Georgin gives the following example of style coupé from Flaubert from whom Conrad learned the value of cadence:

Les métairies des patriciens se succédaient sur le bord de la route; des rigoles coulaient dans des bois de palmiers; les oliviers faisaient de longues lignes vertes; des vapeurs roses flottaient dans les collines; des montagnes bleues se dressaient par derrière.

Conrad uses style coupé most often to give a sense of movement and of speed, shifting focus and reporting action or thought with the swiftness of their occurrence as in these passages:

They stamped with both feet; they turned their shouting faces to the sky; many, spluttering, slapped their thighs; while one or two, bent double, gasped, hugging themselves with both arms like men in pain(33).
He had panted in sunshine, shivered in the cold; suffered hunger, thirst, debauch; passed through many trials—known all the furies. Old! It seemed to him he was broken at last(99).

He stiffened himself, and Mr. Baker, experimentally, let him go. He staggered a pace or two; Captain Allistoun watched him with a quiet and penetrating gaze; Belfast ran to his support(119).

By using this effect Conrad obtains the integration of content and form; rhythm and sound not only contribute to sense but effect it.

The vocabulary of *The Nigger* is an important facet of Conrad's impressionistic technique. Ian Watt defends vague vocabulary against Mudrick's charges as rightly vague since emotional response is often blurred and indefinite. Imprecise and vague language, as Stephen Ullman points out in a recent essay, is an important aspect of style, at times "preferable to precise formulation." Such language appears most often in the novel in passages of a philosophic and reflective nature rather than in passages where movement and action are major concerns. The opening paragraph of Chapter IV is a most visible example where vague emotions and ideas are expressed in language equally imprecise. The piling up of abstract nouns and the incantatory tone produced by parallelism ("by the obstinate clamour . . . by the vast silence . . . by the dumb fear and the dumb courage,"(90)) combine to make the passage an unsuccessful attempt at magniloquence. Rather than using vagueness as an artistic device for statement, Conrad here has only confused his ideas and frustrated his reader. A more successful passage is the one describing the crew before the Mint. The language is equally vague and to some degree grandiose: "the illusions of strength, mirth, happiness; the illusion of splendour and poetry of life"(171), "The sunshine of heaven fell like a gift of grace on the mud of the earth, on the
remembering and mute stones, on greed, selfishness"(172). Nonetheless, this passage is effective and powerful, partly because of the predomin­antly elegiac tone which allows Conrad to use a more eloquent vocabulary, and partly because the passage is never wholly immersed in abstraction but documents precisely the final movements of the crew as a group of men with a common experience. One feels that the narrator is saying something defi­nite about life and human destiny; the manipulation of language and tone and the reliance on words of large meaning, what Gide called "les mots qui laissent à l'imagination pleine licence,"20 permit this impression, even though it is not completely correct. Forster's well-known and often cited opinion that Conrad was "misty in the middle as well as at the edges"21 derives in part from overlooking vagueness of vocabulary as an artistic device which reflects the real vagueness and uncertainty at the centre of the human psyche.

Royal Roussel writing about The Rover in his Metaphysics of Darkness: A Study in the Unity and Development of Conrad's Fiction says of the narrative technique:

Here all the vestiges of a detached perspective have disappeared. The novel is characterized by the same simplicity of point of view which underlies Almayer's Folly. Like the narrator of Almayer's Folly, the narrator of The Rover has the ability to move from one consciousness to another, and like the narrator of Conrad's first novel his tone is the calm, secure21 tone of one whose identity is assured by these acts.

Precisely in the chameleon-like ability "to move from one consciousness to another" the narrator seems to lose rather than gain identity, becoming largely a device through which action and speech are reported. The narrator of The Secret Agent, however, through consistent irony, simultaneously
presenting and undercutting, gives the reader a sense of an identity, while one can only say of the narrator of *The Rover* that his tone is calm and secure. Albert J. Guerard, however, goes so far as to say that there is neither a narrator nor a narrative method in the novel, and discerns that though there are problems with point of view, Conrad seems unaware of them. His contention does not hold up under scrutiny—to be sure, there is a narrator, however minimal the sense of identity, and there is as well a narrative method and movement, however simple or unsatisfactory these may be to Guerard. The return to the narrative method of the early works represents a decline well-documented by Moser, and despite Avrom Fleishman's attempt to redeem *The Rover* on the grounds of "its thoroughness of execution and consistency of theme," the calmness of tone and merely functional narrator negate the extravagant claim that Conrad's last novel may by put "in the same camp with his finest achievements, and belie any generalizations about his late falling-off." 

Although critical judgment of the novel is decidedly mixed, the majority of critics contend that it is poorly written, the narrative method slack, the style frequently careless. Only the chase scene and Peyrol's death scene receive high praise from most critics, and even Guerard, the most severe critic of the novel, finds that "the recovery at the end of *The Rover*, after two hundred and fifty pages of extreme dullness and ineptitude, provides a very moving experience for the lover of Conrad's work." He goes on to praise "the good narrative and descriptive prose" in the chase scene, and judges that "the style remains evocative and under firm control" in Peyrol's death scene. A close analysis of the best passages of *The Rover* will serve as an introduction to a discussion of the
narrative style in the novel as a whole.

The chase scene has a vividness and movement that occurs nowhere else in the novel; it is the culmination of the entire work, and Conrad's dramatic sense is in evidence in the creation and maintenance of tension throughout the scene. This scene has four foci: 1) the thoughts and actions of Peyrol, 2) the thoughts and actions of Captain Vincent, 3) the actions of the *Amelia*, and, 4) the actions of the tartane. The distancing technique of reporting action occurring on the *Amelia* or on the tartane through the perception of the other ship complicates this section. For example, the shooting of Peyrol is described by the narrator only as it is viewed through the eyes of Captain Vincent and his crew. The complex focus changes continually, and the scene gains fluidity in its mimetic presentation of the chase. Conrad's metaphoric powers, precise modification and syntactic complexity help to vivify the action and thought of Peyrol:

> He had meant to play that man a trick, and now the trick had been played. Played by him better than by any other old man on whom age had stolen, unnoticed, till the veil of peace was torn down by the touch of a sentiment unexpected like an intruder and cruel like an enemy(267-268).

> Under that grey sky there was nothing for him but the swish of breaking seas and the ceaseless furious beating of the tartane's foresail. His plaything was knocking about terribly under him, with her tiller flying madly to and fro just clear of his head, and solid lumps of water coming on board over his prostrate body(268).

In the first passage the sense of finality and the tone of completion are created by the tense; the syntax further adds to this tone by revealing the content gradually, almost slowly. The rhythm of the passage creates the sense of an ending; the frequent breaks slow down the reader, giving
emphasis, and, perhaps, solemnity to each of the phrases. The second
passage returns the reader to the moment, to the continuous present
depicting Peyrol lying passively on his tartane ending his life in the
service of France. The highly concrete picture presented here is Conrad
at his best; the substantives are qualified so that the appeal is to the
reader's visual imagination.

Concrete detail has its fullest expression when the *Amelia* fires on
the tartane. The precision of the nautical vocabulary and the exact
reporting of the tartan's movements recall numerous passages of similar
Conrad is on familiar ground in this scene, and the vocabulary in its
accuracy presents exactly what he wants in the sea burial of an old and
faithful sailor. There is no necessity to multiply adjectives because,
like other specialized vocabularies, nautical terms are precise and
sufficient in themselves. Elizabeth Cox Wright notes that: "It is the
great virtue of *The Rover* that Conrad is here in command of a less idio-
syncratic and more precise vocabulary."27 The visual quality of such
writing heightens the over-all effect; and one is reminded of the conscious
aim of rendering truth visible:

> Then suddenly above the topgallant rail of the *Amelia* appeared the upper curve of a lateen
> yard with the tricolour drooping from the point.
> . . . At the same time Captain Vincent ordered the line holding the tartane alongside to be
> cast off and the mainyard of the *Amelia* to be swung round. The sloop shooting ahead of her
> prize left her stationary on the sea, then putting the helm up, ran back abreast of her
> on the other side(280).

Beyond the two great set pieces, narrative prose in the novel is not
of the consistently high quality of Conrad's early and middle periods.
Problems of idiom and syntax, though they do not abound, weaken the writing.
Some passages are held together only by a stringing together of relatively weak connectives rather than through the elements of tone, rhythm, or thought. The following passage, a kind of unobtrusive stream of consciousness, is rather loosely structured, and serves well Conrad's intention of recording the thoughts that pass through Peyrol's mind:

Loot big or little was a natural fact of his freebooter's life. And now when by the force of things he had become a master-gunner of the Navy he was not going to give up his find to confounded landsmen . . . who would put it in their own pockets. As to imparting the intelligence to his crew (all bad characters), he was much too wise to do anything of the kind. . . . So at odd times, while at sea, he had busied himself within the privacy of his cabin in constructing the ingenious canvas waistcoat in which he could take his treasure ashore secretly(13-14).

Numerous sections like this, however, give the reader an impression of flaccidity, perhaps even of carelessness; style ceases to be an artistic concern by itself. The words, though certainly adequate for the expression of thought, are simply not "interesting," one of Conrad's primary criteria for good art. Eventually, these problems betray an over-all slackening in Conrad's search for the mot juste. The fact that Conrad was not in particularly good health and had to dictate much of the novel partially explains some of its weaknesses, of which he himself was aware. Seeing what could have been, he wrote to Garnett that he no longer had the energy to devote to a project which would have been greater in scope, and perhaps greater in achievement than The Rover in the form in which we now have it:

I know that you will believe me when I tell you that I had a momentary vision of quite a great figure worthy of Peyrol; the notion of a struggle between the two men. But I did deliberately shut my eyes to it. It would have required another canvas. No use talking about it. How long
would I have had to wait for that mood?--and the mood of the other was there, more in accord with my temperament, more also with my secret desire to achieve a feat of artistic brevity, once at least, before I died. And on those grounds I believe you will forgive me for having rejected probably a greater thing--or perhaps only a different one.

The narrative might be characterized as considerably more colloquial in tone than that of The Nigger. Contractions occur often, the reader is occasionally addressed where one might expect the more literary "one," and a conscious literary effect is as a rule avoided. These are not necessarily weaknesses, but one notes that the long, carefully cadenced and balanced sentences of Conrad's early period are abandoned for more conventional and less idiosyncratic structures. Two peculiarities of the narrative prose that may derive from a consciously less literary endeavour are the too frequently used "and" at the beginning of a sentence, and the over-use of the "as to" construction. The latter might conceivably indicate a falling away from English idiom, for although acceptable in English, it is more common in French. Ford reports that Conrad had told him that "... when I express myself with care I do it in French. When I write I think in French and then translate the words of my thoughts into English." Writing of Conrad's French, René Rapin observes that the two reproaches most often addressed to Conrad as an English writer are based on his thorough knowledge of French:

... que la construction de sa phrase n'est pas anglais et que sa langue est parfois impropre, s'expliquent, dans neuf cas sur dix par le fait que la phrase de Conrad est calquée sur celle de Flaubert et les impropriétés de termes ou de tournure qu'on y trouve sont généralement des gallicismes.
A lack of tight control over his medium is shown in Conrad's minor idiomatic flaws such as the phrase "of whom everybody thought so much" (134) in the sense of "of whom everybody thought so well," or in the awkward concatenation of adjectives that describe Michel's face: "his habitual amiably vacant face" (138). One also notes a falling away from idiom in a sentence like this: "It was he that had persuaded the villagers to lend a hand and had arranged the terms for their assistance" (97); the relative pronoun "who" would be more likely than "that" in modifying a person.

Awkward syntax, though relatively rare, also mars the prose of the novel. Constructions such as these are clumsy: "He was a gaunt man with a long, as if convulsed, face" (147), and "It was equally inconceivable that there should have been on that particular night men ready to pounce upon Symons and knock him on the head so neatly as not to let him give a groan even" (63-64).

The narrative prose of *The Rover*, although not among Conrad's greatest achievements, is generally competent, giving form to a less complex and less tortured vision than that of the early and middle period novels. A work that has as its subject a movement towards peace and reconciliation is likely to be less turbulent in form than one that explores complex and ambiguous ethical problems. The discovery of self and moral education—so often the centre of Conrad's concern—finds here a complete exploration coming close to *Victory* in its focus on identity and moral responsibility. The narrative tone is, indeed, calm and secure, for the journey that the novel documents leaves behind the exotic—the Congo of the Malay jungle—and replaces it with the search for self in one's native environment. But, having found himself, Peyrol, like the Ulysses of Dante, must embark again to conclude his life and to complete his wisdom.
Footnotes


4 Watt, p. 259.


6 See, for example, I.P. Pulc's "Two Portrayals of a Storm: Some Notes on Conrad's Descriptive Style in The Nigger of the 'Narcissus' and 'Typhoon,'" Style, 4 (Winter 1970), 49-57.

7 "Postures of Belief in The Nigger of the 'Narcissus,'" MFS, 17 (Summer 1971), pp. 256-57.


9 Foulke, p. 255.


17 Georgein, p.215.

18 Watt, p. 264.


21 Quoted from Abinger Harvest in Leavis, p. 192.

22 Guerard, Conrad the Novelist, pp. 284, 286.


25 Guerard, p. 287.

26 Guerard, p. 287.
27
"The Defining Function of Vocabulary in Conrad's The Rover."
SoAtQ, 59 (Spring 1960), p. 268.

28
Letters from Joseph Conrad 1895-1924, ed. Edward Garnett
(Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1928), p.300. Letter of 4
December 1923.

29
Ford, p. 32.

30
"Le français de Joseph Conrad," Lettres de Joseph Conrad à
Marguerite Poradowska, ed. René Rapin (Geneva: Librairie Droz,
Chapter IV

"Above all to make you see": Metaphoric and Metonymic Imagery

Art "must strenuously aspire to the plasticity of sculpture, to the colour of painting, and to the magic suggestiveness of music--which is the art of arts" writes Conrad in his "Preface to The Nigger" (ix). In practical terms, Conrad meets his aim through cadence and metaphor. The aim of art is, according to him, to reveal truth, and the method of revelation is actualized by an appeal to the senses. Metaphor and simile, then, become a primary vehicle of meaning; they are not only an aspect of technique, but of content as well. Through an exploration of Conrad's similes, metaphors, and metonymic images in The Nigger of the "Narcissus" and The Rover this chapter will attempt to demonstrate how Conrad's novels in their movement towards poetry approach that "perfect blending of form and substance" that he so ardently sought.

Following Flaubert too closely in his first two novels, Conrad over-consciously and too obtrusively seeks metaphorical significance--his images are too florid, too worked out, and often poorly integrated into the texture of the narrative. The jungle imagery of Almayer's Folly, for example, is highly overwrought and too consistently laden with meaning, too emphatically brought to the reader's attention as in this passage imagining Dain's and Nina's desperate attempt at escape from the violence and corruptive influence of the morally chaotic jungle:

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... all around them in a ring of luxuriant vegetation bathed in the warm air charged with strong and harsh perfumes, the intense work of tropical nature went on: plants shooting upward, entwined, interlaced in inextricable confusion, climbing madly and brutally over each other in the terrible silence of a desperate struggle towards the life-giving sunshine above—as if struck with sudden horror at the seething mass of corruption below, at the death and decay from which they sprang(71).

But with The Nigger Conrad's style and imagery become generally less self-conscious, less florid, and more functional. Donald C. Yelton attributes to H.G. Wells' review or An Outcast of the Islands a pruning of verbiage and "a greatly sharpened awareness of the expressive resources of metaphor and simile" in the works that followed. 1 Conrad's apprenticeship in the novel ended when he learned to imply and suggest, although throughout his career he occasionally fell back on a store of images and adjectives to state emphatically when he seemed unsure of his ability to convey what he had intended. A graph of the average frequency in metaphor fails to explain, however, the achievement and decline theory of Conrad's creative powers; Yelton discerns that a sharp rise in metaphor is observable from Almayer's Folly to Lord Jim followed by a decline through Nostromo to The Secret Agent. There is another increase from Under Western Eyes to Chance, followed by another decline in the novels from Victory to The Rover. 2 Wilfred S. Dowden's assertion that the best novels revolve about a central image seems a supported claim, if one accepts a single image as Conrad's primary concern in a given novel. 3 It is relatively easy to assert that Nostromo revolves about the silver of San Tomé mine, or that London as devourer is the major metaphor of The Secret Agent; but one has considerable difficulty in agreeing that the
central image of The Nigger is bright light, as Dowden suggests. And one would be on precarious ground, indeed, if he were to assert that Conrad's best novels are those in which metaphor and simile form his predominant technique, for The Secret Agent and Nostromo with their tendency towards irony and attendant restraint in the use of metaphor and simile are surely better novels than the heavily metaphoric Aimeyere's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands. What forms a more legitimate concern than metaphor and simile as predominant technique or a statistical or intuitive grasp of the frequency of metaphor is rather how metaphor and simile operate in a single text, and whether or not their contribution is significant in a reading of that text and in one's judgment of it. Consideration of metaphor as an aspect of style is consonant with Michael Riffaterre's contention that "as soon as elements from a literary language are used by an author for a definite effect, they become units of his style."

The primary emphasis of metaphor and simile in The Nigger of the "Narcissus" is, as might be expected from a reading of "The Preface", visual and auditory, and develops into a sophisticated and complex web of imagery that holds thematic import. This emphasis is not so much important for its own sake as for its ability to reveal the truth of experience. Moreover, Conrad's emphasis on the visual is an extension of his concern for precision, for the Flaubertian mot juste eloquently propounded by Maupassant in his essay "Le roman" that prefaces Pierre et Jean, a novel Conrad knew well:

Quelle que soit la chose qu'on veut dire, il n'y a qu'un mot pour l'exprimer, qu'un verbe pour l'animer et qu'un adjectif pour la qualifier. Il faut donc chercher jusqu'à ce qu'on les ait découverts, ce mot, ce verbe et cet adjectif, et ne jamais se contenter de l'à peu près, ne jamais avoir recours à des supercheries, même heureuses, à des clowneries de langage pour éviter la difficulté.
Conrad's similes describing the sea vividly create the physical background against which the action of The Nigger is played. Setting out on its voyage, the Narcissus traverses water "sparkling like a floor of jewels, and as empty as the sky"(27) moving towards the equator "upon a smooth sea that resembled a sheet of ground glass"(103); but this image is used only after the crew experiences a storm that demands a shift in attention from Wait, an image of themselves, to the ship and to the sea whereby true solidarity, distinct from the "sentimental lie" that binds them to Wait, is achieved. The description of that storm is one of the high points of the novel--the plasticity, and the sensuous impression being created by an appeal to the eye and ear. White hail falls "round and gleaming in the murky turmoil like a shower of pearls" (53); the oilskins hang in the forecastle "like reckless ghosts of decapitated seamen dancing in a tempest"(54); Mr. Baker amidst torrents of water splutters "like an energetic porpoise"(56). The sea, already personified for the sailors, is seen "as mischievous and discomposing as a madman with an axe"(57) and towers above the Narcissus "like a wall of green glass topped with snow "(57) an example of the highly visual quality of Conrad's similes revealing not only colour but texture. Sound also assists in the impression Conrad gives of a raging storm. The foaming waves are "a hissing whiteness as of boiling milk"(78) while "fiendish noises" assail the ship. Where the men had been garrulous, especially Donkin, they become mute listening to the sea "in sombre thoughtfulness" (61); those who had cursed the sea are now cursed by it as they hear "the horrible imprecations of the gale"(61).
The two polarities of the novel — Wait and the sea — become one in the storm scene. The storm, a metaphor for moral trial just as Wait tests the crew, takes on his characteristics — the "black seas" leaping up "towards the glowing sun" (75) attempt to extinguish both light and life, as does Wait before whom the sun seems to flee. An earlier simile takes on its full meaning when the storm begins: "James Wait had a fit of roaring, rattling cough, that shook him, tossed him like a hurricane. . ." (24). Competing for the attention owed to ship and sea, Wait destroys the moral order of the microcosmic Narcissus; this order is righted by the avenging storm, as the men turn their attention to the ship until an anonymous voice cries out "'Where's Jimmy?'" (63). Mr. Baker consigns the rescue party to the "'divvle'" (64), supporting a range of references that link Wait to satanic powers.

Using the Narcissus myth as a basis for an interpretation of the novel, Donald T. Torchiana suggests that Wait serves as the reflecting mirror in which the crew, a collective Narcissus, sees and admires its image; the ship according to his interpretation is "the rejected female, Echo." Just as Wait may serve as mirror, so the sea gives back a reflection of one's moral value. The "immortal sea," not Wait, gives to Singleton a reflection of his own mortal image and enlightens him: "—'I am getting old. . . old'" (98), is the burden of his "completed wisdom" after the thirty hours he has spent at the wheel. Most of the crew prefers the reflection that Wait gives to them, shamming as much as he does rather than facing the truth. They are ultimately fickle, though turning again to the sea when Wait's death ends their deluding bond. Donkin, significantly dressed in black rags (12), linking him to Wait's moral blackness and reflecting his own, neither teaches nor learns; loyal neither to the sea, "immense and hazy, like the image of life, with a glittering surface and lightless depths" (155), nor to Wait whom he mocks.
and robs, he finds his image in the land— in its "begrimed walls"(164) and "long drifts of smoky vapours"(163).

Typical of Conrad's technique is the application of a particular simile or range of similes to his characters. Donkin, as numerous critics have pointed out and even the casual reader can discern, is particularly associated with birds, especially those that are ugly and repellent. His hand is "hard and fleshless like the claw of a snipe" (105); Wait tells him to chatter "like a dirty white cockatoo"(110); and during the storm he "resembled a sick vulture with ruffled plumes" (128). Beyond making Donkin a physically unattractive character, the bird imagery— conveyed largely through simile— serves to connect him to the land, since birds are land creatures, needing the protection and nourishment the land provides. The Narcissus, on the other hand, is imaged as a sea-bird riding a wave during the storm:

The ship rose to it as though she had soared on wings, and for a moment rested poised upon the foaming crest as if she had been a great sea-bird(57).

On land, Donkin is at home at the Board of Trade where "a pasty-faced clerk, with his hair parted in the middle, had the quick, glittering eyes and the vivacious, jerky movements of a caged bird"(167) and where "Another Board of Trade bird was perching on a high stool near the door: an old bird that did not mind the chaff of elated sailors"(168). While obtaining a heightened visual effect through these images, Conrad at the same time presents his themes through them. One finds curious Yelton's statement that the novel has "a relative paucity of recurrent or thematic imagery." The bird images, as much as anything else, link Donkin to Wait, for both are creatures of the land, disdainful of the sea and of the "obscure toil" it demands. One of the ironies of the novel is, of course,
that Wait dies in sight of land, while it is only there that Donkin comes into his own. As with the "aquatic black beetle," the tug, the land gives Donkin his dubious worth and function.

The crew, like Donkin, has its share of similes making the reader evaluate their moral worth. Here, however, the narrator is more ambiguous in his attitude, reflecting the essential ambiguity of the crew's experience in his judgment of them. The movement from darkness into light into darkness again in the mustering of the crew is repeated during the course of the novel in the journey of the ship itself. The narrator's similes assist in presenting a morally ambiguous situation. In the mutiny scene, set significantly at night, the crew is portrayed as a group of "gesticulating shadows that growled, hissed, laughed excitedly" (121); clearly, they are not unlike the damned to which Captain Allistoun's reflection "Worse than devils too sometimes—downright, horned devils" (126) explicitly links them. Their further alliance to the demonic world and their particular relationship with Wait is underlined when they are described as "a dark mass"(122), taking on not only his colour, but his disruptive and egotistic nature under Donkin's urgings. Implicated in Wait's lie, they are later described "like a community of banded criminals . . . profoundly scandalised with each other"(156). To Donkin's eyes immediately after Wait's death, the members of the crew sleeping on the lighted deck are "shapeless dark mounds that had the appearance of neglected graves"(155), a metaphor that enlarges on numerous similes describing the forecastle as "a whitewashed and lighted mortuary"(8) and the berths as "black, like graves tenanted by uneasy corpses"(22). Their moral state after the tests they have passed through - "death, disorder, and evil" — remains unclear; for as the sunshine falls on "the walls of
grimy houses" the crew is seen as a "dark knot of seamen"(172), and as "The sunshine of heaven fell like a gift of grace on the mud of the earth" and cleanses the Mint, the crew forms a "dark group"(172). That salvation is embodied in the sunshine, according to W.R. Martin, seems a misreading; it lightens not them so much as it does the Mint and the walls, as they move, significantly, towards the Black Horse.

Their journey, unlike Wait's and that of the Narcissus—both to death—remains unresolved, and the storm, that metaphor for conflict and trial, must be faced again until their wisdom, like Singleton's becomes complete.

Old Singleton, like Catherine in The Rover, embodies the powers of both prophet and sage. Similes are largely responsible for his magnification to nearly Titanic stature. "Tattooed like a cannibal chief," he pores over Bulwer Lytton's Pelham resembling "a learned and savage patriarch"(6). At once both temporal and spiritual force, his monumental aspect leads the narrator to liken his age to that of "Father Time himself"(24), and to compare his collapse to that of "an uprooted tree,"(97) a classical simile appropriate to Singleton's magnitude. His semi-religious function as a touchstone for moral worth allows him in his wisdom to pronounce on Wait "like an oracle behind a veil"(130). Such similes further emphasize the differences between him and the other crew members, especially Donkin and Wait, and give Singleton something like epic proportions. Moreover, they link him—through stature—to the realm of the officers, who exist in a world above that of the forecastle. The microcosm over which Allistoun reigns is supervised "from the Olympian heights of his poop"(31), and his position as "the master" is affirmed by his correct judgments. Singleton's connection to this world is implied through simile.
Wait, "the centre of the ship's collective psychology and the pivot of the action," exists on both a realistic and metaphoric level; but Ted E. Boyle's statement that he is "so well drawn on the realistic level that he could well be a private in a modern infantry company" is surely an unsupported viewpoint. His blackness, which Conrad exploits for metaphoric significance, gives Wait his symbolic importance in the novel. M.J.C. Echuero in his essay "James Wait and The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'" goes so far as to link Wait's racial background with his moral effect on the Narcissus, accusing Conrad of racism in his exploitation of a traditional, however incorrect, Western concept of blackness:

The symbol of death which Wait is said to represent is merely the consequence of Conrad's factual description of an appearance which appeared to him, literally brutal, tragic and sinister. If we must call Wait a devil, we must mean the name to be a measure of Conrad's revulsion from these aspects of Wait's physiognomy—his negritude.

Wait's connection to the metaphysical evil of the universe gains amplitude from his blackness, to be sure, but no explicit or even implied evil derives from Wait because of his being a Negro; moreover, such contentions seem to overlook the fact that Wait's historical model was black.

Wait's power is first hinted at by his cough that literally disturbs the universe, resounding so loudly that "the dome of the sky rang to it, and the iron plates of the ship's bulwarks seemed to vibrate in unison" (18-19). Wait's moral hollowness, suggested by his physical insubstantiality and especially by his cough, provides the narrator an opportunity for a number of similes intended to suggest the enormity of the crew's self-deception. He is variously seen "as a doll that had lost half its sawdust"(72), "like a black buoy chained to the bottom of a muddy stream" (138); and as becoming "immaterial like an apparition"(139); all appeal,
like the fact of Wait's blackness, to the reader's visual imagination. Finally, he becomes a "black phantom" (151) and a thing as Donkin yells to him "'Yer nobody. Yer no one at all!'" (151), further elaborating the narrator's reflection that he is "as fascinating as only something inhuman could be" (139). Wait images death as well, although one need not interpret such an image allegorically; the ship as well by the end of the novel meets its death, like Wait, in sight of land, and there is no justification for seeing the ship as Death personified. Wait is also related to the religious theme of the novel by the narrator's observation that his cabin "had, in the night, the brilliance of a silver shrine where a black idol . . . received our homage" (105).

Wait's rescuers during the storm scene have a significant group of similes associated with them. Wamibo appears as a dog—his "tongue hung out with excitement" (65), and he "made noises resembling loud barks" (66), a simile that suggests his physical appearance and his excitement. The situation is heightened by the narrator's observation that he stood over them "resembling an amazed and half-witted fiend gloating over the extraordinary agitation of the damned" (66). This simile is typical of Conrad in the novel, the participle "resembling" substituting for the more common "like" or "as"; moreover, it is typical in its economy revealing not only Wamibo's physical position at that moment but the nature of the rescuers efforts— they are the "damned" attempting to save Wait. While on their way to rescue him from his cabin, they appear "wild-eyed, like a lot of maniacs tied up on a wall" (64) indicating both the comic and serious nature of their exploit that implicates both birth and death simultaneously. As the ship wallows "lifelessly" and Wait is "as quiet a dead man inside a grave" (69), the rescuers, those who make possible the rebirth of Wait's influence over the crew, appear "like men standing
above a grave... on the verge of tears" (69); they are at once mourners and midwives. Conrad's concern for precision is demonstrated by the acute visual quality of such a carefully constructed scene, one in which similes, more than any other element, are responsible for symbolic impact.

Beyond giving intense visual impressions and symbolic import to both character and scene, Conrad's similes make his reader hear and feel. Wait's cough, for example, is described exactly as "metallic and explosive like a gong" (39). The sea, which in a sense functions as a character in the novel, receives particular attention from the narrator in regard to the quality of its sounds. Fixing the riggings, the sailors (and the reader) receive an impression of the sea's remoteness high above the deck: "the roar of the seas seething far below them sounded continuous and faint like an indistinct noise from another world" (92), a simile intended to render the aural impression that a sailor would actually have. The sea, indeed, forms so much of a sailor's life that the narrator images other situations and events through it: "The noise subsided like a broken wave" (129). Allistoun, in fact, when reprimanding the crew for its insubordination is described specifically in terms of the sound of a storm at sea, a metaphor that Conrad already used to represent a reprimand: he "began to storm at them coldly, in gusts violent and cutting like the gales of those icy seas that had known his youth" (134). Wait's physical degeneration is also rendered in terms of sound— that of his breathing; in his confrontation with Captain Allistoun the narrator reports that Wait "panted fast like a dog after a run in sunshine" (122), and Donkin hears his death rattle as "a sound like the rustle of a single dry leaf driven along the smooth sand of a beach" (154).
Metaphor in *The Nigger* has both local and larger effect within the narrative. The simile, a linguistic structure, tends toward local effect in creating sensory impression or in giving symbolic import to a particular character or situation, while metaphor, in its broadest sense, is a composite of linguistic structures and content, occasionally relying on archetype and tradition for its significance. Simile, however, in its cumulative effect, that is, in its creation of, or contribution to, a pattern of images, may have the same result as metaphor. The seasonal changes marked during the course of the journey of the *Narcissus* clearly imply that the land and sea operate independently of, almost in antagonism to, one another. The scene of Wait's rescue, on the other hand, relies for its meaning partially on traditional associations with burial and rebirth. Similarly, the similes personifying the storm do not alone give it its central symbolic significance, but again traditional associations, including the pathetic fallacy, effect meaning. *The Rover* is less metaphoric, less given to simile on both the local and large scale, and hence, in a sense, less vivid.

Writing of imagery in *The Rover*, Donald C. Yelton says that "It does not, as in the major works, constitute an imposing and inescapable feature of style"; he is largely correct, for although Conrad draws on a fund of images used forcefully in earlier works, especially animal and artistic similes, they rarely contribute effectively or coherently to theme. The core of the novel's meaning is not, however, as in *Lord Jim* or *The Nigger*, primarily effected through metaphor, simile, or symbolic action, but largely through character and action. Elaborate symbolic situations and complex image patterns would, in fact, unnecessarily encumber a story not complex in its main course. An almost exclusive concentration on character
leads to the dominance of Peyrol and his viewpoint throughout the novel, and Peyrol is no maker of metaphors like Marlow, but a relatively practical and simple sailor whose major concerns do not often include psychological or metaphysical and ethical complexities. Peyrol acts because he must do so, and he does so unhesitatingly, neither ratiocinating nor delaying by sophistry. In part, then, the dominance of character—especially of a character of Peyrol's nature—leads to a relative paucity of metaphor and simile, just as the nature of the action seems less ambiguous—ethically and psychologically—than in the earlier fiction. The central conflict between Peyrol and Réal with Scevola and the abnormality that the latter represents is never clearly dramatized, and, in fact, partly obscured by the theme of rebirth and by the love relationship of Arlette and Réal. The French and English conflict is also responsible for a lack of clear focus, and much of the novel gets caught up by a political-military conflict that has few reverberations.

Rather than finding unity in imagery, metaphor, or simile, Conrad unites the disparate elements and themes by an almost excessive concentration on Peyrol—excessive because it leaves the other characters relatively undeveloped. This is not to fault severely Conrad's method, aim, or achievement in this novel, but rather to attempt a partial explanation for the lack of symbol and metaphor, devices he had used so consistently in order to explore theme in his earlier fiction. Technically, then, Conrad moves away from imagery and metaphor in favour of character and action as primary vehicles of meaning; drama, in a sense, replaces poetry in the later work.
Avrom Fleishman in his essay "Conrad's Last Novel" discerns as a central symbolic and thematic focus of the novel the importance of vision, observation, and perception, finding visual activities and images "the thematic center that deepens the otherwise hackneyed action of the protagonists." Sight, however, is not only a thematic but also a technical concern in the novel. Conrad's relatively infrequent metaphors and similes do diminish to some degree the descriptiveness of the novel as a whole, but concrete details compensate for the loss and pursue the aim of making the reader see. Arlette's entrance into the abbé's presbytery is typical in its precision and detail:

She pushed open the little gate with the broken latch. The humble building of rough stones, from between which much mortar had crumbled out, looked as though it had been sinking slowly into the ground. The beds of the plot in front were choked with weeds, because the abbé had no taste for gardening.

The careful and painstaking establishment of setting and atmosphere in the early chapters gains power from similes, so unenergetic in parts of the novel. Both curious and, in a sense, foreign, Peyrol's mind is especially receptive to the visual impressions his "native" area makes on him, and the narrator renders these impressions with considerable attention to the details of colour, tone, and texture. From the yard of the inn near Hyères, Peyrol sees that "far away, like a blue thread, there was the sea of the Hyères roadstead with a lumpy indigo swelling beyond--which was the island of Porquerolles"(6). As dusk comes, the landscape changes: "the small rise at the end of the Giens peninsula had assumed the appearance of a black cloud"(9). Exploring the land, at one point compared to a desert island, Peyrol travels across a track "with patches of efflorescent salt as white as snow between the tufts of
wiry grass and the particularly dead-looking bushes"(15). What is implied by the descriptions is that the land, and by extension all France, has become the Wasteland through the Revolution; Peyrol's sacrifice is what is needed in order to bring back fertility and life, symbolized by the union of Réal and Arlette.

As the novel progresses, the landscape of its concern becomes increasingly interior and external visual impressions become less noteworthy until the climactic chase scene; on occasion, however, the narrator finds something striking:

... the roadstead, with its play of grey and bright gleams, looked like a plaque of mother-of-pearl in a frame of yellow rocks and dark green ravines set off inland by the masses of the hills displaying the tint of the finest purple; while above his (Peyrol's) head the sun, behind a cloud-veil, hung like a silver disc (144).

Colour, as the above passage demonstrates, seems a particular concern of the narrator, and most are primary rather than shades or tints; Peyrol for example, is dressed in the colours of the tricolour when he arrives at the Port Office of Toulon. Arlette looking over the village sees "just beyond the flat blue-grey level of the salt lagoon, smooth and dull like a slab of lead"(147). Her return to life is apprehended visually, and the change in her spirit is noticeable in her facial colouring: "the faintest possible flush had appeared on her cheeks, played on them faintly rosy like the light of a distant flame on the snow"(175). Distant perspective and the play of light changing the perception of size and colour is noted as Captain Vincent on the deck of the Amelia observes two stragglers of the British Fleet: "two specks very far apart, of which one shone white like a bit of silver and the other appeared black like a drop of ink"(278).

Similes attached to a particular character are, as in Conrad's
other novels, used to give dimension, personality, and identity. The range of similes in *The Rover* is, on the whole, not large—a basic comparison being repeated with variations throughout the text. Catherine has a number of metaphors and similes with similar intent attached to her: she is seen as having the "attitude of an old sibyl risen from the tripod to prophesy calmly atrocious disasters" (170); her profile is that of "a sharp carving of an old prophetess of some desert tribe"(174); she speaks "like a cruel fate" when she warns Réal to leave Arlette(225) and after giving that warning, stands before the breakfasting Peyrol "imposing and solemn like a peasant-priestess"(228); she speaks with Peyrol about Arlette's rebirth "with a sort of regal composure . . . like a chieftainess of a tribe"(169); and waiting for the results of Arlette's flight after Réal, she sits "like a senator in his curule chair awaiting the blow of a barbarous fate"(247). The similes and metaphors describing Catherine seem, perhaps, slightly too portentous considering her somewhat minor role in the novel; her moment of prophecy does come, but she is a slightly misguided prophetess. Her warning to Réal that Arlette is "for no man" is incorrect(225). However, she is accurate in her pronouncement that "there is death in the folds of her (Arlette's) skirt and blood about her feet"(225), but this is mistakenly directed to Réal, for it is Peyrol who meets death for the sake of Arlette. Indeed, Catherine is important for her past relationship with a priest and for her protecting Arlette from Scevola. These roles, however, are little related to the burden of the similes given to her, unless one allegorically sees her as an ancient prophetess or votary of a goddess,
Arlette, whom one critic sees as "the France that Scevola has taken illegal possession of." Arlette herself is also related to the Fate-like; her call and appearance to Peyrol when the tartane is about to set out consciously recalls a Valkyrie's appearance to a doomed Teutonic chiftain—she appears as if in a vision, the symbolic rain also foreshadowing the oncoming moment of Peyrol's death(247).

Similes used in describing Arlette are not as limited in range, but seem to have little thematic or symbolic import except for the shadow metaphor which suggests her insubstantiality before her return to life through the power of love. Perhaps related to this are the bird similes suggesting both her physical diminutiveness and her instability, perhaps even her timidity; Peyrol thinks that "she was like a sea-bird—not to be grasped"(22). Such insubstantiality and elusiveness contrasts markedly with Peyrol and Catherine who are imaged as carvings (80 and 116) or stone effigies(119); they are immobile, while Arlette roams Ariel-like about the farm. Curiously, the chain of images suggesting lightness and movement is disrupted by Réal's confession that he looks at Arlette "as at a picture"(212), consciously recalling the Acis and Galatea myth; but this is only a partial disruption, for the intent of such an allusion is mainly directed towards the la belle dame sans merci quality of Arlette, rather than her inability to rest spiritually and physically.

Animal imagery is once again used to describe various characters in the novel, although both the range and the import of these images is more restricted than those in The Secret Agent, and they largely have local rather than thematic significance. Peyrol describes Scevola escaping from an angry mob in a simile from everyday speech—
he "bolted up the hill, like a hare"(41); the priest who saves him leaps "from boulder to boulder like a blessed goat"(42). To Peyrol's mind also Scevola has a grin that "resembled the defensive grin of some small wild animal afraid of being cornered"(80). And after one of his customary harangues, Peyrol warns Scevola that the people now disenchanted with Revolutionary rhetoric and sympathies will "hunt you down like a mad dog"(166). Arlette, as noted above, is frequently described as bird-like by Peyrol who also sees Réal sitting alone on his bench "like a lonely crow"(177). The priest is described as living "like a hunted wild beast" during the Revolution(148). Arlette describes the crowd chasing Scevola as "yelping like curs"(150).

Peyrol himself is seen by her in animal terms-- "his massive aspect, his deliberation suggesting a mighty force like the reposeful attitude of a lion"(146). Scevola angrily reprimanding Michel reproaches him for bounding "like a goat"(186). The final word Peyrol hears is in "an enormous voice like the roar of an angry sea-lion"(269). The effect of these similes is two-fold; they realistically exploit figures from common speech giving a character's dialogue and thought verisimilitude, and they add vividness to a description. No longer, however, does Conrad seem primarily interested in the animal image as a mirror of a character's spiritual and intellectual attributes or deficiencies, but uses them rather with a simpler intent and for a simpler effect.

Just as human beings are often seen in animal terms in The Rover, inanimate objects occasionally become anthropomorphic through simile, an extension of Conrad's frequent use of the pathetic fallacy. After Peyrol's death, his tartane "tumbled like a lifeless corpse amongst the seas"(269), a simile clearly suggesting the importance of the small boat as an image or extension of Peyrol himself. Similarly
humanized is the mulberry tree "standing like a sentinel at the gate of the yard"; it also "sighed faintly . . . as if regretting the Brother of the Coast, the man of dark deeds, but of large heart, who often at noonday would lie down to sleep under its shade"(286). Conversely, human beings often become inhuman in the novel. Aside from the recurrent animal similes, other similes have this effect. For example, the cripple whom Peyrol befriends is imaged as a beacon as he watches the final preparations for the first launching of the tartane(97). As before, such similes have local effect making little contribution to theme.

Similes making thematic contributions to the novel are few, and tend to be slightly laboured. Peyrol too frequently notices, for example, that his room at Escampobar is like a lighthouse. At home only at sea, he envisages the farm as a ship, declaring his fidelity to its inhabitants to the outsider Réal: "I am old Peyrol and this place, as lonely as a ship at sea, is like a ship to me and all in it are like shipmates"(44). However dear to him Escampobar may be, his true home remains the sea, and he prepares and mends the blood-drenched tartane "as though he had been preparing his escape from a desert island"(88). Peyrol then begins to sleep on the tartane now "as safe from the tempests there as a house ashore"(99), preferring it to the farm where he says of himself: "Well, perhaps old Peyrol is dead. At any rate he has buried himself here"(106-107). During the course of the novel Peyrol moves towards life as Arlette and Réal do; his experience, unlike theirs, however, is complete, for he undergoes death as well, finding in it the fulfillment and peace he had so ardently sought on shore. Death, as Royal Roussel points out, is in The Rover "the inevitable price of the true self." 22

A very large number of "as though" and "as if" clauses functions as similes in The Nigger and The Rover (as well as in Conrad's other works)
in that they serve to render one action, situation, or thing in terms of another. Like similes, too, these clauses are a part of Conrad's impressionistic technique. The introductory "as if" or "as though" are similar in meaning to "like" and "as". To say, for instance, that "x bounds as though he were a goat" or "x bounds as if he were a goat" is nearly the same as saying that "x bounds like a goat." Informal American English seems to acknowledge this similarity by the gradual phasing out of the "as if" clause along with its mandatory subjunctive; in everyday speech "He acted like he was trying to lose" is replacing "He acted as if he were trying to lose" or "He acted as though he were trying to lose."

Approximately the same relationship between tenor and vehicle exists in all three instances in which "x" is seen as performing an action in the manner of a goat. Difference resides in the economy and the precision or intended imprecision that one clause might have rather than another; the word "door" and Samuel Johnson's "the wooden guardian of our privacy" refer to precisely the same object, but the manner in which that object is described forms style. Whereas a comparison using "like" has the advantage of economy (since it requires no verb), a comparison using the "as if" or "as though" clause leads to a greater integration between tenor and vehicle and is more dynamic.

A particular contribution of the "as if" and "as though" clauses functioning as similes in The Nigger is personification; moreover, such a construction displays the narrator's state of mind and sensibility. He sees nature in human terms, displaying the function of simile as
making an analogy between two dissimilar objects. During the storm the narrator describes the *Narcissus* in difficulty: "Twice running, as though she had been blind or weary of life, she put her nose deliberately into a big wave and swept the decks from end to end"(52). The "as though" clause suggests the necessity of motivated action in the mind of the narrator who attempts to attribute motive, and, hence, humanizes. In like manner, after the crew has fixed the riggings, the ship "as if grateful for our efforts, plucked up heart and made better weather of it"(56). While rescuing Wait, the narrator records that "The ship, as if overcome with despair, wallowed lifelessly"(69), making explicit the state of the ship in relation to Wait and the powers he stands for. After the storm has been weathered, the progress of the ship is again rendered in specifically human terms: "She went off slowly as though she had been weary and disheartened like the men she carried"(87). Free at last from the storm, she drives northward "as though inspired by the courage of a high endeavour"(94). And with Wait dead and the calm ending, the ship "rolled as if relieved of an unfair burden"(160), completing the sequence of clauses that are necessary in order to link Wait and the ship. The sun is also humanized throughout the novel like the sea and the *Narcissus*: "the setting sun dipped sharply, as though fleeing before our nigger"(34), and "A sun enormous, unclouded and red," declines "low as if bending down to look into their (the crew's) faces"(74). The characteristic cast of the narrator's belief in humanized nature is best shown, however, when he remarks of the calm: "the glittering sea, touched by the breeze, basked voluptuously in the great sunshine, as though it had forgotten our life and trouble"(143). To the narrator, then, nature is vital—
the stars "glittered, as if alive above the sea" (29), and like man himself, it has both malevolent and benign aspects: the waters rush at Wait's burial "as if impatient to get at our Jimmy" (159), and a bridge opens before the Narcissus "as if by enchantment" (164). This dual aspect of nature mirrors, of course, a central theme of the novel— the harbouring in man of both a dark and evil nature as well as a benign and moral one. The result of this duality is conflict, seen in the storm and the near mutiny.

The "as if" and "as though" clauses serve as similes also in the creation of a visual or aural impression: something looks or sounds like something else. Mr. Baker, tired from the storm is described by the narrator: "The rims of his eyelids were scarlet, and he moved his jaw incessantly with a slow effort, as though he had been masticating a lump of india-rubber" (57). The "as though" clause serves to heighten the visual impression, appealing to the reader's imagination more powerfully than the somewhat flat statement that Mr. Baker "moved his jaw unceasingly with effort." The loudness of Wait's voice is also emphasized by such a construction: "his voice rang, hollow and loud, as though he had been talking in an empty cavern" (35), and Donkin's inarticulateness is also vividly described— "he mumbled with effort and as if his mouth had been full of dough" (136).

This construction further serves to emphasize manner— the way in which an observer perceives the occurrence of a particular action. Peyrol, for example, reproaches Réal for his haughty manner of speech: "'You have a nasty tongue,' he said, 'with your damned trick of talking as if you were made of different clay'" (106). Removing
herself from a conversation between Peyrol and Scevola, "Catherine clearing the table bore herself as if she had been completely deaf"(80). The emphasis on manner often functions as an amplification of aural or visual impressions and also serves to make vivid the object or person being described. Conrad's aim to make his reader see, feel, and hear is furthered by the "as if" and "as though" clauses. As with the simile in the traditional sense, his aim, in part, is the exact rendering of impressions, while at the same time making the reader consistently aware of the approximation that can only result. Moreover, these constructions also contribute to the symbolic and thematic implications of a work, as they are subject to the same type of repetition and amplification as conventional similes.

An aspect of Conrad's style related to simile and metaphor is metonymic imagery, a type of imagery based on "association by contiguity," whereas metaphor is "grounded in" similarity or analogy between two terms." Fleishman, noting the numerous visual concerns in The Rover, suggests that some of them are not of particular interest or noteworthy of themselves, but "develop symbolic force by their accumulated mass," a way of saying that they form a metonymic pattern. Arlette's eyes are among the more important images of the novel, and Conrad directs the reader's attention to them metonymically. When she first meets Peyrol, it is noted that she smiles "without gaiety or any change in her restless eyes that roamed about the empty room as though Peyrol had come in attended by a mob of Shades"(21), and while her conversation with him continues, the narrator remarks that "Her eyes, which had steadied, began to wander again all round and about the
motionless Peyrol"(22). Reflecting later on his reception at the
farmhouse, Peyrol's thoughts underline for the reader the signifi­
cance of Arlette's roaming eyes:

He. . .was met at the door of the farmhouse itself
by the young woman with the pale face and wandering
eyes. Nothing could hold her attention for long
amongst her familiar surroundings. Right and left
and far beyond you, she seemed to be looking for
something while you were talking to her, so that
you doubted whether she could follow what you said.
But as a matter of fact she had all her wits about
her(34).

The first explicit connection, then, between Arlette's eyes and her
state of mind is made relatively early in the novel, and the cause
of her disturbance and of her unstable perception is clearly her
childhood experiences during the Revolution, which she herself
discerns as the cause of the hollow life and living death she has
suffered(155). Peyrol's effect on her revivification is also noted
first in connection with her eyes:

Peyrol called it trying not to see something that
was not there; and this evasive yet frank mobility was
so much a part of her being that the steadiness
with which she met his inquisitive glance surprised
old Peyrol for a moment(49).

As the novel progresses and Arlette's affection for the fatherly
Peyrol is transformed into love for Lieutenant Réal, her movement
towards rebirth has its climax in the scene with the abbé. Arlette
herself tells him of her wandering eyes: "'I saw things round me
here and there, but I couldn't look at anything for long. Something
was gone out of me"'(155). As she leaves the church and re-enters
the sacristy, realizing the power of love, her eyes shine, and the
abbé sees "the gleam of her eyes swimming in tears"(158) signaling to
the reader her return to life. Peyrol, too, notices the change in her
as recorded in her eyes: "She dazzled him. Vitality streamed out of her eyes, her lips, her whole person, enveloped her like a halo" (175). As Arlette's love makes her mind stable, her eyes cease to roam, and in the moonlit scene in Réal's bedroom "her black eyes, immensely profound, looked into his, not with a transport of passion or fear but with a sort of reposeful satisfaction, with a searching and appropriating expression"(215-216). Just as Peyrol moves toward peace and rebirth, so does Arlette, a theme developed, in part, by a chain of images rendering her coming to consciousness through sight. Numerous other references to sight in the novel give force to this chain of images: Peyrol and Réal watch for the English ship, Peyrol's room is like a lighthouse, the English watch the coast, Arlette watches over Réal in order to protect him from Scevola. The importance of sight is developed through relationships established in various scenes rather than through a reliance on traditional metaphoric equivalents of sight as spirtual vision or insight, though these, too, cannot be discounted in assessing the thematic implications of Conrad's visual images in the novel. But largely, the importance and meaning of Arlette's eyes or, for example, the lookout, are developed within the text through the basic stylistic device of repetition. Such a device tightens structure and provides unity, content and form meeting in a coherent whole in which matter and manner are inseparable. As its basis is a contiguous relationship, metonymic imagery tends to place scenes in juxtaposition with one another in the reader's mind; in a sense, it is not only a vehicle for meaning, but assists in the structuring of a text.

In *The Nigger of the "Narcissus,*" a similar metonymic pattern to
the one in *The Rover* can be discerned—eyes again are an important image; Conrad, in fact, often seems to structure a novel around a particular aspect of sight or sound; in "Heart of Darkness" Kurtz's voice more than Kurtz himself seems to contain meaning for Marlow. Both sight and sound are of primary thematic importance in *Under Western Eyes*, and unclearness of vision is a central theme in *Lord Jim*. Constantly playing in the background of *The Nigger* is the Narcissus myth in which a young man falls in love with the sight of his own image. Wait, according to Old Singleton, must die within sight of land; Podmore sees visions of hell and heaven when he looks at Wait; the ship, it is suggested, is held up by Allistoun's eyes—"with living eyes he was still holding the ship up, heeding no one, as if lost in the unearthly effort of that endeavour"(74). The word "eye" itself occurs some eighty times within the short novel, not counting variations such as "glanced" or "stared" or "saw," and although repetition alone is not significant except as a unifying device, a purposeful pattern seems in evidence. Much of the visual concern centres around or emanates from Wait. His eyes, like Arlette's, record emotion and perception; when Donkin envisages Wait's burial at sea and taunts him with the thought of death, Wait looks at him—"a gaze unbelieving, desolated and appealing, of a child frightened by the menace of being shut up alone in the dark"(153). And as his condition worsens, it seems to Donkin that "only his eyes appeared alive"(154); lastly as Donkin starts toward the door, he turns "just in time to see Wait's eyes blaze up and go out at once, like two lamps overturned together by a sweeping blow"(154–55). To some extent the eye imagery in *The Nigger*
suggests that Wait does not see, or rather prefers not to see, his own decline; while on the other hand, Singleton has the enigmatic visions of an oracle, and Podmore those of a fanatic. The crew alternately sees itself in Wait and in the ship. Ironically, Donkin sees almost everything, even perceiving Wait's true condition, but the things he sees are constantly misapprehended, as he filters his perception through his anarchic zeal. Donkin, then, sees things only in terms of himself; Wait's death, for example, effects him only as it is an image of his own inevitable end.

Also linked to sight in the novel is light and darkness, the quality of the light of the land and the light of the sea being clearly marked when Singleton approaches the pay-table for his wages: "his hands, that never hesitated in the great light of the open sea, could hardly find the small pile of gold in the profound darkness of the shore" (168). After being paid, the crew goes out—"they blinked, hesitated clumsily, as if blinded by the strange quality of the hazy light" (170). The narrator suggests the inability of the crew to function adequately on land where the "small pile of gold" is considered the sufficient equivalent to what the sea gives and teaches, and where the Mint appears "dazzling and white like a marble palace in a fairy tale" (172). Vision is distorted here; the Mint, a monument to the capitalist ethic, cannot remunerate as the sea does in knowledge of self, nor does the solidarity provided by capitalist endeavour supplant the true solidarity of a good crew at sea. The moral polarities aboard the Narcissus—Wait and Donkin opposed to Singleton and Allistoun— are reduced to simply one element on land: Donkin is triumphant. Whether or not the crew's sight moves towards Singleton's or Donkin's is unresolved, and
the narrator's ambiguous and elegiac farewell remains an insufficient key to the meaning of their experience.

Marvin Mudrick in his essay "The Artist's Conscience and The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'" faults Conrad for merely decorative metaphor: "occasionally, at least, his choice of metaphor seems calculated rather to impress us with his ingenuity than to illuminate his subject"; Mudrick is in part correct—there are remnants of Conrad's early and more florid style in The Nigger, but remnants that have altogether disappeared by the time of The Rover. The Nigger is the more masterful work of the two, despite the faults that Mudrick and others have correctly discerned. In part, at least, the mastery Conrad displays resides precisely in the portrayal of visual elements with a lively sense of colour and motion, and aural tones with attention to the loudness and quality of sound. The similes and metaphors of The Nigger are greater in variety, more imaginative and energetic, more thematic in emphasis than those in The Rover, which, although competent, lacks the energy and excitement of the earlier novel. Conrad himself, though fond of The Rover and eager for a good critical reception, recognized its shortcomings and wrote to Garnett of its weaknesses, especially in regard to characterization. To Bruno Winaver, who had suggested a drama based on the novel, he spoke of its lack of visual effects.

As to its adaptability for the stage, I was at first surprised. But on thinking it over I see the possibility, though of course I do not see the way in which it could be visibly presented and spiritually rendered in spoken words. But it is a fact that the book has got very little description, very few disquisitions, and is for the most part in dialogue en forme parlée.

But the novel, if not as striking visually as The Nigger and some of the early works, appeals to one's emotions and sentiments, a canon that
Conrad applied to art. In a slightly elegiac tone he had remarked to Garnett in a letter that: it was "A thing of sentiment--of many sentiments."
Footnotes


2 Yelton, p. 111.


4 Dowden, p. 51.


7 See W.R. Martin's "The Captain of the Narcissus," ESA, 6 (September 1963), 191-97 for an allegorical reading of Wait and Allistoun.


9 Kenneth Bernard in "Conrad's Fools of Innocence in The Nigger of the 'Narcissus,'" Conradiana, 2 (Fall 1969), 49-57 contends exactly the opposite, that "It is Wait and what he represents that has broken" Singleton, p. 54.

10 Yelton, p. 155.


12 Martin, p. 196.


15 "James Wait and The Nigger of the 'Narcissus','" ESA, 8 (September 1965), p. 179.


17 Yelton, p. 209.


19 Jean-Aubry in his essay in George T. Keating's A Conrad Memorial Library (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1929), pp. 326-36 notes that Conrad spent some weeks in Corsica and Southern France during the early part of 1921 in order to get near the scene of Suspense. The visit included a car ride from Nice to Toulon where Conrad spent a night. The precision of Conrad's descriptions in The Rover is attested to by Jean-Aubry who travelled to the Toulon area, Escampobariou, and to the Giens Peninsula with that novel specifically in mind.


25  Fleishman, p. 194.


Chapter V

Conclusions

Having presented a detailed analyses of a number of stylistic features in Conrad's The Nigger of the "Narcissus" and The Rover, certain general conclusions about the integration of form and content in these particular novels and about the value of a study of style as related to an understanding of theme can be offered:

1) Conrad's attitude towards and interest in style is demonstrably different in the early and later parts of his career. At the beginning, the occasionally tortured syntax, over-conscious rhythms, and over-modified substantives are perhaps due to too close an imitation of his French models, Flaubert and Maupassant. Although these flaws are most apparent in the two novels written before The Nigger, they still appear in that work and occasionally mar later productions, even Lord Jim. Towards the later part of Conrad's career there is a notable decline in the interest in stylistic virtuosity as an element in itself and a movement towards a generally less-complex and less self-conscious style.

2) A movement towards more conventional structure and style, suggesting, perhaps a more conventional world view, is discernable in the fiction of the later period. Although the style is competent, often assured, it is
at times lacking in energy and freshness. One notes, for example, that the same similes and metaphors are encountered again and again without the effectiveness and vividness of those in the early novels.

3) The reliance on dialogue for vividness and for individualizing characters does not seem to differ appreciably in the early and later works. Used effectively, it is the means by which a novel either comes alive or fails to do so. The heavily melodramatic dialogue of Victory is not apparent in The Rover, showing that Conrad is again in firm control of this aspect of the novelist's art. In analyzing dialogue as a facet of style one also sees the relationship between the drama and the novel more clearly. As in drama, major figures are those who are most frequently presented to the audience or whose utterances are of particular importance; the way in which characters come to dominate a work is, then, partially a result of the amount of dialogue allotted to them. Conrad's brief interest in the theatre in the years directly preceding The Rover seem to have influenced this novel, which Conrad spoke of as being largely a dialogue "en forme parlée."

4) Conrad's use of the "as if" and "as though" similes seems to indicate a special sensitivity to the manner in which an action is performed and to the way in which objects and actions are related. This type of simile, as well as traditional simile, occurs so frequently in Conrad's novels, and especially in those of the early period, that a state of mind which consistently perceived the universe in terms of analogy seems to be suggested. The symbolic potential of actions and events finds expression in a technical device permitting the transmission of this uniquely personal
vision to others. The anthropomorphic universe, so clearly present
in many of the novels, is a version on a grand scale of the simple
analogy, and is often the result of the cumulative effect of indi-
vidual metaphors and similes.

5) The narrative method, and hence the narrative prose, of The Rover
avoids the dangers courted by works such as The Nigger, Lord Jim,
Nostromo, and Under Western Eyes, and equally disallows the brilliant
insight and profundity afforded by the exploration of and emphasis on
perspective in those works. If on the one hand The Rover avoids the
clumsiness and unsatisfactory solutions of the narrative in Victory,
on the other, it skirts the possibilities presented by a more complexly
organized narrative method. For its limited aims, however, its narrative
method is successful, as I have attempted to show.

6) A greater emphasis on character in The Rover is a result of the
novel's preoccupation with Peyrol's perceptions and personality. Indeed,
though the novel concerns itself with interior conflicts, these are
largely resolved within the context of a social unit, or within a
relationship, such as Arlette's and Réal's. In The Nigger character per
se is slightly de-emphasized with the symbolic implications of the work
at the forefront of the reader's consciousness. Although both novels
deal with worlds in relative isolation, one senses that The Nigger has
greater universal concerns, while The Rover is more confined, slightly
more personal and domestic. Needless to say, the effect on style is
perceptible particularly in the types of vocabulary used. The passages
of vague grandeur found in The Nigger and the rhetorical flourishes
achieved by means of very carefully modulated rhythms are absent from
**The Rover.**

7) As shown by Conrad's manipulation of direct address in **The Rover**
and by his presentation of Scevola, Conrad's attitudes towards revo-
**lutionary politics** as expressed in his last novel did not substantially
change from the views put forth in the early novels. A common point of
both **The Nigger** and **The Rover** is the exploration of themes through two
characters who represent social anarchy, Wait and Scevola, and two
characters, Peyrol and Old Singleton, who assist in achieving a balanced
society--based not on politics but on the precept of solidarity. In
**juxtaposing** these novels for stylistic consideration, one discovers a
**relationship** between their themes, including the theme of death and
resurrection central to both. In a sense, Conrad in his last completed
novel returns to the concerns of his early work.

8) In **The Nigger**, and pre-eminently in the middle period novels, metaphor
and simile convey theme, while in the novels from **Victory** to **The Rover**
these elements are either badly botched, as, I think, in **Victory**, or less
heavily relied upon as vehicles for meaning. This seems to be related to
a change in world-view, also reflected in the more conservative narrative
method, with Conrad's concern with the reality of existence less and less
evident. The images of stasis that appear frequently in **The Rover** in-
dicate a more secure world, more solid and less mysterious than in some of
the other novels, notably **The Nigger** and **Lord Jim**. What is real seems to
have definitely been settled upon.
A stylistic approach to *The Nigger* tends to make less problematic for the reader the much debated question of point of view. Considered stylistically, the text is harmoniously constructed; the creation and maintenance of the narrator's voice giving the impression of consistency. Though the problems with point of view are not eliminated by this approach, they are minimized.

One of the most important but least discussed aspects of Conrad's technique is his use of rhythm for effect. Although a concentration on rhythm led to the writing of many fine passages in *The Nigger* and some of the early short stories, it also led to the type of prose known as "Conradese", especially evident in "The Lagoon." In *The Nigger* the modulation of the prose permits emphasis and de-emphasis, heightens the effectiveness of the descriptive passages, and allows for the creation of the impression of speed or gravity. An emphasis on rhythm is accompanied by the use of onomatopoeic words and phrases. Conrad's interest in rhythm is largely confined to the works up to *Nostromo*; after that it is an increasingly less important feature of his style, perhaps indicating his growth away from French models and an interest in creating a more idiomatic and less idiosyncratic style.

Conrad's desire to write in a traditional genre—that of the historical novel—may in part be the cause for *The Rover*'s conservative style. Although he partially succeeds in fusing ethical concerns and the novel of self-exploration with this genre, the conventions of the historical novel place limitations on both the form and content of *The Rover*. Clearly, in setting the novel in post-Revolutionary France certain
stylistic effects are almost required, for example, the frequent use of French phrases, expressions, and forms of address to establish mood and to provide *couleur locale*. The historical novel seems also to demand a fairly conventional narrative method, and virtuoso stylistic effects are also de-emphasized with a stress placed instead on the creation of character and realistic dialogue, features highlighted in *The Rover*.

12) A consideration of the highly complex free indirect style and interior monologue in *The Nigger* and *The Rover* demonstrates the close and intricate relationship between dialogue and narrative prose and also emphasizes the importance of tone. These techniques tend to permit greater subtlety and complexity of structure and give a more dramatic quality to narrative.

A stylistic study of *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* and *The Rover* leads inevitably, as this essay demonstrates, to a consideration of the themes of the novels. In attempting to describe and explain stylistic features one encounters the works as a whole, and learns that the tag "stylistic" only indicates a way by which one deals with thematic content. Most clearly, in discussing imagery and the types of imagery one deals with patterns which reveal theme, and in discussing types of dialogue and narrative one is led to observations about the relationship between a particular technique and the content it presents. I have tried to emphasize what is unique about the style of Conrad's novels with their emphasis on the visual, aural, and tactile qualities of the physical universe. As Conrad himself realized, the way one
describes truth is dependent on the way one sees it, and the way one sees is dependent on one's means of apprehension, and in Conrad this is primarily through the senses. It is this that one appreciates in Conrad--a faithful presentation of the reality of experience through a style that seeks to retain the vividness and fullness of the experience itself.
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