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Thematic and Stylistic Aspects of Modernism in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*

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Dedication

To my Dear mother and my dear father God bless him

To my dear sisters and brothers

To my dear friends

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to Allah for the blessing and ease given to me to finish this paper.

My sincere thanks go to my supervisor Mr. Said Smatti: his guidance, his advice and his knowledge have been a great help.

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Abstract

As I Lay Dying is one of the most celebrated achievements of William Faulkner. It is a short term glimpse into the misfortune of a southern family. Faulkner grants the reader access to the consciousnesses of multiple characters. The main purpose of this dissertation is to figure out to what extent modernist aspects are presented in the novel. The research has been dependent on two main approaches which are the Stylistic and the Thematic. The research is held through extracts which are taking from the novel, a variety of related books, and from other reliable websites. Through the analyses of the novel, it is clear that *As I Lay Dying* is reach account of modernist styles and themes. It stands at the front to criticize and question the new changing world.

ملخص

وأنا أحتضر هي واحدة من الانجازات الأكثر شهرة لوليام فولكنر. هي لمحة على المدى القصير لسوء حظ عائلة جنوبية. فولكنر منح القارئ الوصول إلى واعي شخصيات متعددة. الغرض الرئيسي لهذه المذكرة هو لفهم مدى مظاهر التجديد المعروضة في الرواية. اعتمد البحث على طريقتين أساسيتين هما الأسلوبية والموضوعاتية. عقد البحث عبر مقتطفات مأخوذة من الرواية، ومجموعة متنوعة من الكتب ذات الصلة، ومن مواقع أخرى معتمدة على الانترنت. من خلال تحليل الرواية، من الواضح على أن الرواية تقرير غني بأساليب ومواضيع الحداثة. هي تقف في الطليعة للانتقاد والتشكيك في العالم الجديد المتغير

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Dedication..... | i |
| Acknowledgments..... | ii |
| Abstract in English..... | iii |
| Abstract in Arabic..... | iv |
| Table of Contents..... | v |
| General Introduction..... | 8 |
| | |
| Chapter one: Theoretical background..... | 11 |
| 1.1.Introduction..... | 11 |
| 1.2. Regionalism..... | 11 |
| 1.2.1. Realist Regionalism..... | 12 |
| 1.2.2. Modernist Regionalism: Revival of Regionalism..... | 15 |
| 1.3. American Modernism During the Twentieth Century..... | 19 |
| 1.3.1. American Novel During 1920s..... | 21 |
| 1.4. William Faulkner’s personal life..... | 22 |
| 1.4.1. William Faulkner the Literary Man..... | 23 |
| 1.4.2. William Faulkner’s major works..... | 25 |
| 1.5. Conclusion..... | 26 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Chapter two: Thematic Aspects of Modernism in <i>As I Lay Dying</i>..... | 28 |
| 2.1. Introduction..... | 28 |
| 2.2. Alienation..... | 28 |
| 2.2.1. Addie’s theory of language..... | 29 |
| 2.2.2. Darl’s Alienating language..... | 32 |
| 2.3. Consumerism..... | 35 |
| 2.3.1. Marriage as a business negotiation..... | 36 |
| 2.3.2. The different desires behind the journey to Jefferson..... | 37 |
| 2.4. The Journey..... | 39 |
| 2.4.1. Dewey Dell and Darl’s psychological conflict..... | 40 |
| 2.4.2. Dewey Dell’s self conflict..... | 41 |
| 2.5. Conclusion..... | 43 |
| Chapter Three: Stylistic Aspects of Modernism in <i>W As I Lay Dying</i>..... | 44 |
| 3.1. Introduction..... | 44 |
| 3.2. Stream of Consciousness..... | 44 |
| 3.2.1. The Troubled Consciousness of Darl Bundren..... | 45 |
| 3.2.2. Soliloquy as Stream of Consciousness..... | 46 |
| 3.3. Multiple Narrators..... | 49 |
| 3.3.1. A Single Plot from Different Points of Views..... | 49 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 3.3.2. The various points of view Besides Addie's dead corpse..... | 51 |
| 3.4. Conclusion..... | 55 |
| General Conclusion..... | 56 |
| Woks Cited Page..... | 58 |

General introduction

Many periods in literature were seen as modern. The ancient Greeks of the 5th century B.C Athens believed that they are modern. The Romantics in their time assumed that they are modern. The Realistic considered themselves as modernists in their way of rejecting the Romantics. It is really difficult to look at our own time and see what literary era we are living in and come up with a good name for it, so modernism is the suitable term which covers that now. Generally speaking the term “Modernism” characterizes the radical shift from traditions; it is the use of new and innovative ways of expressions. Many styles in art and literature from the late 19th and 20th centuries are noticeably different from those that preceded them. Modernism as a literary movement reached its height in Europe between 1900 and the middle 1920s. Many artists thought that the world itself was dangerous. The First World War erected to show them how life can be seen ridiculous under the senseless slaughter of people. It was something that they would face again with the Second World War and would in the end influence major artistic movements from that time on (Bradbury and McFarlane 153).

In light of the new economic, social and political circumstances, many artists, thinkers, writers saw that the traditional approaches to arts, architecture, literature, religion, social organizations and life itself have become outdated. Ernest Hemingway, for instance, wrote in flat, short sentences. James Joyce, another representative figure, wrote a novel (Ulysses) that consists solely of the stream of consciousness impressions of its protagonist as he travels through Dublin in one day. Thus Modernism main objectives are, pertaining to present time: modern city, pertaining to contemporary styles in Art, literature, Music, and so on. Modernism is presented by Malcolm Bradbury and James MacFarlane in their book *Modernism: A Guide to European literature 1890-1930* as “a height aesthetic self-

consciousness, with a thrust away from realism and toward style, technique, toward form in one world”(170). For them, it is the artistic tendency that best responded to the chaos set loose by the modern era.

It is in this modernist and aesthetic context that *as I lay dying* was first to be introduced. The novel is considered to be one of the most accomplished and novels offered by a modernist writer. Faulkner’s novels are considered to be as modern texts in term of themes, narrative style and subject matter. Faulkner breaks away from traditions and conventions by using new literary forms. In *as I Lay Dying*, Faulkner depends on a variety of multiple relationships between the characters under the so called stream of consciousness. The different views of characters serve to show their connections and their search for identity.

As previously stated, *As I Lay Dying* is a novel that offer an image of how William Faulkner draw his own way toward modern writings in terms of themes and styles. Thus, this research is an attempt to investigate the way modernism pervades *As I Lay Dying*, and how William Faulkner reflects many aspects of modernist literature in the novel. Via these attempts to figure out the various aspects of modernism used in the novel, one main question arose as follows: in which way stylistic and thematic modernist aspects are reflected in William Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*?

Two main approaches will be used to go through the analysis of the novel; the stylistic approach and the thematic approach. In one hand, the stylistic will be devoted to show how typically the stream of the novel is modern, and how William Faulkner depends on a variety of modernist techniques to mirror his modern attitudes. On the other hand, the thematic approach will go through the psychological makeup of the different and multiple characters to best illustrate their views, feelings and their interpretations to the main events

that they passed by during the course of their journey to bury the mother and the wife Addie. The research will be based on data collected from library and the internet.

In 1956 interview with Jean Stein Vanden Heuvel in Lion, William Faulkner described *As I Lay Dying as tour de force*. As much as it was written in speed as it was well written in term of technique and art. The baffling diversity of tones and moods that characterizes the novel, explains, to certain extent, the variety of interpretations it provoked. In Irvin Howe's words: "*As I Lay Dying* is something more than a record peregrine disaster, we soon discover. As it circles in journey in space, the novel also plunges into the secret life of the journeyers" (162). In terms of style, Wendy Ellen Waisala comments that character's thoughts and status of mind can be true and immediate within the use of stream of consciousness, and that characters may or may not be appreciated, but they can be trusted in term of the reliability of their speech (20). Backing to themes, alienation is highly presented in the novel. The fact that the novel is set in the form of monologue indicates the alienation of each character, because the form of monologue is considered private by nature (Porter 68). In his book *A Modernist Distrust Of Words*, Bartle Kimberlee argues that the matriarch of the Bundren family, Addie, is the most powerful example of the family alienated nature. As he puts it, she believes that language is symbolic and artificial, and that language is not sufficient to truly convey things. This research is bit different from the previous ones, because the analysis of *As I Lay Dying* is molded in new current circumstances.

The research will include a general introduction, and three main chapters, and a general conclusion. The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical background of the whole research. The second chapter will concern the thematic aspects of modernism in the novel. The third chapter will deal with the stylistic aspects of modernism in the novel. Finally, a conclusion is set up to give a general overview to what have been discussed.

Chapter 1:

Theoretical Background

1.1. Introduction

American literature is characterized to be current and international among many literary traditions of the world. Like other national literatures, American literature was created by the history of the country that produced it. By the end of the nineteenth century, America took its place among the powers of the world; its fortunes are so interconnected with those of other nations that unavoidably it becomes involved in two world wars and, following these conflicts, with the problems of Europe and East Asia. Meanwhile the rise of science and industry, as well as changes in ways of thinking and feeling brought many modifications in people's lives. All these factors in the development of the United States molded the literature of the country.

This chapter will be devoted to discuss the backgrounds that paved the way for the American modern literary works. The chapter will cover specifically the creation of a typically regional literature, and how this regional literature turned into new mode to reflect the current circumstances.

1.2. Regionalism

Many places in the world seem to be ordinary, but they can be interesting if someone notices something unique about them. After the end of civil war in 1865, the south was broken. Its core labor system, slavery, had been abolished. Farms, factories, and

plantations had been shattered, and rail lines were out of use. The federal government had to come up with a plan to solve those problems. A sense of nostalgia flourished. This nostalgia, that living was better in earlier decades, becomes part of American awareness. Many American writers felt that the rapid changes that are taking place may threaten the current life, thus, led them to come up with a new form of fiction known as; regionalism. Those regionalists tempted to keep their own direct surroundings. Their work has the attraction of distinct place even while presenting worldwide themes (Lathbury 57).

In their book *Realism and Regionalism*, Gary Scharnhorst and Tom Quirk argue that Regionalists render setting figures, sometimes, as a character, if not a central force in the tale. The setting is not depicted always as idyllic, but as pastoral. Characters in regionalist writings are depicted with greater psychological profundity and with greater sympathy; they represent the local rather than being highly individualized people. The first person narratives are mostly used by regionalists to tell their stories, because the narrator is a part of the region itself. In terms of themes, regionalist writings are often considered nostalgic, since they tempt to lament the passing of rural and communal values (57). Thus to say, regional literature arose from an attempt to accurately represent the speech, manners, habits, history, folklore, and beliefs of people in specific geographical areas.

1.2.1. Realist Regionalism

Gary Scharnhorst and Tom Quirk assume that literary terrain was appealing for “new generation of American writers who emphasized verisimilitude or Realism in the arts,” with the publication of Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, the set off of the American Civil War in 1861, and the deaths of Henry David Thoreau in 1862 and Nathaniel Hawthorne in 1864. Among those writers were Mark Twain, Henry James,

William Dean Howells, Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary Wilkins Freeman and John William De Forest. All the previous writers, preferred not to “allegorize or sentimentalize” the knowledge in their narrative, choosing as an alternative to represent the world in a real or objective manner. In *Criticism and Fiction* in 1891 Howells confirmed: “let fiction cease to lie about life, let it portray men and women as they are, actuated by the motives and the passions in the measure we all know;...let it not put on fine literary airs; let it speak the dialect, the language, that most Americans know, the language of unaffected people everywhere” (qtd. in Scharnhorst and Quirk 3). Journalism was the beginning of many realist writers, the questions of “Who, What, Where, Why and When,” were addressed in their fiction as well as in their career as journalists. Preferring to offer a record of life, the Realists often depicted middle-class experience. They shared with some pragmatists as William James a philosophical attitude that confirmed freedom of the will, intentional and purposeful behavior, and individual responsibility. The literary landscape in the late nineteenth century “featured no monolithic school of Realists.” There were, in result, many “realities or varieties of Realism,” including Local color or Regionalism (3-4).

The origins of local color or local color fiction were traced back, by many critics, to the 1868 publication of the story *The Luck of Roaring Camp*, by Bret Harte. This tale, which is centered in a California mining, was soon joined by his widely held story *The Outcasts of Poker Flat* (1870). Basics of Harte’s work, particularly its regional taste, employ of “stereotypical characters and portrayal of ethnic groups,” influenced many of his generation in the American west. While scholars traced back the story’s origins in southwestern tradition and its association with the work of other authors in the same field, Mark Twain’s sketches *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* (1865) use a principal feature of local fiction, the employment of a storyteller typically an educated viewer from the world beyond who works as mediator between the pastoral folk people of

the tale and the urban addressees to whom the story is produced. Different from Harte's and Twain's representations of miners and other adventurers, Gertrude Atherton practically describes the everyday life of the old Californians, Spanish landowners, and the residents of San Francisco in her short fiction. Mary Hallock Foote's stories underline women's reactions to the relocation practice in the American west. Frederic Remington aimed to focus on the principles of the elderly west and lamented their quick fading through his plentiful short story collections. Likewise, the fictional works of Owen Wister required depicting the specific existence of the western plains states that were speedily disappearing before the encroaching standards of eastern American culture (eNotes Editors).

New England characterizes the remarkable presence of female authors, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, and Rose Terry Cooke. Stowe's distinctive utilize of New England town landscape and Yankee dialect is apparent in her short narrative collection *Oldtown Fireside Stories* (1871). Jewett's masterpiece, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896), a short account series set in the weakening marine communities of coastal Maine, is the mainly famous work of New England local color fiction. The mechanism of "spectator-narrator," a stranger from the town, creates the border for the collection. Alike to Jewett's works, Wilkins Freeman's short narrative collections were produced with a female readership into consideration, presenting New England women whose working opportunities were basically restricted to marriage or "spinsterhood." Rose Terry Cooke's account of a certain demographic of New England, harsh spinsters yearning for the reverence of their communities and exploited farm women suffering from the cruel treatments of their husbands, locate her separately from her generation who were further concerned with the lives of the upper social class (eNotes Editors).

The principal body of regional and local color fiction has been certainly shaped in the South. Richard Malcolm Johnston is the greatest alteration body from early old southwest humor to polite southern local color writing. All over his well-known collection, *Georgia Sketches*, Johnson park as a model for twentieth century writers from the American south. Joel Chandler Harris is recognized as one of the former writers to trace and make use of African American dialect and tradition in his stories of the fictional character Uncle Remus. Likewise, Thomas Nelson Page penned homesick, complete tales in the cultivated tradition area, drawing the thoughts of a war-torn population disappointed by the struggles of rebuilding. The main significant characteristics of his writings, though, are his dependence on the chivalric symbols of southern bravery. Grace King's *Balcony Stories* (1893) and Maurice Thompson's *Stories of the Cherokee Hills* (1898) as well offer emotional views of "antebellum" race relationships and an opposition for community's transformation (eNotes Editors).

Far from the styles and themes of conventional antebellum literature, George Washington Cable is well known for his precise representation of post-Civil War community and truthful handling of the intricate ethnic problems of the Creole people, "descendants of the French and Spanish colonists of Louisiana." Ruth McEnery Stuart regularly received critical approval through her existence for faithfully depicting three oppressed segments of southern society. In Kate Chopin's collections, *Bayou Folk* (1894) and *A Night in Acadie* (1897), she transcends easy regionalism and depicts Creole and Acadian women who required spiritual and sexual freedom among the constrained traditions of nineteenth-century southern society (eNotes Editors).

1.2.2. Modernist Regionalism: Revival of Regionalism

The writings of Southern writers before this renaissance tempted to elevate the bravery of the “confederate army and civilian population” during the Civil War, and that kind of rural culture that pervades the south before the war. The Southern Renaissance changed many beliefs in southern literature; it opened the doors for new themes that were apparent in many literary works. Those writers had to bring more objectivity to their writings in the way they present the South’s issues and concerns, one of the main themes that they tackle in doing so is the insistence of the South’s conventional culture, more precisely on the fact that how an individual could prove his existence without losing his uniqueness in a place where family, religion, and community were more highly respected than one’s private and public life. Apart from the experience of the previous themes, those Southern writers have the chance to bring new modernist techniques such as stream of consciousness and complex narrative techniques to their works. William Faulkner is one of the most significant and celebrated writers whose work *As I Lay Dying* can be a suitable example of Southern literature Renaissance (“Southern Renaissance”).

The beginning of Southern Renaissance is sometimes attributed to the actions of “The Fugitives, that group of poets and critics who were based at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, just after the World War One.” From those who belong to the group were John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, and many others. All the previous named gathered to give birth to *The Fugitive*, a magazine that was named in such a manner, because the editors declared that they fled “from nothing faster than from the high-caste Brahmins of old south” (“Southern Renaissance”).

It has been also acclaimed that the coming out of Southern Renaissance as a literary and cultural movement is attributed to the opening of the predominantly mainly rural South

to exterior influences as a result of industrial extension that took place in the area during and after the First World War. *I'll Take My Stand: The South and The Agrarian Tradition* (1930) is a well-known essay collection written by authors and critics from the Southern renaissance that comes to be known as Southern Agrarians. The essay reflects their antagonism to the new industrialized world ("Southern Renaissance").

In his essay "Contemporary Regionalism," Michael Kowalewski assures that one of the central factors that enriched the American literature is "the spirit of place," this "spirit", he acclaim, is shared by many American writers such as Cather, Faulkner, Thoreau, Silko, Stevens, and so many others. Kowalewski assumes that this "spirit" does not evoke only backdrop color or slight local interest; rather, it is more about the sense of belonging and human connection. He argues that many American writers took the lead to bring to mind this "spirit," because it was felt missing and "uncelebrated" in the American life. The formulation of a national literary landscape of specific places, he puts it, took a gradual process, taking in mind "Faulkner's Mississippi, Twain's Hannibal, Steinbeck's Salinas, and so forth." This creation was a result of a common belief that the American environment missed a sense of "life and spirit." He affirmed that regionalist writers have to overcome a kind of challenge which is to bring different evocations of place that it is not done in classical American literature. In addition to that, contemporary regionalist authors have to avoid "over publicized representations of regional identity," they have to contend to contemporary life (7-8).

In his article "A Literature of Place," Barry Lopez wrote that the United States, in latest years, enjoy a variety of writings known as "nature writing" or "landscape writing," he assumes that this kind of writings start to received a critical consideration. He thinks that this type of writing has old roots and that it is not definitely recent. He believes that the main different that exists in the new regionalist's writings is "the hopeful tone it

frequently strikes in an era of cynical detachment, and its view of technological progress, even capitalism.” He acclaims that the main aims behind nature writings is to clarify the link between community’s modern economic development and the remove of nature as a result. For him, the coming out of Nature writings in the United States emerges from the fate that humanity and nature are indivisible, also from other types of post-colonial writings that “addressed the problem of spiritual collapse in the West, and search for modern human identity that lies beyond nationalism and material wealth”(10).

In his article “Regional American Literature Getting to know us,” Michel J. Bandler argues that the sense of nation, its landscape, its spirit, its achievements and its challenges led hundreds of novelists, poets, essayists and biographers to contribute nowadays to the flourishing of regional literature. Regional literature, for him, enjoys old roots, and he considered it “as native American legends, as evocative of place as the 19 century writings of James Fennimore Cooper and Mark Twain and Bret Harte, as vibrant as the worlds created...by novelist William Faulkner and playwright Tennessee Williams, as reflective of society as the novels of Sinclair Lewis and Eudora Welty.” The tradition, nowadays, is kept alive by contemporary counterparts of the previous writers. Bandler acclaims that by 1990s, regional literature becomes expansive and distinct. It incorporated many genres. It is reflected in the writings of many Americans and “those of the new ethnics.” The special properties of certain regions come out in poetry and drama, as well as in fiction and nonfiction. Regional writings reflect, as before, not only geography, but also moods and yearnings, dialects and idiosyncrasies. It encompasses the concrete and the intangible. Most important, it brings to mind “a hopeful tone”, and it proclaims, at the dawn of new century, that American culture is innovative and meaningful, from one expanse of land to another, and on social and economic levels as well (5).

1.3. American Modernism During the Twentieth Century

“the twentieth century will be American...the regeneration of the world, physical as well as moral, has begun,” announced Senator Beveridge, as the century turned, or as Ezra Pound described “a half savage country, out of date” (qtd. In Ruland and Bradbury 239). It seems that Americans will have the share to celebrate that century. As Gertrude Stein had noticed that the British had the nineteenth century and that the twentieth would be for Americans if it would have to go somewhere else to make it happen. At the start of the century, the arts had almost no artistic confidence, no certainty of direction or guiding tradition, so the need was to go abroad to carry forward the American arts (Ruland and Bradbury 239).

The European experiment influenced the American arts so powerfully. The need for revolutionary ideas led many American writers and intellectuals to seek artistic innovation across Europe. Modernism becomes so apparent in Europe, it threatened nineteenth-century synthesis, traditions, and values that had shaped centuries of art, it re-created the whole basis of artistic enterprise. This was the radical adventure of Modernism that dominated Europe between 1900 and the Great War. It was a time of movements, radical artistic theories, a time for what the German critic Wilhelm Worringer called abstraction. Americans were there and played a major role, taking a slow path toward modern revolution (240).

Theodor Dreiser was the great original of modern American Naturalism, and his masterpiece *Sister Carrie* is an ambitious novel that marked the emergence of American innocence and deep social experience. It took its quest slowly to be accepted as American Classic. Today it is regarded as a fundamental myth of modern displacement, filled with the details of the changing modern world. Another famous figure was Jack London, who

represents the restless side of the modern American mind, and who was famous by his revolutionary works of the struggle in wild (241-244).

Many cultural commentators and participants, such as Sherwood Anderson and Harriet Monroe, Margaret Anderson and Alfred Kreymborg, agreed that the year 1912 was really an extraordinary year in America as well as Europe. The years between 1912 and 1914 marked the change of the entire temper of American arts, and that the writing in the United States becomes unmistakably modern (269).

In many ways, the war justified the modern movements. Many young American writers, from Pound and Stein to Hemingway, Dos Passos, Faulkner and Fitzgerald, were involved in it or suffered from its direct impacts. As President Woodrow Wilson stated that the war the United States entered in 1917 was for democracy, and it marked the nation's first foreign conflict. The impact of the war on Americans was less than those in Europe; indeed America emerged from the war more convinced of its basic values. The nation concentrated on business, economic expansion, the advancing of technology, the spread of consumerism. The change was visible everywhere; wealth spread, mores altered, the texture of life changed, new technologies appeared in every home and street. One did not need to go to Europe to feel the change; however, many American writers did go. Hemingway was wounded on the Italian front and reflected that wound into a primal metaphor for the pain of life in a troubled age. Scott Fitzgerald had just finished officer school and was about to embark for Europe when the armistice was signed. William Faulkner trained with the Royal Canadian Air Force and encouraged the myth that he had served as a pilot in France. The war for many of those writers was the subject of their inspiration, an image of fundamental transition, a challenge for the small-town values among which many of them had grown up (295).

The modernist movement was initially attributed to Europe, but it had the American participants whose role, influence and dominance increased steadily. Americans become necessary hosts in the difficult political age that developed in Europe. Whether outland or homemade, Americans signed their place in the Western century literature (268).

1.3.1. American Novel During 1920s

“And I want to put on paper a record of the strange life they had lived in their time,” (qtd. In Ruland and Bradbury) wrote Hemingway in his novel *The Sun Also Rises*. He shows how wound does not afflict only his hero, but all the surroundings as they search for new values and life-style in a suddenly vacant world. The war give birth to war novel: John Dos Passos’s two works of growing disillusion, *One Man’s initiation-1917*(1920) and *Three Soldiers* (1921); Cumming’s *The Enormous Room* (1922), about his confinement in a French prison camp after expressing pacifist views; realistic battlefield works like Thomas Boyd’s *Through The Wheat* (1925); novels about the loose of peace of the disenchanted modern hero like Hemingway’s *A Farewell Arms* (1930). All those were examples of how war inspired many writers to produce such works. The 1920 was also dominated by post war novel; novels that reflected the changed, darkened and modernized world. The writings of 1920s were pervaded by a sense of purposelessness, decadence, cultural emptiness and political failure (296).

America was highly modernized as the focus moved from country to city, as technologies brought autos, telephones, radios and refrigerators to the growing members of middle-class homes. It was an age that raised the tension between nostalgia and novelty, and the American novel explored the mixture of experimental excitement about the new and anxious awareness of historical loss. One of the key figures that best illustrate the

image is F. Scott Fitzgerald. To many of his critics, Fitzgerald is a man who is highly involved in the social life matters, the amusements, the illusory promises of his time, with its fashions, its wealth, its changing sexual habits that he could never stand far to consider it (297-298).

The achievements of the American novel in the 1920s spread much wider; Gertrud Stein's *The Making of Americans*, Sherwood Anderson's *Dark Laughter*, John Dos Manhattan *Transfer*, Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and so many others. The period stands to be the most remarkable period of American history, as it covers new styles, new forms, new attitudes to human nature and human history and new modes of artistic self-discovery. Many writers had drawn the American aesthetics toward the center, because they possessed both a distinctively modern vision and the sense of culture that existed in American society. Hemingway won national and international success, Fitzgerald finally earned his belated recognition and Faulkner becomes internationally acknowledge as one of the most significant modern experimentalists (314).

1.4. William Faulkner's Personal and literary Life

William Faulkner was born in New Albany, Mississippi on September 25, 1897. Oxford, Mississippi was the place where he spent most of his life. He took different jobs after being dropped out from high school; painter, bank clerk, book salesman and postmaster. He enrolled to study literature in the University of Mississippi in 1919, but he rested only a year. Later, he was devoted to writing and producing novels, short stories and poetry. He had the share to win the 1954 Nobel Prize in literature because of his variety in dealing with the south's matters. As many writers of his generation, Faulkner joined the fight in World War one and he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force. Before travelling

to Europe, he lived in New York City and New Orleans in the mid- 1920s. After the World War One, he moved to Europe for artistic reasons. By 1926, in France, he knew that a New York publisher had accepted his first novel, *Soldiers Pay*, to be published (Fagnoli, Golay, and Hamblin 1, 6-7)

Faulkner's personal life was unstable. He had problems with his marriage and his finances. Although he was elected to the National Institutes of Arts and Letters in 1939, he was not wanted by people. He worked in Hollywood screen for six months, only to support himself and his family. Backing home to Oxford, Mississippi, for the rest six months, he was disappointed from his screenwriting career, and he was attempting to live a life of a farmer and saving his marriage. Faulkner's career was in decline by 1945. But later, he was invited by Malcolm Cowley, a critic who is interested by Faulkner's writings, to discuss his life and works. The two men established a correspondence and a friendship (Waisala3).

Before his death, he worked as a writer in residence at the University of Virginia. Unlike other writers, Faulkner created a small fictional Mississippi county that would enjoy universal themes that surrounded the Sothern history. He died at the age of 65 on July 6, 1962, in Oxford, Mississippi after receiving the Gold Medal for Fiction, leaving behind a reputation as one of America's greatest writers (4).

1.4.1. William Faulkner the Literary Man

“There are great artists who simply unfold, like Mozart, and those who give the impression of being in a state of constant evolution, like Picasso. William Faulkner is a splendid example of a writer who managed to do both,” stated David Rampton in his book *William Faulkner: A literary Life*. The fact that he produced many of his works far from his native region, and creating his imaginary county named as Yoknapatawpha does not

prevent him from becoming one of the twentieth century's original writers(1). He once said: "I am telling the same story over and over, which is myself and the world," (qtd. In Rampton 1). His style of writing was unique from the commencement, but it sorts itself in an imaginable manner.

Faulkner's career is known to be varied. He starts as a poet and fiction writer looking for style and subject matter, trying to follow figures he liked and sometimes having his own distinct way of writing inspired by them. Faulkner was stimulated by his grandfather, who was a successful popular writer. As an exceptional student at the University of Mississippi, he had escaped from high school and sometimes described himself as a "veteran sixth-grader." In his early 20s, he commenced publishing in the literary magazine, and giving bound books of his poems to a young woman he loved. He passes his early maturity practicing what Whitman calls "creative loafing," while managing to find profitable employment. In New Orleans and back in Oxford, Faulkner eventually begins to enjoy the literary life he, for so long, dreamed of. Between 1925 and 1928, he wrote sketches and stories and published three novels, having more or less ignored poetry for prose.

After 1928, Faulkner starts as an innovative literary man creating his own attractively unique creations. Faulkner took the lead among twentieth century's American novelists as the author of a series of novels published between 1929 and 1942, *The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying*, *Light in August*, and *Absalom, Absalom!*, much of these books did not gain him much money. The 1930s mark Faulkner's fruitful decade, he wrote all of the fiction for which he is remarkable today. Selling short stories to national magazines and working for a long time as a scriptwriter in Hollywood does not provide him with enough money to carry on his life, as a result he had to give up his artistic ideals in order to make a living(Rampton 2).

From his early stages, Faulkner received a variety of critics. His novels attracted positive as well as negative remarks. The chain of novels he gave birth to was reviewed by a significant of thoughtful commentators; so far, the same books were also strictly criticized for their “wilful obscurity, obsession with cruelty and violence.” Faulkner was the focus of discussion in a conference that was held to converse about Southern literature as early as 1931. By 1946, almost all of his works were printed. The success it provokes and the reputation of reprinted novels from the 1930s gave Faulkner the chance to gain the 1949 Nobel Prize for literature. In the next decade he enjoys a position as a spokesman in American letters, as he acclaimed: “articulate in the national voice,” (qtd. In Rampton 3). He becomes the subject of debate because of his success. The Faulkner industry proper was born. Its growth over the last 50 years was astonishing (3). The body of his plentiful works was written in a period not much longer than 10 years and even today he is considered as one of the most significant authors not only of the South of the United States, but also of the whole world.

1.4.2. William Faulkner’s major works

By the end of 1924, William Faulkner was convinced by Sherwood Anderson that his talents are best served by prose, and that he should write about the region and people he knows best. Thus, Faulkner created the world of Yoknapatawpha County, a rich detailed world that was the place of his major fictional writings. Faulkner published his first novel, *Soldiers Pay*, initially titled «*Mayday*», in 1926. The novel is a dark portrait of a return home of a wounded war veteran. It is based on Faulkner’s experience with and among soldiers and cadets in Toronto. After returning from Europe, Faulkner completed the manuscript of his second novel, *Mosquitoes*, which was published in 1927. His later novel,

Flags in the Dust, was rejected, but in 1929, it was published in a short version, as *Sartoris*. *The Sound and The Fury* (1929) was the result of his decision to write something that would reflect the writer's own opinion. Thus, the novel is considered as the first of Faulkner's major works, and the beginning of a remarkable period of creativity, as it is written in modernist style, that was adopted from the work of James Joyce and others (McGowan 86).

The novel, as Faulkner's previous works, acquired fewer sales, which led him to think about a work that would, both, gain attention and sales. So, he gave birth to his next novel *As I Lay Dying* (1930). The novel deals with the Bundren's quest to Jefferson to bury their mother. Later works, such as, *Sanctuary*, *Pylon* (1935), *Absalom, Absalom* (1936), *Go Down Moses* (1942), *The Hamlet* (1940) were also Faulkner's greatest achievements. The second half of 1940s saw Faulkner national and international recognition. Although his works gained less attention, he continues writing during the 1950s (87-89).

1.5. Conclusion

The outsized cultural wave of Modernism, which progressively emerged in Europe and the United States in the early years of the twentieth century, showed a sense of modern life through art as a pointed break from the past, as well as from Western civilization's classical traditions. Modern life seemed fundamentally different from traditional life; more scientific, more rapid, more technological, and more mechanized. Thus, born the American enterprise of writing; a writing of the American story that taken on a kind of meaning, as the Americans find themselves interpreting a modern history and experience for a larger world. Modern novel celebrated the viewpoint of first-person narrative; it becomes no

more associated with straightforward third-person narrative. The way the story was told become as important as the story itself.

In *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner attempts to address the South's dark issues. Through the Bundren family, Faulkner has the share to reflect the sense of displacement, individuality, personal profits and living in fragmented and chaotic world. Thus he tries to fully expose the fact of modern life. The majority of the novel's characters show how a human being can be in a difficult position which prevents him from defining his purpose in life.

Chapter 2:

Thematic Aspects of Modernism in *As I Lay Dying*

2.1. Introduction

Modernist American literature, during the First World War, presented themes of devastation and chaos, as they signal the collapse of Western civilization's classical traditions. The modernist novel celebrated the sense of individualism that is resulted from the feeling of isolation and loss. Such themes are particularly apparent in William Faulkner's novels. In *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner seems to be highly concerned with the inner world of each character; how they interpret the events around them, how they react and what are their main objectives behind their actions. The Bundrens of *As I Lay Dying* offer a good example of how southern American family's values melt and disappeared in the new changing conditions.

2.2. Alienation

A tension is built within the whole Bundren family originated from Addie's passing away, and even earlier before, in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. By having a family which is principally composed of people with nothing in common, Faulkner allows the reader to observe characters in terms of one another's true selves. Also, by the method of interior monologue, the characters are allowed to comment on the action which is occurring around them; thus, the text sorts itself out in terms of the personal points of view

of the characters. Awareness of how language shapes reality is also an important feature in *As I Lay Dying*, creating much of the nervousness within the novel.

2.2.1. Addie's theory of language

Addie is the mother of the Bundren children and she is the wife of the family patriarch Anse. She passes away earlier in the story from a protracted sickness, and the events of the novel circle just about carrying her dead body to her family's burial land in Jefferson. Out of the totally of the novel, Addie Bundren occupies only one chapter, so far, the complication of her thoughts debatably makes it one of the most dominant sections in the book. She exposes a great deal of disapproval towards her husband and her children. her image is stressed as less-than wholesome mother. John Stephen argues that Addie is one of the major causes of the family breakdown. By her request to be buried in Jefferson near her kin, she shows no close ties with her immediate family. The troubles that her husband and her children may face are none of her concerns. She pays no attention to the fact that they will have great difficulty in fulfilling her request. Much of the hostility in the family occurs because of her hatred of Darl and her love for Jewel. This prevents them from becoming a united family (30).

One of the main reasons that led to the isolation of Addie Bundren is the fact that she cannot identify herself with the people and things around her. In her narrative, she states that: "words are no good," and that "words do not ever fit even what they are trying to say at." She seems to mistrust language, that system of illogical signs that indicate ideas, words, phrases, grammar rules, and so forth. She even goes faraway by claiming that the ideas of love, motherhood, and pride are words just "like the others; just a shape to fill a lack" (Faulkner 136). In his book *A Modernist Distrust of Words*, Bartle Kimberlee claims that Addie is suggesting "the bleak goals language provoke to attach people, emotions,

things, and so on, by leveling out any hierarchy of meaning with this words,” and mentioning that even these typically strong terms mean no more than others. By describing them mere “shapes to fill a lack,” Addie emphasizes the fact that language is only symbolic and artificial, and that these arbitrary system is not sufficient to identify things (2). Again, she declares that we have “to use one another by words like spiders dangling by their mouths from a beam, swinging and twisting and never touching” (Faulkner 136). By including that spiders never contact each other, she highlights not only the deficient nature of communication, but it also portrays our supreme dependency on that system. Again, Bartle Kimberlee states that unlike many people, Addie seems to be highly concerned by “the modern crisis of language and labels,” however, since things exist “beyond the incomplete realm of words,” which make it impossible to truly convey things perfectly, isolating the one from connecting with the rest of the world (3). In her section, she remembers lying in bed and thinking “Anse. Why Anse...I would think about his name...I could see the word as a shape, a vessel...a significant shape profoundly without life like an empty door frame” (Faulkner 137). In this statement, Addie wants to convey that words are nothing like the door frame that it is r useless in its emptiness. She sheds more light on her husband’s name and calling him “not Anse”(138), because she thinks whatever he is labeled has no consequence on who or what he is, and that things continue to exist behind the frame that it is colored by language. And that explains, to certain extent, why she regards her husband as a negative person.

For Addie, physical reaction would create a deep solid connection between her and her surroundings, since words stands as obstacles. In his thesis “Words are no Good,” Michael Joseph argues that blood creates another problem for Addie in perceiving the others (16). In her narrative chapter, while she is not married to Anse and she is without children of her own, Addie struggles to make sense of her father’s claim that “the reason

for living was to get ready to stay dead along time.” As a school teacher, she goes to the spring after school to find a place where she can disgust the ones she teaches. The smells of the damp grass that pervades the fruitful soil makes her hate those students for being exterior to her own circle of birth and blood: “each with his or her secret and selfish thought, and blood strange to each other blood and strange to mine.” She tries to understand how those children which are considered outsiders, non of her blood or thoughts, would constantly arrange for her own loss, as she grows annoyed for her father that “for ever having planted her.” She reflects this struggle towards the children she teaches, as she thinks that brutal actions and the consequential scares on their faces would left a lasting mark of her existence: “when the switch fell I could feel it upon my flesh; when it welted and ridged it was my blood that ran, and I would think with each blow of the switch: now you are aware of me!” (Faulkner 134). But after giving birth to her first born child Cash, the carpenter who spends the first part of the novel in constituting his mother’s coffin, Addie has found answers to her unhappy life as a schoolteacher. Even though her students are outside the circle and “only through the blows of the switch could her blood and their blood flow as one stream” (136), Cash blood and thought are not strange of her own.

Language and blood are the main concepts that shape the limitations of Addie’s circle. In one hand, Cash, to whom she interconnect with no words is regarded, by her, inside. Anse, on the other hand, still outside. He uses the word “love,” which Cash does not necessitate to say, and his name is only “a vessel” into which he flows “like cold molasses.” thus to say, Anse and the words are strangers to Addie as the secret thoughts of her children: “Anse, love, what you will, outside the circle” (Faulkner 136-137).

The background in which to understand Addie circle is Julia Kristeva. In her post-structural and psychoanalytical approach she distinguishes between language’s Symbolic

and Semiotic operations. In one hand, she argues that the symbolic function of language enables significations and constitutes those phrases, sentences, and so forth. So that suggests meaning. On the other hand, the semiotic are those illogical aspects of language, and it is observed in childhood when the child starts to make sounds and noises that remain playfully indeterminate. Kristeva attributed the symbolic with the male and the semiotic with the female. Her works are based on Lacan's notion of the "mirror stage" in which an infant, upon seeing his own image, first refers to himself as a distinct I. "the act of signification, therefore, as it indicates the formulation of identity in the symbolic order" (133; 136). This is can be viewed in Addie's commentary about her relationship with Anse: "I would be I; I would let him be the shape and echo of his word" (Faulkner 138). Since Anse identifies himself with a word, he occupies the sphere of the symbolic. On the other Hand, Addie is determined to identify herself with those things that oppose signification occupies the sphere of the semiotic.

2.2.2. Darl's Alienating language

Darl is the second child of the Bundren family. He is the main teller of tale. He is considered by others as psychologically Broken. When Darl was born, his mother, Addie, states that: "At first I would not believe it. Then I believed that I would kill Anse" (Faulkner 136). Addie does not appreciate the arrival of Darl. She seems so angry to the extent that she would kill her husband Anse. In his essay "The Individual and the Family," J.L. Roberts argues that Darl is rejected by his mother, because she thinks that she have been tricked by words in giving him birth, and since words fails to break her alones, Darl will do as well, because he is considered ,by her, the off spring of those useless words. As Darl is growing up, he is able to figure out that he is the unwanted and the "motherless"

son. In regarding Addie's refusal of words as well as Darl, Roberts states that it is ironic that Darl becomes the main character who is very dependent on the concept of words (27). In a way or another, Addie is the one who affects Darl's relationship with the rest of his family. Faulkner draws the character of Darl in a very complicated manner; it is always not easy to grasp what he is trying to say, his thoughts and his narrative consciousness are elusive. In one of his narratives he tries to explain his uncertainty in a strange way as he puts it: "In a strange room you must empty yourself for sleep. And before you are emptied for sleep, what are you. And when you are emptied for sleep, you are not. And when you are filled with sleep, you never were. I don't know what I am. I don't know if I am or not" (Faulkner 65). He is skillful in getting access to the details of each of his surroundings. With all the previous complexities, it is through Darl's eyes that the reader can draw a complete image of the other characters.

According to Robert, one of the main conflicts that overshadow the relationship between the family members is the one between Darl and Jewel. At first, it is necessary to be fully knowledgeable that Jewel is the illegitimate son of Addie. He is the result of her affair with a preacher named Whitfield. Addie favors him, because she thinks he is conceived in violence. This love for Jewel creates a clash between him and Darl. Darl is the only character who sees the real relationship between his mother and his brother (31), as he put it: "she would fix him special things to eat and hide them for him. And that may have been when I first found it out, that Addie Bundren should be hiding anything she did, who had tried to teach us that deceit was such that, in a world where it was, nothing else could be very bad or very important, not even poverty. And at times when I went in to go to bed she would be sitting in the dark by Jewel where he was asleep" (Faulkner 100-101). Again, Darl realizes that Jewel is the "cross" that his mother carries. The tension between

them is raised again when Darl tries to put an end to their journey to Jefferson and Jewel save the situation.

Again, Robert has proved that Dewey Dell, the younger sister of the Bundren family, is the other character who is in conflict with Darl. One more time, Darl gets admission to a different character's inner world and knows all the implications concerning Dewey Dell pregnancy (32). Her first words to him are: "are you going to tell pa are you going to kill him" (Faulkner 25). Unfortunately Darl refuses to take any recognized move which led Dewey Dell to be more aggressive with him even more than Jewel. As the journey to Jefferson is in growth, the antipathy between Darl and Jewel, and Darl and Dewey Dell becomes stronger and reaches the peak.

In his book *The Scapegoat in Selected Works of William Faulkner*, John Stephen states that none of the members of the Bundren family tries to put an end to the trip to Jefferson except Darl. While they are spending a night with Gillespie, a farmer who puts up the Bundrens in their journey, Darl sets fire to the barn, wishing to burn his mother's corpse and coffin, but his attempts fail. Later, after the burial of Addie, Darl is taken to the insane asylum in Jackson. As they back home, after being a while in Jefferson, Anse, the father, is quickly re-married, and the others if they think of Darl at all, seem to feel as Cash does, that the asylum will certainly suit him better than the outside world. Darl's banishment is highly emphasized in the novel's final thirty pages, where it receives more attention than the burial of Addie. The problem here is how Darl character should be interpreted; is he, as J.L. Roberts describes him, "the sane and sensible individual pitted against a world of backwoods, confused, violent, and shiftless Bundrens," (qtd. in Hardet 36). Or is he truly insane. John Stephen puts that in the way to Jackson he seems insane, but his insanity could be caused by his family's total rejection of him. Earlier in the novel he has shown some unusual powers of "intuition and perception," but his setting fire to the

barn is the only action which suggests his insanity. Even his burning of the barn does not convincingly prove his insanity. Regarding the circumstances, the burning can be viewed as completely sane and human action (34-37). Even Cash states that he “can almost believe he done right in a way” by starting the fire (Faulkner 185). Darl is the victim of his family’s actions. He is sent away not because of his insanity, but because of the hatred his family, particularly Jewel and Dewey Dell, feels toward him, and because the only way to avoid paying Gillespie’s barn is to send him away, as Cash states: “it was either send him to Jackson, or have Gillespie sue us” (184). The considerable attention given by Faulkner to Darl’s punishment suggests the importance of the event. The removal of Darl represents the culmination of the disintegration of the Bundren family. The family has never united, and Darl’s situation has always been marginalized, but before this event, the family tries to stay together regardless of the hatred some of the individuals feel for each other. It has not been a family unit, but rather a collection of separated individuals, as the events of the novel show. Except for Cash and the young Vardaman, no one seems to care about Darl, especially when Cash demonstrates “it is better so for him. This world is not his world; this life his life” (208). The hatred, that is exchanged between some of the family members, is again emphasized when Darl is taken away to Jewel’s shouts of “kill him. Kill the son of a bitch” (188).

The novel allows the reader to view the world through individual lenses, and, yet, the one becomes devastatingly aware of how relationships permanently mark the nature of a character’s existence in general. Faulkner gives the reader access to the human psyche, to the mind, and, in doing so, opens up the doors so that to understand connections.

2.3. Consumerism

The early twentieth century America witnessed the split up of regional and traditional values. It remarked the increase of a mass consumer culture. Americans turned inward shunning diplomatic commitments to foreign countries, disapproving radical foreign ideas. New technologies, new consumer products, and new forms of leisure made the twenties roar. Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* is an example of how individual attempts and personal desires shattered the unit of one of the Southern families. It is a suitable illustration of the loss of one of the most sacred concepts of family which is the spirit of corporation and love.

2.3.1. Marriage as a business negotiation

When taking into consideration the circumstances of Addie and Anse's first meeting, the one can assume that their relationship is based on material benefits for both sides. In his thesis *Faulkner's Cartographic Method*, Marc Baldwin argues that the Bundren members are "enslaved by their own material desires". For instance, Anse considers his sons as no more than field workers, because he, himself, is "enslaved by economic state" that dictates his desires. Baldwin proclaims that the necessity of a woman able to control the children as well as the land led Anse to ask Addie for marriage. He finds in Addie the woman that is motivated by the same material desires (8). In her narrative chapter, Addie narrates her first meeting with Anse: "And so I took Anse. I saw him pass the school house three or four times before I learned that he was driving four miles out of his way to do it" (Faulkner 134). Addie asks him: "if you've got any womenfolks, why...they make get your hair cut?" he replies: "I ain't got none...that's what I come to see you about," then Addie says: "they tell me you've got a house and a good farm. And

you live there alone” (135). Their court relationship is a business negotiation, devoid of romance, each wanting not the other, but what the other owns or can grant. So, it is not astonishing, after so many years of marriage, that Anse refuses to provide a doctor for his dying wife just for the sake of saving few pennies, as he says: “and now I got to pay for it, me without a tooth in my head...got to pay for being put to the need of that three dollars” (33). Even the doctor, Peabody, notices that it is too late to send for him to examine Addie’s illness: “and I knew that if it had finally occurred to Anse himself that he needed one, it was already too late” (35).

2.3.2. The different desires behind the journey to Jefferson

As the novel’s events show the way death, that sacred concept, has become no more than opportunity among the Bundrens; it loses its sanctity in a very rapid changing society haunted by personal and individual attempts. Before her death, Addie makes her family promises to bury her in Jefferson near her family. As she dies, her husband, Anse, tries to act as a man of words in fulfilling her wish. The narrator leads the audience to believe that Anse Bundren’s journey to Jefferson in an effort to fulfill Addie’s request to be buried with the rest of her family is a heartwarming gesture that presents a small spark of hope pervades a corrupt and hard-pressed south; however, Anse is the exact opposite of these positive perception. No choice is left for Anse, the only thing that he would do is to take the way to Jefferson, and so he declares: “God’s will be done...now I can get them teeth” (Faulkner 44).in his book *Destructive And Generative Being In The Novels Of William Faulkner*, William H. Rueckert argues that Anse acts not because he cares about the death, and not because he is a man of words, but because he wants to buy new set of false teeth. And even this heroic quest, which he chooses to carry, is not fully reached without the help

of some neighbors. Rueckert assumes that the need for new teeth led Anse to behave in a very malicious if not corrupt manner; he steals from his children, till it left nothing to be stolen. He depends on other man to get the grave dug just to save money (53).

As J.L. Roberts argues, Dewey Dell is yet another character who gets profit from her mother's death. She identifies herself with no responsible actions, she only comes to resonates her planned affair with Lefe: "because I said will I or won't when the sack was half-full because I said if the sack is full when we get to the woods it won't be me. I said if it don't mean for me to do it the sack will not be full and I will turn up the next row but if the sack is full, I cannot help it" (Faulkner 24). Roberts assumes that the pregnancy of Dewey Dell is none of her concerns, and she bears no attention to the results that would face her. Her first objectives from going to the town is to find away to get an abortion. Through the journey to Jefferson, Dewey Dell is the one who seems very interested in reaching the town as quick as possible. The late is apparent in Dewey Dell's insistence on her father to carry on when they are interrupted by any obstacles (30). As she demonstrates: "you promised her...she wouldn't go until you promised. She thought she could depend on you. If you don't do it, it will be a curse on you" (Faulkner 88). Unfortunately, this statement does not reflect the real attempts of Dewey Dell; it carries behind other hidden aims and desires.

In his essay "Family Conflict and verbal Fiction," John Earl Basset assumes that Dewey Dell is "that teenage girl who can put an end to her own maternity." And as she is a bit confused about her identity, and as she is concerned by the passing of time she laments her mother's death in an unusual manner (127). As she says: "I heard that my mother is dead. I wish I had time to let her die. I wish I had time to wish I had. It is because in the wild and outraged earth too soon too soon too soon. It's not that I wouldn't and I will not it's that it is too soon too soon too soon" (Faulkner 93). She seems to appreciate her

mother's death, because she seems obliged to do so. Time is running and she has to put an end to her pregnancy, and that explains, to certain extent, her words.

The world of individual desires does not exclude another family member from being involved. Cash, the oldest son of the Bundren and the carpenter who spends the first chapter in building his mother's casket, has his own wishes from going to the town. In her analysis of the novel, Wendy Ellen Waisala comments that Cash's first concerns are how the casket is made in suitable manner, and how it will be balanced in the wagon. She assumes that he wants to go to Jefferson, because he is seeking new tools for his craft and to access craftsmanship (35). The events of the novel clearly show Cash's personal reasons; for instance, Faulkner devoted a whole chapter to list Cash's thirteen reasons behind building the casket: "I made it on the bevel. There is more surface for the nails to grip. There is twice the gripping surface to each seam. So I made it on the bevel. It makes a neater job" (Faulkner 66).

"Dewey Dell said we will get some bananas. The train is behind the glass, red on the track. When it runs the track shines on and off" (Faulkner 54). Vardman, the youngest of the Bundren children, is, as Waisala demonstrates, acting as a normal child in his age, as he is seeking a kind of adventures that would offer him new toys and exotic fruits at the end (35). Vardman may be too young to exhibit those strong characteristics that most of his family members enjoy during the course of the novel, but he is not immune of their influence on his innocent character.

The different desires of the Bundrens keep them on the road to bury the wife and the mother in an act to fulfill her last wish to be buried in Jefferson near her ancestors. The family members are fully knowledgeable about the absurdity of holding her corpse all across the countryside for more than a week, except for Darl and Jewel, none of them tries

to put an end to this burden, they try as possible as they can just to reach selfish and none mature desires.

2.4. The Journey

For the Bundren family in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, illusion is the standard. Opinions are facts and reality is subjective; concrete events get lost in the multitude of first-person perspective and stream of consciousness narration. It is remarked in the course of the novel that the characters do not communicate effectively in words with one another. The passivity of words is reflected in their activities. The characters are very much hesitant to employ verbal conversation. The limitation of expressions causes the interference of another means which is the psyche. Thus to say, the journey they take is considered to be more psychological than been real.

2.4.1. Dewey Dell and Darl's psychological conflict

Beyond the real journey, another psychological journey takes place. This psychological journey is symbolized by Dewey Dell and Darl. Although the funeral trip is, sometimes, considered as comic, the internal one has nothing to do with comic; rather it is taken in a very serious manner.

In her thesis "a Theme in Selected Works of William Faulkner," Nancy Kelley argues that Darl regards his sister as a sexual being, as he refers to her and describes her body so many times in the course of the journey (6). While preparing to the trip to Jefferson, Darl refers to his sister as follows: "Dewey Dell carries the basket on one arm, in the other hand something wrapped square in a newspaper. Her face is calm and sullen, her

eyes brooding and alert...she sets the basket into the wagon and climbs in, her leg coming long from beneath her tightening dress: that lever which moves the world; one of that caliper which measures the length and the breadth of life” (Faulkner 81). Darl seems interested in his sister’s physical appearance not because he wants her sexually, but because he knows all the affairs she has with their neighbor, Lafe. As if he is trying to find a link between her appearance and her deeds. Earlier in the journey, after they are drown in the river, and after Cash breaks his leg in an attempt to save his dying mother’s casket, Darl, again, refers to Dewey Dell: “Squatting, Dewey Dell’s wet dress shapes for the dead ayes of three blind men those mammalian ludicrosities which are the horizons and the valley of the earth” (130).

Nancy Kelley assumes that no one in the novel seems to care about Dewey Dell’s sexual appearance, and if they care, they would think her as Cora Tull does a “tom- boy girl” (Faulkner 11), or as Cash does when he regards her as the alternative of his mother in the way she cares about his injury although she is “near naked” (22). Kelley argues that since Darl is so interested on his sister, Dewey Dell seems as well interested on him. She notices Darl’s appraisal of her sexuality (7). In their way to a country named new hope, Dewey Dell gets an eye on her brother and she is fully aware of his aims behind his glimpses: “the land runs out of Darl’s eyes; they swim to pinpoints. They begins at my feet and rise along my body to my face, and then my dress is gone: I sit naked on the seat above the unhurrying mules, above the travails” (Faulkner 93). Dewey Dell’s personal interests on Darl starts earlier in the book, in her narrative, she describes him as “sits at the supper table with his eyes gone further than the food and the lamp, full of the land dug out of his skull and the holes filled with the distance beyond the land” (24). Dewey Dell’s concentration on Darl does not correlate with his own interest on her. For her, the only

thing that would matter is that whether or not Darl is attempting to tell their father about her affair and her pregnancy.

2.4.2. Dewey Dell's self conflict

Apart from the rest of the family, Dewey Dell takes her own journey in her mind. Her remembrance of her seduction by the neighbor Lefe reveals her casual attitudes toward sexual violation: "we picked on down the row, the woods getting closer and the secret shade, picking on into the secret shade with my sack and Lefe's sack" (Faulkner 24). Dewey Dell's primary concerns, as Nancy Kelly demonstrates, are her pregnancy. Her real attempts from making the "symbolic journey" are to reach the town druggist to provide her with pills to cause her miscarriage, but "her efforts to secure medication in Jefferson result in a second seduction by the soda clerk MacGown, who dupes her through her naiveté." As a result of her occupation with her problem, Dewey Dell tries to get to Jefferson by showing anger to anyone attempting to stand against their way. "She glares at Samson, and at Tull. To Tull Dewey Dell and Anse seem the most determined of the family members to reach Jefferson" (9).

The working of Dewey Dell's mind starts earlier in the novel as she has no one to talk to, she struggles in her inner world revealing some personal secrets. While carrying the domestic responsibilities of preparing the evening meal, milking the cow, and shoeing Vardman into the house, Dewey Dell reflects on the solitude into which the dilemma of her pregnancy has pushed her, thinking how the "big tub of guts" Peabody, the doctor who has been asked to examine Addie's illness, can help her in her aloneness. She feels her "body, bones and flesh beginning to part and open upon the alone" (Faulkner 49; 51-52).

The moaning of the Bundren cow, which rub and press Dewey Dell while wanting to be milked, provides a kind of sexual imagery that reflects Dewey Dell's situation in her own looking for relief: "when I am out sight of the house, I got fast. The cow lows at the foot of the bluff. She nuzzles at me, snuffing, blowing her breath in a sweet, hot blast, through my dress, against my hot nakedness, moaning "(Faulkner 51). In her thesis "Understanding Sibling Relationships Through the Intersection of Loss and Language in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*," Josephine Adams acclaims that "the predicament of her released fertility produced a numbness to emotional release and contrasts sharply with the deadness she attributes to her surroundings" (11). As Dewey Dell her own dictates: "the dead air shapes the death earth in the dead darkness, further away than seeing shapes the dead earth. It lies dead and warm upon me...I feel like a wet seed wild in the hot blind earth" (Faulkner 53).

Darl foams at the mouth in a cage in Jackson; Dewey Dell returns to the Bundren hill farm with no visible hope for the future. The only consequences from their enclosure on themselves are the disintegration of the family unit and the destruction of hope for future happiness.

2.5. Conclusion

William Faulkner was thoroughly preoccupied with the experimentation of language, meaning and communication in his literary works. He is exclusively concerned with the nature of words; deals with characters struggling with loss of traditional belief after the destructiveness of World War I. these characters are alienated from their past and present, and very often suffer from inability to communicate with words. His experimentation with narrative perspective, his focus on language and its failure and the

themes of alienation, the journey and the concept of consumer society are apparent in his novel *As I Lay Dying*. Many critics think that he is greatly influenced by two of the celebrated modernists; T.S Eliot's *The Waste Land*, and James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Faulkner adopted new techniques in most of his writings. In addition to his use of modernist themes in his novel *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner deals with modernist styles. He depends on the progression of interior monologue and a multiplicity of narrations.

Chapter 3:

Stylistic Aspects of Modernism in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*

3.1. Introduction

The beginning of the twentieth century was a period in which America was experiencing a constant change practically in every area of human life. The distraction of World War One caused an impulse in society, it challenges society's foundations and uproot its traditions. Each family in American South had a different story and different problems depending upon the psychology of the family members. The majority of the people were suffering from psychological imbalance. They were unable to take any right decision in their life though they were adults and highly educated. These pitiful and worst backgrounds of his society made Faulkner to be creative in terms of style in the way he presents the problems of his society to the world. Thus, there was a movement in the realm of literature to challenge the traditional values of literature, straightforward plot, omniscient narration; leaner sense of time, among others, Faulkner demonstrates Modernism's approval of all kinds of linguistic and formal experimentation, and perpetuation of new and innovative stylistic techniques. The experiment with modernism in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* offers the reader a chance to listen to voices ranging from elders to children, villains, the insane, even the dead.

3.2. Stream of Consciousness

Stream of consciousness is a style of writing which is introduced by so many great authors during the modern period in which it reflects the flow of character's thoughts and feelings. It is a literary technique which seeks to portray an individual's point of view by giving the written equivalent of the character's thought process. Moreover, this technique was defined as the continuous flows of ideas, images, thoughts, and feelings of the characters or to move deeply inside the human minds without any stopped markers in which so many critical writers observed. The use of stream of consciousness in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* functions to identify character, to precede the plot, or to estimate levels of awareness (Golden 1-3).

3.2.1. The Troubled Consciousness of Darl Bundren

Faulkner exposes *As I Lay Dying*, from the early starting, through the consciousness of its characters, by doing so; he aims to make the readers entirely accountable for understanding and getting access to the minds of each character. Each monologue allows to distinguish, investigate and picture the undeclared opinions of each character. Taking into consideration Darl Bundren, he is the most thoughtful character during the course of the story, he narrates about 19 sections. One of the most powerful examples of his waking mind is his thoughts toward his sister Dewey Dell: "*I am I and you are you and I know it and you don't know it and you could do so much for me if you just would and if you just would then I could tell you and then nobody would have to know it except you and me and Darl*" (Faulkner 43). In his thesis "William Faulkner: An Innovative Artist in Narrative Techniques, John B. Padgett argues that Darl is worried about his personal thoughts. He seems to be objective in the way he observes the world around him. Padgett acclaims that

the family ties or the neighboring ones do not prevent the characters of the novel from owning their distinct identities, “each with his self-centered demands and obsessions” (79).

The stream of consciousness makes the reader in a position of doubt. Padgett acclaims that Faulkner uses the Unreliable Narrator for the sake of making the audience in “a deliberate sense of disbelief, suspicion or mystery,” to push him to think what is supposed to be right and what is wrong. The unreliability, he puts it, is created by the author to demonstrate that the one who is telling the story is “psychologically unstable, unknowledgeable, ignorant or childish who purposefully tries to deceive the audience (89). One of the clear examples of this unreliability is that of Dar’s statement: “I cannot love my mother because I have no mother. Jewel’s mother is horse” (Faulkner 75).

Darl is not the only character who is not worth trusted; Faulkner depends on various untrustworthy narrators. One of the most interesting of those narrators is the youngest of the Bundren family, Vardaman. During The course of the novel, Vardaman’s shows misunderstanding of two of the main concepts of the novel which are life and death. He tries to make a link between his mother’s death and that of the fish he catches earlier in the story: “but my mother is a fish. Vernon seen it. He was there. Jewel’s mother is a horse, Darl said. Then mine can be a fish, can it, Darl? I said. Jewel is my brother. Then mine will have to be a horse, too, I said. Why? Darl said. ‘If pa is your pa, why does your ma have to be a horse just because jewel’s is? (79). the previous quotation indicates that even children are sometimes considered unreliable.

3.2.2. Soliloquy as Stream of Consciousness

Faulkner depends on soliloquy as stream of consciousness technique. John B. Padgett acclaims that the novel is created under a combination of both internal stream of

consciousness and external activities. In other words, the novel is depicted through the inner world of each character and his outside active world. He argues that the plot of the novel is built under the soliloquies of fifteen narrators, and that “the plot is reduced to a minimum of complexity. It concerns the preparation for a dying woman’s burial...Most of the characters are the members of her family. Sometimes they reflect only the surface attitudes they have toward the proceedings; at other times there is a complex attitude expressed which reveals more of the working of the whole consciousness” (qtd. In Padgett 76). A particular attitude that is laid within the threshold of consciousness does not provide the complete quality of stream of consciousness, but at least allows the reader to know some the technique’s details (76).

Earlier in the book, Jewel stands to describe the way his brother, Cash, is making his mother’s coffin: “It’s because he stays out there, right under the window, hammering and sawing on that goddamn box. Where she’s got to see him. Where every breath she draws is full of his knocking and sawing where she can see him saying. See what a good one I am making for you” (Faulkner 15). Jewel’s soliloquy seems reasoned, even more than other passages of interior monologue. In his thesis “Some Exponents of the Stream of Consciousness Technique in Modern American Fiction,” Dorothy Golden assumes that the novel enjoys a special form of monologue which is designed as soliloquy. He acclaims that each monologue of the family members serves as a method to distinguish that person, and the monologue of the outsiders serve to insist or counterpoint these revelations, or to allow the novel’s events to be seen from different angles (26).

According to Golden, the flows of some characters characterize three levels: “the realistic dialect records actual speech; more formal diction records conscious thoughts, and a poetic linguistic language indicate uncontrolled thought” (27). These three levels can be grasping in Dewey Dell’s monologue: “we’ll leave you here, then. Lessen you behave, we

will leave you. Go on, now, before that old green-eating tub of guts eats everything up from you. He goes on, disappearing slowly into the hill. The crest, the trees, the roof of the house stands against the sky. The cow nuzzles at me, moaning...He could fix it all right...The dead air shapes the dead earth in the dead darkness, further away than seeing shapes the dead earth...I said you don't know what worry is. I don't know what it is. I don't know whether I am worrying or not... (Faulkner 53). Dewey Dell's Soliloquy gives the reader an impression of the richness of her active consciousness, because she, in most of her monologues, employs all the previous levels mentioned.

Darl also shows this kind of levels: "let Jewel take the end of the rope and cross upstream of us and brace it, I say. 'Will you do that, Jewel?' Jewel watches me hard. He looks quick at Cash...let's do that, Cash, I say. I reckon we'll have to, Cash says. The river itself is not a hundred of yards across. And pa and Vernon and Vardaman and Dewey Dell are the only things in sight not of that single monotony of desolation leaning with that terrific quality a little from right to left" (115). Darl's sections are always difficult, they reflect his intelligence and awareness to the events that accure around him. The previous passage giving is basically poetic in tone, with the images, to some extent, more convoluted and complicated than those of the other characters. The last section which is devoted to him shows his continence observations with an insistence on his alienated personality: "Darl has gone to Jackson. They put him on the train, laughing, down the long car laughing...the wagon stands on the square, hitched, the mules motionless... it looks no different from a hundred other wagons there; Jewel standing beside it and looking up the street like any other man in town that day, yet there is something different, distinctive, there is about it that unmistakable air of definite and imminent departure that trains have, perhaps due to the fact that Dewey Dell and Vardaman on the seat and Cash on a pallet in

the wagon bed are eating bananas from a paper bag. ‘is that why you are laughing, Darl?’ ” (202-203).

The novel celebrates many other examples of monologues. Those monologues serve to show the hidden side of each character, or in other words, they allow the reader to go inside the character’s thoughts and feelings and understand their real selves, their actions and their main interpretations to the main actions that happen around them. Although it is not mentioned in the above explanation, Faulkner’s methods of presenting the various events of the story does not stop at this point, he also depends on fragmenting the story and of moving backward and forward in time and using a multiplicity of different characters.

3.3. Multiple Narrators

This technique is the main pioneering part in William Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*. Faulkner makes the reader contribute both in the progression of the story and in the disengagement of the truth. He abandons the conventional narration from the point of view of an omniscient narrator; he employs a numerous characters as the narrators of the same tale who transmit the plot to the reader in the light of their own experiences. The jumping from one point of view to another, the lack of apparent connection between the parts of the whole shows how Faulkner text helped to establish those practices that would become associated with the modernist novel.

3.3.1. A Single Plot from Different Points of Views

Despite their distinctive individuality, the characters of *As I Lay Dying* show a kind of belonging to the same shared values and beliefs. Cora Tull, one of the neighbors of the Bundrens, is the most conventional figure among the novel's characters, she, most of time, justify her thoughts and behaviors in the name of God. One of the most powerful examples of that appears in her narrative when she states: "if it's a judgment, it ain't right. Because the Lord's got more to do than that. He's bound to have" (Faulkner 60). In the same manner, Jewel appeals to the name of God in his secret desires to monopolize Cora's mother: "if it had just been me when Cash fell off of that church and if it had just been me when pa laid sick with that load of wood fell on him, it would not be happening what every bastard in the country coming in to stare at her because if there is a God what the hell is he for" (15).

Throughout the novel, Faulkner provides characters which achieve voices with regional taste. Those voices seem very personal, but, after all, they are built under ties of blood, community and heritage, so, in a way or another, they affect each other. It is not surprising then to find some characters share the same points of view in the same subject matter. Earlier in the book Cora Tull is the first one who has a closer look on Adie's eyes as she describes them as: "two candles when you watch them gutter down into the sockets of iron candlesticks" (10). In nearly the same manner, Darl describes his mother's eyes when she is about to die: "she looks at Vardaman; her eyes, the life in them, rushing suddenly upon them; the two flames glare up for a steady instant. They go out as though someone had leaned down and blow upon them" (41). It is really interesting to find different narrators describe something or someone in nearly the same method. It brings to mind the fact that despite their differences they, at least, share certain attitudes with each other. Again, another two characters seem to have the same points of view. Dewey Dell

and Anse both converse about the land running out of Darl's eyes. Earlier in the novel Dewey Dell notices her brother's, Darl, glances on her as she describes him: "the land runs out of Darl's eyes; they swim to pinpoints. They begin at my feet and rise along my body to my face, and then my dress is gone: I sit naked on the seat above the unhurrying mules, above the travail" (93). In the same way, Anse, the father, describes Darl's eyes earlier in his narrative: "and Darl, too. Talking me out of him, darn them. It's that they would short-hand me just because he tends to his own business, just because he's got his eyes full of the land all the time" (32).

3.3.2. The various viewpoints Besides Addie's dead corpse

About Fifteen narrators describe the nine day's trip to Jefferson of the Bundren's. The family members consist of Anse, the lazy father, the oldest son Cash, a skillful carpenter, the next eldest, Darl, the middle child Jewel, the only daughter, Dewey Dell, the youngest child, Vardaman and the lifeless Addie herself. They are joined in the narration by neighbors and strangers. Darl narrates the most chapters, with nineteen, followed by Vardaman with ten; some characters narrate no more than one chapter. So, it is clearly shown that the writer wants the reader to draw different images from different lenses and by the end come up with his own conclusion, because the narrators of the novel's events offer no reliable information.

The druggist, who refuses to aid young Dewey Dell Bundren finish her unwanted pregnancy, describes the break of the family who have brought their mother's corpse through town on their way: "it had been dead eight days, Albert said. They come from some place out in Yoknapatawpha County, trying to get to Jefferson with it. It must have been like a piece of rotten cheese coming into an ant-hill, in that 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 and another fellow with a broken leg lying on a quit on top of it, and the father and a little boy seating on the seat and the marshal trying to make them get out of town” (Faulkner 161). As readers, we contemplate on the voices to find out whom to trust, which account of narrative to believe. From the right beginning Cora Tull appears to be undependable character, especially when she claims that Darl asks his father and brother not to leave Addie’s sickbed in order to sell a weight of lumber: “He said Darl almost begged them on his knees not to force him to leave her in her condition, but nothing would do but Anse and Jewel must make that three dollars” (20). But three pages earlier, Darl himself has told us that he wants the tripe: “It means three dollars...Do you want us to go, or not?...We’ll be back by tomorrow sundown” (26).

The novel seems more about a story of a dying mother, but the true events of the story are developed from the various information given to the audience through a multiple of narrators. The relationship between each family member and their association with Addie’s death differ from one person to another. Through her husband Anse, the reader is introduced to his philosophy that man should not be active, as he explains: “the Lords put roads for travelling; why he laid them down flat on the earth. When he aims for something to be always a moving, he makes it long way, like a road or a horse or a wagon, but when he aims for something to stay put, he makes it up and down ways, like a tree or a man” (Faulkner 31). By his comparison between the tree and the man, Anse reinforce the fact of his useless nature; that even though man is alive, he is not created to move.

Anse’s narrative is suspected. He blames his entire dilemma on the road outside his door. He always acclaim that the road that it is laid in the hill that takes to Anse’s house stands against his works, as he put it: “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...And now I can see same as second sight the rain shutting down betwixt us, a-coming up that road like a durn man, like it want ere a other house to rain on in all the living land” (Faulkner 33). As everyone in the novel knows, the road is just an justification for Anse laziness, as Cash implies: “Sometimes I think that if a working man could see work as far ahead as a lazy man can see laziness” (187). The road disturbs Anse after the death of his wife, he has to fulfill her wish and bury her near her family in Jefferson, but, as he demonstrates: “God’s will be done, now I can get them teeth” (44).

Some characters in the novel have no equivalent to judge their action. Darl stands at the top of those characters, because his views are philosophical. In one of his narratives he seem to be imaginative: “beyond the unlamped wall I can hear the rain shaping the wagon that is ours, the load that is no longer theirs that felled and sawed it nor yet theirs that bought it and which is not ours either” (Faulkner 65). Darl personality is drawn in a strange way, he knows about his mother’s death even he is far from the house, he also knows about Dewey Dell’s pregnancy. By the end of the novel, he ends “in a cage in Jackson where, his grimed hands lying light in the quite interstice, looking out he foams” (203).

Jewel, so far, one more significant character in the novel, is the only one who gets a section which is narrated by him. He is introduced to the reader from other points of view; like that of Darl: “Jewell and I come up from the field, following the path in a single file. Although I am fifteen feet ahead of him, anyone watching us from the cotton-house can see Jewel’s frayed and broken straw that a full head above me” (Faulkner 7); or that of Cash. His section shows his true love for his mother, the problem with him is that he cannot express this love only in ways of violence. He has no idea to the fact that he is the illegitimate son of Addie Bundren, yet, he suffers from an individual personality. His isolation becomes evident as he imagines himself with Addie on a high hill: “I can see the fan and Dewey Dell’s arm. I said if you’d just let her alone. Sawing and knocking, and

keeping the air moving so fast on her face that when you're tired you can breathe it, and that goddamn adze going one lick less"(15).

The youngest of the Bundrens, Vardman, has his share in the way he sees his mother's death bed. From the beginning, Vardaman's birth, as Addie acclaims, is for the sake "to replace the child, she, had robbed him, Anse, of" (Faulkner 140). He is ignored by both, his mother and his father, but he is more attached to his brothers: "Jewel is my brother. Cash is my brother. Cash has a broken leg. We fixed Cash's leg so it doesn't hurt. Cash is my brother. Jewel is my brother too" (167). He expresses his sadness toward Darl's banishment, especially when he keeps on repeating that Darl is his brother: "Darl went to Jackson. Lots of people didn't go to Jackson. Darl is my brother. My brother is going to Jackson ...Darl he went to Jackson my brother Darl...Darl is my brother. My brother Darl" (199). Vardaman has never been appreciated by his mother, yet, he still loves her, and this can be clearly shown when he wants her to be the first one to see his caught fish. But later when he is about to clean this fish, he knows that his mother is dead, from this time he starts to associate his mother's death with that of the bleeding fish: "and now it's all chopped up. I shopped it up. It's laying in the kitchen in the bleeding pan, waiting to be cooked and et. Then it wasn't and she was, and it is and she wasn't. And tomorrow it will be cooked and et and she will be him and pa and Cash and Dewey Dell and there won't be anything in the box and so she can breathe" (55).

The bizarre element is that Vardaman thinks that his mother has been eaten by the whole family. He imagines that the coffin is unfilled, but when Cash starts to nail it he gets perplexed, and he is afraid that Addie will not be able to breathe in there. He flashes back to the time when he himself was trapped in the crib. He felt as if he could not breathe because the rat was breathing up all the air. As a result, he takes the decision to make some holes in the cover so that his mother gets some clean air. The wholes reach Addie's face

and cause her a wound, yet Vardaman is not conscious of his actions. Throughout the course of the novel he keeps saying that his mother is a fish, the only moment that this idea disappears completely from his mind is one Jewel loses his horse. Now he goes back to the real world he is living.

The novel offers a mixture of unstable, sane and unbalanced characters, as Cash says: "Sometimes I ain't. So sho who's got ere a right to say when a man is crazy and when he ain't. Sometimes I think it ain't none of us pure crazy and ain't none of us pure sane until the balance of us talks him that-a-way" (Faulkner 184). The novel produces a single cohesive body through the diverse experience of fifteen characters.

3.4. Conclusion

Modernism is a very complex movement presented in diverse domains. The era of modern movement started with current approaches in philosophy and psychology. New theories about human mind and conscious vs. unconscious levels of thinking and behavior were advanced. In *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner uses two effective techniques; the stream of conscious and multiple narrators. *As I Lay Dying* remarkably presents a background of consciousness, and a fictional world. The events in the novel and the world which envelope the characters are introduced to the reader through means of the dissimilar and indirect reports of the characters. The novelist makes the narrators participate in the actions they describe and the reader is made to enter the world of clean subjectivity. External chronological reality is exposed only through its impact on the consciousness of the speaker.

General Conclusion

Through this dissertation, a variety of modernist techniques has been explored in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. Those techniques pervade the deferent employment of stylistic and thematic aspects of Modernism in the novel.

As I Lay Dying is Faulkner's strongest complaint against the literary conventions; it is his most questioning exploration of the effects of modernization on the rural poor. What makes this novel so different is that it presents itself through the experiment in interior monologue, narrative technique and family story. Each of the fifty nine sections in this novel represents the inner thoughts of the characters who narrate the section. The particular use of stream of consciousness reflects the twentieth century development, research and interest in the psychology of free association and inner thoughts of man.

In *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner creates a world where objective truth does not exist, and reality is totally dependent upon individual perceptions. He abandons the traditional device of an objective and omniscient narrator and makes as an alternative the fragmented subjective account of fifteen different protagonists.

William Faulkner started writing fiction in the 1920, when writers were breaking away from old style and experimenting with form, style, diction, and even chronological organizations of their works. Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf stands in the front to symbolize the main motives that led Faulkner to adopt modernist attitudes.

The journey from the Yoknapatawpha County to Jefferson with Addie's dead body for funeral narrated by fifteen points of view becomes very significant. Through The employment of multiplicity of narrators and the stream of consciousness, Faulkner succeeded to go further than the time limits by breaking the chronology and having

characters narrate events that are not currently happening, as well as events that they does not observe. Yet, the continuity of exterior reality is constant; no matter through whose mind is presented. In other words, although the narration is moving backward throughout time, the sense of stable and continuous time line remains unbroken.

The first chapter is devoted to discuss the theoretical backgrounds that paved the way for the Modern Movement. The chapter tackles the subject of Realistic Regionalism and the revival of this kind of writing. Also, it provides an over view of American Modernism during the twentieth century, more precisely, the chapter introduces the American novel during the 1920s for the sake of making the reader fully aware of the circumstances that give birth to *As I Lay Dying*.

The second chapter concerns the Thematic Aspects of Modernism in *As I Lay Dying*. The chapter analyses three dominant themes: Alienation, the Journey and Consumerism. Faulkner introduces the Bundren family as a model to clearly clarify his attitudes toward the disintegration of the conventional life of many members of the Southern families.

The third chapter deals with the Stylistic Aspects of Modernism in *As I Lay Dying*. Faulkner is famous with his innovative stylistic techniques; the novel is a suitable example of this acclaim. This chapter is devoted to discuss two of the main Stylistic Aspects used in the novel: the Stream of Consciousness and Multiple Narrators. Faulkner presents the events of the novel through the consciousness of its multiple characters. It is entirely difficult to depend on one character to draw a complete image of the reality of the novel's events.

Faulkner's main concern in this novel is to paint the poor trash family dealing with death and their motives during the journey. The focus on characters is deeper than death.

The novel is full of surprises and little revelations that can severely change the reader's opinion of a character.

Although it achieved a little success at the time of its publication, it has become one of Faulkner's most popular novels, because of its vivid characters, obscure tone, and complex narrative techniques. Faulkner reached the zenith of his thematic and stylistic development and continued to portray the South's racial dilemma in its obsessive violence. He shares his views on the way of experimentation of new techniques which led him to the doors of success.

A future perspective is laid in the fact that this dissertation can be a starting point for doctoral studies, especially for the ones who are interested in dealing with Modernist Themes and Styles. Faulkner is a worth studied subject matter, so it can be interesting to many literary researchers to approve carrying on their studies starting with this research.

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