

“The thick dark current runs”: *As I Lay Dying* – A Multi - Theoretical Approach

A Dissertation
Submitted
to the Temple University Graduate Board

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By
Leiza Renee Brown
August, 2008

©

Copyright

2008

by

Leiza Renee Brown

ABSTRACT

“The thick dark current runs”: *As I Lay Dying* – A Multi- Theoretical Approach.”

Leiza Renee Brown

Doctor of Philosophy

Temple University, 2008

Dr. Sheldon Brivic

This dissertation focuses on one of the greatest, yet most problematic, novels in William Faulkner’s canon. *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner’s self-proclaimed “tour de force,” is a multilayered, multi-voiced text that leaves many critics wondering how to approach it, which has led to there being only a handful of full length critical texts devoted entirely to the book. The narrow approach used by most articles and critical texts leads to a necessarily cursory glance at the novel. The complexity of this narrative demands a multi-theoretical approach where no one theory is the primary voice or ultimate authority. The structure of the novel has dictated the order in which the theories are presented in the dissertation. The story follows members of a poor farm family as they journey to bury their matriarch. The family journeys from a private isolated space to a public outer space. The chosen theories are ordered in this same inner to outer fashion. The study begins with Freudian theories which consider how the inner workings of the mind affect the individual and moves steadily to Marxist critiques which focus on the effect of society on the individual. In this manner, the discussion grows from

individual concerns to communal concerns. Spanning the theoretic gulf between Freud and Marx are Lacanian theories and Race issues using Appiah's theories, each a certain step from the inner to the outer. An important factor in the dissertation is the discourse between the theories as each theory sounds a note of meaning that builds toward a unified chord of truth. I hope this exercise in literary criticism will add to a fuller understanding of Faulkner's novel.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all of my professors at Temple, especially my committee: Dr. Sheldon Brivic, Dr. Miles Orvell and Dr. Roland Williams. I deeply appreciate the assistance they have given me.

I would also like to thank the faculty and staff at Morgan State University for their continued support and good wishes. I especially need to thank: Dr. Valerie Sedlak, my department chair Dr. Dolan Hubbard, Dr. Ruthe Sheffey, Dr. Linda Carter, Dr. Margaret Reid, Dr. Milford Jeremiah and Mrs. Ella Stevens. These are the people who encouraged me on a daily basis.

I could not have finished this without the support and kindness of my daughters, Nikki and Nina, my family, many friends and a multitude of students I have encountered over the years.

Also special thanks to Boucary Sacko, who gave me support and kept me sane.

Finally, I must thank my ex-husband, Bernard Brown for all of his assistance and support.

This dissertation is dedicated to

My mother

Cora M. Jackson (1934 – 2002)

Who never understood why I needed to do this,

but supported me anyway

And to

my mentor

Dr. Michael D. Bayton (1949 – 2004)

who first handed *As I Lay Dying* to me

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
DEDICATION	vii
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. "ONE LICK LESS": ALTERED OEDIPAL ASPECTS	19
3. ANSE, CLAIRVOYANCE AND THE LAW OF THE FATHER	53
4. IN THE ABSENCE OF NEGROES: THE RACIALIZATION OF THE BUNDRENS.....	103
5. "WHY AIN'T I A TOWN BOY,PA?": IDEOLOGY IN <i>AS / LAY DYING</i>	133
6. CONCLUSION – "ALL SHUT UP PRETTY AS A PICTURE".....	169
7. END NOTES.....	182
WORKS CITED	184

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Faulkner's South

Many of the greatest writers have been damaged people, hashing out their life struggles on the printed page. Dostoyevsky, Joyce and Woolf all addressed issues of their lives and times through the lens of their own personal demons. Dostoyevsky's paternal issues, Joyce's obsession with jealousy and Woolf's alienation are all rampant throughout these authors' works. Faulkner is no exception, and he has the added bonus of having the rich, dysfunctional history of the South as his backdrop. He is one of many great authors who capture the concerns of the society by examining what he knows best, his own life and surroundings. Faulkner's personal demons are feelings of sibling rivalry and social inferiority. In Faulkner's case, the individuals in his novels are often at the mercy of the "social power and cultural dysfunction" (Porter FGS 120) of the South. Joseph Urgo examines several of Faulkner's most famous protagonists and concludes that "their main and constant antagonist is best understood as their time and place, the social and intellectual environment which has produced them and their alienation" (xiii).

One of his greatest novels, *As I Lay Dying*, illustrates many of the ills and confusions typical of the South during the early 1900s. Faulkner accomplishes

this by creating the dysfunctional Bundren family. "Family relationships in Faulkner are seldom idyllic, and in this novel, setting against each other husband and wife, mother and son, father and daughter, brother and brother and brother and sister, presents almost the whole range of possible tensions" (Bleikasten *IOM* 150). Faulkner's use of interior monologue and stream-of-consciousness in the multi-voiced novel was innovative when he wrote the text. These writing tools create a valuable foundation for in-depth critical study, including theories such as Freudian or Whiteness studies. In his text, *Freudianism and the Literary Mind*, Frederick J. Hoffman divides the stream-of-consciousness novel into four groups: traditional, preconscious, subconscious and unconscious (128-130). Hoffman suggests that *As I Lay Dying* is a subconscious novel, which he defines as a novel "in which the conscious mind releases much of its control over the will" (Hoffman 129). He goes on to comment that "perhaps the best examples of writing at this level are William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* and *The Sound and the Fury*" (Hoffman 130).

With this unique writing form, Faulkner crafts *As I Lay Dying* into a bedrock of hidden desires that is the foundation of the basic human conduct of these plain country people. "The techniques employed by the stream-of-consciousness novel are designed to capture . . . the source of human behavior it is the task of the mind to keep from consciousness" (Hoffman 127). The story is advanced through 51 interior monologues that allow the reader to survey the inner landscape of the 15 narrators. The separate narrations intertwine to form a

vivid image of rural life in the Deep South during the 1920s. *As I Lay Dying*, which appears to be a simple tale of the burial of a matriarch, unfolds through its complex techniques to encompass the myriad of societal expectations and proclivities that Faulkner experienced in his world as a Mississippian.

This dissertation will be a theoretic journey, which will consider the disparate notions of individual pressures and cultural pressures and how these ideas overlap and relate to each other while impacting the characters in this work of art. In order to capture the novel's wide scope as it grows from individual concerns to communal concerns, it is necessary to approach the novel from multiple theoretic angles, so no one theory is the primary voice, or ultimate authority. The body of the dissertation will deliberately move from the concerns of the inner world of the individual, which are at the core of Freud's theories, to the effects of the outer world on the individual, which Marx chronicles in his writings. Issues concerning these polar opposites of the spectrum, and every step in between, are found within the text *As I Lay Dying*.

Four theorists have been chosen to critique the novel. The structure of the novel itself has dictated the order in which their theories are presented in the dissertation. The family moves from the private isolated space of the farm to the public outer space of the town of Jefferson. Therefore, I begin with Freud, who considers the innermost issues of humanity by examining childhood and family dynamics. For Freud, the inner health of the individual is most important. This

chapter will revolve around the influences the matriarch makes on the family. Next comes Lacan, who begins to straddle the line between the inner and outer worlds. With his focus on the role of language, Lacan begins to connect the inner individual to society. In this chapter, the patriarchal figure will provide the foundation for discussion.

K. A. Appiah's theory of race as a societal construct will help springboard the discussion of Race studies as yet another decisive move in the direction of the outer world's impinging on the individual. Here the effect of society on the individual commands center stage. In this chapter, the issue of the Bundrens' whiteness will be foregrounded. The fourth theorist, Marx, considers primarily the outer world, and how it shapes and positions the individual in society. Here again, society and its concerns are foregrounded, this time through the lens of Ideology. An important factor in the dissertation is the discourse between the theories as each theory sounds a note of meaning that builds toward a unified chord of truth. I hope to show that life in *As I Lay Dying* is a multifaceted experience with many influences.

In order to fully understand any society, it must be viewed in a multifaceted way. This is an idea that Faulkner himself posits. In the novel, several characters may replay the same scene, and the reader, by listening to the evidence to be found within the multiple retellings, can discern the various truths for herself. Similarly, all of these multiple visions, Freud's, Lacan's,

Appiah's and Marx's, are necessary for gaining a rich understanding of what William Faulkner accomplished when he penned *As I Lay Dying*.

Existing Scholarship

Currently, there are a multitude of journal articles that look at *As I Lay Dying*. However, as Andre Bleikasten points out, any journal article, by necessity, must be limited in its exploration of any given subject. It is also easy to find references to *As I Lay Dying* in many articles and books of criticism that analyze Faulkner's other works. In each of these cases, *As I Lay Dying* is usually an after thought, sometimes to highlight the primary text, for example, *The Sound and the Fury*. These few sentences and scant paragraphs that tangentially glance at *As I Lay Dying* hardly plumb the depths of the novel and often leave the reader wanting something more thorough.

There is one casebook, entitled *William Faulkner's As I Lay Dying*, edited by Dianne Cox and published in 1985. The articles in this text consider topics such as narrative format, the chronology of the action, parallels to the *Waste Land* and the function of the non-family member narratives in the novel.

There are also three full-length studies: Bleikasten's *Faulkner's As I Lay Dying*, published in 1973, Dixie Turner's 1981 exploration titled *A Jungian Psychoanalytical Interpretation of William Faulkner's As I Lay Dying* and Warwick Wadlington's *As I Lay Dying: Stories Out of Stories* published in 1992. Each

does an admirable job of examining the novel from its own viewpoint, although the first two texts are dated. Bleikasten's text, although thorough in the foundation that it sets, is almost a cursory look at the novel. There are new vantage points to explore. Considering the extensive amount of critical coverage Faulkner's other novels receive, it is clear there is still a dearth of critical exploration of *As I Lay Dying*.

Turner's text is a very well rounded Jungian look at the novel. She considers each family member and assigns him or her an archetypal role. She goes on to address symbolism as well as consider a few non-family characters in the novel. She diagrams "Symbols of Wholeness" and "Jungian Quaternity Postulates." Her work is very detailed and tangentially interesting, but Jungian theory has fallen out of favor since 1981. Her work no longer feels fresh or relevant.

Wadlington begins his text by considering *As I Lay Dying* in its cultural context, which is that of the United States at the beginning of the Depression. The mindset of the entire country was affected by the "Crash of 29." Faulkner began writing *As I Lay Dying* the day after. Wadlington juxtaposes the concepts of the "individualism" of the Twenties and the "community cooperation" of the Thirties and in doing so, highlights the passing of an era. The boisterous 20s fade into the bleak 30s and Faulkner, who is writing in 1929 and publishing in 1930, is there to cap off the old decade with the grim yet comic *As I Lay Dying*.

Wadlington's text goes on to consider the impact of *As I Lay Dying* and its critical reception.

Theoretical Concerns

Faulkner's ancestry is one of the working aristocracy "in decline"; therefore, he is positioned as the once-monied individual who can claim an illustrious past, but who also understands the underbelly of struggle and deprivation. The elegance connected with the antebellum period of the South is stripped away. The gentility associated with that time slips to reveal a society that is rigidly ordered; the cracked facade can no longer hide the shabby reality concerning the condition of Southern culture. Faulkner's South is one where patriarchy and cultural hierarchy work to negate and/or destroy the social Other. Faulkner examines the inner workings of these structures in his writing, quietly holding them up for the reader to draw conclusions and make judgments about this society. The Bundrens, who are stuck at the bottom of the socioeconomic power structure for numerous reasons, encapsulate various paradigms of the Other, providing ample fodder for the various types of analytical discussions the selected theories can offer.

With each theory, the Other takes on a different connotation. For example, in Marxism the Other represents those at the bottom of the labor hierarchy, while the Racial other is created by the townspeople who impose this status on the Bundren family in the absence of African Americans. In Lacanian

theory, the Other is language itself. Below are the layouts for each chapter and each contains a synopsis of how each theory will explore the slow destruction of this hapless agrarian family. The conclusion will examine where these notions overlap and dialog with each other. In the end everything should address the various inherent problems associated with attempts by the theories or even society to dominate and/or control while highlighting the text and the brilliance of Faulkner's simplicity.

Chapter Overviews

Every theoretic chapter will begin by discussing the context of the theory, thereby establishing a viewpoint for the literary discussion to follow. Each theoretic viewpoint will follow the teachings or positions provided by several theorists. Along with this theoretic context, a historic and/or cultural component will be introduced when such a discourse is pertinent to the theory being discussed. The chapters' contexts are highlighted below.

“One lick less:” Altered Aspects of the Oedipal Complex

Chapter one will be a Freudian interpretation of the novel, which hinges on Addie's effect on the family. With Addie, Faulkner creates a character who tries “to penetrate the surrounding gloom, to communicate with reality not for the sake of communication but in order to know” (Jehlen 43) making her an excellent vessel for Freudian study. Freud's theories have long been used to explore the dynamic of family relationships and the consequences of those relationships on

the individual. Faulkner's writings and Freud's theories make an exceptional coupling since both are laden with familial conflicts. The pairing is such a natural fit that there has been much debate over whether or not Faulkner read and was influenced by Freud. Blotner explains that Faulkner "insist[ed] that he had not read Freud, though his writings referred to him and showed that at the very least, [Faulkner] had heard a lot of talk about Freudian psychology" (147). So despite his assertion that he is ignorant of Freud's writing, Faulkner is remarkably skilled at writing a "psychological novel." Hoffman explains, "The interior monologue is a natural stylistic companion of the psychological novel. It is . . . based on the assumption that personality is not static and that motivation may be explored in the psychic life of a character" (127). Because Faulkner is obsessed with delving into the motives of his characters, this narrative format is an excellent vehicle for his explorations.

Freud's theories have attracted many detractors over the decades since he first published.¹ His work comes under a variety of attacks, ranging from claims of fraud to suggestions that Freud's drug use and/or his own predilections make him unfit to monitor the inner workings of others. Terry Eagleton is one of the critics who suggests a possible validation for still considering Freud's work as viable. He argues "there is one simple and evident connection between psychoanalysis and literature which is worth touching on Rightly or wrongly, Freudian theory regards the fundamental motivation of all human activity as the avoidance of pain and the gaining of pleasure The reason the vast majority

of people read poems, novels and plays is because they find them pleasurable” (166). Eagleton further defends psychoanalysis by noting that examining where individuals find pleasure or displeasure is just another attempt to unlock the motivations, depths and complexities of humanity.

Despite problems with his research, no one can argue that Freud and Freudianism have not had a tremendous effect on cultures, artists and thinkers across the globe. “Writers who were aware of modern psychology frequently altered their conception of personal dynamics” (Hoffman 127). So character construction is altered and, in turn, the way writers think about novels and the use of novels is altered. And the rest is history. Freud’s notions pervade the twentieth century, therefore, his theories, although questioned, cannot be ignored.

In his text, *Doubling and Incest/ Repetition and Revenge: A Speculative Reading of Faulkner*, John Irwin uses Freudian-based psychoanalytical theory to explicate *The Sound and the Fury*, *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Knight’s Gambit*. Among other things he considers the Oedipal triangles and the Doubling present in Faulkner’s work. I hope to explore the workings of the Oedipal triangles in *As I Lay Dying* as well. The Oedipal tension between Darl and Jewel is one of the central themes at the center of the novel. This triangle is unique in that it eliminates Anse as a member since the struggle for the love of the mother is limited to the two sons. This construct of son-mother-son instead of father-

mother-son is a dark under current, which swirls through the action of the text and culminates with the institutional commitment of one of the main characters.

“Without the words I said it”: Anse, Clairvoyance and the Law of the Father.

In the next chapter the focus moves from the mother to the father. This chapter will use Lacan’s “radically new theory of subjectivity” (Fink *TLS* xi) to explicate the text while dissecting the impact Anse has on the family. Doreen Fowler explains that “before Lacan, psychoanalysis concentrated on the mother-child relation. Lacan’s revolution was to rewrite psychoanalysis so as to emphasize the role of the symbolic, which is identified with paternal law” (*R of the R* 8). The Lacanian chapter will center on Anse and his effect on the family. With its emphasis on the “word” as one of the primary lynchpins in the construction of identity, Lacan’s theory seems an appropriate whetstone for uncovering another layer of hidden meanings in *As I Lay Dying* that suggests that several members of the family are telepathic. The importance of language and how it helps the individual to function in society make the juxtaposition of Lacan and clairvoyance and telepathy an interesting grouping.

The idea of clairvoyance and telepathy existing in the text may be seen as controversial. Many critics have attempted to address the issue without committing themselves to the idea of the supernatural. But it is clearly an important element in the novel. Faulkner actually doubles up on telepathic

evidence in two of Darl's chapters near the middle of the book, the first one being the more important of the two. They are nearly back to back with only three and a half pages from Tull sandwiched in between them.

It is almost as if Faulkner cannot help finally making obvious what he has been hinting at throughout the first half of the novel. Although Addie's one chapter is often referred to as the center of the novel, Darl's section that begins on page 128 spans the actual half way point of the 261 page text. And it is in this section that Faulkner uses the phrase "telepathic agreement" to describe the taciturn acceptance the family has of Jewel disappearing night after night. This is an odd concept to spring into the mind of the son of a backwoods cotton farmer.

Several critics have used Lacan to study Faulkner's work. Doreen Fowler takes a Lacanian look at several of Faulkner's novels, including *As I Lay Dying*, in her text, *The Return of the Repressed*. Her chapter on *As I Lay Dying* seems to be a good beginning, but I think there is room for further exploration. Anse's inability to function, his "dangling" arms, his lack of teeth, which leads to his inability to eat, his fear of sweating and most importantly, his inability to speak, all suggest that he is an inadequate father who cannot conceal his lack and subsequently, cannot usher his children into the Law of the Father and is therefore the seat of the family's downfall.

Feminist theory considers the means by which patriarchal systems work to oppress women. Unlike Freud, Lacan's theories suggest that women can have

power, and many feminists have embraced Lacan using his suppositions to examine Faulkner's work. Therefore the Lacan section presents a good opportunity to glance at some feminist issues. Because there already is an impressive and thorough body of feminist critiques on Faulkner, I will not provide feminism a chapter of its own. Instead, I will provide some feminist observation regarding Addie and Dewey Dell. Using the work of Elaine Showalter, Nancy Chodorow and others, I will examine the fate of the women in the novel, especially Addie.

The feminist view holds that the inherent nature of patriarchy is to silence the voice of the woman, making her either the object of "the gaze" or a beast of burden, which should include childbirth. Addie is a quintessential beast of burden, yet still the driving force of the family. Saddled with the ineffectual Anse, Addie is the one who gets things done. For example, Addie supervises the construction of her coffin from her deathbed while Anse stumbles about "mumbling his mouth" as his wife dies. Addie is a strong and determined woman, yet she is still silenced. Addie should be at the center of the action as her life is being ripped from her grasp, but she isn't.

With few exceptions, Addie is used by her family to slake their own needs and desires. Addie's displeasure, horror even, with the state of her married life serves as an excuse for the action of the novel and offers a wicked look at the silent aspect of rural southern women. One theme that Faulkner repeats through

the characterization of most of the women is that of the unvoiced despair. Addie, Dewey Dell and Cora each suffer in silence and each is abused by the culture that holds her captive allowing for a thorough use of feminist theory.

In the Absence of Negroes: The Racialization of the Bundrens

Chapter three will look at *As I Lay Dying* through the lens of race and specifically address the ways which the townsfolk racialize the Bundren family. Jehlen suggests that *As I Lay Dying* was written during “an acute phase in Faulkner’s intensely uncertain attitude toward the South” (42). This novel is one of the few of Faulkner’s best-known works that does not thoroughly examine the issue of race. There is only one encounter with African Americans in the novel, and it is very brief. Nevertheless, the novel presents an admirable opportunity to investigate the notion of “Whiteness.” Thadious Davis believes that “*As I Lay Dying*, *The Hamlet*, *The Town* and *The Mansion* [are] the most racialized of Faulkner’s work – those with no visible black presence at all” (254).

In the novel, the Bundren family is assumed to be less than white because of their behavior. Faulkner creates a situation where “Whiteness” is stripped away from his characters leaving them vulnerable to the attacks and critiques of the towns people. In America, and especially in the South, “White identity conferred tangible and economically valuable benefits, and it was jealously guarded as a valued possession, allowed only to those who met a strict standard

of proof” (Harris 280). The Bundrens continually prove that they fall outside of the sphere of acceptability for “Whiteness.”

In the past few years Whiteness Studies has become an important part of the canon of literary theory. It might seem that the critical study of whiteness would merely serve to foreground a culture that already holds center stage in every conceivable way. Instead, this ground breaking investigation has served as a new “space for discovery, intellectual adventure and close exploration” (Morrison 3) which allows other races and cultures to assume central positions. This new literary point of view focuses on the idea of what it is to be white and how cultural frameworks restrict whites almost as much as they restrict blacks. In *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, David Roediger examines Whiteness through a Marxist lens. His work “argues that whiteness was a way in which white workers responded to a fear of dependency on wage labor and to the necessities of capitalist work discipline” (13).

There are many outstanding race theoristsⁱⁱ, but this chapter will springboard off of the works of Kwame Appiah who suggests that Race is a societal construct that has no firm base in biology. He states:

Apart from the visible morphological characteristics of skin, hair, and bone, by which we are inclined to assign people to the broadest racial categories – black, white, yellow – there are few genetic characteristics to be found in the population of

England that are not found in similar proportions in Zaire or in China, and few too (though more) that are found in Zaire but not in similar proportions in China or in England. All this, I repeat, is part of the consensus. A more familiar part of the consensus is that the differences between peoples in language, moral affections, aesthetic attitudes, or political ideology – those differences that most deeply affect us in our dealings with each other – are not to any significant degree biologically determined.” (*IMFH* 35)

Appiah maintains that those factors that society finds most important are not the result of nature. He insists that individuals are racialized at the whims of those in power to not only observe but also pass judgment.

Julia Leyda adds another dimension to Appiah’s argument. In her article “Reading White Trash: Class, Race and Mobility in Faulkner and Le Sueur, she chronicles the ways which the townsfolk, or acceptable White Society, repeatedly compare the family to absent Blacks in the most negative of terms. The Bundrens, in all of their shabbiness and poverty, seem destined to have to prove their whiteness. By the end of the novel, society has judged and punished this tiny clan and stripped from them what little assets they may have possessed. In their clumsy backwardness, the Bundrens embody the “racialized” Other, which allows Middle Class Whites to think better of themselves, even when African Americans are not available to be scapegoated.

“Why ain’t I a town boy Pa?”: Ideology in *As I Lay Dying*

Marxist criticism will be the foundation for the fourth chapter. The term “Marxism” has fallen out of favor although many of his theories and ideas are still seen as relevant. “Perhaps ‘ideology’ was most powerfully developed in Marxism because Marxism always sought to be not just narrowly ‘political’ a more comprehensive kind of theory that could understand the important relations among the political, economic and cultural elements in specific societies” (Kavanagh 307). The effect of society’s concerns with class and how it shapes this isolated family will be the driving force for this section. This chapter will use Marx to examine the way society’s insistence on false consciousness shapes the outlook and destiny of this cotton farming family.

This chapter will trace three ideological concerns present in the novel. They are patriarchy, religion and alienation. Marx considers each of these factors a burden that is imposed onto the individual. Patriarchy assigns power and control to certain individuals. For the Bundrens, Anse acts as a corrupt patriarch who can be linked to most of the tragedies found in the novel.

Marx considers religion a tool used by those in power to oppress the masses. Religion is a prominent fixture in southern culture and its controlling influence echoes through the novel. Although it is mentioned, the actual structure of the church does not appear in the novel. There is never a scene where one of the characters attends church. Whitfield, the minister, only has one

monologue. Yet church and the minister both have a lasting impact on the people in the book. By juxtaposing Addie and Cora, it will be possible to examine the effects not only on these two women, but also on their respective families as well.

Finally, Marx suggests that alienation a result of culture created by society's focus on greed. In a culture where production and consumption are the most important factors, the common individual is separated from self as well as others. Faulkner found something a little unnatural about the way Mississippi was changing. His nostalgia for times gone by permeates the character of Darl, who is made to suffer for his inability to accept his assigned place in his society. He becomes a victim of alienation; therefore, society casts him out.

Succinctly, the purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the multiple discourses at work in the novel and map out how each of the critical theories, and the ideas they address, function in terms of the text. These multiple discourses are mirrored by Faulkner's use of 51 monologues. Faulkner presents this novel through multiple monologues "because there is something he wants to see clearly but can't" (Jehlen 42). This study will move from the realm of the personal concerns of the individual to the societal concerns of the world.

CHAPTER TWO

“ONE LICK LESS”: ALTERED OEDIPAL ASPECTS

It seems appropriate that the first section of *As I Lay Dying* is narrated by Darl and also that the first word of the novel is “Jewel.” In this tale of a matriarch’s funereal journey, the primary action of the text actually centers on Darl’s Oedipal conflict with his brother Jewel. Despite his repeated claims of ignorance of Freud’s writings, William Faulkner penned a classic Oedipal tale when he wrote *As I Lay Dying*. From the first word of the novel, Faulkner weaves a Freudian tale of anguish and parental rejection. He taps into the primary angst of the 20th Century, familial dysfunction, as he constructs the Bundrens, a family barely able to conceal the underlying turmoil that sets sibling against sibling. Oedipal chaos is plentiful as the Bundren children struggle under parental neglect, which leaves its mark on most of them. Many critics have posited the idea that various family members suffer from varying degrees of mental dysfunction. In short, *As I Lay Dying* is a Freudian playground waiting for critics to explore and discover the numerous hidden gems.

The Oedipus complex is one of the investigative instruments from classic Freudian psychoanalysis which is often used in literary criticism and “signifies the combination of genital love for the parent of the opposite sex and jealous death

wishes for the parent of the same sex” (Fenichel 97). Norman Holland provides an extended definition of the Oedipus complex in *The Dynamics of Literary Response*.

The Oedipus complex itself is an outgrowth of earlier phases [oral, anal and phallic]. Even in early infancy, the child has longed for the exclusive possession of his mother; he wishes that there were no competing demands on her time, that the father and any siblings were out of the way, that he had to keep no corner in the thing he loved for others' uses. By the phallic phase, however, these oedipal wishes are complicated by his own greater powers of thought and deed and by his confused awareness of what sex is like between adults.” (47)

Freud contends that this complex creates a necessary familial struggle between the parent and the same-sex child for the attention of the parent of the opposite sex.

It is the conclusion of a child's natural progression from the oral stage through the phallic, at which point the child should become a successful part of society. “The way out of [the Oedipus Complex] is provided by the fears of the castration complex. The father is experienced as the source of all authority, all direction of desire, and thus as capable of castrating the boy child” (Wright 13). When the Oedipal tension is unresolved, any number of neuroses or even psychosis may be created, which can lead to an individual with stunted maturity and social dysfunction.

Relevant Criticism

Many critics have pointed out just such unresolved problematic family dynamics inside the Bundren clan. In *The Novels of William Faulkner*, Olga Vickery examines the negative repercussions of Addie's forced motherhood, not only for Addie herself, but also for each of her children. In his pivotal work *Doubling and Incest / Repetition and Revenge*, John T. Irwin presents the idea of configurations of Oedipal conflicts that overshadow the role of a parent in favor of a sibling, an idea which was introduced to him by Otto Rank's *Das Inzest-Motiv in Dichtung und Sage*. Irwin points out that the issue of incestuous feelings is one of Faulkner's major themes, and as he scrutinizes *The Sound and The Fury*, Irwin configures "the triangle of sister/brother avenger/brother seducer [as] a substitute for the Oedipal triangle of mother/father/son" (43). Although he only glances tangentially at *As I Lay Dying*, Irwin's interpretation of substitute forms of the Oedipal triangle in *The Sound and The Fury* suggests a new way of examining *As I Lay Dying*.

Faulkner creates a mother/son/son dynamic between Addie/Jewel/Darl that is too complex to be mere sibling rivalry. Darl is the only one to realize that Jewel is Addie's illegitimate child, conceived without Anse. He is aware of the extent of Addie's favoritism towards Jewel. So Darl knows that Jewel is Addie's "partner" not Anse. He understands that Jewel is the one whom he must

displace because the relationship between Addie and Jewel goes beyond that of mother and son. Therefore, in Darl's mind, Anse is not a threat.

Robert J. Kloss extends the notion of incest in *As I Lay Dying* by pointing out that the older male offspring do not have women/partners of their own in their lives, and that at some point in the journey each "lies on the coffin" (436). Kloss focuses on these symbolic attempts at intercourse with the mother, and other moments of "incestuous interest," as a means of suggesting that Addie is the only woman who captures her sons' attention and that she too may have harbored such feelings. The insights afforded by Irwin and Kloss make it possible to reconfigure the Oedipal conflict again in order to take a different look at the relationships Faulkner presents in *As I Lay Dying*.

At the heart of *As I Lay Dying* is such a restructured Oedipal conflict which functions as a major part of the underlying drive and angst in the action of the novel. The primary Oedipal tension in this novel is not between father/mother/son, as traditional Freudian tenets dictate. Hoffman points out that *As I Lay Dying* "is essentially a novel [about] the tensions between Darl and Jewel, the one unwanted and the other an illegitimate son" (63). So this atypical Oedipal triad consists of mother/rejected son/treasured son. One son is marked as the destroyer of Addie and her corpse; the other is predestined to be her savior. The cross purposes of the two brothers inform almost every action in the novel. "The tension in Darl and Jewel's relationship . . . is one of special

significance. This relationship . . . embodies the unresolvable ambiguities at the heart of the journey” (Hayes 50).

Andre Bleikasten points out the hopelessness of this situation, stating that “Addie has never let [her sons] go, has never allowed them to be on their own, they have never broken out of their preoedipal limbo” (*IOM* 174). Bleikasten is one of few critics who sees the Bundren sons as trapped in a “preoedipal” stage. On this one issue Bleikasten seems off point. Several things seem to indicate that they have moved beyond the infantile stages, specifically their interest in sex. Darl relates an instance of masturbation:

Then I would wait until they all went to sleep so I could lie with myself without touching myself, feeling the cool silence blowing upon my parts and wondering if Cash was yonder in the darkness doing it too, had been doing it perhaps for at least two years before I could have wanted to or could have. (11)

In this long sentence Faulkner gives clear indication that Addie’s “man growed” sons have gotten at least as far as the phallic stage, manifesting desires of their own. Both Darl and Cash show tacit approval when they assume that Jewel has found a girl who keeps him from sleeping at night. Cash shows acceptance of castration fears when he fears that the “girl” is actually a married woman. This, coupled with the various tensions between Addie’s sons, suggests that the boys have entered the Oedipal stage.

Otto Fenichel also presents the circumstance under which a parent can be replaced by a sibling in the Oedipal battle.

Siblings may also serve as objects for the transference of love, especially older ones or those who are only a little younger, so that the world has never been experienced without them. If there are several older brothers and sisters, we may see “doubles of the Oedipus Complex”; what is experienced with the parents is experienced with the older brother and sister a second time. (93)

Although he is very powerful in many ways, it is conceivable that Anse can be removed from this conflict. ¹ Bonnie Woodbery outlines how this unusual circumstance occurs in the novel. She states that “in *As I Lay Dying*, there is within the triadic relationship a failure on the part of the father, Anse, to establish a ‘unitary bent’ between the subject, Darl, and the object, Addie” (36) Using Kristeva’s notion that “the advent of language and a stable enunciative position” allows the child to construct a “unified” view of itself and its body, Woodbery argues that “a weak paternal metaphor prevents the subject from finding its place in the triadic structure” (35). In other words, Anse does not create the threat of castration in Darl’s mind.

According to Freud, this threat is necessary for the child to progress through the “oedipal strivings” that begin to arise as the child moves from the oral to the phallic stage of development. Elizabeth Wright adds another level of understanding regarding the Freudian process of personality development: “the

boy . . . abandons his love for the mother and moves towards identification with the father, with the understanding that he too can in time occupy such a position of power” (13). This abandonment is spurred by the castration complex, which helps to prompt the child on to the next stage of emotional development. There are consequences when this process is interrupted. Fenichel explains that “an overcoming of these strivings, to be replaced by adult sexuality, is the prerequisite for normality, whereas the unconscious clinging to the Oedipus tendencies characterizes the neurotic mind” (91).

The Problem of Anse

There are numerous reasons for Anse’s inability to act the role of “father” for the Bundren children. In many ways Anse forfeits his position of patriarch. Kevin Rainey explains: “The very authority of the patriarch stems from his control over the woman, couched in terms of devotion to her, and from a sense of responsibility to his dependents that justifies their obedience” (93). Anse’s lack of devotion to Addie is blatant in his quick recovery after her death, when his primary thought centers on his “get[ting] them teeth” (52). His lack of control is clear in Addie’s affair and Dewey Dell’s pregnancy. And his tendency to ignore all his familial responsibilities in favor of looking out for his own needs brands him as not only irresponsible in the extreme, but also lacking patriarchal traits.²

So the father Darl describes as “dangle-armed, humped, motionless” (51) cannot provide the fear of castration that should usher Darl through the Oedipal

complex, which therefore leaves Darl frustrated, seeking his identity by tormenting his half brother Jewel, Addie's favorite child, whom Darl does perceive as a threat, an obstacle between himself and Addie's affections. Also, Anse's failure to maintain the position of patriarch is altered in the case of Jewel who is not Anse's son; therefore, the position of patriarch in Jewel's life does not rightfully belong to Anse, but to Whitfield. John Lowe posits that "Anse's nonentity status suggests not only the fated quality of his children's destinies, but also clears the field for the drama of fraternal struggle" (607).

So it is important to understand that the tension between the brothers is too involved, too complex to be classified as mere sibling rivalry. In that construct, there is always the knowledge that the same-sex parent is the major competition for the desired parent. This situation does not exist between Anse and his sons, or with Jewel. T. H. Adamowski's remark "that Oedipal themes are played out at the level of the sibling relationship" (223) is perceptive. In Anse's absence, there are at least two distinct Oedipal constructions at work between the siblings. Of course the major Oedipal tension is between Addie, Jewel and Darl. The second Oedipal triangle can be found in Jewel's lone monologue which runs the length of about one page. During his short emotional outburst of feelings concerning his mother and her impending death, Jewel's primary focus is on Cash's role in Addie's life, not Anse's. Anse rates one half of a single sentence during Jewel's ruminations. Jewel all but ignores Anse.

Darl, on the other hand, is outright dismissive of his father. During his monologues, Darl repeatedly hones in on Anse's shortcomings, his "hump," his "dangling arms," his "mumbling mouth," his "splayed feet." When Darl reports Anse's claim that sweating will lead to his demise, Darl rudely scoffs, "I suppose he believes it" (17). These comments and observations suggest that Darl sees Anse as fumbling, incompetent and not much of a father figure, as someone he cannot take seriously. "Indeed, Anse's behavior seems a near perfect caricature of paternalism – claiming all the authority with absolutely none of the responsibility" (Rainey 94).

Darl's overwhelming obsession is Jewel, not Anse. It is Jewel, not Anse who is perceived as a rival for Addie's affection. Despite the unusual arrangement of participants, this Oedipal situation is raw and emotional and it is the primary force at the heart of *As I Lay Dying*; the struggle for the love and affection of the woman is just as fervid as those that do include the proper father figure. Addie, Darl and Jewel are each locked in a struggle for recognition and/or acceptance. This altered dynamic affects the entire family; Addie, Anse and each of the children are stained by the conflict.

Addie and Oral Themes

As mother of this dysfunctional family of cotton farmers, Addie is situated as the desired parent of the Oedipal triangle. "As rim and hub (center and unifier), [she] is surrounded by her progeny and Anse, who in his ineffectiveness,

is really more like one of her children” (Lowe 611). The familial conflict originates in Addie’s childhood. Addie’s father poisons any optimistic leanings she may have had when he tells Addie that life is little more than a waiting room for death, for “get[ting] ready to stay dead a long time” (169). In order to survive this daunting news, Addie splits her life and being into two. Andre Bleikasten describes this resulting conflict within Addie as “acquiescence and refusal, surrender and withdrawal” (*IOM* 80). She wants to experience the vibrancy of life, but her father’s words deny the existence of anything vibrant about living. Addie becomes a woman who yearns for life, and yet denies it.

In true Freudian fashion, Addie’s relationship with her own father goes on to affect her entire outlook on life. By introducing her to the idea of the pointlessness of life, Addie’s father sets her on a nihilistic path that even marriage and motherhood cannot alter. Adamowski reveals the essence of Addie’s heart.

The novel speaks clearly enough of the nurturing and the hatred of children, of children so close to Addie as to overcome the barrier of otherness, and of children cast outside the circle of Addie’s wordless love. Cash is firmly within that circle and Jewel . . . exists in that nutritive circuit established between him and his mother by the calm flow of milk. As for the other children, they are Others.” (216)

Regardless of the fact that Addie’s marriage to Anse is a tentative attempt at “living” her life in spite of her father’s words, she finds pregnancy so unbearable

that the violation which accompanies her pregnancy with Darl begins an internal upheaval in Addie that translates to all of her relationships, especially with her children.

Adamowski's assertions about Addie's "wordless love" and the "circle" of her love are on point, succinctly capturing the complexities involved in Addie's terse displays of affection. These two factors are manifested in Addie's hatred of words and in her use of breast milk. Both of these major components of Addie's life are concerns fixated on the mouth. This distrust of oral elements manifests itself in how Addie judges others, as well as in the ways that she gives or withholds affection, all of which revolve around the concepts of words and milk.

Words

Addie's distrust of words strikes most readers as odd; after all, she is a teacher by profession. Her distrust appears to stem from a sense of loss. It is apparent that Addie's nihilism rises out of her awareness of the disjointed nature of words. She "demands that words must first correspond to facts" (Allen 189). The seat of this problem may spring from her mother rather than her father. Karen R. Sass suggests that Addie's mother dies very early in her life, which would account for Addie's failure to mention her mother even once during her monologue. It may also explain the blackness of her father's view of life. Ineke Bockting points out this reoccurring theme in Faulkner's works, stating "Addie is another of Faulkner's victims of an absent mother and an embittered father"

(101). The absence of a mother manifests itself in Addie's life as isolation from mankind, which Sass asserts is directly related to Addie's dislike of words. Sass argues that the void left by Addie's mother leaves Addie unable to comprehend "attachment to or warmth toward another person. . . . She naturally discredits words because the feelings they should correspond to are absent" (11).

Faulkner underscores Addie's right to dislike words in his positioning of her one monologue. Her words are not cradled by the loving thoughts of her family members, but sandwiched between those of two outsiders who, rather than focus on her waning life, are oblivious to Addie's suffering in the face of their own selfish concerns. Cora and Whitfield are the two characters in the novel most captivated by the sound of their own voices, which makes them odd choices to bookend the taciturn Addie's monologue.

Joseph Blotner describes Faulkner's audacious choice. "Flanked by the monologues of the garrulous, obtuse and self-righteous Cora Tull and the sanctimonious Reverend Whitfield, Addie's words convey her deep sense of alienation and bitterness" ("How *AILD* Came to Be" 118). Faulkner portrays Cora as a mental dullard and as an unreliable narrator so mired in her own empty sermonizing that she only rarely understands what is actually going on around her. Cora's twisting of scripture is topped only by the minister, Whitfield. William Rodney Allen goes so far as to suggest that Whitfield's use of the bible in his one monologue illustrates "the final bankruptcy of language" (192). Allen shreds

Whitfield's grandiosity: "Though his words proclaim his devotion to morality and truth, his deeds, his impregnation of Addie and his failure to admit it, prove him a coward who perverts the proper use of Language for his own self-serving ends" (192).

Addie's problems with words seem to surface after she marries Anse. Rather than lifting Addie out of the emotional mire caused by her father's words, Anse seems to propel Addie further into hopelessness.³ In Freudian terms, Anse is a person suffering from "oral dependence." This type of personality shows a "marked reliance on other people resulting from fixation at the oral stage" ("oral dependence" 515). This succinct definition captures the intrinsic nature of Anse's character. It is this trait of neediness, this tendency to rely on anyone and everyone else to take care of his responsibilities that several narrators focus on when they speak of Anse.

One way this type of personality is able to "relieve stress and depression [is] by eating, drinking, talking or smoking" ("oral character" 515). This makes Anse's lack of teeth very telling since eating is one of his chosen methods of working out his anxieties. He complains bitterly that he is unable to indulge in the food that God gave Man to enjoy. This inability to eat affects Anse's image of himself as a man and reinforces the image of him as a nursing infant. One of the primary reasons that Anse is willing to endure the journey to bury Addie is

because it will take him into Jefferson where he will be able to purchase a set of false teeth.

Talking, Anse's other apparent method of stress relief, is also affected by his empty mouth. Appropriately, his words are hollow and stumbling. Darl mentions repeatedly that Anse "mumbles his mouth," highlighting Anse's failure to express what he wants or needs in a clear, strong masculine manner. Anse's ability to communicate, one of the few avenues left for him to interact with society, is severely hampered. Anse's circumstances situate him as an infant, a helpless child. Toothless, unable to eat adult food, barely able to speak because of his exposed gums, incapable of working for fear of sweating, Anse does not present a patriarchal image for the Bundren children.

There is another element about Anse's lack of teeth which holds additional Freudian significance. "In the symbolism of dreams losing one's teeth often represents the fear of castration" (Bleikasten *FAILED* 156). This is further indication of Anse's status in the Bundren family dynamic. He cannot release his oral frustrations. And because of his missing teeth, Anse's role of father is doubly diminished. He is vulnerable, unable to fend for himself or protect himself from a strong wife who may decide to castrate him. Also, he is not the primary provider for his family. Significantly, Addie pulls her own weight by making money by baking and selling cakes to town women. Also, Cash's work as a carpenter must be considered.

Addie is deeply affected by Anse and his orality. For Addie, words are the sticky webs that dangle out of the mouths of spiders. Words are traps that force her to submit to the definition placed on her by others, notably Anse who wants her to be “mother” and Cora who wants her to be “sinner.” With Cash’s birth, she learns “that words are no good; that words don’t ever fit even what they are trying to say at” (171). Up to this point in Addie’s monologue, her diction is learned and eloquent; her thoughts are those worthy of a teacher, an educated woman. But at the point of disillusionment, she slips into vernacular language ending her sentence with a preposition and removing the apostrophe from the word “don’t.” Immediately after her assertion about the uselessness of words, Addie’s diction returns to its precise manner. It is almost as if Addie chooses to disrespect language in an effort to separate herself from this medium that torments her.

Milk

Addie is a hard woman who has difficulty expressing affection through conventional means, yet she does still have these emotions. One way she can manage to channel her love to her family is through her milk. Addie’s discovery of this avenue of loving begins with her first child. While Cash is still an infant, Addie lies in bed considering Anse’s use of the word “love,” a word which does not coincide with his actions, specifically with ignoring her wish to stop having children. And as she ponders on the senselessness of the word, the exchangeability of one word for another, she reports, “I would think that even

while I lay with him in the dark and Cash asleep in the cradle within the swing of my hand. I would think that if he [Anse] were to wake and cry I would suckle him, too. Anse or love: it didn't matter" (172). Here is the point when Addie begins to displace Anse as "husband" in favor of Anse as "child."

At this point, Addie still feels love for Anse, and she expresses it through her desire to nurse him. Bleikasten explains that "Like the nurturing earth, she then became the Universal Mother, and even Anse . . . was an infant to be suckled" (IOM 172). For the first time since her father's pronouncement, Addie finds a place for herself in the world and a way to acceptably express her scant love. "Within the swing of [her] hand," (172) in that small nook where an infant lies at the breast, in that interstice between her bed and the cradle, is the span of Addie's love. She reveals her acceptance of Cash's birth when she explains that, "My aloneness had been violated and then made whole again by the violation" (172). Using Kristeva's notion of the "semiotic," or the "preverbal" connection experienced between mother and infant, Bockting explains that the violation caused by Cash can be accepted because it eventually provides "the preverbal closeness to another human being that" (101) allows Addie to open her heart. With her first child, Addie allows herself to be swept into the "preverbal motherly discourse" (Bockting 101) and to bond with Cash.

But Addie does not want to experience this violation again; she cannot bear the idea of having more children. When Anse refuses to consider Addie's

request to stop “chapping,” she withdraws her slight affection, pushing her husband from her, dismissing him from her emotional existence. Anse is expelled from this small arc of love once Addie becomes pregnant with Darl. She no longer feels compelled to offer her breast to Anse since he is now dead to her even though “he did not know he was dead” (174). He becomes the void that replaces her virginity, which Faulkner illustrates by leaving a gap the length of eight letters in the text of Addie’s monologue.

Addie tacitly indicates how significant breast-feeding is to her when she reveals the fact that while she carries on a torrid affair with Whitfield, she simply refuses Anse’s advances; she links this refusal of sex with the refusal of offering her breast to “Cash and Darl after their time was up” (175). It seems probable that there was not a great span of time between Cash and Darl. “On demand” nursing is generally supposed to suppress ovulation, thereby acting as a natural birth control. Her back-to-back pregnancies would be another indication that Addie was not available to Cash whenever he needed her, whether by design or circumstance.

For Addie, offering her breast, herself, to her offspring is a vivid indication of the extent of her affections. Addie does love Cash despite his having violated her aloneness. She is able to find completion and acceptance, albeit tardy, as Cash’s mother, yet she cannot love Darl. In either case, Addie’s weaning is not a gradual nurturing process, but rather the violent expulsion of her unexpected

sons from “within the swing” of her arm as soon as she deems that they may be safely cut off from her breast.

But things change for Addie once she conceives Jewel. There is a significant age gap between Darl and Jewel, apparently because Addie refuses Anse’s overtures for an extended period of time. Addie’s caged passions seethe, not for Anse, but for escape, for the freedom equated in her obsession with the “wild geese” and the land that stretches out in the “wild darkness.” She finds relief from her volatile emotions in an emotionally violent affair with the preacher Whitfield. Jewel, the product of this affair, becomes the center of Addie’s life.

Once Jewel is born, the constant internal raging Addie has had to endure all of her life settles down. She states that as she birthed Jewel “the wild blood boiled away and the sound of it ceased. Then there was only the milk, warm and calm . . .” (176). With Jewel, Addie can once again hold a small head “within the swing of [her] hand” and express love for another human being. But there is something sexualized in this maternal act, for Addie associates refusing sex with Anse to refusing the breast to Cash and Darl.

In the same vein, her unconditional surrendering of her milk to Jewel binds him to her in ways other than strictly maternal. The imagery that Faulkner uses to describe Addie’s nursing Jewel is that of the aftermath of orgasmic completion. Her passionate emotions characterized by the “wild blood” are satiated and she finds a “slow silence” where she can finally live in contentment. In other words,

Addie substitutes, or even equates, the act of nursing with the act of sex. It calms her once the “wild blood” finally subsides. In this way, Addie places Jewel in the position that rightfully belongs to Anse.

This fact does not escape Darl’s notice and so begins the Oedipal conflict that fuels much of the action in *As I Lay Dying*. Jewel’s presence becomes a doubly damning irritation which damages Darl. Without Jewel, Darl would have been merely an odd, sulky unloved child. But Jewel’s existence hurls Addie, Darl and Jewel into an Oedipal stand off that can only “end” after Addie’s death.

Darl’s Dilemma

Darl’s side of the Oedipal triangle is determined from the moment that Addie discovers that she is pregnant with him. He is a turning point in Addie’s life. She is so distraught over the pregnancy, so violated, that she not only completely rejects Darl during fetus stage, but she also inwardly proclaims that Anse is dead to her. “Addie’s denial of Darl’s existence . . . links up with his precarious sense of self and his consequent fear of disintegration” (Bockting 142). Darl’s troubles with language prefigure the ideas of Lacan, which will be fully explored in the next chapter.

In the triangle, Darl is a master of words, but they are mostly locked inside his head, with no means to find escape or acceptance. Darl cannot forge a verbal connection with the outer world. Tull notes Darl’s lack of verbal skills while

positing that God did not design man to do a lot of thinking; “That’s ever living thing the matter with Darl; he just thinks by himself too much” (71). This indicates Darl’s life long pattern of observing life and others rather than interacting. His oedipal energy is played out in ways other than in speech.

From early on in the novel, Darl tries to claim the patriarchal position for himself. Hayes asserts that Darl is working to sever the tacit bond between Jewel and Addie before Addie’s death.

“Darl has deliberately separated Jewel from Addie at her death, isolating himself with Jewel and imposing himself as narrative intermediary between Jewel and Addie. He has in this way placed himself squarely in opposition to both Jewel’s and Addie’s wishes” (55).

During Addie’s life, Darl could not find a way to interfere between Addie and her love for Jewel, but at her death Darl finally manages to separate the two, denying them both any final connections or goodbyes that they may have wanted to share.

This act of separation begins to lay bare the depth of Darl’s contempt for not only Jewel, but Addie as well. Burning down Gillespie’s barn in an attempt to destroy Addie’s body is a turning point in Darl’s mental stability. He does not offer assistance as the flame engulfs the barn and he attempts to distract Jewel as he runs into the barn. Darl focuses his brother’s attention on the animals in the barn, trying to buy

time, hoping that the fire will consume Addie's hideous box before Jewel can get the horse, the mule and the cow out of danger. When he is unable to destroy the casket with fire, Darl "mounts" his mother's coffin and cries out his rage. Vardaman recounts, "He is out there under the apple tree with her, lying on her . . . You needn't cry' I said. 'Jewel got her out. You needn't to cry, Darl'" (225).

The image of Darl laying face down on his mother's coffin weeping is telling and disturbing. A grown man lies weeping on his mother's putrid coffin, a coffin he has just tried to destroy. He might be lamenting the relationship that was never allowed to flourish between himself and his mother. His prone position above her could indicate that he is acting out whatever unresolved Oedipal tensions he may have left. This position, which simulates copulation, is an obvious attempt to return to a womb that he feels, and rightly so, has rejected him from his birth.

Darl is not crying because of the near catastrophe, or the possibility of the coffin's destruction; he breaks down because he cannot end the horrible trek to the cemetery. This flood of tears is the first outwardly normal sign of emotion that Darl exhibits. But this particular act of physical and emotional release is far from normal; rather it is an indication of his precarious hold on himself and reality. As he watches Jewel risk life and limb to save the coffin, Darl muses over the beauty of the flames. When Jewel's shirt catches fire, Darl states that "the

crimson-edged holes . . . bloomed like flowers in his undershirt” (222), just as he later muses on how the sound of the swollen river is peaceful. Darl can only find peace when his mother’s remains are about to be destroyed.

Jewel’s Side

Jewel’s place in the triangle is constructed because Addie prefers him over her other children. “While being motherless has tragic consequences for Darl, the absence of a father and the exclusive intimacy it allowed to develop with the mother seem on the contrary to have confirmed Jewel in his being and to have given him more vital strength than any of the other Bundren children” (Bleikasten *FAILED* 92). Jewel’s role in Addie’s life is stable and unchallenged.

Jewel is the middle child and by common standards should be the child most likely to receive too little attention. But Jewel is the only child Addie considers hers, specifically because he is not Anse’s son. Addie sees Jewel as the result of glorious sin committed with Whitfield, the local preacher. Addie and Whitfield’s tryst in the woods can be read as a metaphor for Adam and Eve in Paradise. The ironic Faulknerian twist, as there are no uncomplicated depictions of paradise with Faulkner, is the desecration committed when Addie and the minister enter this particular “paradise” together. Together Addie and Whitfield debase the mores of “decent society” and between themselves form new definitions for words such as “love” and “sin” that flout the standard conventions. So, Addie revels in Jewel as much as she revels in the sin that created him. She

tells Cora, "He is my cross and he will be my salvation. He will save me from the water and from the fire" (168).

This statement illustrates two things. First, Addie acknowledges that Jewel is a "cross." This terminology suggests "both punishment and transcendence." Addie must live every day with the proof of her infidelity. But Jewel is also the vehicle through which Addie transcends the nihilistic life slated to her by her father and finds some modicum of peace. Secondly, this statement foreshadows Addie's funereal journey. Jewel becomes the person who makes certain that her coffin is delivered to its burial site in Jefferson. He is the one who drags the coffin from the burning barn. He is the one who pulls his mother's corpse from the swollen river.

The relationship between Addie and Jewel is further complicated by Jewel's illegitimacy and Darl's knowledge of Jewel's paternity. Jewel, in contrast to Darl, is all violent, raw emotion. And he is nearly mute throughout the text, which is significant because he is his mother's love child. Jewel belongs solely to Addie and she does not respect words. She sees words as a shield for sin. So it is significant that Jewel's real father, the minister, uses words as a part of his profession. He is skilled at delivering his message not only from the pulpit, but in life as well. His one monologue attests to his proficient use of words, but his words are an empty sham and in conflict with his actions. Addie seems

comforted by the falsities that come from Whitfield; she seems to understand that it could not be any other way.

Jewel's one and only narration makes it clear that he alone is focused on his mother and her burial. His one desire is to take his mother away so that he can protect her from the onlookers. The image of him and Addie on a hill, with Jewel lobbing stones at all who dare to venture up, reveals the binary construction of Jewel as son/savior as opposed to Darl as son/destroyer. They are forever locked in this battle, for neither of these brothers has an acceptable way to resolve his Oedipal conflicts.

Claiming the husband's role for himself, Jewel fumes as he envisions himself as his mother's savior. He resents the neighbors who stop by, invading Addie's privacy that she holds so dear. He snarls at Tull, "You been here often enough looking at her. You or your folks" (17). Jewel cannot bear their need to observe his mother's death. The gathering of the family and neighbors plays out like a spectacle in Jewel's mind. The ineffectiveness of Dewey Dell's fan "whispering the useless air" (48-9) underscores the inactive, passive activity of those who surround Addie, anticipating her death. This lethargic voyeurism grates on Jewel until, in an Oedipal daydream, he sees himself fighting off all onlookers.

"It would just be me and her on a high hill and me rolling the rocks down the hill at their faces, picking them up and throwing them down the hill faces and

teeth and all by God until she was quiet and not that goddamn adze going One lick less. One lick less and we could be quiet.” (15)

Jewel longs to give his mother the gifts only he would think of providing as she dies: peace, solitude and quiet – no words, only sincere emotions. Jewel’s desires echo those which Addie expresses on the first page of her monologue. She states that, “instead of going home I would go down the hill to the spring where I could be quiet . . .”(169). Not only does Jewel have an innate understanding of his mother’s unvoiced needs, he has a fierce determination to fulfill those her wishes.

Cash as Father

Finally, in order to fully understand the dynamics at work between Addie and her sons, Cash must be brought into the fray. He is also part of the Oedipal complex, not so much for Darl, but for Jewel. There is an unspoken hierarchy between these three brothers. Each boy’s reaction to Addie’s regard sets each in his position. Cash is at the top with Darl on the bottom and Jewel situated in between.⁴ Since he is secure in his mother’s love for him, Cash does not feel the need to compete with anyone other than Anse for Addie’s love. Because Darl is aware of Addie’s hatred of him and the illicit nature of her relationship with Jewel, Darl’s jealousy is directed at Jewel as his major competition. But, during

Jewel's one speech, it becomes clear that Cash is the one who holds center stage as competition for Addie's love in Jewel's mind.

Cash is the Bundrens' first child, the first to violate Addie's aloneness. Cash is the child who brings her some order and stability in the world, so he has a place in Addie's heart. He "offers her what she could not know . . . with the school children: the flowing-together, in one stream, of her blood with that of the other" (Adamowski 210-11). For a moment, Cash completes Addie – gives her a connection to humanity and she loves him for this fact. Since he is secure in his mother's love for him, he is also privy to that small circle where Addie expresses her affection. "Her active acceptance of him . . . has provided him with a stable position in the world" (Bockting 142). Addie really does love Cash: her hatred kicks in with Darl. Somehow, Jewel understands that it is Cash whom he shares his mother with, so it is Cash who holds the third position in the mother/son/son triad in Jewel's mind.

Jewel's section begins and ends with Cash working on Addie's coffin. Jewel's obsession with Cash almost rivals Darl's obsession with him. He thinks over Cash's disastrous attempts to impress and help their mother with her gardening, which ends with Cash hauling manure into the house in Addie's bread pan. This is a particularly cruel memory that Jewel dwells on, for it casts his brother in the role of incompetent idiot, despite this action being an error of youth. This seems like a self-defense mechanism because he covets his brother's skills

as a carpenter. Jewel chooses to force Cash into the role of braggart, while he quietly resents Cash's abilities as a carpenter to the point of wishing that he had been injured in the fall from the church. Jewel fumes, ". . . and that goddamn adze going One lick less. One lick less. One lick less until everybody that passes in the road will have to stop and see it and say what a fine carpenter he is" (15).

Jewel's jealousy leaps from every tortured word as he yearns to displace his brother in his mother's affections. In his mind, Cash is the symbolic father, the patriarch with whom he has to share his mother. In this manner, Jewel is very perceptive, for this construction eliminates both Anse and Darl, both of whom Jewel either never mentions or takes little notice of. "Jewel well knows [that Cash] is his only real rival for Addie's love" (Lowe 615).

More significant than Jewel's preoccupation with Cash is Cash's apparent position in the family. There are several indications that by the end of the novel Cash has firmly unseated Anse as patriarch of the family. As a child, Cash had everything he needed -- a mother who loved him and a father who could still function as a patriarch -- in order to progress successfully through the Oedipus complex. Along the way Anse has slipped more and more into passivity to the point of almost seeming inert. But Cash, the first child, was loved by his mother and, one must assume, he had a father who was still active and vital and capable of triggering the castration complex. The Anse who is present at Addie's death is

“hump backed” with bad feet and no teeth, and as the novel progresses, is not the Anse of Cash’s youth. While Anse shows the end result of years and decay, it is Cash who shows the most growth as a person.

Cash is already presented as being in control of the family from the beginning of the novel. Darl constantly juxtaposes Anse and Cash, and in doing so Darl makes a comment on the state of activeness versus passiveness. Darl narrates the scene where Addie dies. He explains that Cash interrupts his coffin construction and he takes a moment to stand and quietly look at his mother’s face in death. Meanwhile Anse stands in the background telling Cash to hurry up and finish the coffin. But, “Cash’s skill and care with things stands out against the ineptitude of the rest of his family, especially his pathetic and ludicrous father” (Lears 143). Darl repeats the phrase, “Cash is not listening” (50) to underscore Anse’s lack of power in this situation. Darl also presents a picture of true grief in the face of self serving “concern.” Cash loses his mother, and her death is a major factor in his life; Anse loses his wife, yet her death is merely an opportunity for him to undertake a “parodical reconquest of manhood, following the matriarchal reign of Addie, the ‘castrating’ wife . . .” (Bleikasten *FAILED* 156) by purchasing his new teeth.

There are other instances when Cash acts the role of patriarch. Cash shines when a crisis with Jewel sends Addie into an emotional outburst. The Bundrens stand in the field as Jewel rides up on the horse that he has purchased

by clearing the neighbor's field. Once she realizes how hard her son has pushed himself to buy something of his own, Addie stands with the family and cries long and hard until Jewel's "face [grows] cold and a little sick looking" (135). Cash is the one who intervenes. He tells Addie, "This here ground is too wet for you. You go on, now" (135). In his attempt to send Addie back to the house, Cash shows care and concern for his mother. Anse, on the other hand, is not heard from. He is too busy calculating how much work he lost when Jewel hired himself out. But, Cash always tries to attend to Addie's needs over and above his own. He does not miss a step when the rain pours down; he keeps tending to the coffin, concerned only for her comfort and "balance."

Another indication that Cash has taken the role of patriarch centers on the respect his siblings have for him. Cash and Darl have a very close relationship. Darl talks to Cash more than any other adult in the novel. Darl's descriptions of Cash are filled with images of strength and dependability. He states that "the sound of [Cash's] saw is steady, competent, unhurried" (50). These words depict the inner stability of Cash's character. One telling image occurs when that rain storm approaches while Cash works on the coffin. Darl narrates the scene:

He saws again, his elbow flashing slowly, a thin thread of fire running along the edge of the saw, lost and recovered at the top and the bottom of each stroke in unbroken elongation, so that the saw appears to be six feet long, into and out of pa's shabby and aimless silhouette. 'Give me that plank,' Cash says. 'No; the other one.' He puts the saw down and comes and picks up the plank he

wants, sweeping pa away with the long swinging gleam of the balance board" (76).

In this scene Darl minimizes his father in three ways. First, the word "pa" is not capitalized. A capital letter would have been an indication of Darl's respect. "Pa" is capitalized in other places, which makes the lack of capitalization in this segment significant. Secondly, Darl emphasizes the notion of Anse as an incompetent; his father is "shabby" and "aimless." Even the simplest task eludes him. He is incapable of retrieving the correct board for Cash. Finally, the image of Cash blotting out Anse's shadow, metaphorically erasing his father, as he picks up the board he needs points to Cash's carpentry as a mode of obliterating Anse.

An important indicant of Cash's growth toward a leadership role occurs near the end of the novel. Darl comments at least twice that Cash fumbles for words. It is the only fault that Darl equates with Cash. This inability to find the right words is a social handicap, but by the end of the novel he has acquired language. "During the last part of the journey, Cash is forced by his broken leg to abstain from deeds and make use of words" (Bockting 140). In this way, Cash becomes complete because not only can he act, he can now speak. He is now able to function at a higher level in society than anyone else in the family. This suggests his ability to prosper and survive.

He is the deciding voice concerning Darl's fate. Cash narrates Darl being dragged forcibly to the asylum in Jackson. It is clear that he is in charge of the discussion. He lays out the need for this action, explaining that it will spare them the lawsuit Gillespie could file against the family. It is clear that Cash has already laid out the plan and his family members need only agree with his decision. Anse states "I reckon there ain't nothing else to do" proving that, true to form, things happen to Anse with little active input from him. Cash is the one who calms Jewel when he wants to tie Darl up right away. It is Cash who decides that they can wait until after Addie is buried to deal with Darl's arson.

Finally, Cash is the voice at the end of the novel who envisions the family joining the 20th century. It is startling to realize how out of step with society the world of the Bundrens is. Their arrival into a modern town takes the reader by surprise. The juxtaposition of the abundance associated with the town with the spare existence of the cotton farmers clarifies the Bundrens' selfish desires as yearnings to become part of the growing middle class. A move toward a middle class lifestyle will lead to Anse's undoing since Anse is representative of Faulkner's vision of the old South while Cash represents Faulkner's view of the new South. The Bundrens' shift toward the middle class is foreshadowed on the final pages of the novel. Cash states:

And then I see the grip she was carrying was one of them graphophones. It was for a fact, all shut up as pretty as a picture, and every time a new record would come from the mail order and

us setting in the house in the winter, listening to it, I would think what a shame Darl couldn't be to enjoy it too" (216).

The new wife's portable record player fulfills Cash's personal "want." It is the item Cash's wished to buy in town, the dream that Anse steals when he takes Cash's saved money to buy teeth. Unwittingly, Anse provides Cash with fulfillment, so Anse is not the only one who gets what he wants by the novel's end. Cash's satisfaction helps to extend the idea of Cash gaining a permanent patriarchal position in the family since the record player aids in moving the family steadily toward a 20th Century way of life. The gramophone is the first hint of the Bundrens' possessing a modern convenience that connects them to the middle class demographic.

In the closing passage Cash uses his clairvoyance to look into the family's future and rather than violating private thoughts, he sees the collective family settling comfortably into a middle class life. He envisions them listening to "new records" that they acquire by "mail order." This seems out of place on two levels. First, the family seems to exist in a bygone era where cars and electricity do not exist. At the beginning of the novel it seems inconceivable that the Bundrens receive regular mail, let alone would take advantage of a middle class convenience such as ordering a luxury item through the mail. Modern ideas such as enjoying music during the inactivity of the winter months displace Anse who in

his early monologues explained his fear of the road that crops up on his doorstep.

Secondly, this tenant farm family that cannot afford to embalm their mother seems far removed from the middle class. Although Faulkner gives several indications that the Bundrens are poor, the family's abject poverty is most clear in Peabody's comment during their shared meal: "Plain turnip greens is a mighty spindling eating for a man my size" (60). Peabody is the only overweight person at the Bundren table. How would they be able to afford records?

His assertion that the road is unlucky brands Anse as stagnant, unbending. This does not work for the new lifestyle which is a move toward not only self-sufficiency, but also a global, more mobile view of life. This goes against all that Anse holds sacred, including the idea that God "aimed for [mankind] to stay put like a tree or a stand of corn" (36). The only thing Anse can imagine a road doing is helping "every bad luck prowling . . . come straight to my door" (36). This is not the reflection of a forward thinking individual.

It is important to deal with the fact that Anse recovers a bit of control for himself at the end of the novel. In fact, "the boys, knowingly or unknowingly, assist their father in reasserting his patriarchal position as the head of the family" (Rainey 94). But his reassertion as "head of the family" cannot be looked on as a permanent thing. Anse's judgment was poor when he chose Addie for his wife, and it appears that his new choice of bride is not any wiser. The possibility is

illustrated when he is unable to make eye contact with his family as he presents his new wife, but the new Mrs. Bundren has no problem looking them all squarely in the eyes. The defiant look in the “duck shaped woman[‘s]” eyes seems a harbinger of difficult times ahead for Anse. He is repeatedly attracted to town women who are stronger than he is. If he has remained true to form, it will not be long before Anse has been “castrated” once again. False teeth can be hidden.

In the end, “it is Cash, the oldest brother, who ultimately achieves maturity and understanding by integrating [sensation, reason and intuition] into one distinctive response which fuses words and action, reason and intuition” (Vickery 51). The reconfiguring of the Oedipal complex allows for a new facet, a new perspective on not only the uses of Freudian critiques, but on *As I Lay Dying* as well. The dynamics between the brothers is intensified by the new construction. This new triangle also provides an opportunity to examine Anse more closely, possibly leading to a new view of his much maligned character. His helplessness becomes clinical rather than horrid and deliberate.

CHAPTER THREE

ANSE, CLAIRVOYANCE AND THE LAW OF THE FATHER

"Durn that road. And it fixing to rain, too. I can stand here and same as see it with second-sight, a-shutting down behind them like a wall, shutting down betwixt them and my given promise" (35).

Faulkner often examines the detrimental effects an absent or incompetent parent can have on the children. For instance, the steady disintegration of the Compson family at the center of Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury* highlights how the four children suffer under the neglect of an ineffectual mother. Mr. Compson is a weak-willed drunkard, but even his internal concerns seem to stem from his wife's deficiencies. By contrast, in *As I Lay Dying* Faulkner creates a family dynamic where the patriarch systematically devastates each member of his family. Of course, the Bundren matriarch is not without her own problems, but it is Anse Bundren who demands center stage as the worst Bundren parent.

By the time Anse gets to speak on page 35, the reader has already encountered eight monologues, three of them belonging to Darl, which should indicate that Anse is a lesser character in the novel surrounded by stronger voices. But it is clear that Anse is at the heart of the Bundren family and its dysfunction. When the Bundren family patriarch finally does speak, his twisted speech clarifies certain linguistic phenomena occurring in the text, i.e. that Bundrens are a family of clairvoyants and telepaths. Where Darl and Dewey Dell subtly demonstrate some of the unusual family ability, Anse simply blurts out

what astute readers are noticing. At the very start of his monologue Anse reveals that he “can stand . . . and same as see [the road] with second sight” (35). He knows before hand that the road will be flooded and impassable before Darl and Jewel return. This bald announcement allows readers to make unexpected interpretations about what is occurring in the Bundren household.

In Darl’s eleventh monologue, the family comes to the startling realization that Jewel has been missing all night. Darl explains their collective discovery as “a kind of telepathic agreement of admitted fear” (134). This half-hearted suggestion of telepathy combined with Anse’s bumbling admission of clairvoyance permit the entrance of something supernatural into the text. The Bundrens have not only the ability to communicate without speaking to each other, but also the ability to see or know of events that are taking place in the future or in locations removed from their presence.

There are only a handful of critics who address the issue of the supernatural in *As I Lay Dying*.ⁱⁱⁱ André Bleikasten does a particularly good job of examining not only Faulkner’s use of the supernatural, but also Faulkner’s response to questions about Darl’s clairvoyance. Bleikasten points out that the author admits Darl’s madness and explains that it is “nice to think that [a mad man could have] . . . something of clairvoyance, maybe, a capacity for telepathy” (IOM 191). In this way, Faulkner is the connection between telepathy and Lacanian ideas about language. He combines his psychoanalytical bent with

these notions of the supernatural and tells twin stories of a mother's burial and a son's descent into madness. Faulkner's use stream of consciousness during his multiple monologues allows him the framework to develop the idea of clairvoyance and telepathy as significant motifs in *As I Lay Dying*. The interior monologues allow for multiple points of view of any given situation, which in turn highlights any gaps or inconsistencies in the action. These gaps in the narrative reveal the unusual abilities of several of the Bundren family members and suggest that an alternative means of communication is in use.

Many critics have examined Anse's laziness and passive aggressiveness, but few have taken a careful look at the core of Anse's problem, his "second sight" and how it affects his children.^{iv} One who has looked at clairvoyance is Bleikasten. Another is Doreen Fowler. Fowler will admit to "Darl's ability to mine the unconscious mind" (M & MR 122), but she soft-soaps the idea. Rather than attaching a word like clairvoyance to his actions, Fowler evades any possible controversy by stating that Darl "penetrates the unconscious and makes the conscious mind aware of chaotic, subversive, instinctive forces" (M & MR 122) without suggesting how this might be accomplished.

In ancient literature, seers, those who could predict the future, were usually considered prophets, so most readers would consider clairvoyance a gift, an advantage in the world. But this is not the case for Anse and his family. Clairvoyance does give Anse "prior knowledge" of events, but this knowledge

arrives in an untimely manner, long after it would have been useful. For example, Anse can see the flood “a-shutting down” the road he needs to get Addie to the cemetery. But the knowledge does not come to him early enough for Anse to act and circumvent the problem before it occurs. His ability does not help him to make his life easier; it just shows him how difficult life is going to be.

So his clairvoyance is a hindrance, a handicap that he passes on to his children: Cash, Darl, Dewey Dell and possibly Vardaman. Those characters who rely heavily on these unexpected talents are crippled and unable to function in the real world, especially Darl. Cash, who does not choose to indulge in the use of clairvoyance, distinguishes himself as a survivor.

For the sake of the discussion in this dissertation, the term clairvoyance will refer to a character’s ability to know things that will happen in the future or having knowledge of things that are happening outside of the immediate environment of that character. Telepathy will be limited to characters “conversing” with their minds rather than audibly. Instances of both clairvoyance and telepathy can be found throughout the novel.

Clairvoyance and Telepathy

Of all the Bundren children, Darl possesses the strongest gift for clairvoyance. He is also more comfortable than the rest with looking at most things with his inner eye. For instance, at one point Darl stands on the porch

talking with Anse and Tull, yet inwardly he is watching what Jewel is doing down in the barn. Several critics have tried to reason away his odd ability by reducing it to a mad genius's sensitivity to the actions occurring around him.^v The problem in these arguments is that Jewel's actions are not occurring anywhere near Darl. Bleikasten, one of the few who does not try to diminish the idea of the supernatural, admits that Darl's "preternatural clairvoyance could easily be mistaken for an exceptionally vivid and sensitive imagination" (IOM 156). Then Bleikasten boldly confronts the issue of this undercurrent by insisting that readers of the novel "must credit [Darl] with either second sight or a miraculously precise imagination" (IOM 156).

Besides the ability to see what is unseeable, Anse's children share a means of telepathy, a power for communication between their minds. As the interior monologues which make up the novel chronicle conversations between the Bundrens, especially between the children, the critical gaps in the spoken word can be located where the siblings resort to a non-verbal shortcut; in Dewey Dell's words, the siblings rely on an ability to converse "without the words." This inner communication holds a certain importance for the Bundren children. They understand that what is said by means of silent communication is more significant than spoken words. Dewey Dell confesses that she would not be concerned if Darl had verbally threatened to expose her pregnancy, but because he makes the threat "without the words" (27) she knows that he is to be believed and feared.

Lacan

Bruce Fink interprets Lacan thusly: “Language functions. Language ‘lives’ and ‘breathes’ independently of any human subject. Speaking beings, far from simply using language as a tool, are also used by language; they are the playthings of language, and are duped by language” (*TLS* 14). Most of the Bundrens reverse Lacan’s idea of language; if anything they are guilty of duping language. Lacan describes the means by which words and phrases present themselves for use as “two chains of discourse which run roughly parallel to each other” (Fink *TLS* 14). The top chain constitutes the spoken word, while the bottom chain represents unconscious thought where language functions unbeknownst to the individual (Fink 15). The Bundrens function in the gap between the two chains, beneath spoken language, yet above unconscious thought. This interstice is where telepathy and clairvoyance exist.

Bleikasten states that Darl’s “clairvoyance and his telepathic powers may be said to spring from his very weakness; they are a side effect of his deficiency in being” (*IOM* 190). These “powers/weaknesses,” which are Anse’s primary legacy to his children, reinforce the Bundrens’ handicapped status in life, their fundamental inability to move beyond the sorry state to which Anse has delivered them. The patriarchal crisis that Faulkner creates in *As I Lay Dying* as well as his use of language that functions without words presents an opportunity for looking

at the work of Jacques Lacan and the ways in which Lacan's ideas on the importance of linguistics illuminate literature.

Working from the model outlined by Sigmund Freud's concept of human psychoanalytical growth, Lacan reworked the idea of parent/child separation as an essential part of personality emergence. In "The Meaning of the Phallus," Lacan posits that one of the functions of "the unconscious castration complex" is that of "regulator of development giving its *ratio* to this first role: that is, by installing in the subject an unconscious position without which he would be unable to identify with the ideal type of his sex, or to respond without grave risk to the needs of his partner in the sexual relation" (FS 75).

This "unconscious position" is that of supplicant, one who understands and accepts his lack and is then able to take his place in society as a rule-following member. Lacan goes on to suggest that it is the father who must provide the "ratio" by placing himself between the mother and the child in order to plant the seed of the "castration complex" in the child's unconscious, thereby making the son obedient and submissive to his father's and society's wants. Fowler simplifies this idea and connects it to *AILD*, stating that "to become a speaking subject, to enter the realm of the symbolic, the child must renounce his/her desire for the mother and generate substitutes for her that are permissible within the Law of the Father" (M&MR 117). The acquisition and acceptance of

language are the benchmarks for a successful resolution of the castration complex.

Sass explains Lacan's use of language to fortify individual personality, stating that "language serves as a barrier to keep the conscious self from collapsing into the inarticulate chaos of the unconscious. In addition, language provides potentially infinite opportunities for continued confirmation of a person's sense of self because through it, the speaker can appeal for recognition to anyone he or she encounters" (13). Darl is incapable of "renouncing his desire for the mother," so his eventual collapse "into the inarticulate chaos of the unconscious" indicates one reason that Faulkner's use of language and non-language in *As I Lay Dying* begs for a Lacanian reading.

Lacan "viewed language and its effects as the agents by which an unconscious is formed. He also saw language as the conscious means by which individuals learn to master the early trauma of separation through the process of naming, thereby representing themselves as totalizable (that is nameable)" (Ragland-Sullivan xv). When the dyadic mother/child relationship is ruptured as the child is forced to move away from the mother, the child must forge an identity of its own in order to repair the loss. Many critics have examined this process and how the acquisition of language impacts the individual.

Literature Review

Carolyn Porter playfully situates Lacan as a child of Freud's in his efforts to make his own attempt to delve into the minds of humankind. She states that while he is "trying to be Freud's good oedipal son, both like and unlike his father, Lacan sets out to resolve the problem of Oedipus by recasting Freud's dead father as the 'Name of the Father'" (103 Porter) The three primary elements Lacan defines for use in mapping the human psyche are the Imaginary, which Elizabeth Wright describes as "the realm of illusory wholeness" (104) the Symbolic, which she labels "the domain which grants a conditional identity" (104) and the Real, from which mankind is irrevocably separated.

Imaginary

Fowler succinctly explains the Imaginary by stating that "in this early register of being, there is no self and no other" (F:RR 7). She goes on to explain that although the infant does not conceive of itself as an individual, the child "possesses completeness of being . . . precisely because the child perceives no lack of any kind" (F:RR 7). This is the stage during which the mother and child form a dyadic symbiotic relationship. Lacan examines this dependant relationship between mother and child and concludes that at some point the child must break away from the mother (and the imaginary) and move into the world of the father, or the symbolic.

That break from the mother begins at the mirror phase. Fowler paraphrases Lacan by stating that “While still identifying with the mother, the child begins to the process of constructing an I” (F:RR 7) during the mirror phase. The child becomes aware of a reflection of self, realizing that the mother is separate, which makes way for the insertion of the father into the dyadic relationship of mother/child, leading the child out of the imaginary and into the symbolic.

Symbolic

The second Lacanian register of language is the Symbolic. Wesley Morris explains that “the symbolic defines the conditions of social belonging, it is best described as the stage of accession to Language, of entry into the symbolic order” (120). In the symbolic, the father *must* insert himself between the mother and child in order to prepare the child for the concerns of society. Morris suggests that during this rupture, or separation, “the ego is forever divided against itself” (121). But this division is a part of normal development, so that at this point the child should be moving toward becoming a successful adult.

Jacqueline Rose also points out that “for Lacan the subject is constituted through language” and this language is the Law of the Father. In Lacanian structure, the child’s successful journey through the pitfalls from the imaginary to the symbolic is dependent on the father’s ability to conceal his “lack” of a phallus. Lacan appropriates Freud’s term “phallus” and retools it for his own purposes.

For Lacan, the phallus is not so much the actual body part as the idea of that body part and the power associated with possessing it. Elizabeth Wright asserts that “the phallus [should be interpreted as] the symbol of patriarchal law” (103). This phallus is the power of language that the child assumes will allow him/her to rejoin with the mother.

Real

The final element for Lacan is the Real. Morris positions the Real as “the problematic relationship between the symbolic and the imaginary” (123). Most critics acknowledge that the Real is difficult to conceptualize. All agree that the real is unattainable. Ragland-Sullivan paraphrases Lacan’s definition of the Real from Séminaire 1. She states that “the Real . . . is that before which the Imaginary falters, and over which the Symbolic stumbles” (188) suggesting that the Real seems to exist as a psychoanalytic Catch - 22. Because humans are within the symbolic, it is impossible for them to understand or enter the real. The Real is forever just beyond the fingertips. Wright presents the following explanation:

The real for Lacan is the given field of brute existence over which the Imaginary and Symbolic range in their rival attempts to control: one can say that it is that to which all reference and action have relevance. (102)

Considering Lacan's idea of the never-ending chain of signifiers, Fowler states that it is that which "we cannot not know with our arbitrary system of signification" (14). The Real is outside of language; signifiers do not apply in that realm.

Parallel with Freud's idea of personality development, i.e. the ego, id and superego, Lacan provides a framework with which to chart the individual's progress and not every child is successful at traversing Lacan's Narrative of Subjectivity. Bonnie Woodbery provides additional insight to Lacan's framework. "When a weak paternal metaphor prevents the subject from finding its place in the triadic structure, then primary narcissism becomes the 'unleashing of drive as such, without object, threatening all identity' (Kristeva *Powers of Horror* 44)" (35). The Bundren children each suffer, in varying degrees, the indignities inherent in having a "weak parental metaphor," Anse especially. All of Anse's problems harken back to his clairvoyance and telepathy.

Anse

Anse is the seat of the family's predicament. He is the epitome of a "weak paternal metaphor" who devastates his wife and children, and many critics agree that Anse is a pitiable individual and a despicable father. John Lowe suggests that Anse has a "nonentity status" which creates "the fated quality of his children's destinies" (607) while Bleikasten points out that "behind the weak father appears the predatory father: enjoying the immunity which the dregs of his paternal authority allow him" (*F's AILD* 84) and Harriet Hustis puts forth the idea

that “Anse defines ‘man’ by his ‘sweating’ [yet] he is clearly bent on ‘doing no sweating’ and ‘living off of them that sweats’” (“M. As/In Comic” Hustis 108).

Many have rushed to Anse’s defense, seeing Addie as a castrating wife who is mostly to blame for Anse’s incompetence. One reason for this judgment may be Addie’s refusal to function as a mere woman. Morris describes Addie as “a caricature of the castrating female” (119). He extends the idea by stating “she is the domineering wife/mother who represses - oppresses - her entire family” (119). She positions herself as active and therefore masculine from the beginning when in her monologue she states, “So I took Anse” (170). And because her one chance to tell her story is positioned near the center of the book, Addie is clearly the lynchpin on which the Bundren family pivots.

Her silencing of Anse is also clear. Anse does not have another monologue once Addie has spoken. When she finally gets to tell her story, Addie exposes Anse as tentative and barely functional. In her section he “pass[es] the school house three or four times” (170) before he finally works up the courage to approach her. When he finally comes courting, Anse sits and stares at her rather than engaging her in conversation. Addie initiates conversation. He is barely able to respond to her direct questions with direct answers. Anse repeats “That’s what I come to see you about” (170) when she inquires about his marital status.

And when Anse finally does assert himself as a man by refusing to settle for only one child, Addie begins to work against him. Anse’s desire for more

“chapping” is the emotional breaking point for Addie. She finds some semblance of hope when her misanthropic nature is placated by Cash’s birth. Cash helps Addie to find a way to exist and function in society through his intrusion into her life, which then connects his mother to humanity. “When Anse takes away her blissful sense of wholeness with Cash by making her pregnant [with Darl], she tries to settle accounts with . . . [Anse] by withdrawing from him and the family” (Sass 17). Addie is able to forgive Anse the first “violation” of pregnancy, but her hard earned peace is completely undone by her second pregnancy leading her to fall back on the philosophy planted in her mind by her father: “Living is terrible.”

Anse, as well as the unborn child, must bear the brunt of Addie’s fury. Step by step she begins to exact her revenge upon him. Under her rough care, Anse is reduced to a toothless, mumbling incompetent. He bitterly complains about having to pay Peabody with money he has earmarked for his new dentures. Anse whines, “Me without a tooth in my head, hoping to get ahead enough so I could get my mouth fixed where I could eat God’s own victuals as a man should” (37). Anse presents himself as a man who has suffered. Gabriele Schwab points out that “the journey to Jefferson becomes a last manifestation of Addie’s power over the family” (214).

Addie’s demand to be buried with her kinfolk is just a final punishment for Anse, one last jab after her death. Having methodically stripped Anse of whatever masculinity he may have had, Addie is able to occupy the vacated

position of the phallus. Helene Cixous explains that Lacan places the phallus as the “transcendental signifier,’ transcendental precisely as primary organizer of the structure of subjectivity” (46). As phallus, Addie is situated as desired object, and each member of the family has a desire connected to Addie or her burial.

Anse is unable to hide his “lack” from his children. Since they are all very aware of his shortcomings, none of them seem to have much respect for Anse. When Darl relays the fact that Anse “tells people that if he ever sweats, he will die”, (17), Darl adds his own thoughts on the subject by sarcastically stating “I suppose he believes it” (17). Darl’s addendum suggests that he does not believe his father has cause to fear for his life. When Anse complains that the boys should not take the wagon and leave because Addie would want her affairs and arrangements kept “private,” Jewel snaps, “Then let it be private” (18). Jewel makes it clear that he does not agree with his father allowing so many neighbors to have access to Addie while she is dying. When Addie finally dies, “Cash comes to the door, carrying the saw”(49). As Cash looks down at this dead mother, Anse’s only concern is getting the coffin finished in the quickest manner possible. He needles Cash, asking “how nigh are you done?” (5). He repeatedly tells Cash to “get at it,” but Cash ignores Anse until he is ready to continue construction on the coffin.

Addie and Anse

Life with Anse is a misery that has feminists rallying around Addie and responding to her plight. Fowler baldly states: “The attempt to assert the primacy of the father and to dematerialize the world of the mother is the central project of patriarchal culture in *AILD*” (M&MR 116). Fowler’s *The Return of the Repressed* is a text heavy with Lacanian theory. In a chapter she titles “The Displaced Mother: *As I Lay Dying*,” Fowler examines Margaret Homans’ notion that the absence of the mother, that is the symbolic murder of the mother, “makes possible desire, law, language and the civilized order” (49). Moreover, Addie does not share the talent of clairvoyance or telepathy. This further alienates her from a family whose members use these abilities for their primary form of communication. Even without the family talents/curse, she can still be looked at in Lacanian terms.

The “revenge” journey that makes up the bulk of the novel can be read as Anse’s steady attempt to dispose of Addie at last and undo all of the damage that she has forced upon him. Lacanian theory adds significant depth to the consideration of Addie’s dilemma. Lacan’s ideas are more acceptable to many feminists because his interpretation of the resolution of the castration complex can afford women some semblance of autonomy rather than the position of exclusion found in Classic Freudian theory.

Nancy Chodorow examines one such concept in *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*. She explains that feminists who follow Lacan find empowerment in his notion “that although one sex has an anatomical penis, neither sex, finally, can possess the phallus. Sexuality is incomplete and fractured for both sexes. Moreover, as men and women must line themselves up on one or another side of the linguistic/sexual divide, they need not do so on the side isomorphic with their anatomy” (188-9). Unlike Freud, who tends to be dismissive of women, Lacan allows women to participate in the same feeling of lack that men experience.

Cixous, who has a different interpretation of Lacan, looks at the notion of castration and finds that man “has to mourn. It’s his way of withstanding castration” (54). She goes on to suggest that the lack of a phallus is actually a source of strength for women. She states, “woman . . . does not have to mourn, does not have to resign herself to loss. She basically takes up the challenge of her loss in order to go on living” (54). This idea works well with Addie’s character because she is a woman who takes command of life especially with her marriage, with her affair and after her death.

Amy Wood expands on the idea of Addie as powerful as she examines “Addie’s search for identity through her body” (99). She looks at “feminist[s who] seek to refigure and reclaim the female body as an alternative and a challenge to masculine culture” (99). She also studies the ways that society turns the female

body into a commodity. Wood goes on to explain that Addie flouts society by being “selfish in her motherhood” (103) and refusing to relinquish her sexuality, in particular, the “illicit sexuality” she relishes with Whitfield. The “psychological power (Addie finds) within her sin” (104) affirms her refusal to accept patriarchal dictates. Wood insists that “Addie’s body persists as the most vivid and powerful presence in the novel” (111) even after her death.

These feminist critics and others find strength in Addie’s defiance. When they write about her, they use words like power, “rebellion” and “revenge.” Rather than see Addie as a castrating wife or the pathetic victim of Anse’s neglect, they imagine her as forceful and active. Of course, there are those critics who see Addie’s behavior as too masculine for her own good or the good of her sons, none of whom have adult relationships with women. Addie’s life is a series of rejections and refusals and, in Lacanian terms, she quickly becomes a threat to the patriarchal order. After her father’s nihilistic pronouncement that life is merely a warm-up for death, Addie searches for self definition, refusing patriarchal restraints. This begins with her rejection of language. “In male terms of patriarchy, she [should exist] as the object of desire in the lives of others, primarily her husband and children” (Sass 10). But Addie will not allow society to dictate how she should exist in the world and this rejection gives her power. This first rejection of the Law of the Father allows her to refuse interpretations of herself including such important patriarchal terms as “woman”, “mother” or “wife.”

So Addie refuses to assume the typical “woman” role. At every turn, she moves away from traditional feminine actions. Addie teaches young children, which is an occupation closely associated with women, yet as a teacher, a role which is also traditionally constructed as a caretaker/mother figure, Addie is not a nurturing force; rather she finds relief in beating the children. Wood suggests that Addie’s treatment of her students is a way of “turning [her] suffering outward onto others” (102). She can only connect with them by causing them pain and drawing their blood. In this way she rails against the Law of the Father and society’s narrow definition of “woman.”

Addie also approaches marriage in a non-traditional manner rather than in a womanly one. “So I took Anse”(170) states a complex action simply. “Anse did not propose to Addie, but simply established the context in which she might infer a proposal and so act” (Jacobi 64). In this manner, Anse hands control of the relationship over to Addie, at least momentarily relinquishing his role as “man”. Wood explains that the Bundren “marriage is [a] . . . violent and aggressive attempt at connection” (103), which is the only kind of bond that Addie understands. Eventually, the marriage is a failed connection.

Addie refuses to accept the role of mother after she conceives Darl. She wants to take control of her reproductiveness, but Anse insists that they “ain’t nigh done chapping yet, with just two” (173). Anse’s insensitivity sends Addie into a rage born of the fear that she might lose whatever connection to a happy

life and the world Cash has afforded her. When he dismisses her concerns, Addie kills Anse in her heart and mind. Pettey points out that Anse's refusal to allow Addie to control the number of children she has is in fact "the manner of her castration, for her representational murder takes away the sexual power Anse has over her in procreation" (37). She refuses to relinquish total control of her sexuality.

Addie takes control of her reproductiveness despite Anse's wishes. Jewel is considerably younger than Cash and Darl, which suggests that Addie found some means of avoiding pregnancy after Anse's pronouncement. Probably by avoiding Anse's sexual overtures - that is, refusing to treat him like a husband and equal - Addie stops producing children. Once she decides to resume having children, Addie turns to a man other than her husband, thereby completing her castration of Anse by cuckolding him with the minister. So Jewel, the third Bundren child and the minister's son, is Addie's final step in stripping "manhood" and "sexual power" from Anse.

As she turns away from Anse, Addie focuses her energies on Jewel. Through Jewel, Addie regains everything she lost with Darl. She now has a way to exist in the world. She further distances herself from the Law of the Father by successfully redefining motherhood and rejecting everything that patriarchy demands. Flouting church teachings, she makes Jewel her savior. She tells Cora "He is my cross and he will be my salvation. He will save me from the

water and from the fire. Even though I have laid down my life, he will save me“ (168). With these three sentences, she dismantles religion, another pillar of patriarchal control. “Addie forms herself into her own perversion of the Virgin Mother through the synthesis of her sexuality and her maternity, figuring her bastard son, Jewel, into her baby Jesus” (Wood 105). This is another attack on Anse.

Addie revels in sin when she has an affair with Whitfield, the minister. She “tries to burst her isolation through an affair with Whitfield” (Jacobi 67). During their affair, Addie’s personality begins to blossom as she realizes that she has finally grasped the mystery of her life. As always, Addie is brief with her use of words, which makes her statements so much more powerful. She announces “I believed that I had found it” (174). This simple proclamation ushers a sense of power and wonderment into Addie’s life and counteracts the despair brought on by her father’s vision of existence.

The affair with Whitfield only covers three paragraphs of Addie’s section, but in those scant lines, she seems to come to life. She is vibrant; her mind is filled with vivid images as she describes waiting for the minister to arrive.

“While I waited for him in the woods, waiting for him before he saw me, I would think of him as dressed in sin. I would think of him as thinking of me as dressed also in sin, he the more beautiful since the garment which he had exchanged for sin was sanctified. I would think of the sin as garments which we would remove in order

to shape and coerce the terrible blood to the forlorn echo of the dead word high in the air" (174-5).

Here Addie discovers a way to grasp the inequities caused by the inability of words to accurately capture the essence of life. Adultery with the minister reconnects actions to words and allows Addie to come to terms with her empty relationship with Anse. Jewel's birth puts a permanent seal on her acceptance of the status quo. With Jewel she will always have a reminder, evidence that she indeed took control of her life for what ever small period of time; evidence that she is alive and that she can force words to do what they would not otherwise deign to do. With Jewel, she can live her empty life with Anse and be satisfied.

Darl and Anse

Although Darl's "clairvoyant description of Addie's death demonstrates his intense mental involvement with her" (Kinney 163), the concerns of clairvoyance and telepathy are most prominent between Darl and Anse. Darl is the most comfortable with his silent communication. He is the most persistent silent "talker", the strongest clairvoyant and telepath. Bleikasten points out that Darl's "clairvoyance springs from his weakness; it is a side effect of his ontological deficiency" (F's AILD 89), which suggests that Darl's grasp of reality and being are tenuous at best. This deficiency manifests itself in several ways, including the erosion of his slight hold on reality as the novel progresses. All of Darl's

problems stem from his disconnect from language, traditional accepted language that would otherwise help integrate him into his society.

Throughout the novel, Darl demonstrates that he is not only emotionally unstable, but also psychotic. According to Pettey, "Darl's madness . . . is due to an inability to recognize his own perceptions as a network of symbols that do not convey reality, but displace it and negate it" (27). Because of this "inability," Darl joins Cora Tull as one of the unreliable narrators in the novel. His vision is colored by his desire to reinterpret or "reconstruct" his family members. Darl's final break with the exterior world comes when his family attacks him and ships him off to the insane asylum in Jackson in retribution for his destruction of Armstid's barn.

Outsiders see Darl as reflective and odd rather than talkative. Tull, who prides himself on his avoidance of over-thinking, explains "I have said it and I say it again, that's ever living thing the matter with Darl: he just thinks by himself too much" (71). By page 71 Darl has already had five monologues, more than anyone else, and the reader is aware that Darl is the greatest internal "talker" of the family. Darl's interior life is much richer and fuller than his exterior life. But he has no avenue for reaching the outside world. Without someone to identify with, Darl cannot get to the image stage; he cannot conceive of an "I," cannot form an identity.

One source of Darl's emotional disturbance can be traced back to his parents' failures while he was a child. "Psychotic episodes occur when the intrinsic lack of [a] key phallic signifier - the Name-of-the Father - is challenged within the symbolic order. The confrontation topples the mental house of cards supporting the subject's identity. Imaginary relations between moi and others also collapse" (Ragland - Sullivan 198 -99). In other words, the individual may become psychotic if the father is incapable of ushering the child into the Symbolic. Darl repeatedly comments that Anse "mumbles his mouth." Ragland-Sullivan's quote also indicates that the psychotic's relationship with the mother cannot be maintained. Of course, Darl does not have a relationship with Addie. Neither parent is able to provide Darl with what he needs in order to function as an adult.

Addie not only spurns Darl, but her successful castration of Anse leaves Darl not only outside of the imaginary, but also without any means of gaining access to the symbolic. Addie's various dismissals, of her father's edicts, of language, of Anse and finally of Darl, create a pattern that lives on and is heightened in Darl. "While Addie's discourse reveals her rejection of the paternal order . . . Darl's progressively ruptured discourse reveals him as a 'borderlander,' an exile" (Woodbery 34). Consequently, Darl splits off from himself and eventually goes insane. His telepathic abilities are not sufficient to sustain his identity. From the very beginning of the novel, Darl is quietly hostile to his family members. He saves his moments of active hostility for Jewel, but Addie and

Anse also come into Darl's line of fire. Darl is disrespectful of Addie, using her name rather than calling her "ma." And although Anse is always "pa," Darl systematically builds a portrait of Anse as a doddering, ignorant fool who is easily handled and manipulated. It is significant that this portrait begins with Anse's first misuse of language.

When Darl pushes Anse into agreeing to allow Jewel and Darl to haul one last load of wood, Anse, who is uncertain of the necessity or the wisdom of the proposed trip, replies "I mislike undecision as much as ere a man" (17). Up to this point, readers have encountered the thought processes or the speech patterns of several characters including Darl, Jewel, Cora, Kate and Dewey Dell. But Anse's sentence stands out as a sudden indicator of character. He is revealed as a foolish, unlearned man to be mocked and/or pitied. His deplorable misuse of language is telling and far more significant a character trait than regional "slangauge" might be. Anse cannot hide his "lack" from anyone, let alone his own family.

Anse's misuse of language provokes Darl's slow assault on his father's character and credibility. What follows Anse's statement is a series of Darl's observations concerning his father, each indicating a fundamental lack in Anse. Darl points out Anse's hump, mentally scoffs at Anse's notion that sweating will kill him, and compares his father's stubble to that of "old dogs". This is not the first time Darl describes his father's shortcomings, but when the son states that

Anse's "Feet are badly splayed, his toes cramped and bent and guided" (11) it is easy for readers to interpret these comments as sympathetic. After Anse's linguistic gaffe however, it is clear that Darl is discrediting his father, not sympathizing with him and there are many ramifications for Anse's failure to fulfill his patriarchal mission. Most importantly, Darl attempts to "foreclose" his relationship with society and his father.

Woodbery points out that "it is Anse's ineffectuality, then, his inability to complete the [triadic relationship] that allows Darl's foreclosure of the Name of the Father" (36). According to Lacan, the rejection of the paternal signifier or "foreclosure" is a violent refusal of symbolization and its effects are catastrophic" (Bowie 107). Darl's "catastrophic" consequences begin to emerge as he talks with Vardaman, who also may be losing his grip on reality. Darl states "I cannot love my mother because I have no mother" (95). He is an orphan; his mother rejects him from the imaginary and his father is unfit to guide him to the symbolic. As a result, the integrity of Darl's character begins to wither. It is ironic that the one person Darl can hold a conversation with is his young brother who is at a point of tragically replaying the break with the mother.

Darl's obsession over his father's misuse of language is just a manifestation of Darl's compulsive, repetitive relationship with language. Although his monologues are arguably the most lyrical in the novel, it is clear that there is a problem. He is the only character's whose mental product is out of line

with the verbal output. His mental attention to detail sets him apart from other characters, but in the outer world, most of his discourse revolves around harassment of his siblings, Jewel and Dewey Dell. His irrational and impulsive need to harass Jewel speaks volumes about his jealousy of Jewel's relationship with Addie.

The fissure in Darl's relationship with language appears at the very beginning of the novel. Although innocent enough, his comment:

“Chuck. Chuck. Chuck. of the adze.” (5)

alerts the reader that things are very different in this story. The repetition along with the odd spacing and the use of four full stops within one sentence only begins to hint at the depth of Darl's significant pathological problems with language.

Darl's compulsion is best displayed in his final monologue where the culmination of Darl's slow slide from reality occurs. His last monologue presents a picture of a man who has completely disconnected from himself and reality. His insanity is now fully developed; he can no longer hide it. The monologue is barely a page and a half, Darl's shortest offering. Beginning with “Darl has gone to Jackson,” the monologue's use of third person suggests that Darl is now watching his actions, removed from the happenings rather than directly involved. Darl tries to explain why the other Darl is laughing when he is put on the train.

He attempts through “normalized” conversation to inquire of his disconnected self about the source of the laughter. The disjointed answer involves irrational comparisons with the asylum guards, the state of Mississippi and its monetary system - which Darl describes as incestuous- and a “little spy-glass he got in France at the war” (254). Verbally, Darl simply keeps repeating the word “yes” while laughing hysterically. The disassociation between these various images illustrates the disorganization of Darl’s mind. His connection to reality has shattered; in other words, it is now clear inwardly and outwardly that Darl is psychotic.

Bowie explains how psychosis comes about. “For psychosis to be triggered off, the Name- of-the-Father, *verworfen*, foreclosed, that is to say, never having attained the place of the Other, must be called into symbolic opposition to the subject” (108). He goes on to explain that as “parental metaphor,” the Name of the Father acts as “an essential point of anchorage for the subject” (109). Darl lacks this “essential anchorage.”

Fink’s description of psychosis is simpler and more to the point. Fink states that “psychosis can be understood as a form of victory by the child over the Other, the child *foregoing* his or her advent as a divided subject so as not to submit to the Other as language” (49). This explains the disintegration of Darl’s character as the story progresses. His use of clairvoyance for his primary form of communication coupled with his lack of a relationship with either of his parents, but especially with his mother, give him no avenue into subject-hood.

Dewey Dell and Women

Dewey Dell presents another vision of the Bundren woman. Although she is both clairvoyant and telepathic, she often seems mute. Her predicament meshes with Lacan's view of women's journey from the Imaginary to the Symbolic and back again. Chodorow interprets Lacan's basic principals with a feminist viewpoint.

One reading of Lacan holds that the resolution of the castration complex differs for men and women and thereby institutes (and documents) sexual difference. Sexual constitution and subjectivity is different for he who possesses the phallus and she who does not. As the phallus comes to stand in relation to the mother's desire, the woman becomes not a subject in her own right – even one who can never have the phallus – but simply a symbol or a symptom in the masculine psyche (188).

Dewey Dell's status as a woman traps her in the Imaginary. It sometimes appears that the purpose of women is to exist as that thing from which all children are forcefully separated. If language is the realm of the father, then the realm of the mOther is alienation. There is no connection or bonding between the only two Bundren women. Addie does not pass her strength on to her daughter. And there are consequences. Alldredge points out that "Dewey Dell feels her mother's death almost not at all because her simple being is obsessed with her own pregnancy and the compelling need to get to town to get rid of the child she cannot admit she is carrying. There is simply no room left in her for grief" (14). Dewey Dell is without thought or word. She never uses the word

“baby,” not even to herself. The closest she comes to verbalizing her problem is when she states, “He is his guts and I am my guts. And I am Lafe’s guts” (60).

Like her mother before her, Dewey Dell will give birth to a child she did not plan for. One major difference is that where Addie is “active”, Dewey Dell is “passive.” Dewey Dell does not “take” Lafe as Addie “took” Anse; Lafe “takes” her. Dewey Dell allows herself to be impregnated. She gives her power away to Lafe. Where Addie refuses to be defined by the male psyche, Dewey Dell all but begs to be defined.

Dewey Dell seems to share her father’s indecisiveness. This leads to her predicament. She allows the fullness of her cotton picking sack to determine whether she will give her virginity to Lafe. Her passiveness leads to her pregnancy, which in turn leads to her being victimized by MacGowan, the town druggist. MacGowan interprets her as an uneducated, desperate fool, a willing victim he can readily take advantage of. Despite all of her extrasensory abilities, her language is scattered, running in helpless circles as she yearns for help, but cannot imagine how she can communicate her need to Peabody. She thinks,

He could do so much for me if he just would. He could do everything for me. It’s like everything in the world for me is inside a tub full of guts, so that you would wonder how there can be any room in it for anything else important. He is a big tub of guts and I am a little tub of guts and if there is not any room for anything important in a big tub of guts, how can it be room in a little tub of guts. (58)

Of course, her guts have room in them for an unwanted child. Her fear and desperation are clear in every line.

Vardaman and Anse

The youngest Bundren child is problematic. It is difficult to find evidence that Vardaman is clairvoyant or telepathic. It is safe to assume that he is, especially considering how close he is to Darl. But he does fit easily into a Lacanian argument. Vardaman's actions as he tries to impress his father with the large fish he caught suggest that he is still a child trying to find his way from his mother to the Law of the Father.

In his discussion of the Phallus and the function of the phallus, Fink states that "In its quest for love and attention, a child is sooner or later confronted with the fact that it is not its parents' sole object of interest. Their multiple, and no doubt multifarious, objects of interest all have one thing in common; they divert the parents' attention away from the child. The parents' attention is what has the highest value in the child's universe; it is the gold standard by which all other values are measured" (101).

There has been some controversy over Vardaman's age. Some have argued that he is as old as 14, but it is clear that he must be a young child. There are several things that indicate that Vardaman is younger than seven years old. According to Tull, the fish that Vardaman catches is "nigh as long as he is" (30). If he is 14, this fish is more suitable for mounting than eating. Also,

when Darl narrates Addie's death scene, he notes that Vardaman watches from "behind pa's leg" (49). This positioning suggests a child not only small enough to hide behind an adult's leg, but also young enough to find this action comforting and acceptable.

Tull provides a another description of the youngest Bundren when Vardaman arrives knocking at Tull's front door after Addie dies. Tull explains that he "couldn't see nobody a-tall" (69) when he peers straight out of his open front door. But when he lowers the lamp and gazes downward, Tull finds Vardaman looking "like a drowned puppy". Also, Vardaman is muddy "up to his knees". An average 14 year old might have mud around the cuffs and all over the boots, but he would need a mud slide to get muddy to the knees.

Peabody also provides a description of Vardaman. He states, "The durn little tyke is sitting on the top step, looking smaller than ever in the sulphur-colored light" (45). The word "tyke" suggests a small pitiable child. After Vardaman mutilates the fish, Anse compares him to his "man-growed brothers" (38). He tells the child, who is covered in the fish's blood to "Go wash them hands"(38), which is another action that suggest a child who is young enough not to be concerned that he is covered in fish blood. Also Dewey Dell shares a bed with Vardaman. Each of these factors indicates a small child. He might be seven or younger. A good guess would be four or five. His youth is very important to his placement in Lacan's development scheme.

Addie explains that Anse “has three children that are his and not mine” (176). Vardaman is the one Addie “gave [Anse] to replace the child [she] robbed him of” (176). And despite the fact that he “belongs” to Anse, most of his actions center on his mother. Fearing that his mother will suffocate, he drills holes into the coffin so Addie can breathe. Of course the horror in this action is that he mars Addie’s corpse. Cash can beautifully repair the coffin, but there is no undertaker to repair the holes Vardaman drills in his mother’s face.

Because Vardaman associates Peabody’s arrival in his carriage with Addie’s dying, the youngster attacks Peabody’s horses in an attempt to revenge his mother. This action merely strands the doctor at the Bundren house, making him an unexpected dinner guest. But for Vardaman, this is an attempt at protecting his mother, a move toward manhood. But his separation is not completed and it leads him to a mental break. When Addie’s coffin is pitched into the stream, Vardaman confuses Addie with the fish he guts for dinner. Whether or not he is clairvoyant or telepathic, it seems likely that Vardaman may follow Darl to the insane asylum at some point in the future.

Jewel and Anse

The character of Jewel is not clairvoyant or telepathic since he is not Anse’s son. Jewel presents another aspect of Lacan’s father/son dynamic. Robert Con Davis addresses this aspect as he explores the importance of Lacanian fathers in his introduction to his collection *The Fictional Father*:

Lacanian Readings of the Text. Using *The Odyssey*, which was Faulkner's source for the title of the novel, as the foundation for his discussions, Davis focuses on the various relationships between fathers and sons in the poem, often lingering on Telemakhos' claim that "It's a wise child that knows its own father" (5). For Davis this distinction between what makes a "father and what makes a "son" is really a question of power, and he turns to *The Odyssey* for his explanations. Davis painstakingly outlines the paternal balancing act that occurs in the narrative as one son, Telemakhos, must search and hope for his father's return in order to preserve an inheritance, while another metaphoric son, Odysseus, must wait for his metaphoric "father," Zeus's, permission to return home and claim said inheritance.

Davis explains that "every father is also a son" while identifying a character's shift from "father" status to "son" status - defining a son as one who is shackled by "restricted action"(7) - by contrasting Odysseus's relationship with Zeus and Telemakhos' relationship with Odysseus. Odysseus wishes to return home, but he is not successful until his metaphoric father allows him safe passage home. Telemakhos wants to rid his mother and their home of the plundering suitors. Until his father returns to assist him, Telemakhos is unable to act on this wish. Using Davis's definition of active "father" and passive "son", certain distinctions can be drawn between Anse and Jewel. Anse, an individual who prefers not to move, is apparently a "son" at the beginning of *As I Lay Dying* and Jewel is clearly a "father". Furthermore, a strict and surprising divide can be

drawn between all of the male Bundrens. Of all the Bundren children, only two, Cash and Jewel, are continuously “active” rather than “restricted.” Jewel’s “action” manifests itself in his deeds as he aids in the burial of his mother.

Darl’s detailed observations chronicle Jewel’s every movement through the novel. His smallest comment can speak volumes about Jewel’s status. He notes that Jewel “has been to town” (39) to get his hair cut, whereas Peabody reports that “Anse has not been in town in twelve years” (42). This indicates not only that Jewel puts forth an effort in order to take care of his appearance, but it also suggests that Jewel does not have difficulty moving beyond the rural world and interacting with townspeople.

When the wagon breaks down during Darl and Jewel’s trip “to haul one more load,” Jewel is the one who is standing “ankle deep in the running ditch” (52) trying to fix the broken wheel. Darl merely observes and taunts his brother. When it comes time to place Addie’s coffin on the wagon, it is Jewel who “carries the entire front end alone” (98) when others want to wait for more hands to bear the weight. Jewel is not a verbose person; he acts. Another parallel to *The Odyssey* comes later in the novel when Darl asks Jewel the same question Athena asks Telemakhos. Darl goads Jewel by saying “Your mother was a horse, but who was your father Jewel?” (212). Telemakhos’ answer to Athena is “It’s a wise child that knows its own father,” which acknowledges his understanding of his ignorance and his acceptance that his fatherless state

defines his passive status. Telemakhos needs his father, for he cannot claim the paternal role for himself. Jewel, on the other hand, refuses to accept a fatherless state as he lashes out at Darl, snarling “You goddam lying son of a bitch” (213).

This question of deprived parentage is at the heart of the angst of the novel. Darl’s bitterness over Addie’s rejection and his “nearly all consuming desire for his mother” (Woodbery 40) drive him to inflict this same pain on his brother, the object of Addie’s affection. Darl sees Jewel as thriving with only one parent and cannot fathom how this could be. As Darl questions Jewel about his parentage, Darl wants to somehow force Jewel into understanding his lack. With this line of questioning, Darl is attempting to shatter what he views as Jewel’s “perfect” world.

But Jewel is impervious to Darl’s attacks. Betty Alldredge, in her article “Spatial Form in Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*,” also examines Jewel’s selfhood. She points out that “as polar opposite of Darl, Jewel, who has had affection and recognition, knows who he is and consequently is free to live – to love as well as hate” (13). Jewel can withstand Darl’s taunts. He acts as a man enduring the verbal attacks of a child. Jewel has everything he needs to claim father/manhood. Alldredge goes on to point out that Addie’s death provides Jewel the opportunity to move on. “At Addie’s death, Jewel is able to translate his intense grief into positive action; his ultimate act of love is the sacrifice of his horse” (13).

Bleikasten also provides evidence that Darl's vision of Jewel's ideal world may be right on target. Bleikasten situates Jewel in a position where he can flourish without parental boundaries. He points out that "while being motherless has tragic consequences for Darl, the absence of a father and the exclusive intimacy it allowed to develop with the mother seem on the contrary to have confirmed Jewel in his being and to have given him more vital strength than any of the other Bundren children" (92). Addie makes Jewel strong; in many ways she plays the father figure for him. Without that traditional father figure to assume control, Jewel can stand outside of the Law of the Father, yet occupy the patriarchal position himself.

This notion would explain several things. First, Jewel claims the role of patriarch in his only monologue. He imagines separating Addie from all others, clearly an action that would rightfully belong to a mate, not a child. He wants to take her to a "high hill" where he can protect her by lobbing "rocks" at all on comers. Jewel has an expectation of privilege where his mother is concerned and an understanding that he is her partner, her most beloved.

Secondly, Jewel identifies his rival for Addie's affection and dismisses him. Cash, the only other "active" Bundren male, is the only person who factors in as a possible threat in Jewel's mind. But Jewel perceives Cash as a simpleton, a bumbler who fills Addie's "bread pan" with "fertilizer." Jewel sees Cash as ineffective since Cash is not protecting Addie; he is complicit with the others,

fostering the idea that Addie is headed for death by building the coffin beneath her window. This makes Cash just another person “burning hell to get her there” (19).

Jewel must be defined as a man of action. Jewel’s preference for action and hatred of words or talk help to characterize him as distinctly Addie’s child - one born out of her own illicit action. The situation of his conception marks him as one who must act. He will not wait for others to bear any weight for him. When Jewel decides to purchase a horse, he takes it upon himself to earn the money in secret - working himself almost to collapse. Jewel takes on the additional burden of “clean[ing] up . . . forty acres of new ground [for Mr.] Quick” (135) rather than go to Anse and request the money. Without mentioning his plans, Jewel simply slips out of the window at night and works for what he wants. He wants a horse. He earns the money. He buys the horse.

Darl spends an entire chapter examining Jewel’s acquisition of his prize animal. He goes into great detail explaining Jewel’s odd behavior, his sleeping at odd times, his barely being able to function after what seemed like a good night’s sleep and finally Darl reports the tale of the fierce pride Jewel displays when he gallops his horse, the fruit of his labor and no one else’s, across the field to where his family waited. Jewel tells Anse, “You wont need to worry about it” (135). As far as Jewel is concerned, the horse is his responsibility alone. He will

groom and feed it and he alone will ride it. Most importantly, Jewel will provide for his horse in the manner that Anse should be caring for Addie.

And when the family argues over not having called ahead so Addie's grave might be open and awaiting their arrival, it is Jewel who is undaunted by the task and asks repeatedly, "Who the hell cant dig a hole in the ground?" (228). Where his family can only imagine obstacles, Jewel sees paths yet to be cleared. Because of his mature inner drive, Jewel is undaunted by any task that the horrific journey might throw at him. During his Odyssey to bury his mother, Jewel does not wait for compliance or permission from anyone. He claims the traditional paternal role and forges ahead. These various actions - shouldering additional responsibility, working without complaint, refusing to beg for a handout or wait for help or ask permission - all define Jewel as a "man" not a "child," a "Father" not a "son."

Because Anse is not his father, Jewel escapes the double curse of telepathy and "second sight". This may also explain why Darl is the only sibling obsessed with Jewel's parentage. It is clear that he is the only one who knows of Addie's indiscretion. Part of the reason Darl knows that Jewel is not Anse's child has got to be Jewel's inability to communicate telepathically with the others. In this way, Jewel's lack of telepathic ability makes him the target of Darl's wrath and life long fixation. But in another way this lack in Jewel allows him to escape certain issues that plague the family. Because Darl lives so much of his life

inside of his head, he is considered odd by most of the folks in the small community. His taciturn nature combined with his tendency to look through people cause many to feel discomfort in his presence.

The local minister is key to understanding Jewel's distrust of language and his use of action over language. Whitfield, Jewel's absent father, uses words well, but falsely. His entire existence is a mockery of patriarchy and everything society holds dear. In well-mannered society, the purpose of the church and the clergy is to uphold and preserve the Laws of the Father, yet Whitfield pursues an affair with a married woman. There is no indication that he provides any care or comfort concerning Jewel's parentage. Addie explains: "Then it was over. Over in the sense that he was gone and I knew that, seeing him again though I would, I would never again see him coming swift and secret to me in the woods . . ." (175).

He displays the height of hypocrisy once he discovers that Addie is dying. Whitfield's one section is filled with grandiose and pompous language, displaying his knowledge of and his ability to feign being a steadfast believer of patriarchal teachings. But throughout his self-congratulatory paragraphs, Whitfield's metaphoric slip is showing. As he speeds toward the Bundren farm, Whitfield "wants" to confess, but he is relieved to hear Addie died without mentioning their indiscretions. At this point, he "confesses" to Anse, "even though he was not

there" (179). Once he enters the Bundren house, he thinks only of his "cleansed" soul, not of the son Addie has left behind.

With such a deplorable specimen for a father, it is understandable that Jewel has an innate disrespect for words. Addie, who distrusts all words and the hypocritical Whitfield, who spouts nothing but religious nonsense that belies his and Addie's adulterous relationship, spawn a child who lives by actions not by words. Despite what outsiders like Cora might think, Jewel's love for his mother is very real, regardless of his inability to give it voice. Jewel only needs one chapter, one monologue, for the reader to understand that everything he does is done out of his difficult silent love for his mother.

Cash as Patriarch

Cash is the primary hope that the Bundrens have for the future despite his telepathic abilities. "He alone among the brothers is neither delusional nor obsessed; and he is one of the few Faulkner characters who are not merely revealed but also grow as a consequence of their experience" (Howe 188). Bockting explores Cash's position in his family. She suggests that "Cash's place as the eldest brother in the family makes it natural for him to function as the leader of the undertaking. This role of 'being the oldest' (217) dictates his sense of responsibility, and shows why he can ignore their inadequate father more easily than the others and is even able to remove him from the scene" (142). He is the future Bundren patriarch. Darl will never leave the hospital in Jackson.

Dewey Dell will be hampered with an illegitimate child to care for. She will not have Addie or a husband there to assist her. Dewey Dell is incapable of getting help for herself; she will not do a better job getting help for her child. Vardaman may be the next Bundren to end up in the Jackson asylum. Of course, Jewel, who is not really a Bundren, seems to have half a chance at success. After all, he is tenacious when he sets a goal for himself.

Most significantly, Anse has married badly again. Cash reports that the second Mrs. Bundren is “a kind of duck-shaped woman all dressed up, with them kind of hardlooking pop eyes like she was daring ere a man to say nothing” (260). The defiance inherent in the “duck shaped” woman will inevitably lead to him ending his days as an ineffectual man. Faulkner does not provide much information about Anse’s new wife, but what little he does reveal to the reader seems weighty.

The fact that she greets her new family with a glare that “dared ere a man” (261) suggests that she is a strong willed woman who thinks well of herself. She is not likely to quietly put up with Anse’s habits. Although his new teeth might reduce his need to mumble, they cannot correct Anse’s misuse of words or his disastrous choice of a mate or help increase his active role in the family. It will not be long before she is working against him just as Addie had done before her. New teeth can be hidden or destroyed. This leaves room for Cash to take over and run the family.

Anse leaves the door open for Cash to become the patriarch in another way as well. The final monologue belongs to Cash, during which he gives the reader a glimpse into the Bundren future. He sees the family listening to the music the “graphophone” will provide. Cash’s focus on the music machine is crucial. He is the only child who comes out of the funeral journey with what he wanted because he wanted to purchase a machine just like the one that comes with the new wife. In this way, Anse fulfills Cash’s dream rather than crushing it as he does the hopes and dreams of the other Bundren children.

Cash is the only one with learned skills, which help to uplift and define him as an individual who functions above normal Bundren standards. These carpentry skills provide Cash with one essential thing Anse does not have, the respect of the community. Cora describes him as “a good carpenter and always more building than he can get around to” (24). Several characters comment on Cash’s abilities or remind him that he is supposed to do work for them, so it is clear that everyone agrees that he is proficient at his craft and much sought after as a worker. Cash is a necessary part of the community. “In Cash there is an acceptance of himself, at least in a limited way, through his pride in his carpentry, an acceptance echoed by his family and neighbors” (Alldredge 10). This self-acceptance, bolstered by his strong ties to the community, makes Cash the most functional member of the Bundren clan. He is a hard worker whose profession has meaning for him.

It is significant that his skill involves an old world occupation. His care and precision in his work also connect him to a bygone era. He uses his hands and his imagination to take something from nature, wood, and produce structures that enhance the lives of mankind. Woodworking is a Biblical profession; it was Christ's chosen occupation. Not only does carpentry speak of nobility that avoids the technological world that Faulkner found so jarring in his life, it grounds Cash as a long suffering Christ figure.

Cash is the only person who earns a compliment from Darl. "A good carpenter, Cash is" (4) Darl observes. As he admires his brother's work on their mother's coffin, Darl admits that she "could not want a better one, a better box to lie in" (5). Darl, who feels nothing but contempt for most of his family members and neighbors, who "equates his father and Jewel with caricatures" (Petty 29), who torments his pregnant sister and can only communicate deep seated concerns to his prepubescent brother, admits an appreciation for Cash's skills.

At the start of the novel, Cash is laboring under the same Bundren curse as the others; communication is not his strength. There is a glut of evidence to substantiate this notion. First, Cash is the last Bundren, other than Addie, to have a monologue. Even Vardaman speaks before Cash does.

Secondly, during his first chance to tell his story Cash isn't even able to express free flowing thought; instead he presents a list of reasons he beveled the

coffin. The forced order of list-making seems to comfort him during this time of stress.

Thirdly, Tull reports that “them durn women” (90) place Addie in the coffin upside down, which destroys the balance of Cash’s well-thought-out design. Cash complains, “I made it to balance with her. I made it to her measure and weight” (90). None of the women pay any attention to his concerns. During his next monologue, which concerns the awkward movement of the unbalanced coffin, Cash is interrupted mid sentence and never gets to finish his thought. Early in the text, Cash is inarticulate and when he does try to express his concerns, he is ignored.

Carpentry, Cash’s ability to build and construct, offers him an opportunity to express what he cannot say. Cash cannot respond to Armstid when asked if the weather is causing him pain because of his injury, but Cash readily answers with the exact height of the church when the farmer asks “How far’d you fall, Cash?” (90). Ineke Bocting points out that Cash shows his devotion to his mother through his act of constructing the coffin in accordance to her wishes and instructions.

The most essential aspect of Cash’s character is that he chooses not to use his clairvoyance, which suggests that he is capable of surviving in society. It is clear that he has the gift. Darl reveals Cash’s ability during the monologue that focuses on Jewel’s horse. As Cash and Darl discuss Jewel’s odd behavior, Darl

thinks about Jewel's difficulties after birth. Darl remembers Addie "holding [Jewel] on a pillow on her lap" (144). Cash verbally responds to Darl's silent memories by stating "That pillow was longer than him" (144). By this point in the novel, it is clear that the Bundren siblings habitually converse with each other in a nonverbal manner. Cash hears his brother's silent communication, yet he decides to respond through the use of conventional verbal communication.

This action must be viewed as a crucial divide between Cash and his siblings. He could have responded in kind, but Cash chooses not to do so. Even in private, when there is no need to worry about the perceptions of on lookers, Cash chooses to function as a part of traditional society.

Cash may choose to communicate by conventional methods because of his position as eldest child. Jacobi points out that "during the narrative he develops as a reflective observer. It is fair to say that he is the child of both parents in a way none of the others are. Kinney says that 'Cash is the best adjusted, because he is the only child born in wedlock whom Addie truly loves' (174)" (Jacobi 69). Having both Addie and Anse love him suggests that Cash is the only Bundren offspring to benefit from the attention of both parents, which explains his steady growth throughout the novel.

Before Darl's birth, Addie, Anse and Cash are a healthy family unit. "The crucial function which psychoanalysis assigns to the father in the dialectic of desire and law that, under normal circumstances, leads to the achievement of

selfhood” (Bleikasten “Fathers” 119) is present in the beginning and allows Cash to develop a stable sense of who he is. Cash is afforded the opportunity that is denied Darl since Addie does not begin to work against Anse by mentally killing him off until she becomes pregnant with Darl. Anse’s presence “allows [Cash] to move on to other object-choices, and furthers his entry into the system of alliance which rules and regulates the wider world of human exchange” (Bleikasten “Fathers” 119). Cash has an unaltered patriarch to usher him into the Law of the Father, thus, according to Lacan, he has most of what he needs to be a functioning member of society.

Bleikasten explains that Cash “typifies a possible form of wisdom. It consists of resignation at the irremediable, at suffering and death, of submission to the established order and most of all of faith in work and in the creative resources of the individual” (F’s AILD 87). These qualities, which Faulkner himself admired, suggest that by the end of the novel Cash is ready to claim the role of patriarch of the Bundren family. Jan Bakker captures Cash’s essence when he writes “He is unselfish in a quiet, unobtrusive way; the values he believes in may be simple and direct, but he shows dignity and integrity” (225).

In conclusion, Lacanian theory provides a complex dimension for examining Faulkner’s world. Faulkner’s characters are often beset by difficult circumstances that test their mettle and define who they are. Urgo points out in his introduction to *Faulkner and the Ecology of the South* that the primary

struggle for many of Faulkner's characters "is best understood as their time and place, the social and the intellectual environment which has produced them and their alienation" (xiii). At its very heart, *AILD* is a novel about "alienation."

Faulkner's concern in this text seems to revolve around how all of the Bundren characters negotiate "their alienation."

Polite society is based on an understanding of certain rules. One fundamental rule is that the purpose of language is to communicate. In *As I Lay Dying*, telepathy and clairvoyance act to disrupt the balance established by the rules and laws of language. If the Law of the Father is based in language, then to communicate without language, to flout or even shun language, is an act of disorder or anarchy. For the sake of society, this cannot be allowed. Addie's journey to her final resting place is an abomination to outsiders, yet all of the Bundrens do make some attempt to negotiate their alienation as the funeral procession gets closer to Jefferson with differing results. "When viewed from the inside . . . the trip is a demonstration of each character's relative struggle to wrest control by applying personal interpretation and value to his/her circumstance and predicaments" (Urigo FA 62). The Bundrens' special gifts only complicate things.

Each character is "marked" in a way that suggests that some of them will fare well in Faulkner's world, while others are doomed from the beginning. Lacanian theory along with the ideas of clairvoyance and telepathy aid in understanding the hows and the whys. Most of the siblings exhibit either one or

both of these “talents” at different points in the novel. Darl, the odd son who “folks talk about”, is the first to demonstrate the hidden Bundren ability when he spies on Jewel and the horse, despite being some distance away and out of the sight line of the barn. He is condemned to the asylum in Jackson because of his inability to define himself apart from his triadic relationship with Addie and Jewel. His despair leads him to burning the barn, which, for society, is the final straw.

Dewey Dell is the next to evidence a hidden talent. It is Dewey Dell who establishes how important the silent communication is for the siblings. She knows how serious her situation is because Darl communicates his discovery to her by telepathy. Her alarm concerning his silent threat to reveal her loss of virginity and subsequent pregnancy emphasizes this importance. And her vehement attack on Darl underscores her very real fear and desperation.

Because of his youth and confusion, Vardaman does not exhibit clear cut instances of telepathy, but the conversations he shares with Darl are revealing. Vardaman is the only person to whom Darl tells exactly what is on his mind. When he tells Darl that his “mother is a fish” (101), Darl calmly replies that “Jewel’s mother is a horse” (101). The ease apparent in this odd exchange speaks to a familial connectedness that Jewel cannot claim.

Cash is the last of the siblings to evince telepathic powers. There is only one telepathic exchange between Darl and Cash and none between Cash and Dewey Dell. As Darl muses over Jewel’s difficult infancy, Cash verbally

responds “That pillow was longer than him” (144). This exchange illustrates that Cash does have telepathic abilities because he reads Darl’s mind, but he prefers conventional means of communication. Cash can survive. He makes himself a part of the world. Given choice and opportunity, he conforms to society’s norms rather than fall back on the familial telepathy.

And even when he does speak, Cash is sparse and competent with his language. “It is he who actually builds the coffin, directs the journey and manages the burial, without ever partaking of the loquacity of Anse. He speaks directly only after something concrete has been accomplished, after the coffin has been finished” (Vickery 195). Anse’s legacy will not be the end of the Bundren line. The common thread between all of the siblings is Darl. He is the touchstone who speaks telepathically with everyone who is able to respond to him.

Perhaps the biggest surprise is Anse. At the beginning of the novel Anse is a weakling who is releasing himself from a long confinement. As the novel progresses, he steadily moves into a position of strength. He “discards” his annoying first wife and uses his children and their assets to help him obtain a new wife. Ironically, his clairvoyance did not warn him that Addie was not the wife for him and unfortunately it does not help him do any better of a job when he picks the new Mrs. Bundren.

CHAPTER FOUR

IN THE ABSENCE OF NEGROES: THE RACIALIZATION OF THE BUNDRENS.

“Now there are seven of them, in little tall black circles” (194).

As I Lay Dying is an atypical Faulknerian novel in that it is one of a handful of his major works that does not openly address the ever-present Southern issue of race relations. Thadious Davis explains that the concept of “the ‘Negro’ is a central imaginative force in Faulkner’s fiction” (FN 2). So it only follows that in his tale about a poor white family, Faulkner would still take the opportunity to address one of his central themes. On the surface, the Negro is absent from *As I Lay Dying*. But hidden in this novel “with no visible black presence” (qtd. in Watson 5) is a determined debate about the issue of whiteness.

The concept of whiteness has dual implications. First, it speaks to the anxiety felt by whites, especially in the South. There was a need on the part of the white southerner to enforce the notion of white supremacy in order to carve out and solidify an identity of societal dominance. “In a society structured on racial subordination, white privilege became an expectation” (Harris 281). After the abolishment of slavery, the working and living quarters between blacks and whites suddenly seemed too close. Grace Hale points out, for example, that the fact that whites and blacks purchased many of the same items in the same stores subverted an ideology of absolute white supremacy” (173). There are countless other instances where the lives of black and white southerners rubbed

uncomfortably close to each other. In an attempt to deny any and all connection to “blackness,” Southern society erected strict, if tacit, boundaries around the concept of “whiteness.”

Secondly, “whiteness” suggests a way of looking at society and history and examining whites as simply another group of people and not the primary group that all others must be measured against. From this idea the new field of whiteness studies has sprung. For the white supremacist and any others who hold fast to the idea of a segregated South, this refigured notion of whiteness must be a dangerous and subversive thing since the basic principles of whiteness are being questioned. “Critics of whiteness have argued that the abstractness of whiteness is responsible for the political dominance of whites in modern Western cultures. Abstracted from particular physical attributes as well as from history and cultural practices, whiteness is understood as inclusive, neutral, normal, and unremarkable, difficult to specify or define” (McKee 3). By focusing on whiteness as an entity among other entities, its hold on the dominant position in society can be loosened.

In the last decade, critics have begun to explore the idea of whiteness studies and its importance as a component of the discussion on Race. One prong of that exploration is evolving into the discussion of who is assigned “white privilege.” Even among whites there is an element of jockeying for social positions. Middle class white southerners uplifted and affirmed their position in

society “by racializing . . . white trash as somehow biologically or genetically inferior to themselves” (Leyda 41). The Bundren family is an excellent example of Faulkner’s depiction of typical white trash. The author’s tale of this white trash family becomes a conduit for expressing his views on race relations in the South.

John Duvall points out that Faulkner’s “narratives negotiate racial struggle even when race seems absent from the reader’s field of vision; these narrative are, in other words, racialized in a way that enables a critical purchase on whiteness” (108). Because white trash individuals are racialized in Southern culture, they are more closely identified with African American stereotypes. The white trash and the African American occupy “an area of ‘racial’ sameness” (Hale 296) that the middle/upper class white southerner refuses to acknowledge, that they are horrified to admit might be extended to themselves.

More succinctly put, white trash individuals are generally accused of having “nigger attributes.” Masami Sugimori explains that several of these “attributes [include] ‘ignorance,’ ‘cowardice,’ ‘childishness,’ ‘subservience,’ ‘savageness,’ and ‘brutality’” (56). Hale also lists “the black mammy and the black whore, the Uncle Remus and the rapist” (293) as other stereotypes African Americans have had to overcome. In Faulkner’s south, any individuals such as the Bundrens who find themselves aligned with these, or many more, negative traits have to prove their whiteness with their every action. Here then is evidence that in America, especially in the South, the issue of race is ever present, ever

relevant, and forever responsible for the behaviors and reactions of those who live under its considerable weight.

For thirty seven pages only, Faulkner plays with the idea of the Bundren family as Black. Cheryl Lester confirms that as the family members are “entering into new social relationships from the time they arrive in Mottson to the time they get to Jefferson, the Bundrens are increasingly identified with blackness” (47). At first, it seems odd that the “N” word should be used in a 261 page tale where African Americans are present for only three sentences. Yet, “nigger” is used four times in the novel and, with the exception of Darl, all of the Bundren offspring have the slur aimed at them in some form or they are in some way associated with Blackness. In each case, the slur is used to “reduce” the character’s position in society to that of an African American.

Relevant Criticism

The foundation of all racism is that racial difference is grounded in biology. For centuries, the traditional belief has been that since African Americans are “view[ed] as inferior to whites, they are not deserving of the same rights reserved for white persons” (Robinson 100). Kwame A. Appiah argues “that a biologically rooted conception of race is both dangerous in practice and misleading in theory” (176). This theory of a biological difference has allowed the dominant society to classify African Americans as less intelligent than whites and given to behaviors that cultured white society would find distasteful. Appiah also contends that the

idea of race is a construct created by society which has no basis in “biology” and therefore there isn’t a reason to create subgroups of human beings. Using Appiah’s theory, it is possible to examine the way individuals and society construct race and also how individuals might be stripped of their white identity. This line of thinking would allow consideration of Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying* seems to argue “that race is not a simple matter of essence or biology but is always mediated by performance” (Duvall 106).

W. J. Cash thoroughly discusses the state of the South midway through the 20th century, including the issue of “white trash” in *The Mind of the South*. Cash attempts to explode the widespread myths concerning the make up of the “white trash” population.^{vi} He redefines them thusly: “The poor whites in the strictest sense were merely the weakest element of the old backcountry population” (23). Faulkner illustrates this distinction in the persons of Anse and Tull. Anse epitomizes “white trash” while Tull represents the segment of poor white America that learned to thrive as cities began to gobble up farm land. Anse’s laziness contributes to his family’s financial ruin; Tull’s business savvy leads to his family’s prosperity and positions them to eventually move into the middle class.

Dina Smith takes over where W.J. Cash leaves off in the exploration of “white trash” in the South. In her article titled “Cultural Studies’ Misfit: White Trash Studies,” Smith further defines the pejorative term “white trash.” She

gathers together various theorists and examines their speculations about the “lived-lives of many Southern poor white/working-class populations” (369). She suggests that the term “white trash” has gone through any number of stages including as a term that defines those who “are stuck in place” (370). An inability to be mobile, or escape their situation is one of the original connotations surrounding the idea of white trash. Smith also points out that “the term historically designated a border position between white privilege and black disenfranchisement” (370). She goes on to chronicle various stages of the phrase through novels and critical work during the 20th century.

Julia Leyda brings together the notion of white trash and Faulkner in her article “Reading White Trash: Class, Race and Mobility in Faulkner and LeSueur.” She too examines the question of mobility and the concept of white trash. She states that “William Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying* (1930) suggest[s] the historically specific ways in which poor whites are read as white trash in 1930s American texts” (38-9). She directly states the society/race connection in the novel when she points out that “Anse Bundren’s racialized class position, [and that of his family], is articulated in the novel through others’ perceptions of him” (Leyda 42). She goes on to explain that “the function of geography in the white trash identity is . . . central: town whites must ‘other’ the rural whites to preserve their own class and racial identity as white capitalists” (Leyda 40-1).

The Faulkner Journal devoted the entire fall 2006/spring 2007 issue to the theme of positioning Faulkner's canon into the field of Whiteness Studies. Jay Watson edited this breakthrough volume and wrote the introduction. He explains that society "ignore[s] whiteness at our peril" (3). Watson explains that by refusing to examine what it means to be white, society is de-centering those races that are judged as "not white" and making whiteness the standard by which all (O)thers are to be judged. Using Thadious Davis, Watson goes on to illustrate that Faulkner's focused concern about race makes him a natural choice for studying how whiteness functions in American Literature. Several contributors to the volume do an excellent job of examining the whiteness issue including Cheryl Lester, John Duvall and Masami Sugimori.

In her examination of "rural depopulation," Cheryl Lester uses Raymond Williams, Kevin Railey, Leyda and Marx to assess notions of race and class in *As I Lay Dying*. She is the first to pinpoint the location during the journey where the issue of race slips in to displace the issue of class. Her article is an exploration of "the lived experience of migration, social and spatial dislocation, and rural depopulation, on one hand, and social identities, subjectivities, social relationships, and interdependency, on the other" (Lester 29). Although her writing leans heavily towards Marxism, Lester does provide some cogent information about the formulation of the racialized poor white by the southern middle class and mobility. She examines those persons who attempted to move

“from the isolated Southern agrarian communities to towns and cities within and beyond the South” (Lester 35).

John N. Duvall’s contribution to the issue of *The Faulkner Journal* is titled, “‘A Strange Nigger’: Faulkner and the Minstrel Performance of Whiteness.” In it Duvall correctly points out “that not all Caucasians are fully white in a South that wishes to absolutize all racial difference” (106). Those who have their white cards yanked by society are classified as white trash. Duvall highlights a few of the behavioral elements in some of Faulkner’s characters who negate their whiteness. According to Duvall, “sexual . . . difference works to exclude certain Caucasians from the metaphysical privilege of whiteness” (108).

The Problem of Vardaman

The youngest sibling, Vardaman, is the central figure in Faulkner’s commentary on race in the text. The author uses the youngster to focus the reader’s attention on the issue by first using a name that during the 1920s would have immediately foregrounded racial hatred. In Mississippi, the name Vardaman was synonymous with outrageous racism. W. K. Vardaman was a Mississippi politician with a reputation for virulent racism, who instigated unrest when relations between the races were too calm. W. J. Cash quotes Vardaman as saying, “The way to control the nigger is to whip him when he does not obey without it and another is never to pay him more wages than is actually necessary

to buy food and clothing” (248). All of the emotional turmoil associated with this malignant politician is settled onto the fictional shoulders of young Vardaman Bundren.

Next, Faulkner uses Vardaman to build the initial construct of the Southern “dual nature of being” by introducing buzzards into the text as a metaphor for blackness. Vardaman has the monologue positioned right before the family reaches the first town and it is in this monologue that Faulkner begins his experimentation of Bundren whiteness vs. Bundren blackness. The monologue opens with the youngster obsessing about the vultures that have been trailing behind the family in search of a meal. Vardaman notes that “there are seven” (194) buzzards in the sky, and he goes on to describe them as “little tall black circles” (194). These vultures are the first association with blackness in the text, and there is one buzzard for each family member.

Finally, Faulkner uses Vardaman to aim the slur at various family members. Here Faulkner couples internal familial racialization with his external societal racializations. Although Vardaman is not the first person to use the “n” word, he is the only family member who does. The youngster is the one who directly connects his family to African Americans. While cataloging the injuries the family has sustained during the burial journey, Vardaman describes first Cash and then Jewel using the “n” word. Faulkner seems to be taking a “safe” route by putting such inflammatory comments into the mouth of a child. The child’s use of

the word points to the “sins” of the adults around him, his family and neighbors. His casual use of profanity highlights one of the oxymorons that are metaphors for life in the south. Through Vardaman Faulkner uses the “perverse innocence” so common in the South that easily goes back as far as Mark Twain’s Huck Finn.

Vardaman is a very young child who has clearly heard the “n” word used matter-of-factly. Yet, he is innocent and sees nothing wrong with using the hateful slur to describe those closest to him, members of his own family. He does not hesitate to use the word three times in front of his family. Oddly, none of the other Bundrens use the word, yet not a one of his family members bothers to correct him. So by repeatedly associating his siblings and himself with blackness, Vardaman presents his family as a group of questionable whites.

Behavior and Economics

Duvall argues that there are “two classes of Caucasians not granted full Southern whiteness in Faulkner’s world” (108). He groups these classes by “sexual difference” and poverty. Although Duvall’s inclusion of economics is right on point, his assertion about sexual difference feels too narrow. A more thorough classification is unacceptable behavior, which would include sexual difference. Throughout Faulkner’s fiction there are “characters who do whiteness wrong, sometimes flamboyantly, spectacularly wrong” (Watson 10). And there are plenty of things wrong with the Bundren family. For this family of poor, White

farmers, spectacularly wrong fits nicely into the two categories of behavior issues and economics issues. The most egregious issue with the Bundren family is behavior.

Even before the family places Addie upside down in her coffin, their questionable behavior firmly establishes them as people who would have their whiteness negated by “regular” society. In the South, “White belief in black intellectual inferiority” (Robinson 101) is easily extended to certain Whites who can then be grouped together under the derogatory term “White Trash.” There are numerous incidents in the text, which indicate that common sense is in short supply in the Bundren household. For example, Darl explains that the weather is so hot that the path he and Jewel travel is “baked brick-hard by July” (3), yet Addie lies in a bed with a “quilt . . . drawn up to her chin” (8) while Dewey Dell stands “right over her, fanning her with a fan” (9). This situation may be comic, but it is also senseless.

It is July in Mississippi. The quilt isn’t needed. Apparently, someone has noticed that Addie is overheated, but no one has the common sense to remove the quilt rather than stand over her most of the day fanning. Their participation in the funeral journey also renders them only half white. As they move from the relative safety of their rural community where everyone knows about the family’s oddities, they expose themselves to the unfriendly scrutiny of the townspeople who do not want to be associated with backwoods inhabitants.

There are also issues of sexual difference in the novel. The haplessly pregnant Dewey Dell fits into this mode. One aspect of this sexual difference is based on “stereotypes of African Americans and primitive sexuality” (Duvall 108-9). Faulkner explored this same situation in *The Sound and the Fury* with middle-class Caddy Compson’s tryst in Benjy’s pasture with Dalton Ames. Brother Quentin reports part of a conversation he had with his sister. “Why wont you bring him to the house, Caddy? Why must you do like nigger women do in the pasture the ditches the dark woods hot hidden furious in the dark woods” (Faulkner *TS&TF* 92). The end of Quentin’s question where he repeats the term “dark woods” mirrors the excessive passion equated with the “animalistic appetites” of African Americans.

Quentin defines these uncontained, forbidden feelings, which for him are “hot hidden furious” by their location, out of doors, close to nature, away from everything that speaks of civilization. By giving up control to Lafe, Dewey relinquishes what little purchase she had on her white identity. Having sex in a field with Lafe qualifies as “primitive sexuality,” which reduces her to the level of an African American and leads to Dewey Dell becoming the victim of sexual aggression a second time.

The final concern is economics. Because of their poverty, the family members are racialized once they reach the town of Mottson solidifying the notion that racial identity is locked with the dilemma societal perception.

Although Vardaman's section begins the 35 pages of racial consciousness, it takes an upstanding townsman to aim the first "n" word at one of the Bundrens. At every turn the Bundrens are judged and found wanting.

The family's shabbiness permeates the journey and defines them to the outside world. Their dire financial situation is repeatedly narrated by outsiders. From the doctor to the druggist, the townspeople, those with money, give voice to the deficiency in the family's life and interpret the Bundrens' poverty as a racialized condition. Peabody is not satisfied by the "plain turnip greens" (60) that the family accepts as a meal. He needs more. He asks Dewey Dell "Where's that big fish Bud caught, sister?" (60). Moseley captures the essence of society's view of the family as he describes their "ramshackle wagon that Albert said folks were scared would fall all to pieces before they could get it out of town, with that home-made box" (203). The "respectable druggist" is the one who describes how Darl persuades "Grummet [the shopkeeper to] break a sack and let him have ten cents' worth" (204) of cement. Every instance of poverty moves the Bundrens a step closer to being "Negro."

Dewey Dell as Negro

The first character to be associated with the word "nigger" is Dewey Dell. She is the easiest Bundren to "attack" since her gender leaves her vulnerable. It is a telling act for Faulkner to open his 37 pages with Dewey Dell completely out

of her element, and hopelessly seeking help. Her episode in the woods with Lufe indicates that she is pliant and without the courage or good sense to make her own decisions or protect herself. She projects this attitude of helplessness into the world around her. Hence, her sexuality is perceived as available. This is a viewpoint that parallels the societal perception of the African women who were held in slavery. Their sexuality was also perceived as being there for the taking, which led to the creation of a new race of people -- African Americans.

Dewey Dell is incapable of taking the initiative to approach Peabody about her pregnancy, so she is left to turn to strangers. Moseley, an upstanding citizen of Mottson, looks at her “bare feet” and “blank eyes” and makes assumptions about her. The pharmacist, arguably an educated man and respected member of the middle class privileged white community, looks at the young woman at his store window and passes judgment on her. When she enters Moseley’s drug store, he assumes she will purchase either “a cheap comb or a bottle of nigger toilet water” (199). Although the sudden appearance of the slur is startling, it might still be easy to pass its use off as an indication of Moseley’s mindset.

But there is something deeper building here. The punch in the gut delivered to the reader by the sudden appearance of the “n” word is enough to cause hesitation. Surely Moseley has not insulted her. But his opinion of Dewey Dell is apparent when he suggests that she should “go back home and tell [her] pa, if [she has] one” (201) about her pregnancy. Here is another parallel with

Blackness. Black men have been stereotyped as irresponsible and /or incompetent for decades. Therefore it is not surprising that Moseley questions whether there are responsible men in Dewey Dell's life, men who are willing and able to care for their women folk. He clearly assumes that the middle class standard of a respectable and involved patriarch is absent from Dewey Dell's existence.

Leyda also examines this passage in the text. She points out that "the druggist's demarcation of Dewey Dell's likely purchase, toilet water, as somehow signifying 'nigger' exemplifies the ease with which discourse about class, i.e., a poor white girl, slips into a complementary discourse on race signifying white trash. Dewey Dell's predicted 'choice' signals that her tastes will run close to the tastes of African Americans in the druggist's estimation" (45). When Dewey Dell approaches MacGowan, she assumes that he is a second druggist. In actuality, he is merely a soda jerk. MacGowan and Jody, the other store clerk, judge her to be a "country woman" (241), an indication that she is "lesser than" them and fair game for whatever sexual escapades they might invent. They feel no need to be respectful towards her in any way.

MacGowan and Jody discuss her attributes in an unseemly manner. MacGowan does not want to be bothered with Dewey Dell and her problems until Jody mentions that "she looks like a pretty hot mamma, for a country girl" (242). Once he looks Dewey Dell over for himself, MacGowan arranges for his friend to

act as look out for the return of the real druggist. But, Jody's primary concern isn't for Dewey Dell's well being, but that as look out he will get "no seconds on it" (243). During this exchange, Dewey Dell is reduced to the status of a brood mare. MacGowan quips "What the hell do you think this is? . . . a stud farm?" Again, this idea of woman as breeding stock runs parallel the idea of raping African women in order to increase the number of available work hands on a plantation.

When MacGowan first sees Dewey Dell, he hopes to take sexual advantage of her. Once he "[knows] what she [is] talking about" (243) he is confident that he will not have a problem forcing himself on her. Clearly, if she is looking for a way to abort a pregnancy, she has already engaged in premarital intercourse. He even assumes that she has had multiple partners. This is another tactic for justifying taking advantage of her and for nearly poisoning her. Even though Dewey Dell assures him that "it aint but one" (244), MacGowan has sex with her in the "cellar" as part of her "treatment."

Vardaman as Negro

Vardaman is the next person to racialize the family. This internal racialization is most telling. As Dewey Dell and Vardaman attempt to fall asleep on their pallet on the back porch, Vardaman observes their legs in the moonlight. He notes that "the moon shines on half of the pallet and we will lie half in the

white and half in the black with the moonlight on our legs” (215-6). Here, Vardaman’s metaphor of the duality of their existence captures the act of being in between, not quite one thing and not quite the other. He comments, “‘Look,’ I say ‘my legs look black. Your legs look black’” (216). Dewey Dell ignores his profound statement, ordering him to sleep. But Vardaman aligns himself and Dewey Dell with the notion of de-privileged whites.

Cash as Negro

Cash’s racialization centers on the issue of economics. Cash possesses several things that position him to make a transition from his white trash status. First he has learned the skill of carpentry during a time when such skills are highly valued. Secondly, he has an exacting mind which has allowed him to perfect the skills that he has learned. Finally, Cash has the forward thinking which leads him to invest his earnings in purchasing tools of his own. His primary downfall is his family. Although Cash seems to have a decent intelligence, he passively lets his family push him into taking actions that are not in his best interest.

The youngest Bundren looks at his brother’s foot, which is changing color because gangrene is setting in and says “Your foot looks like a nigger’s Cash” (224). The condition of his foot has a direct connection to the idiocy of the funeral journey. There are several things that should have forestalled the trip.

The flood that destroyed the bridge should have convinced the family to bury Addie at New Hope. When the wagon was nearly destroyed while crossing the swollen stream, the family should have considered New Hope. It is at the banks of the river that the family begins to sustain injury. When Cash's leg was broken for the second time, instead of relishing the idea that it was the same leg he had broken while falling off of the church, the family should have reconsidered the folly of continuing and gone to New Hope instead. Setting the leg in concrete is another level of stupidity.

Julia Leyda thoroughly examines Cash's racialization in terms of mobility. She explains that early in the 20th century, mobility is just one more factor that separates the Races and the classes in the south. Those with money and opportunity had the chance to move from place to place and in that way change their circumstance. Cash is crippled once his leg is broken in the stream. He spends the rest of the journey prone on the coffin. Cash's chance at mobility is further hampered by his father's inept attempt at stabilizing his broken leg until they can reach the doctor in town. Leyda points out that Vardaman's comments about his brother's leg is an act of "layering another symbol of immobility onto Cash's already ridiculous situation by linking him, specifically his injured leg, with African Americans, who were also shut out of the economic promise of mobility in the New South" (58).

Cash, as his name must symbolize, is the Bundren with the ability to lift the family out of poverty. Yet it seems as if his family works against his every effort that could liberate them from “white trash” status. When he sees the makeshift concrete cast on Cash’s leg, Peabody rages, “Dont tell me it aint going to bother you to have to limp around on one short leg for the balance of your life – if you walk at all again” (240). After yelling at Cash for quietly allowing his family to maim him, Peabody turns to the primary cause of the family’s destruction. “God Almighty, why didn’t Anse carry you to the nearest sawmill and stick your leg in the saw? That would have cured it. Then you all could have stuck his head into the saw and cured the whole family” (240). The doctor tells Cash it will be at least a year before he will be able to “hobble around fine on this leg” (240).

Anse’s actions, which injure his eldest son, take money from his own pocket. But they also effectively shackle Cash and ensure that he will not be able to leave the family and go off on his own, at least for another year. Anse’s fear of the unlucky road that appears at his doorstep is a symptom that indicates fear of change and fear of progress and once again links the Bundren family to African Americans in a negative context. This small-mindedness parallels the actions of many African Americans who, themselves afraid of change or unsure of their own abilities to succeed in an unfamiliar environment seek to curtail the

upward movement of those around them who have stronger skills and fewer fears.^{vii}

Anse, for example, resents Cash's ability. Anse's first concern is the economic impact Cash's carpentry has on him. He complains that he has to "pay for Cash having to get them carpentry notion" (36). It seems unlikely that Anse actually comes out of pocket for Cash's tools. When Vernon Tull finds the "rule" in the swollen river, Darl explains that "it's right new. He bought it just last month out of the catalogue" (159). This comment suggests the truth is closer to Cash purchasing tools from his personal wages. Rather than looking at Cash's acquisition of tools and skill as an asset to the family, Anse greedily interprets these actions as simply depleting his available funds.

His next concern is about the loss of Cash's physical work. Anse is angry that Cash has the opportunity to get work out in the community. In some ways it seems that Cash has to apologize or explain when he has work elsewhere. Vardaman reports: "Cash is carrying his tool box. Pa looks at him. 'I'll stop at Tull's on the way back' Cash says. 'Get on that barn roof'" (101). Anse claims that Cash's actions "aint respectful" (101). Cash refuses to participate as 'slave' for Anse so his skills are outside of Anse's control. They are a direct loss of revenue for him. Anse plays the part of the victimized plantation owner as he complains that "there's plenty of sawing on this place he could do if he's got to saw" (36). The phrase "got to saw" highlights Anse's fundamental backwardness

and laziness. Anse is backwards because he cannot fathom why the progress that Cash is a part of is necessary. Anse is lazy because, again, he cannot fathom why his son should work for anyone other than himself. After all, he wants many children so that they could help him on the farm.

Cash's broken leg is actually an asset to his father. Cash tries to talk them out of using concrete on his leg. He asks as they hover above him, "Wont we get to Jefferson tomorrow?" (207). He insists that "I can wait it out" (207). But Anse insists "We done bought [the sand and concrete] now" (207) and they proceed to use the mixture to splint Cash's leg.

All of these things add up to the Bundrens having their claim on whiteness questioned. There are too many instances where common sense or circumstance should have made them turn back. But Anse is determined to get the family to Jefferson and Cash is injured in the process. Faulkner provides a pinprick of hope in Cash's situation. Lester points out that "Anse's sacrifice of Cash does not result in his death but rather in the impairment of his emergent social identity as a carpenter. To move freely in and out of agrarian life, Cash must remain of sound body and mind, equipped with the physical mobility, skills, tools, and social relationships necessary to practice his new trade" (39). Faulkner understands the changes that the New South is experiencing and the damage that may be done to certain individuals. Anse is definitely old South and Cash is part of the New South.

Cash's emergence may be impaired, but it is not forestalled completely. The Bundrens must find a way to adjust to the tidal wave of progress that pushes toward their isolated farm despite Anse's fear of the road and the change that it brings. Cash's survival, maimed but alive, sets the metaphoric template for the rural inhabitants of Yoknapatawpha County and others in the New South. There may be casualties, but there will be some who survive and thrive.

Jewel as Negro

Perhaps the most difficult person to categorize as raced is Jewel. He stands out from the other family members. After all, Jewel isn't really a Bundren. Addie is originally a "town woman" who marries "beneath" her social status. When she has an affair, she chooses another "town person," the minister, as the partner for her indiscretions. "If we see white trash as a race apart, Jewel is the only child [Bundren] of unmixed blood" (Palmer 131). But because of his unfortunate connection to Anse, he too falls into the category of white trash, even if only temporarily.

The easiest way to associate Jewel with African Americans is through his behavior, specifically his volatile anger, which seems to be the foundation of his nature. There is nothing tender about Jewel. Dewey Dell points out his hard stance that distances him from the rest of the family. "And Jewel don't care about anything he is not kin to us in caring, not care-kin" (26). Addie is the only

person he cares for, but still, there is nothing tender about Jewel. He even uses violence to display his affections. He imagines himself proving his love for his mother by suffering e.g. falling off of the roof instead of Cash, or having “that load of wood” (15) fall on him instead of on Anse.

In his fantasy, Jewel imagines how he would protect Addie from the “buzzards” who come to gawk at her and watch her die. He explains, “It would just be me and her on a high hill and me rolling the rocks down the hill at their faces, picking them up and throwing them down the hill faces and teeth and all by God until she was quiet . . .” (15). Jewel’s irrational anger is another “negro” stereotype. The “brutality” of Jewel’s emotions are uncivilized, his anger a constant in his interactions with everyone he encounters. Communication is difficult for Jewel. During his only monologue, he communicates with no one, neither does he introduce or report the dialogue or thoughts of anyone else. And when anyone narrates Jewel’s contributions to conversations, his words are always clipped and brusque.

As the family approaches Addie’s final destination, Jewel almost causes a fight with three negroes who are walking on the side of the road. They demonstrate the hollowness of stereotypes. One of the comments, “Great God . . . what they got on that wagon?” (229). These African Americans demonstrate common sense as well as “white” values: they are appalled by Addie’s smell. The

smell highlights the idiocy of the family's decision to transport an unembalmed corpse 30 miles in the Mississippi heat.

When Jewel hears the comment he shouts "Son of a bitches" (229). But he aims his curse at a white man by accident. "Jewel becomes confused over whom he should attack" (Lester 47). The wagon, which is moving faster than the pedestrians on the road, passes the Blacks and pulls abreast of the white man just in time for Jewel's attack. This error places Jewel and the family in an immediate position of having to defend their whiteness. The white man is insulted and reacts negatively to Jewel's swearing at him by producing a knife.

Jewel attempts to lower the man's claim on whiteness by saying "Thinks because he's a goddamn town fellow" (230). The thought behind Jewel's comment is that being from town does not make the traveler any whiter than Jewel. Darl reaffirms the pedestrian's whiteness by first calming the situation and making Jewel retract his comment, but then Darl attempts to affirm the family's whiteness by asking the man, "Do you think he's afraid to call you that?" (231).

There are two additional levels where Jewel is forced to relinquish his whiteness. These levels are situated in the areas of work and mobility. First, Faulkner centers Jewel's degradation on his back, which is the origin of Jewel's strength. Jewel is lying face down after saving his mother's corpse from the

burning barn. Vardaman racializes his half brother. He states, "Dewey Dell put medicine on it. The medicine was made out of butter and soot to draw out the fire. Then his back turned black. 'Does it hurt Jewel?' I said. 'Your back looks like a nigger's, Jewel' I said" (224). Jewel is separated from his family not only by virtue of his parentage, but also by his un-Bundren like ability for work. He distinguishes himself by using what he has, his physical strength, to get what he desires in life.

Jewel cannot claim Cash's skill with wood and tools. He must use his strong back and determination in order to become part of the new south Faulkner is imagining. Darl may be responsible for Jewel's injuries because he is the one who sets fire to the barn, but the fault must still be laid at Anse's feet. The journey is Anse's temporary redemption, his means to an end which decimates his family in the process. From the beginning Anse attempts to assimilate Jewel into the Bundren mindset. Jewel's injuries help Anse gain more control. Like Cash, Jewel is temporarily crippled. He is chained to Anse and the farm until he is healed enough to once again begin his trek away from the family.

Jewel's loss of mobility is another way that Anse gains more control. At the beginning of the journey, Anse is livid when Jewel shows up on "a durn circus animal" (105). Anse demands "You leave that horse here" (100). Anse wants everyone to travel in the wagon even though he suggests that it is Addie "wanting us all to be in the wagon with her that sprung from her flesh and blood" (105). He

is very cognizant of the family's appearance to society and having Jewel travel separately from the family "wouldn't look right" in his estimation. Having the entire family on the wagon allows Anse to present a united front to the world that will observe their foolish journey. No one family member will stand apart.

But Jewel ignores Anse's wishes. Anse attempts to absolve himself. "I tried to do as she would wish it. The Lord will pardon me and excuse the conduct of them He sent me" (106). This hypocritical prayer underscores Anse's complete disconnect from reality, for it is his conduct that is questionable at every turn. He cannot keep Jewel from bringing his horse, but Anse is successful at removing the animal from Jewel's life. When the family mules are killed during the river crossing, Anse sells Jewel's horse, literally out from under him. He trades the horse for a new set of mules in order to finish the journey.

At first Jewel resists having his independence stripped from him. But in the end Jewel acquiesces and allows Anse to sell his source of pride and mobility. The horse was symbolic not only of Jewel's ability to set a goal and achieve it, but also of Jewel's desire to live a different kind of life. This was an attempt at moving up in society. Anse squelches that forward movement, at least for the moment.

Without his horse, Jewel, like many others in poverty, is "stuck in place." Armistid narrates Jewel's departure with his horse.

I kept thinking about them there, and about that fellow tearing away on that horse. And that would be the last they would see of him. And I be durn if I could blame him. Not for wanting to not give up his horse, but for getting shut of such a durn fool as Anse. (192)

Armistid imagines Jewel escaping from his family and his white trash existence. But Jewel does not abandon his mother and family. For the time being, Jewel, like Cash, is unable to extricate himself from his situation. He allows his mobility, his horse, to be taken from him and by doing so, he helps fulfill his mother's dying wish.

Darl as Outsider

Darl is the only family member not to be directly linked to blackness by Vardaman or anyone else they encounter on the journey. He is the "oddest" of the family, but Faulkner hesitates aiming the "n" slur at him. Many critics have speculated that Darl is the character in the novel who is most closely identified with the author. Perhaps Faulkner is sparing himself by sparing Darl. Darl is also the only character who actively worked to end the journey. Also Darl is the one who escaped his circumstance by fighting in World War I. There are many variables that might explain Darl's exclusion from "nigger" status, but two seem most glaring.

First, Darl brings in real Negroes. The three sentences that reference real African Americans appear in one of Darl's chapters. This occurrence seems

ironic since he is also the only sibling who is not racialized. At no time does anyone make a comment that links him with African Americans. It is also telling that during this short encounter with the three black people, he shows complete respect for the Blacks. He never once uses the “n” word, not even in his private thoughts. These actions show some level of recognition that African Americans are human beings deserving of the same esteem as any other person.

Next, Darl is transported to the mental institution in Jackson, Mississippi because he commits a terrible crime. Barn burning was particularly despised in the south. It was not just an attack on a person’s property, but on his ability to earn a living as well. When Darl sets the barn on fire, he endangers the stock as well as the house, the land/crops and the people on the farm. Since constructing any building costs these farmers a lot of money, a barn is a symbol of progress and prosperity. It means that the farmers have worked hard and are moving toward middle class status.

Burning a barn would have brought a death sentence or a jail term for Negroes caught committing such an act. Darl ends up in an insane asylum. This is an unlikely option for rural blacks in Mississippi, not even crazy blacks who actually require institutionalization. Death or jail terms were the only remedies visited on southern African Americans. In a way, Darl has once again escaped his white trash environment. Surely, most impoverished folks hid their infirmed

relatives in an attic or a back room. He is now locked away in a big city institution as well as being locked in his own head.

In conclusion, slavery had a profound effect on everyone involved, including the racist slave holders. If the idea of inferiority allows slavery to exist, then the idea of superiority allows individuals to insure that such a deplorable condition is not visited on themselves. The root of white anxiety in America can be traced to individuals striving to separate themselves from those persons society deemed beneath consideration. There had to be strict boundaries, especially in the south.

Throughout the novel, Faulkner seems to be commenting on the stupidity of people. "The futility of applying strict binary categories to human affairs is the main lesson of Faulkner's novels" (Snead ix). By blurring the lines between what constitutes whiteness, the author rejects the idea that there is behavior that can be labeled White or Black. He creates a playing field in Yoknapatawpha that seems morally level, even if it isn't socially level. Some of his white characters do abominable things while many of his African American characters are the image of grace, demeanor and common sense.

There have been critical complaints that Faulkner romanticizes the Negro, but perhaps this is simply an attempt on his part at suggesting to the Southern world that the prevailing views about African Americans, and in turn themselves,

are faulty. “Ultimately, the interrogation of race in literature cannot be contained within a dominant ideology that by its very nature subordinates and dismisses or elides any concern with its other” (Davis *GOP* 256). The job of Whiteness Studies seems to be to abolish the oppressive nature inherent “White culture’s” dominance.

Finally, it is important to remember when examining race in the novel that *As I Lay Dying* is a dark comedy. Faulkner’s ironies brilliantly balance painful truths with laughter and hysterical situations. This tale of Addie’s demise, beginning when she marries beneath her station and ending when her rotted corpse is finally buried, resonates with issues of race and white anxiety. Louis Palmer suggests that “the horror in this story . . . is that one of ‘us,’ the educated middle class, has to live like one of “them,” the poor, and the implication is that it is a kind of miscegenation” (131). Poverty strips away the distance and protection money provides whites in Faulkner’s New South. If indeed this is a horror story, Faulkner wraps it in a palatable coating of humor as he invites his readers into the conversation.

CHAPTER FIVE

“WHY AIN’T I A TOWN BOY, PA?” IDEOLOGY IN *AS I LAY DYING*

Many Faulkner scholars question what on earth Marxism has to do with Faulkner’s writing.^{viii} After all, Marxism is concerned with “specific class relations (in modern society, between capital and wage labor) that the production (and unequal distribution/appropriation) of all goods and services constituting the wealth of a society takes place” (Kavanagh 308). Kevin Railey clearly explains that “this conflict is not important in Faulkner’s fiction” (xi). Faulkner identified more with the “ruling class” than the “working class.” But even though it may be difficult to use the traditional criticism of capitalistic class structure for which Marx is most famous to explore Faulkner’s works, there are other portions of his tenets that can be applied to a text such as *As I Lay Dying*.

Since the 1930’s, Marx and Marxism have been frightening words in American culture and many critics of literature have wished to avoid using Marx and his theories when they examine various works. Marx is most closely and negatively associated with the realm of politics. James Kavanagh explains that a fear of Marx has been created in this country because America labors under the influence of a “construction of meaning that is continually reinforced in our culture, namely, the conveniently simple construction of ‘Marxism’ as essentially meaning ‘the Soviet Union’” (307). Despite the fact that the Soviet Union no longer exists and is no longer a threat to America, there are still many who have

difficulty believing that “Marxism is not some kind of ‘Russian’ or ‘un-American’ phenomenon” (Kavanagh 307). But over the years, Marxist critics have insisted in varying degrees of loudness that there is much value to be found in his theories. Finally, mainstream literary critics are opening up to the idea of considering Marx’s ideas relevant in critical thinking.^{ix}

Of course, Marxism had to undergo some modifications to make it less scary for American thinkers. One of the biggest changes has been a simple shift in terminology from Marx to “ideology,” which is a term that draws from one of Marx’s primary concepts that individual perception is often altered to accommodate society’s needs. Also, “Marxist tradition sees ideology as ‘negative’ in its emphasis on the ways ideology misleads and oppresses the already powerless” (Jones 135-6). So for Marx, an ideology is a false consciousness that a society forces on its people. “Perhaps ‘ideology’ was most powerfully developed in Marxism because Marxism always sought to be not just narrowly ‘political’ but a more comprehensive kind of theory that could understand the important relations among the political, economic and cultural elements in specific societies” (Kavanagh 307). The American critical community seems to have found a way to make the practice of examining the nexus of “the political, economic and cultural elements” palatable.

With this notion of “ideology,” Marxist thinkers have found a non-threatening springboard for Marx and his theories since “ideology” does not carry

the complications and stigma associated with the term “Marxism” and it allows for the continuation of a dialog between Marxism and literature that was started in this country decades ago.^x Perhaps it is easier to focus on the problem, e.g. the lies which society creates, rather than to focus on the individual brave enough to attack that society. There are several critics who have attempted to integrate the study of ideology into American culture, but their input has been sporadic. As far back as 1977, Raymond Williams explains that “Ideology” is “an important concept in almost all Marxist thinking about culture . . . especially about literature and ideas” (55).

Near the close of the 20th century, Edward Ahearn states that Marx’s “views on ideology - the myriad forms of expression that mold and may obfuscate our consciousness - open up complex and rich areas of literary interpretation” (xiv). Here at the beginning of the 21st century, there is an understanding that the idea of ideology not only runs through everything Marx wrote, but also that this concept can be applied to all areas of life, so it is not surprising that literary criticisms based on Marxist theories have been so closely linked to “Ideology” in recent years that the term has become a replacement for the term “Marxism.”

There are several Ideological concerns that can be traced in *As I Lay Dying*. The first is the notion of paternalism or patriarchy. In Marx, patriarchy is often compared to government and to traditional kinds of thinking. Under patriarchy, the father sets family “laws” and rules the household and it is

assumed by all family members that he is the best person for this task. Men and boys are favored under this system and they are expected to be active and productive. Women and girls are often used as commodities and are expected to be passive. Railey points out that Faulkner's "concerns focus . . . on those who hold or should hold positions of social power and those who undeservedly move into these positions" (*NA* xii). By comparing Anse and Tull it is possible to gain insight into "Count No-Count"'s view on patriarchy and of people like Anse who wield undeserved power.

Another ideology that can be traced in the novel is religion. Religion provides another set of rules and controls by suggesting that there is a wise higher power which watches the actions of mankind and will make a judgment about those actions at the end of time. Those who follow the laws of religion are presumed to be better people than those who see little sense in religion. There are several connections to religion in the novel from Cash being injured by falling off of the church to Addie's affair with Whitfield the minister. But, by juxtaposing Addie and Cora, it may be possible to discover Faulkner's stance on religion at the time the novel was written.

A third ideological issue in the text is that of alienation. By examining Darl and his fate it is possible to plot the downfall of an outsider. Darl is a primary character in the novel. He is one of the most active speakers. Through not only Darl's narratives but especially those of the people surrounding him, it is possible

to chart the effect of alienation on one of Faulkner's most "poetic" characters. As he desperately searches for a place for himself in the world, the reader can chart Darl's grasp on reality slipping away.

Relevant Criticism

In her 1985 article titled "The House That Tull Built," Gail Moore Morrison begins a discussion that focuses on the Bundrens' neighbors. In the first half of her essay, Morrison highlights Cora Tull's inconsistencies and shortcomings. During the second portion she presents Tull as one of the most admirable characters in the novel. As she examines Tull, Morrison creates a "portrait" of "a man who humanely and uncomplainingly carries his own burdens although he barely manages to articulate them and finds the alternative of laying them down in defeat unacceptable" (Morrison 160). Although she tends to admire Tull, Morrison sometimes questions his underlying motives.

In "*As I Lay Dying* in the Machine Age," John T. Matthews looks at the southern cultural shift from "southern Victorianism" to Modernism as he points to "the dynamic relation between modernization and modernism" (69). Matthews sees progress in the New South linked to consumerism and a move away from the plantocracy and toward a more industrialized world. The tension between those people moving into the future and those who "called instead for the supremacy of tradition, provincialism, and a life close to the soil" (qtd. In Matthews) creates the historic backdrop for Faulkner's writing of *As I Lay Dying*.

Patrick O'Donnell addressed Marxist issues in his article "Between the Family and the State: Nomadism and Authority in *As I Lay Dying*." According to O'Donnell, *As I Lay Dying* "is a novel that both underwrites the conditions of the family romance in Faulkner's canon, and publicizes the inadequacies of 'romance' as an expression that allows us to understand the cultural contexts of family dynamics in Faulkner's fiction" (83-84). He also states that the personality dynamic created by Freud – i.e. the ego, the id and the superego- are "collapsed in [the writings of] Deleuze and Guattari into a collision between the collective appetency and social control in the formation of the State" (85). O'Donnell insists that the journey "gives [the family] over to the state, and they become objects to public scrutiny to be differentiated according to custom" (87).

In his article, "Realism, Naturalism, Modernism: Residual, Dominant, and Emergent Ideologies in *As I Lay Dying*," James Mellard chronicles the way critics have examined *As I Lay Dying*. In one instance he looks at the ideas of Robert Penn Warren. Mellard States, "Warren makes Faulkner an objective observer who simply presents his material and leaves the reader to be the judge or make political associations" (225). Noting that there has been some debate over how to best characterize Faulkner's early novels, Mellard attempts to situate *As I Lay Dying* vis-à-vis modernism and ideology. Using Raymond Williams' terms "residual, dominant and emergent," he "wants to examine some of the elements of that critical debate" (218). He concludes that "Faulkner's modernism is largely emergent and oppositional" (235).

In his text *Natural Aristocracy: History, Ideology, and the Production of William Faulkner*, Kevin Railey, one of the current leaders in ideological studies, uses the ideology of liberalism to critique *As I Lay Dying*. He compares *As I Lay Dying* and *Light in August*, suggesting that both novels focus on “the question of mobility in a liberal society” (87) and that “both books . . . are centrally concerned with the process of subject or identity formation in a socially mobile society” (87). Railey goes on to investigate the process of the journey to Jefferson to bury Addie and how each member reveals him or herself during the trek. He suggests that Addie is the most “intensely aware of the effects of liberal ideology and capitalist society” (92).

In the introduction to the Fall 2005 – Spring 2006 issue of the *Faulkner Journal*, Railey points out the complicated “history of the term ideology” (5)^{xi} while he also examines the reasons “there has been a general resistance to [the use of Marxist theories] within Faulkner studies” (3). He chronicles the controversy among Faulkner critics during the 1992 Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha conference. That year the focus of the conference was Faulkner and Ideology. He notes that “various critics at the conference, especially Andre’ Bleikasten and Louis Rubin, registered a suspicion of, and in Rubin’s case even an amazed indignation about, the theme of the conference” (3). Railey goes on to document “the reasons for the resistance to ideological approaches to Faulkner” (3).

He encapsulates the negative feedback thusly: “Taking into consideration the atrocious and devastating social experiments connected to Marxism from the 1930s to 1960s (and beyond), the backlash against communism, and the lack of a national labor political party in this country, it is not really surprising, on one level, that analyses inspired by Marxism have drawn heated criticism and have entered the canon of American literary criticism slowly” (Intro 4-5).

In her article “As They Lay Dying: Rural Depopulation and Social Dislocation as a Structure of Feeling,” Cheryl Lester uses *As I Lay Dying* to examine “spatial and social dislocation” (28) in Faulkner’s world. Lester’s very thorough article springboards off of Railey’s examination of mobility and Leyda’s reading of white trash. She suggests that “Faulkner’s writings . . . [attempt] to capture the lived experience of modernization in the South” (28). Lester goes on to insist that “the Bundrens’ journey . . . serves to illustrate the pressures and limits that simultaneously solicit and reject [the family] as middle class subjects” (31).

Ted Atkinson situates *As I Lay Dying* in its historic context by noting near the beginning of his article “The Ideology of Autonomy: Form and Function in *As I Lay Dying*” that Faulkner began writing the novel the day after the 1929 stock market crash. Atkinson suggests that *As I Lay Dying* and Faulkner’s writing process is a response to the “debilitating shock waves” of the times. He defines “autonomy [as] a function of a broader ideological form that ‘shapes into

harmonious unity the turbulent context of the subject's appetites and inclinations' and substitutes the power of 'self-identity' for the coercion of 'autocratic power' in the marketplace (23)" (23). Much of Atkinson's article hinges on aspects of Cash, his carpentry and the construction of Addie's coffin. In a capitalistic world, Cash's skills are a valued commodity, which is alluded to by the character's name. Atkinson compares "Cash's labor of love . . . [as a] kind of union between human and machine" (19). He also suggests that Cash's construction of Addie's coffin is "frenzied," which seems a misreading of the text. Cash is an exacting and deliberate carpenter. Neither of those qualities suggests frenzy of any kind.

Edward J. Ahearn examines Faulkner in his text *Marx and Modern Fiction*. Ahearn's purpose for writing the this book is to "bring Marx's system of thought to bear on . . . some of the great works of the great modern European and American fiction that are familiar to the educated American public" (xii). Using *Absalom Absalom*, Ahearn examines "literature's deployment of history" (119).

Ideology of Paternalism

Faulkner's writings often question the validity of paternalism. His treatment of the Bundrens in *As I Lay Dying* suggests that the writer has little or no compassion for those he considers as being undeserving and dishonest. Faulkner designs Anse as a corrupt character who moves into a position of power without earning it and the "corrupt patriarchal order" (Tebbetts 110) established by Anse affects every family member as well as various neighbors.

“Anse Bundren’s claims to paternalistic status are rhetorical ruses to cloak his trivial desires” (Railey NA 103).

Not every backwoods family represented in the novel suffers the abject poverty in which the Bundrens are mired. The Tulls aren’t wealthy, but they are doing much better than the Bundrens. Despite the fact that they are neighbors, there is a world of difference between Anse and Tull. Both are the patriarchs of their respective families and both are farmers who live in the remote reaches of the Mississippi backwoods. But that is where most comparisons end. Anse’s selfishness, Tull’s altruism and even their relationships with their wives are at opposite ends of the spectrum.

The Bundrens’ financial position is one of abject poverty. They live on the fringes of capitalistic society in a state of “empty and shimmering dilapidation” (4) and every aspect of their existence adds layer upon layer of shabbiness. The “cottonhouse” is in disrepair. The family’s clothing is described as “faded,” “frayed” and “patched.” Not a single member of the family is overweight, unlike poor Dr. Peabody who at “seventy years old, weighing two hundred and odd pounds,” (43) must suffer through the scant meal that the family offers him. After Peabody “pussel-gut[s] himself eating cold greens” (40) for dinner, he is quick to inquire if Vardaman’s fish is available as well. Because Anse is a failed capitalist, his family must scrounge for every dollar they can get, despite the fact that they grow both cotton and corn on the farm.

The primary issue for the Bundren family is that Anse lives his life as if he were part of a “slave-based plantation economy” (Lester 32) rather than a dirt-poor tenant farmer. Unfortunately, in Anse’s world, the slaves are his children and any neighbor he can coerce into helping him. A lot of the allegations of Anse’s laziness come from onlookers comparing the Bundren children to Anse. Cora accuses Jewel of being “a Bundren through and through . . . caring for nothing except how to get something with the least amount of work” (22). Of course she is wrong on both counts. Jewel isn’t a Bundren and he has no problem with hard work. But as head of the Bundren “plantation,” Anse is the one doesn’t feel that he needs to work. There are several indications that he has situated himself in his own mind as lord and master of his imaginary kingdom.

First, Anse avoids work of any kind as if he were a wealthy plantation owner. He has a sense of entitlement that leads him to expect his sons and people like Lefe to do all of the laboring for him. Dewey Dell is one of many who mentions Anse’s inactiveness. “Pa dassent sweat because he will catch his death from the sickness so everybody that comes to help us” (26). In this case, Anse’s lack of attention and hatred of motion leaves his daughter vulnerable, and she ends up pregnant by one of the young men who comes to the farm to help pick cotton. And it is Darl who points out that Anse’s shirts have never seen a sweat stain. Also, Tull states, “I tell him again I will help him out if he gets into a tight, with her sick and all” (33). Anse keeps everyone around him catering to his needs. He claims “It ain’t that I’m afraid of work” (36) right before he begins to

complain about all of the things he is expected to pay for, including taxes and Cash's tools.

Next, Anse takes Addie as his wife assuming that it will raise his status in society since Addie is a town woman and a teacher. In Anse's world, such attributes speak of class and education. Darl points out that Cora and Addie have the same type of foundation when he notes that Cora "taught school too, once" (11). Anse knows that he is reaching beyond his station when he approaches Addie. He worries that her "people" will interfere with his plan to lure this valuable asset away to the hill country.

A major component of patriarchy is control of women. "The very cornerstone of paternalism ideology was the 'purity' or 'honor' of white women within the upper class" (Railey 56) Anse may want to claim upper class status, but he is completely incapable of controlling either Addie or Dewey Dell. Addie has a drawn-out illicit affair with Whitfield and she has a child by him. So unbeknownst to him, Anse raises another man's child. Dewey Dell ends up pregnant and taken advantage of not once but twice because of Anse's inability to protect and control the Bundren women. Anse will have to find a way to deal with the embarrassment and loss of status that will follow with the birth of her fatherless baby.

Finally, he refuses to go into town. When the story begins, "Anse has not been in town in twelve years" (42). There are various indications that other

family members interact with the townspeople. For instance, Jewel travels to town to get his hair cut. And Dewey Dell and Vardaman were in town at Christmas. Also, it would make sense that Addie had interactions with town folks to sell her baked goods. But Anse refuses to travel. This could be part of his delusion building process. By avoiding town and people he assumes are above “country people”, Anse can “ignore the hierarchal distinction between town and country” (Lester 36) and imagine himself as an entitled landowner. Of course, when the Bundrens do encounter town folks they “are quickly marked as ridiculous, inept, insignificant, or outrageous” (Lester 36) which dismantles Anse’s view of himself.

Faulkner further dismantles Anse’s world by taking a jab at Anse’s version of patriarchy. In this country environment, sons should equal productivity and prosperity. Anse has three full grown sons to help around the farm. Cash is talented and dedicated to his craft as a carpenter. This denotes drive and ambition as well as creativity on Cash’s part. Jewel has a strong back and the determination needed to set a high goal and to see a project through to the end. Clearing “forty acres of new ground [for Lon] Quick” all by himself had to take determination. This indicates that Jewel has the ability and the mindset to get work done. There are only two instances that show that Darl is capable of working. In both cases, Darl is with his half-brother Jewel. The first occurs at the very start of the novel as the two approach the house from a field where it must be assumed they were working. The next occasion is when Darl takes Jewel

from Addie's deathbed to haul a load of wood. So, Darl doesn't seem to mind working when there is a need.

Even Vardaman displays the ethics for hard work. Vardaman first appears in the novel "carrying a fish nigh long as he is. He slings it to the ground and grunts 'Hah' and spits over his shoulder like a man" (30). Vardaman is mimicking the work he has seen his brothers doing. His young mind has processed what it takes to be a man in his environment and he attempts to take part in that world. This indicates that even at his young age, Vardaman accepts that hard work is a part of his life.

The problem does not lie with the Bundren sons; the problem lies with Anse. He lives in poverty with his four sons despite the fact that they are very capable and willing to work. The problem seems to be Anse's attitude about life. He confronts life in a begrudging manner. He sees everything as a slight that keeps him from his imagined life. In one passage he begins complaining about the new road, which should be a helpful, welcomed thing, and he ends up complaining about his sons working for others.

"Putting it where every bad luck prowling can find it and come straight to my door, charging me taxes on top of it. Making me pay for cash having to get them carpenter notions when if it hadn't been no road come there, he wouldn't a got them; falling off churches and lifting no hand in six months and me and Addie slaving and a-slaving, when there's plenty of sawing on this place he could do if he's got to saw. And Darl too. Talking me out of him, durn them. It ain't that I'm afraid of work; I always is fed me and

mine and kept a roof above us; it's just that they would short-hand me just because he tends to his own business." (36)

The boys are a disappointment to Anse because he cannot control their behavior. When Vardaman reappears covered in fish blood, Anse looks at him and muses, "Well, I reckon I ain't no call to expect no more of him than of his man-growed brothers" (38). The concern is that the boys flout Anse's claim to patriarchy as they go about making their own money outside of the farm. Faulkner's works are filled with characters who "claim and gain positions of authority, but . . . never deserve them" (Railey NA 103). Anse is a failed capitalist. Unlike Anse, the Bundren sons are learning to function and succeed inside the capitalistic society.

Darl provides the clue that explains Cash, Jewel and Darl's decision to work for themselves. Darl states "I have never seen a sweat stain on his shirt. He was sick once from working in the sun when he was twenty-two years old, and he tells people that if he ever sweats, he will die. I suppose he believes it" (17). This subtle dig at his father articulates the disdain all the boys feel for Anse. Even Cash shows disregard for Anse. When Anse tries to hurry Cash back to working on the coffin once Addie dies, "Cash is not listening. After a while he turns without looking at pa and leaves the room" (50). Cash does not allow his father to hinder his personal moment of grief over his mother's passing. He takes the moment he needs and says his silent goodbyes to his mother.

In truth Anse's selfishness corrodes everything and every relationship around him. Anse brings Jewel's raincoat for himself to stand and watch Cash work on the coffin in the rain. He tells Cash "I dont know what you'll do . . . Darl taken his coat with him" (77). To this Cash simply replies, "Get wet" (77). Anse is completely unconcerned for Cash's well being. It is Tull who brings his wife's raincoat for Cash to wear. The irony is that he doesn't need to be in the rain at all since he is not helpful and serves no real purpose as Cash works on the coffin other than to get in the way and to make Cash's task more difficult.

Bringing Jewel's coat to Cash and returning to the house would have been the fatherly thing to do. But it was more important to Anse to put on some show of trying to assist in the making of Addie's coffin. But his true motives shine through. Darl reports that Anse wears "a face carved by a savage caricaturist [where] a monstrous burlesque of all bereavement flowed" (78). There is no truth in Anse's display of grief over the loss of his wife. He has to mimic bereavement. Darl explains that Anse "touches the quilt as he saw Dewey Dell do" (52) after Addie dies. No one is fooled by Anse's artifice. His attempt at playing the sorrowful husband is negated by his startling announcement at Addie's death, "Now I can get them teeth" (52) reverberates through everything he says and does.

Vernon Tull prospers without sons, which is an indication of Tull's worth in Faulkner's eyes. Patriarchal ideology suggests that sons are part of the

mechanism that insures its continuation and success. Faulkner scoffs at this notion, turning the ideology upside down. In much of his work the traditional fathers, those who should prosper, are ineffective at best. But Tull is at ease in the capitalistic system despite the fact that he “is after all a farmer not blessed with four sons to assist him. This misfortunate notwithstanding, he is for all practical purposes as successful as Anse has been unsuccessful” (Morrison 167). He represents the kind of man who is worthy in Faulkner’s eyes of raising sons, but who is blessed with only daughters. Tull has several things other than sons working in his favor, including his intelligence, his wife and his humanity.

Vernon has an excellent business mind. He makes the most of his assets. Along with his usual farming, Tull also does some logging on his land. Darl and Cash discuss the “two big whiteoaks” Tull cut down two years before. One of them mentions, “He cut a sight of timber outen here then. Payed off that mortgage with it, I hear tell” (142). The boys continue their conversation as they study the rapidly moving water.

“Most folks that logs in this country, they need a durn good farm to support the sawmill. Or maybe a store. But I reckon Vernon could.’

‘I reckon so. He’s a sight” (143).

Tull thinks ahead. He owns his farm outright. When others are struggling to make ends meet, he has found a way to decrease his debt and he is positioning himself to move into the middle class. Dr. Peabody also suggests

that Tull is good with money matters. When he is finally called to Addie's bedside, he thinks that "it was maybe Vernon Tull sending for me again, getting me there in the nick of time, as Vernon always does things, getting the most for Anse's money like he does for his own" (41). Clearly Tull's business acumen is well known and respected.

The irony here, and Faulkner always provides irony, is that Tull's business sense leaves the Bundrens stranded when the two oak trees are no longer present to use as landmarks for the placement of the ford over which they must cross since the bridge has been washed away by the storm. It is undeniable that Faulkner thinks very highly of Tull, but no one gets a free pass with Faulkner. With the felled oaks, he illustrates how the capitalistic society does not take into consideration the needs of the agrarian society that is often left behind.

But there are enticing trappings that come along with moving into the middle class. Tull dresses nicely when he goes into town. Even though he arrives on a wagon in an era of motor vehicles, he presents himself like a business man. His family dresses nicely as well. Eula, who is trying to capture Darl's attention, wears a "necklace [that] looks real nice with her red hat" (9). The Tull girls can afford to dress nicely every day, whereas Dewey Dell must bring out her "Sunday dress, her beads and her shoes and stockings" (229) as the family approaches Jefferson and Addie's burial. The Tull house even has a rug.

Another thing Tull has going for him is his partner. He has Cora working for him. Even if she cannot cook, Cora is an excellent business person in her own rights. She is the one who negotiates the deal for the hens.

“Cora Tull occupies a transitional position in the history of commodified relations and market involvement in the modernized South. . . . In her egg business she grasped the principles of deferring profit in order to maximize capital investment, of reinvesting profit to assure growth, and of the advantage of producing goods for sale rather than for personal consumption. She stocks the best breed of hens, accepts the fact that early losses mean that they ‘couldn’t afford to use the eggs ourselves’ (5), and organizes her banking vertically, becoming her own supplier of eggs and trading for the rest of what she needs.” (Matthews 78)

Cora is a natural capitalist. She sees an opportunity to bring money into the house by selling eggs. And she attempts to take advantage of an additional opportunity to sell her baked goods. No matter how much posturing she may do, her concerns are more for financial matters than for her fellow man. This works well in an ideology where making a profit at all costs is the first tenet. And she enjoys all the things that come with membership in the capitalistic world. When she sees the despondent Vardaman standing at her door, Cora tells Vernon, “He’s a-ruining the rug” (70). Her concern for her property announces her readiness to become part of the middle class. Here Cora’s belief in the ideology of patriarchy suggests that things, possessions, are more important than people.

Vernon's humanity speaks volumes about the kind of man Faulkner values. He is a good man who is truly concerned with those around him. He is the good neighbor who tries to give advise and comfort, as well as physical help when that is needed. Even though he is more than willing to lend his assistance to anyone in need, he uses his common sense. He explains: "When folks wants a fellow, it's best to wait till they sends for him" (69). Also he is never one to make quick judgments about his neighbors. He confesses that "When folks talks [Anse] low, I think to myself he ain't that less of a man, or he couldn't a bore himself this long" (72). He is truly interested in the well-being of his neighbors.

Much of his interest revolves around the youngest Bundren. Gail Morrison explores Tull's affection for Vardaman in her article "The House that Tull Built." She points out how Tull listens to the child and often tries to include him in conversation when Anse simply ignores the boy. After he hacks the dead fish to pieces, Vardaman joins his father on the back porch. The boy is "bloody as a hog to his knees" (38) but Anse just lamely orders Vardaman to wash his hands. As Father and young son sit alone on the steps, Vardaman seeks assurance from Anse. Confused and frightened by his mother's illness Vardaman questions Anse: "Pa . . . is ma sick some more?" (38). Anse ignores the youngster's questions and concerns and merely repeats "Go wash them hands" (38). Anse's treatment of Vardaman is in stark contrast to Tull's treatment.

There are a couple of indications that Vardaman is responding to Tull's attention. In both instances, Vardaman turns to Tull at a time of crisis. He is so distraught after his mother dies that Vardaman describes his weeping as "vomiting the crying" (54). During this fury of emotions, Vardaman first attacks Peabody's horses. He cannot process the idea that Cash will be nailing Addie into the coffin and he begins to mingle the two recent deaths, the fish and his mother, in his mind. But then Vardaman turns to someone he knows will listen to him and help him. He thinks, "I can get Vernon. He was there and he seen [the fish], and with both of us it will be and then it will not be" (67). Vardaman imagines that with Vernon by his side he can somehow undo his mother's death and put his world back in order. He is surrounded by family, yet they are not the ones he turns to when he needs comfort. He shows up at the Tull's house looking "like a drowned puppy, in them overalls, without no hat, splashed up to his knees where he walked them four miles in the mud" (69).

A second instance occurs when the family reaches the swollen river. Anse, Dewey Dell, Vardaman and Vernon cross what is left of the bridge by foot, leaving the older boys to find a way to get the wagon and the coffin across. Although Vernon is smart enough not to let the Bundrens risk his mule's life, somehow he finds himself risking his own life instead. He explains his shock at arriving safely on the opposite bank: "And when I looked back and saw the other bank and saw my mule standing there where I used to be and knew that I'd have to get back there somehow, I knew it couldn't be, because I just couldn't think of

anything that could make me cross that bridge ever even once. . . . It was that boy. I said 'Here; you better take holt of my hand' and he waited and held to me. I be durn if it wasn't like he come back and got me; like he was saying They wont nothing hurt you" (139). The connection between Vernon and Vardaman is nurturing and safe, just like a father/son relationship should be. At every turn, Vernon proves to be a better father and more worthy patriarch. He will not risk property, i.e. his mule, but he does not hesitate to put himself at risk to ensure Vardaman's safety.

In his last monologue, Tull narrates the scene as the coffin and the wagon are swept down stream. Cash, Jewel and Darl are placed in peril and Vernon ends up shouting at Anse, "See what you done?" (154). He is appalled that Anse would risk the lives of his sons. It is Tull not Anse who helps the boys at the riverside. Vardaman stands on the bank "watching Vernon with rapt absorption" (157) while he helps to pull Cash's tools out of the river.

At this point in the journey Tull and the Bundrens part ways. After all, Vernon Tull is just the friendly neighbor; he isn't family. He has his own responsibilities to tend to, as Jewel suggests when he snarls at Tull, "Get the hell on back to your damn plowing" (126). Deprived of Vernon Tull's stabilizing influence, Vardaman turns to Darl. Unfortunately, Darl, who is in the middle of a mental collapse, only further weakens Vardaman's tenuous hold on reality.

Both Anse and Tull marry women who are town woman. While Tull aspires to be more than he is, Anse assumes that he is more than he is.

Faulkner clearly values the ideology of patriarchy, but at the same time he is suspicious of it. He seems to want to refashion patriarchy to fit the perfect model he has of it in his mind. The author presents Tull, the perfect patriarch, as an honorable man, but he deprives him of sons. He juxtaposes Tull with Anse, the corrupt patriarch, who has sons to spare. Faulkner wants to buy into the false consciousness of the patriarchal system, but he cannot seem to stop thinking long enough to completely submit to it.

Ideology and Religion

Religion is another problem area for Marx. Under the best of circumstances, religion can be a difficult topic that comes with plenty of controversy and baggage. Marx was an atheist, which has lead his critics to add “Godless” to the list of accusations against him. Every religion entails a system of beliefs and rituals that celebrate a deity or leader. Marx believes that religious ideology “involves the creation of an imaginary supreme being, a form of estranged energy before which human beings prostrate themselves” (Ahearn 5). So for Marx, the primary purpose of religion is to control behavior and strip the individual of identity. There is a code of ethics associated with religion, an acceptable method of behavior that every supplicant is aware of by the time he or she is old enough to go to school.

Faulkner's views on religion are muddy and difficult to pinpoint. He incorporates faith into his text in various ways, but nothing good seems to come of it. For example, while working on the church roof, Cash falls off and is badly injured. Because of his broken leg, Cash is unable to work for six months. There is something unjust about this action. Cash is a good, honorable and reliable man who does not even have time for a monologue with the reader until after he has finished his mother's coffin. He is creative, careful in his work and considerate of his fellow man. When he and Darl suspect that Jewel is "rutting" with a married woman, it is Cash who finds the possibility morally unacceptable. He complains about Jewel "wallowing in somebody else's mire" (132). He possesses all of the aspects that would make him a pious individual, yet Faulkner sees fit to hurl him from a religious structure.

In Faulkner's world, being religious does not always equate to Christian behavior. Addie and Cora are perfect examples of this dichotomy that Faulkner creates. Both women leave their families to make a life with their husbands. Addie leaves the city for the country and Cora leaves Alabama for Mississippi. Both leave the field of education for farm life. He juxtaposes these two women in order to suggest that religion must be more than just words.

Addie has a true heart and a good sense of spirituality. She only sees emptiness in words and refuses to indulge in rhetoric she considers useless in order to satisfy others even if it is religious rhetoric. When Cora attempts to force

Addie into confessing her sins in a way that Cora feels is appropriate, Addie stays true to herself despite Cora's damnations. She tells Cora, "My daily life is an acknowledgement and expiation of my sin" (167). Addie accepts the fact that she is a sinner and that she needs to atone for whatever she may have done.

But unlike Cora, she actually lives her life as an act of atonement. She never once attempts to proclaim her holiness to all who will listen. She never tries to claim that she is closer to God or that she is in a better position than any other person to know what is right in the eyes of God. She never appeals to God for mercy or even forgiveness for what she has done. She simply states, "I know my own sin. I know that I deserve my punishment. I don't begrudge it" (167). Addie is not a woman given to pretense.

On the one hand, these simple declarations would seem to suggest that Addie is truly pious. She lives her life honorably without fanfare or showiness. On the other hand, Addie's primary sin is the torrid affair she carries on with the minister. And that is not the limit of her sin. She revels in the knowledge that she is betraying Anse with a man of God. It is better for her that Whitfield's connection to religion is a hollow shell of meaningless words. The final layer of Addie's sin involves Jewel, the product of her relations with Whitfield. She did not want Anse's children, yet she celebrates having an illegitimate child with the minister. And every day, Jewel's presence gives her the strength "that let her put up with Anse Bundren when Mr. Tull said she ought to poisoned him" (22).

Addie's major sin is an ongoing comfort in her life. This puts her outside of traditional religion in which such actions are shunned.

Cora's "faith" is all talk, meaningless words that cloak the small-minded woman behind them. Tull says that Cora is "trying to crowd the other folks away [from God] and get closer than anybody else" (71). Cora is a hypocrite who chides her neighbor for presuming to know what God wants and thinks, yet she is the first to do the exact same thing. "Cora manifests a spiritual barrenness, a blind insensitivity to the world around her" (Morrison 162). For Cora, religion is about control. It is about her being righteous and holy and the rest of the world being wrong and sinful. She has taken it upon herself to teach the sinful world how to behave.

Cora does not like Anse, so Addie's death becomes "a judgment on them" (72). Cora claims that she can "see the hand of the Lord upon [Vardaman] for Anse Bundren's judgment and warning" (72). Whenever she wants to emphasize what she is saying, or keep Tull from disagreeing with her, Cora resorts to singing hymns. Her faith is a club with which she vanquishes any who dare question her wisdom and/or personal knowledge of God's thoughts.

The idea of God and His place in the lives of ordinary men greatly affects both Cora and Addie and subsequently the marriages of both the Bundrens and the Tulls are affected as well. Addie's life is filled with the gloom of her father's pronouncement that "the only reason for living was to get ready to stay dead a

long time" (169). She directs the anger that is brought on by this nihilist statement in all directions. Because of her nihilistic upbringing, Addie does not go into marriage with religious conviction. She plainly states, "So I took Anse" (171).

For her, marriage is an opportunity to banish her "aloneness." She does not go into the union with Anse expecting to fulfill a duty to be fruitful and multiply. When she does get pregnant, Addie decides that "living is terrible" (171). Addie is simply looking for a connection to another individual. Her pregnancy leaves her shaken, but she survives. Her only wish is to avoid a second pregnancy. As patriarch, which according to ideology is a God-given position of power, Anse is within his rights to overrule Addie's desire to not have any more children. With Darl's birth Addie is furious enough to defy Anse and God and withhold her body from her husband.

Cora's views on marriage complement her religious position. For Cora, religion is a point system set up to ensure that do-gooders gain benefit from their actions. She proclaims "I have tried to live right in the sight of God and man, for the honor and comfort of my Christian husband and the love and respect of my Christian children. So that when I lay me down in the consciousness of my duty and reward I will be surrounded by loving faces, carrying the farewell kiss of each of my loved ones into my reward" (23). This may be all well and good for Cora,

but not for Addie. In essence she is judging Addie and the way Addie chooses to live her life. This action proves Cora to be a master hypocrite.

Her marriage seems to work the same way. She accumulates points as she fulfills her duties to her family. She controls Tull even though she gives the impression that he might “chide” her for any time she might step out of line. She often misquotes or misrepresents her husband as if she were rewriting his words and thoughts in her mind (7, 22). In a scary way, this is the same type of relationship that she has with her faith. She changes things to fit her own vision of right and wrong.

Cora can find fault while participating in activities she would frown on in others. She imagines herself above Addie, and everyone else for that matter, and clearly Addie’s miserable death is God’s judgment on her. So with her imagining of her own glorious death during Addie’s paltry one, Cora illustrates the self-serving nature of religious thinking. Faulkner “had special sympathy for simple piety [which is most often] clear in his portrayal of black religion” (Wilson 39). Addie is not unreligious. She simply refuses to accept Cora’s version of God and what religion should be and most importantly what religion should “look like” or how the pious should conduct themselves. Again this shows Faulkner hedging on an ideology. He wants to believe, but only on his own terms. He understand the many problems associated with blind acceptance.

Ideology of Alienation

According to Marx, outsiders are feared because they refuse to allow ideology to shape their actions and existence. "Characters who defy the natural order surrounding them . . . lose any sense of identity and their right to a place in society" (Railey *NA* 103). This explains Darl's fate by the end of the novel. Unlike Tull, the good capitalist who blends in and prospers, Darl is out of step from the beginning of the book. He does not follow normal conventions just for the sake of appearances. When an individual defiantly stands outside of the circle, refusing to accept his or her place, the community will want to put the individual out of society. This character is Faulkner's chance to explore the darker side of capitalism. With Darl, Faulkner can express the madness that is one of the affects of alienation. Several characters note that there is something "queer" about him, which is an indication that he is unable to conceal his disregard for the "natural order of things." Railey goes on to point out that "isolation and alienation" are "the two greatest effects of capitalism on the people with in it" (92). Darl is barely a productive member of his society.

Darl is isolated from almost everyone in the novel. The only person he has a natural relationship with is Cash. The older brother is one of the few people who earns a compliment from Darl. Because of Darl's inability to hide his difference from the people around him, his personality slowly erodes as the novel progresses until he loses his "place in society." Although critics have described

Darl as a visionary too sensitive to exist in a cruel world, his despair manifests itself by means that suggest something darker than just a sensitive artist. Even though he generally has nothing positive to say about most of his family, Darl reserves a well of intense hatred for his sister, for Jewel and for his mother.

Darl's hatred for Dewey Dell is alarming. His battle with Dewey Dell centers on her relationship with Lefe. Darl sees Dewey Dell and Lefe together and wields this knowledge like a sword over her head. "Irigaray argues the following: Marxism reveals the problem of women's subservience, as use- and exchange-value, among men" (Ahearn 15). In Southern culture at this time in the novel, protection of women for such purposes is still valued, yet Darl does not thrash Lefe for stealing his sister's virginity. By making no attempt to protect Dewey Dell, Darl places himself in the position of the outsider. There isn't any indication that Darl ever approaches Lefe about his indiscretions. Instead Darl uses his knowledge in an attempt to coerce Dewey Dell into admitting that she wants Addie dead.

Darl tells us, "I said to Dewey Dell: "You want her to die so you can get to town" (39-40). When Dewey Dell refuses to admit that she is gleefully anticipating her mother's death, Darl begins to badger her. He asks, "Why wont you say it, even to yourself?" (40). Dewey Dell is alone. Her mother is dying and the men in her family allow her to be put in a situation where she is taken advantage of by Lefe. She is pregnant and afraid. Lefe gives her money for an

abortion, flimsy directions about how to obtain one, and then washes his hands of the situation. Darl knows all of this and yet he cannot bring himself to offer her comfort.

Darl's hatred for Jewel is the catalysis for the novel. Faulkner slowly reveals the reason for Darl's obsession with Jewel, but first the writer lets Darl express his considerably intense emotions through harassing Jewel. The first indication that there is a real problem occurs when Darl states, "'Jewel' I say, 'Do you know Addie Bundren is going to die? Addie Bundren is going to die?'" (40). The venom in the question is palpable. Rather than mourning his mother's impending demise, he once again uses information at his disposal to torment one of his siblings. Jewel is a taciturn character filled with unexpressed rage and Darl teases him the way a child would tease a chained dog. Darl narrates not only Addie's death, but Jewel's discovery of his beloved mother death.

"Jewel's hat droops limp about his neck, channeling water onto the soaked towsack tied about his shoulders as, ankle-deep in the running ditch, he pries with a slipping two-by-four, with a piece of rotting log for a fulcrum, at the axle. Jewel, I say, she is dead, Jewel. Addie Bundren is dead." (52)

As Jewel struggles to fix the wagon, Darl watches and torments his brother.

Anyone viewing this scene would begin questioning Darl's sanity. Rather than offering assistance with the wagon or consoling Jewel about the loss of Addie, Darl take malicious pleasure in inflicting pain on Jewel. On the trip back to the

farm he says, "It's not your horse that's dead Jewel" (94) and points to the buzzards that are circling the house in the distance. At this point and throughout the rest of the novel, Jewel swears.

After Addie and Whitfield's sections reveal the truth of Jewel's birth, Darl finds another way to needle Jewel. He repeatedly asks "Jewel . . . whose son are you?" (212). He goes further. "Your mother was a horse, but who was your father, Jewel?" (212) Jewel can only respond with violent profanity. Darl explains that "Jewel knows he is, because he does not know that he does not know whether he is or not" (80). This confused rambling is Darl's way of articulating the pain he feels because Jewel is unaware that he is the product of an illicit affair. Darl envies Jewel's ignorance and wants to destroy his stability.

When it comes time to commit Darl, it is no wonder that the two characters who react most violently are Dewey Dell and Jewel. When the family discusses what is to be done with Darl, Jewel is the one to insist that they "catch him and tie him up" (233). Cash narrates Darl's capture: "It was Dewey Dell that was on him before even Jewel could get at him. And then I believed I knowed how Gillespie knowed about how his barn taken fire" (237).

Darl's hatred for his mother is his ultimate undoing. Unlike his father, Darl does not put on a mask of grief. He cannot pretend to be sad that she is gone. He mourns "I cannot love my mother because I have no mother" (95). Addie does not exist in Darl's mind. The saddest fact in the novel is that Darl is

completely aware that Addie hates him, yet she adores his illegitimate half-brother. He knows that she has cuckolded Anse and gotten away with it. Her rejection is so complete that she even refuses to nurse Darl once she reasons that he is old enough to move on. When she tallies her list of atonements that she must make, Addie does not mention Darl other than to note that he is one of the children that belongs to Anse.

Understandably, this knowledge allows him to feel sheer hatred for the woman who gave birth to him and then rejected him. Addie never thinks twice about this rejection. Without a foundation of love, Darl cannot find a place for himself in the world. He says "I don't know if I am or not" (80). Throughout the novel, Darl spirals downward, unable to process his mother's death. He makes it his business to destroy her corpse. His first chance comes during the river crossing.

Tull tells Cora that "Darl jumped out of the wagon and left Cash sitting there trying to save" (152) the coffin alone. Darl abandons the wagon in the hopes that Addie and the coffin would be washed away downstream. And once the box goes into the water, he does nothing to help Vernon and Jewel pull it back out. Vardaman is the only one who seems to notice. He yells at Darl "You never got her" (151).

Darl's next chance to destroy Addie occurs at Gillespie's farm. The family leaves the coffin with the rotting corpse in the barn in an attempt to divert the

smell from the house. During the night, Darl sets the barn on fire. When Jewel runs to save the coffin, Darl repeatedly redirects Jewel's attention to the animals in the barn, hoping that their mother will burn before Jewel can retrieve the coffin. But it does not work. Jewel gets every living thing out of the barn and still has time to save the coffin. Darl tries to physically restrain Jewel from making his last trip into the barn, Jewel "strikes [his] hand down" (221). Darl "can see [Jewel's] mouth shape as he calls [Darl's] name" (222), but Darl makes no move to help his half-brother pull the coffin from the burning building.

His destruction of Gillespie's personal property is a strike against capitalism. Just like stealing a horse, burning a barn is an attack on the victim's livelihood. Losing the barn interferes with Gillespie's ability to make money as well as destroying a symbol of his success. Atkinson points out that "Cash understands that the barn burning has changed his family's relationship with Gillespie from communal to adversarial" (23-24). Relationships are important in this close knit community where everyone does business with each other. Rather than risk becoming outsiders in this capitalistic system, it is better to remove Darl and banish him to the asylum in Jackson, Mississippi.

Faulkner takes a clear stand on the idea of alienation. He deeply believes that mankind loses something elementally human as we move away from nature and into the modern society. Darl has no place in the New South. He refuses to accept the false consciousness that society would have him accept and he is

banished. His attempts to cut short the funeral journey indicates that he sees the falseness around himself better than anyone else in his family or community.

The knowledge, his visionary bent, destroys him.

In conclusion, "Faulkner's treatment of the southern poor white leaves no doubt that his sympathies were not with mass movements that based their reform ideology on a rational analysis of man's role in an economically determined society" (Cook 62). In other words, no one would ever categorize Faulkner as a complete Marxist. There are certain ideologies he wholeheartedly accepts. But clearly there are some ideologies with which he is struggling. The author addresses his concerns with patriarchy through Anse, but he then uplifts Tull as a patriarch to be emulated. Faulkner presents Vernon Tull, a character who isn't even in the entire novel, as nearly heroic. Faulkner refuses to pick a side, neither completely condemning or accepting the ideologies of patriarchy or religion. He accepts distinct parts of certain ideologies and questions other portions.

With Darl, Faulkner presents a character who cannot survive. According to Railey, Faulkner understands that "people in [a capitalistic] society can only develop in distorted and limited ways" (94). But, Darl's disregard for property and for Jewel's life, places him squarely outside the acceptable norm. His zeal to destroy Addie blinds him to his responsibility in a capitalistic community. He has no foundation that will allow him to embrace any ideology at all.

Once he is subdued, Darl sits “there on the ground laughing” (238). Again this is odd behavior for a man who has just discovered that his entire family has turned against him. Railey suggests that “Darl’s laughter . . . shows how he stands outside the signifying practices that organize and justify this journey and this society” (93). His position of outsider, his fundamental inability to cope and adapt, is what leads to Darl’s being snatched from his family and being hauled off to Jackson like a criminal.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION – “ALL SHUT UP AS PRETTY AS A PICTURE”

Besides being an exercise in literary theory, the purpose of this dissertation is to attempt to illustrate four different versions of a possible meaning where each version is as important and relevant as the next. Faulkner continually presents situations where there is more than one version of truth. It seems important that we, as readers, listen to the messages he has left us. Forcing *As I Lay Dying* to fit into a theoretic box is tantamount to cheating not only the novel, but in essence dwarfing a literary giant. Since Faulkner refuses to be limited to a single vision, it only makes sense to look at his works through several critical lenses.

Andre Bleikasten brilliantly summarized the problem of *As I Lay Dying* in his book *The Ink of Melancholy*. “Critics are so sharply divided that one sometimes wonders whether they have all been reading the same book. And yet, no matter how conflicting their interpretations, nearly all of them seem to agree about the need to coerce *As I Lay Dying* into *one* genre, *one* mode, and to reduce it to *one* unequivocal message, that is, to force it into formal classes and ideological categories to which it obstinately refuses to conform” (162). *As I Lay Dying* is a classic example of Faulkner’s belief in shifting levels of truth. Trying to hold fast to one meaning for *As I Lay Dying* is like trying to grasp a fist full of

sand. Each theorist examined in the dissertation provides the reader an opportunity to glimpse a single aspect of Faulkner's writing.

The second chapter uses Freudian theory to examine Addie's influence on her family members. The Freudian chapter tells the story of two sons, the cherished son and the neglected son. Jewel flourishes under Addie's affection, while Darl is vanquished for want of it. The format of the novel, 51 interior monologues, lends itself to psychoanalytic scrutiny. Freud's focus on the mother and how interactions with her can mold the individual psyches of her children provides the opportunity to examine the monologues of each family member in depth. Jewel's possessiveness, Darl's psychotic loneliness and Anse's ineptitude all can be explained with classic Freudianism.

Oedipal turmoil is quite common in Faulkner's novels and *As I Lay Dying* is no exception. I examine the relationship between Addie and Anse, as well as the silent struggle between brothers for Addie's complete attention. I provide a Freudian character study of each of the children, but the three that seem most relevant are the ones concerning Jewel, Darl and Cash. By the end of the chapter, I suggest that Faulkner positions Cash to take over as patriarch and transition the family into the New South. It is apparent that Faulkner has a deep respect for the kind of person that Cash represents.

There are several strengths in this chapter. The restructured Oedipus complex is unexpected and forces the reader to consider new formations in the

family dynamic. The mother, father and child are usually the key components of the Oedipus complex. I argue that Anse is not a significant player in this dynamic. Also, the use of Freudian psychoanalysis seems a good choice for beginning a probe of the extreme levels of dysfunction found in the Bundren family. It is especially useful in unraveling the reasons for Darl's slow descent into madness. And Freud's work helps to establish Cash as the brother who successful gets through the Oedipus complex.

There seems to be only one major weakness in this chapter. That weakness is that the literary critical community is beginning to see Freudian psychoanalysis as passé. Despite the fact that Freud introduced his *Interpretation of Dreams* more than a hundred years ago, his theories and terminologies are still very much a part of the current culture. Actually, "Freudianisms" are so ingrained in the culture that in many ways they have been reduced to background noise. "Psychobabble" is a familiar element in pop culture. It is used in movies, commercials, TV shows and, yes, it can still be found in books. The problem with such wide spread use and acceptance is that Freudian theory has lost some of its intellectual authority.

One weakness that Freudianism has never been able to brush away is the criticism that it is not a science because it deals with intangibles such as the interior world of the human mind. Freud himself pointed out that many of his

patients attempted to hold back information. How can one be certain that it is possible to know any person, including the self?

There have been critics who have discredited Freud and his research and procedures. And there have been those who would prefer to relegate him to the status of a drug using fraud. Yet there are still elements of Freud's theories that cannot be denied. For example, he gave society new tools to examine motivation, desire and mental health. His influence on the 20th century cannot be ignored. Freud gave the world a new way to examine the individual in an attempt to make a better life possible. In the end this seems to be what works of literature are about, giving a glimpse into the possibilities of the individual. His works help explain Addie's nihilism, Jewel's silence and Darl's madness.

The next chapter uses Lacanian psychoanalysis to further examine the Bundren family. The Lacanian chapter captures the story of a greedy father. After years of Addie's neglect, Anse finds a way to regain his manhood, all the while expecting each of his family members to pay a high price for his success. In the 21st century, psychoanalysis has not died, it has merely been altered. Lacan uses the father and a focus on language to probe the individual. Lacan is the new voice of psychoanalysis in the literary community. Lacan also considers the unconscious. His theory suggests that the unconscious "is not something one 'actively,' consciously grasps, but rather something which is 'passively' registered, inscribed, or counted" (Fink *TLS* 23). Although the average individual

has heard of Freudian theory, most people outside of academia do not yet know Lacan's name.

I argue that the Bundren family is clairvoyant and I use Lacan's Law of the Father to examine Anse's effect on the family. I juxtapose Anse and/or clairvoyance with each member of the family and attempt to decipher the consequences his actions and the odd ability of communicating without words has for every one of them. Throughout *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner broods over the notion of language and its inadequacies. He pours his own frustrations into Addie and highlights her mistrust of words by giving her a single monologue. Faulkner, a man who uses words for a living, creates Addie and then he surrounds her with a husband and several children who engage in a conversation in which she is never allowed to take part. She is not privy to any of the familial understanding that comes from their private communication. Then the writer involves his lead character in a torrid affair with a man who is all empty talk.

One strength in the Lacanian chapter is that it begins to act as a bridge from the inner world to the outer world. Lacan is a clear step from the concerns of the individual to the concerns of the society the individual inhabits. Lacan investigates the development of the subject through the use of language, a common denominator for all cultures.

Chapter four considers the issue of race from the perspective of "Whiteness." The Appiah chapter chronicles the struggle of this poor family to

make a way in a society that judges their fitness to be a part of the white race. Appiah's assertions that race is merely a social construct with no basis in science or reality allows for an examination of whiteness in the novel. Like Mark Twain before him, Faulkner is gifted at presenting a clear and accurate depiction of Southern life and the social issues he sees around him. What appears to be the casual use of the "n" word by the youngest Bundren veils a systematic categorizing of the Bundrens as Black rather than as white. Even when the focus of his work is not on African Americans, Faulkner is always discussing race.

Thadious Davis insists that "the interrogation of race in literature cannot be contained within a dominant ideology that by its very nature subordinates and diminishes or elides any concern with its other" (*GOP* 256). Currently, "White" is the rubric against which all other races are measured. As Davis suggests, the examination of race must include a long critique of "Whiteness" which would act to decentralize being white. To study *As I Lay Dying* from the "Whiteness" standpoint is to empower every American minority. In this chapter, I use Kwame A. Appiah's belief that race is purely a manmade construct in order to examine Whiteness in *As I Lay Dying*. The concept of Whiteness Studies is a little more than a decade old and *As I Lay Dying* is the perfect novel for studying this new concept. Appiah argues that there is no biological foundation for separating humanity into three specific groups. He argues that race is merely a way to segregate certain members from the rest of society.

Springboarding off of Appiah's argument, I argue in chapter three that through the Bundren family, Faulkner explains how race is always a factor in American culture even when there aren't any Black people present. Through either association or action, Faulkner finds ways to turn the family members step by step into African Americans, sometimes with specific use of the "n" word. The townspeople that the family encounters have no reason to cast these fellow white citizens as "negroes," other than to raise themselves above the Bundrens. In this way, Appiah's claim that race is strictly cultural assignment with no biological basis is proven.

This chapter has several strengths. First it taps into an emerging style of literary criticism, which makes it innovative and timely. Whiteness Studies is steadily gaining in popularity. *As I Lay Dying* presents a good opportunity to explore what makes a person white in American society. Secondly, using a novel that really has no significant African American presence to examine race takes the teeth out of the argument that minorities in this culture are merely hypersensitive. In other words, the arguments posited in the chapter cannot be brushed aside as an attempt to play the race card. In the end, it seems that race will always be an issue in America. This conversation will always be relevant in the minds of critical thinkers.

There is also a possible weakness with Appiah's argument. Medical science has discovered that there are certain differences between African

Americans and Caucasians. Blacks and whites manifest illnesses differently. Take heart disease for example. Studies done exclusively on white men may not help doctors diagnosis heart disease in African American men. Also it is becoming clear that Caucasians and African Americans metabolize certain medications differently as well.

These facts would negate Appiah's argument that there are no biological differences between the races. Of course, a possible counter attack would be to point out that women also have medical differences from men, yet no rational, thinking person would suggest that women are a separate species. But in the end, one would hope that rational people would understand that "there is nothing in the world that can do all we ask race to do for us" (Appiah 45). It would be ludicrous to make any assumptions about a person based solely on race.

In the fifth chapter, I examine *As I Lay Dying* using ideological studies. I claim that, although Faulkner was clearly not a Marxist, there were several ideologies in Southern culture that he could not accept. The Ideology chapter examines Faulkner's commentary on these Mississippi social ills. Faulkner does not make any judgments. He merely paints a picture and expects the readers to make decisions for themselves. His vision is always balanced. For example, Cora is religious hypocrite who condemns others for sins that she is also guilty of committing. But he balances Cora's hypocrisy with Addie who is pious in her own strange way.

In many ways, Faulkner rebels against traditional ideals that his Southern culture would expect him to automatically accept. His founding fathers would be appalled at much his work. Ultimately, tensions between Faulkner and his father seem to have insured that all of the fathers in Faulkner's world have some significant struggle to overcome. There are plenty of instances in his life where Faulkner revels in ideology by falsifying himself, e.g. pretending to have been a pilot during the war in order to appear manlier. He seems to have an intricate order of how things should be in his head and he rebels against everything outside of that order. But in true Faulkner form, the picture in his head seems to keep shifting.

A strength in this chapter is use of Anse's vision of himself as a plantation owner. In this way Anse is uplifted from his usual state of just being a lazy and shiftless person. By presenting Anse as an individual who assumes he deserves privileges he has not earned, i.e. someone who feels that s/he should not have to work rather than someone who simply doesn't want to work, it is possible to understand why Anse thinks having grown sons making money for themselves is a slight against him.

Another strength in the chapter would be the use of Addie and Cora to study Faulkner's stand on the ideology of religion. Although many of the incidents in the text that revolve around religion are laughable, e.g. Cash breaking his leg by falling off of a church, Faulkner seems to be leveling

particularly harsh criticism at those who follow the protestant hard line. Cora, the churchgoer, is presented as an unreliable narrator to be laughed at. Addie on the other hand appears to be much more interesting and have a better understanding of a true relationship with God. She does not use God to manipulate others the way that Cora does. Addie understands that she is a sinful person and she accepts her punishment.

The most stimulating part of this discussion must be how these theoretical voices join in conversation. Two of the theories that most naturally speak to each other are the psychoanalytical theories. Fowler points out, "Although Faulkner seems to have had no formal knowledge of psychoanalytical theory, nevertheless, his statements about the nature of his art seem to reformulate in alternative terms the Freudian and Lacanian position that meanings that have been relegated to the unconscious return in art" (5). Faulkner, consciously or unconsciously, mines his own hidden meanings.

Freudian theory and Lacanian are the psychoanalytical bookends. One begins the 20th century; the other begins the 21st century. Together these two theories examine how children are molded and affected by their parents. Both theories speak to how the individual is formed through familial connections. Each theory presents various attempts to chart childhood development highlighting how and where things go wrong. For Freud, the focus of discussion

is in the individual's psyche. For Lacan, the focus of discussion is in language and how the individual is prepared to go into society.

Appiah and Marx examine the twin societal concerns of race and class. The issues inherent in each of these social themes are so intertwined that it is nearly impossible to speak of one and completely ignore the other. Both race and class are ways of segmenting a population into groups of privileged, semi-privileged and non-privileged individuals. In a frightening way, both issues eventually boil down to the topic of economics. Slaves were first brought to this country in order to build a foundation of economic stability for slave owners. Slave owners needed to justify enslaving a group of people. After slavery ended, race was a way to decide who would be business owners and who would be low wage employees. These are the exact same problems that make up issues of class, but without the restrictive component of skin color.

The final pairing is between the concerns of psychoanalysis and how the individual defines himself with the concerns of society and how groups of people define the individual. At this point it seems necessary to point out that *As I Lay Dying* is a novel comprised of monologues. 51 times Faulkner gives the reader a slice of an individual's perception of the world around him/her. The final analysis must be that every group, society or culture is made up of individuals. It is easy to hide in a group of people, but things become complex when every individual is held accountable for his or her actions.

Would the entire Bundren family allow Vardaman to repeatedly use the “n” word if they knew they would be held accountable for teaching a new generation to hate people very like themselves? Would Cora have looked down on Addie if she knew that she would have been held accountable for her mean-spirited thoughts? In some fundamental way, Freud, Lacan, Appiah and Marx are all interested in people and how they function, sometimes alone, sometimes in groups. At the foundation of each of their concerns is the examination of how individuals react to the forces that seek to change or control thoughts or behavior. The individual may or may not be aware at all of the forces that are affecting him or her.

There are so many tales in this simple book. Faulkner is a master at weaving each story strand into the plush fabric of Yoknapatawpha. The author said “I am telling the same story over and over, which is myself and the world” (qtd. in Bleikasten *IOM* 358). In an attempt to understand himself and his place in the world, Faulkner crafts a skilful tale while gems from his unconscious float to the surface and spill onto the pages of his novel, illuminating the human condition. His works give the reader not only a glimpse into the mind of the author, but also allow the reader the opportunity to examine self and community.

“With its ventriloquistic expression of simple people’s complex feelings” (Matthews “FPL” 188), *As I Lay Dying* suggests that life, even at its simplest, is a wonderful complicated discussion with myriad undertones to be discovered. The

most exciting part of teaching Faulkner to undergraduates is being in the room to see what the next generation has to add to the conversation. The strongest part of this dissertation stems from my refusal to stamp a single meaning on the novel. *As I Lay Dying* reveals itself when viewed through so many facets. I have attempted to do just that, engage the text from multiple points of view. This brilliant multi-leveled novel deserves an honored place of its own.

NOTES

¹See Crews, Frederick. *Memory Wars and Unauthorized Freud: Doubters Confront a Legend*
 Dufresne, Todd. *Killing Freud: Twentieth Century Culture and the Death of Psychoanalysis*.
 Webster, Richard. *Why Freud was Wrong: Sin, Science and Psychoanalysis*.

ⁱⁱ For example, W. E. B. DuBois - *The Souls of Black Folks* ; Henry Louis Gates – *Figures in Black* and *The Signifying Monkey*; Toni Morrison, - *Playing in the Dark*; and Malcolm X just to name a few.

³. For discussion of Anse's hidden strength and his "rat like talent for survival", see Andre Bleikasten's *Faulkner's As I Lay Dying*, pp. 84-5. Also see Kevin Rainey's discussion in *Natural Aristocracy* where he points out that "Anse asserts power and position through his manipulation of the rhetoric of paternalism" (93).

⁴. T. H. Adamowski goes so far as to suggest that Anse is even a hindrance as a sperm provider. He suggests that Cash and Jewel are "virgin births" and that Darl's birth, which *is* tied to Anse, causes Addie to "banish [Anse] and [Darl] from her spiritual life" (219). See "Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*" in the *University of Toronto Quarterly Spring* 1980, pp. 219 -20. Betty Alldredge also suggests that Anse is not a paternal figure. Alldredge explains that "Anse is childlike, completely self-centered like the children in Addie's school, seeing everything in terms of his own well-being, completely unaware of Addie's [or his family's] needs" (9).

⁵. William Rodney Allen compares Addie's disdain for language with Pound and Imagist poetry in his essay "The Imagist and Symbolist Views of the Function of Language: Addie and Darl Bundren in *As I Lay Dying*." He points out that "Addie's demand for denotative value, precision, and spareness in her language reflects a similar trend in the imagist movement" (192).

⁶. I am grateful to Sheldon Brivic for pointing out the hierarchal structure between the brothers.

⁷See Arthur Kinney. *Faulkner's Narrative Poetics: Style as Vision*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1978. Also see James M. Mellard. "Something New and Hard and Bright: Faulkner, Ideology, and the Construction of Modernism." *Mississippi Quarterly* 48.3 (Summer 1995):459-480.

⁸ See Homer B. Pettey "Perception and the Destruction of Being." *The Faulkner Journal* 19.1 (Fall 2003): 27-46.

⁹See Irving Howe *William Faulkner: A Critical Study*; Frederick Hoffman, Ed. *William Faulkner: Two Decades of Criticism*; Jan Bakker "As I Lay Dying Reconsidered" in *Modern Critical Views: William Faulkner* .

¹⁰ See *The Mind of the South* where Cash argues that all Southern "white trash" cannot be credited to "some fifty thousand indentured servants set down in tidewater Virginia in the seventeenth century" (24). He suggests that it is not logical to believe "that these servants and

their progeny were so astoundingly inferior that through town centuries they spread over the land, past a dozen frontiers and through vast upheavals, without ever in the slightest losing their identity, without ever marrying and intermingling with the generality, and breeding steadily with their own" (24-5).

¹¹ One example of this "crab" mentality connects to the underground railroad. Harriet Tubman understood that any slave who decided not to go all the way to the North and freedom became a threat to the entire operation. So she carried a gun; it was either be free or die.

¹² See *Faulkner and Ideology: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha, 1992*. Kartiganer begins by noting that Faulkner's "unwillingness to recognize [ideology's] relevance to his work is clear enough" (viii). Andre Bleikasten especially shows "a deep impatience with some of the directions that ideological criticism has taken in the study of Faulkner. Also see Kevin Railey's *Natural Aristocracy* for a reaction to the 1992 conference.

¹³ These include Kevin Railey, Cheryl Lester, John T. Matthews and D. Matthew Ramsey.

¹⁴ The best example would be found during the Harlem Renaissance when writers such as Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison and others were discovering Communism and incorporating it into their works, e.g. *Invisible Man*.

¹⁵ Railey confirms that the term has "helped move us into the realm of postmodernism" (5). He also provides several suggested readings for discussions on Ideology as well as Ideology and its relation to Faulkner. See Railey "Introduction." *Faulkner Journal* 21.1&2 (Fall 2005/Spring 2006): 3-13.

WORKS CITED

- Adamowski, T. H. "‘Meet Mrs. Bundren’: *As I Lay Dying* - Gentility, Tact, and Psychoanalysis." *University of Toronto* 49.3 (Spring 1980): 205-227.
- Ahearn, Edward J. *Marx and Modern Fiction*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1989.
- Allredge, Betty. "Spatial Form in Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*." *The Southern Literary Journal* 11.1 (Fall 1978):3 - 19.
- Allen, William Rodney. "The Imagist and Symbolist Views of the Function of Language: Addie and Darl Bundren in *As I Lay Dying*." *Studies in American Fiction* 10.2 (Autumn 1982): 185-196.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *In My Father’s House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*. New York: Oxford UP, 1992.
- Atkinson, Ted. "The Ideology of Autonomy: Form and Function in *As I Lay Dying*." *Faulkner Journal* 21.1&2 (Fall 2005/Spring 2006): 15-28.
- Bakker, Jan. "As *I Lay Dying* Reconsidered." *Modern Critical Views: William Faulkner*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publisher, 1986. 221-232.
- Bleikasten, Andre. *Faulkner’s As I Lay Dying*. Trans. Roger Little. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1973.
- -. "Fathers in Faulkner." *The Fictional Father: Lacanian Readings of the Text*. Ed. Robert Con Davis. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981. 115-146.
- -. *The Ink of Melancholy: Faulkner’s Novels from The Sound and the Fury to Light in August*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990.

- Blotner, Joseph. "How *As I Lay Dying* Came to Be." *Readings On William Faulkner*. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1998. 113-119.
- Bockting, Ineke. *Character and Personality in the novels of William Faulkner: A Study in Psychostylistics*. Lanham: University of America Inc, 1995.
- Bowie, Malcolm. *Lacan*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1991.
- Cash, W. J. *The Mind of the South*. New York: Vintage Books, 1991.
- Chodorow, Nancy J. *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1989.
- Cixous, Helene. "Castration or Decapitation?" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 7.1 (Autumn 1981): 41-55.
- Cook, Sylvia Jenkins. *From Tobacco Road to Route 66. The Southern Poor White in Fiction*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1976.
- Davis, Robert Con. "Critical Introduction: The Discourse of the Father." *The Fictional Father: Lacanian Readings of the Text*. Ed. Robert Con Davis. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1981. 1 - 27.
- Davis, Thadious. *Faulkner's "Negro": Art and the Southern Context*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1983.
- . *Games of Property: Law, Race, Gender, and Faulkner's Go Down Moses*. Durham: Duke UP, 2003.
- Duvall, John N. "'A Strange Nigger': Faulkner and the Minstrel Performance of Whiteness." *The Faulkner Journal* 22.1/2 (Fall 06 / Spring 07): 106-119.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. 2nd Edition. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

- Faulkner, William. (1930) *As I Lay Dying*. New York: Vintage International, 1990.
- - -. (1929) *The Sound and the Fury*. New York: Vintage International, 1990.
- Fenichel, Otto. (1945). *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1972.
- Fink, Bruce. *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995.
- Fowler, Doreen. *Faulkner: The Return of the Repressed*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997.
- - -. Matricide and the Mother's Revenge: As I Lay Dying. *The Faulkner Journal* 4.1&2 (Fall 88/ Spr. 89): 113-125.
- Hale, Grace Elizabeth. *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940*. New York: Vintage Books, 1999.
- Harris, Cheryl. "Whiteness as Property." *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*. Ed. Kimberle Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Pellar, and Kendall Thomas. New York: The New Press, 1995. 276-291.
- Hayes, Elizabeth. "Tension Between Darl and Jewel." *The Southern Literary Journal* 24.2 (Spring 1992): 49-61.
- Henninger, Katherine. "It's a outrage": Pregnancy and Abortion in Faulkner's Fiction of the Thirties." *The Faulkner Journal* 12.1 (Fall 1996): 23-41.
- Hoffman, Frederick. *Freudianism and the Literary Mind*. Ann Arbor: Louisiana State UP, 1967.
- Holland, Norman N. (1968). *The Dynamics of Literary Response*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1975.

- Howe, Irving. *William Faulkner: A Critical Study*. Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1991.
- Hustis, Harriet. "Masculinity As/In Comic Performance." *The Faulkner Journal* 15.1&2 (Fall 1999/Spring 2000): 107-123.
- Irwin, John. *Doubling and Incest: A Speculative Reading of Faulkner*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996.
- Jacobi, Martin. "'The Man Who Suffers and the Mind Which Creates': Problems of Poetics in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*." *The Southern Literary Journal* 20.1 (Fall 1987): 45-60.
- Jehlen, Myra. *Class and Character in Faulkner's South*. Secaucus: The Citadel Press, 1978.
- Jenkins Cook, Sylvia. *From Tobacco Road to Route 66: The Southern Poor White in Fiction*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1976.
- Jones, Anne Goodwyn. "Desire and Dismemberment: Faulkner and the Ideology of Penetration." *Faulkner and Ideology*. Ed. Donald M. Kartiganer and Ann J. Abadie. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1995, 129-171.
- Kavanagh, James H. "Ideology." *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. Ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughline. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. 306-320.
- Kinney, Arthur F. *Faulkner's Narrative Poetics: Style As Vision*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1978.
- Kloss, Robert J. "Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*." *American Imago* 38.4 (Winter 1981): 429-44.

- Lacan, Jacques. *Feminine Sexuality*. Ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose. Trans. Jacqueline Rose. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1982.
- Lears, T. J. Jackson. "Faulkner and the World of Goods." *Faulkner and Material Culture: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha*, 2004. Ed. Joseph Urgo and Ann J. Abadie. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007. 139-148.
- Lester, Cheryl. "As They Lay Dying: Rural Depopulation and Social Dislocation as a Structure of Feeling." *The Faulkner Journal* 2.1&2 (Fall 2005-Spring 2006): 28-50. (1)
- Leyda, Julia. "Reading White Trash: Class, Race, and Mobility in Faulkner and Le Suer." *Arizona Quarterly* 56.2 (Summer 2000): 37-64.
- Lowe, John. "The Fraternal Fury of the Falkners and the Bundrens." *The Mississippi Quarterly: The Journal of Southern Cultures* 48.3 (Fall 2001): 595-624.
- Matthews, John T. "As I Lay Dying in the Machine Age." *Boundary 2* 19.1 (Spring 1992): 69-94.
- - -. "Faulkner and Proletarian Literature." *Faulkner in Cultural Context*. Ed. Donald M. Kartiganer and Ann J. Abadie. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1997. 166- 190.
- McKee, Patricia. *Producing American Races: Henry James, William Faulkner, Toni Morrison*. Durham: Duke UP, 1999.
- Mellard, James M. "Realism, Naturalism, Modernism: Residual, Dominant, and Emergent Ideologies in *As I Lay Dying*." *Faulkner and Ideology*. Ed.

Donald M. Kartiganer and Ann J. Abadie. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1995, 217-237.

-- -. "Something New and Hard and Bright: Faulkner, Ideology, and the Construction of Modernism." *Mississippi Quarterly* 48.3 (Summer 1995): 459-480.

Morris, Wesley. "The Irrepressible Real: Jacques Lacan and Poststructuralism." *American Criticism in the Poststructuralism Age*. Ed. Ira Konigsberg. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981. 116-134.

Morrison, Gail Moore. "The House That Tull Built." *As I Lay Dying: A Casebook*. Vol.3. Ed. Dianne L. Cox. New York: Garland Publishing, 1985. 159-177.

O'Donnell, Patrick. "Between the Family and the State: Nomadism and Authority in *As I Lay Dying*." *Faulkner Journal* 7.1&2 (Fall 1991/Spring 1992): 83-94.

"Oral Character." *A Dictionary of Psychology*. 1st ed. 2003.

"Oral Dependence." *A Dictionary of Psychology*. 1st ed. 2003.

Palmer, Louis. "Bourgeois Blues: Class, Whiteness, and Southern Gothic in Early Faulkner and Caldwell." *The Faulkner Journal* 21.1&2 (Fall 2006 – Spring 2007): 120-139.

Petty, Homer B. "Perception and the Destruction of Being." *The Faulkner Journal* 29.1 (Fall 2003): 27- 46.

Porter, Carolyn. "Faulkner's Grim Sires." *Faulkner at 100: Retrospect and Prospect*. Eds. Donald M. Kartiganer and Ann J. Abadie. Jackson:

University Press of Mississippi, 2000. 120 – 131.

- - -. “Symbolic Fathers and Dead Mothers: A Feminist Approach to Faulkner.”

Faulkner and Psychology: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha, 1991. Eds.

Donald M. Kartiganer and Ann J. Abadie. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1991. 78 - 122.

Ragland - Sullivan, Ellie. *Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis.*

Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

Railey, Kevin. “Introduction.” *Faulkner Journal* 21.1&2 (Fall 2005/Spring 2006):

3-13.

- - -. *Natural Aristocracy: History Ideology, and the Production of William*

Faulkner. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1999.

Robinson, Angelo Rich. “Race, Place, and Space: Remaking Whiteness in the

Post-Reconstruction South.” *The Southern Literary Journal* 35.1 (Fall 2002): 97-107.

Rose, Jacqueline. “Introduction II.” *Feminine Sexuality.* Ed. Juliet Mitchell and

Jacqueline Rose. Trans. Jacqueline Rose. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1982.

Sass, Karen R. “At a loss for words: Addie and Language in *As I Lay Dying.*”

The Faulkner Journal 6.2 (Spring 1991): 9-21.

Schwab, Gabriele. “The Multiple Lives of Addie Bundren’s Dead Body: On

William Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying.*” *The Other Perspective in Gender and Culture.* Ed. Juliet Flower MacCannell. New York: Columbia UP, 1990.

209-241.

- Smith, Dina. "Cultural Studies' Misfit: White Trash Studies." *Mississippi Quarterly* 57.3 (Summer 2004): 369-387.
- Snead, James A. *Figures of Division*. New York: Methuen, 1986.
- Sugimori, Masami. "Signifying, Ordering, and Containing the Chaos: Whiteness, Ideology, and Language in *Intruder in the Dust*." *The Faulkner Journal* 21.1&2 (Fall 2006 – Spring 2007): 54-73.
- Urgo, Joseph R. "Introduction." *Faulkner and the Ecology of the South*. Ed. Joseph R. Urgo and Ann J. Abadie. Jackson: University of Mississippi, 2005. ix-xxii.
- . *Faulkner's Apocrypha: A Fable, Snopes and the Spirit of Human Rebellion*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1989.
- Vickery, Olga W. "As I Lay Dying." *William Faulkner: Two Decades of Criticism*. Eds. Frederick Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery. East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951. 189-205.
- . *The Novels of William Faulkner: A Critical Interpretation*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1992.
- Watson, Jay. "Introduction: Situating Whiteness in Faulkner Studies, Situating Faulkner in Whiteness Studies." *The Faulkner Journal* 22.1/2 (Fall 06 / Spring 07): 3-23.
- Wilson, Charles Reagan. "Faulkner and the Southern Religious Culture." *Faulkner and Religion: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha, 1989*. Eds. Doreen Fowler and Ann J. Abadie. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1991. 21 – 43.

Wood, Amy Louise. "Feminine Rebellion and Mimicry in Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*." *The Faulkner Journal* 9.1&2 (Fall 93 Spring 94): 99-112.

Woodbery, Bonnie. "The Abject in Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*." *Literature and Psychology* 40.3 (1994): 26-42.

Wright, Elizabeth. *Psychoanalytic Criticism: A Reappraisal*. 2nd Edition. New York: Routledge, 1998.