



People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
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Social and Economic Escapism in a Journey of Paradoxes through William Faulkner's As I Lay Dying

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Language, Literature and Civilization

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Academic Year

2015/2016

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled; “Social and Economic Escapism in a Journey of Paradoxes through William Faulkner’s As I Lay Dying”, is my own work and all the sources I have quoted have been acknowledged by means of references.

Signature

Date:

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother's and my father's soul.....To my supervisor, Mr Mohamed GOUFFI, who believes in my capacities to deal with Faulkner's novel As I Lay Dying....He is always pushing me forward and supporting me..... He opens doors of hope when it seems dark and gloomy. He never gives up.....Every word, in this dissertation, narrates a story..... Every word is a memory.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All Praise is to Allah, The most Graceful and most Compassionate the Almighty, Who gave me strength and good health for accomplishing this work.

My sincere and honest gratitude is addressed to Mr Mohamed GOUFFI , the supervisor of this dissertation, for his patience, his endless advice, his brilliant ideas and his genuine efforts.

My deepest thanks and appreciations go for the *Founding Fathers*: Mr Mourad TOUATI, Mr Tayeb BOUAZID, Mr Saber M. DJEMOUI, Mrs Fadila ABADOU, Mrs Nassima AMIROUCHE, Mrs Nassira HRIZI, Mrs Houria MIHOUBI, Mrs Assia BAGHDADI and Miss Messouda LAADJINI for their precious comments, suggestions and for supporting me and motivating me throughout the entire five years of study and for all the teachers in English department at M'Sila University.

I would like to thank in advance the examiners for accepting to read and to examine this work.

A prayer for mercy to my parents; Ammar and Baya.

My heartfelt gratitude also goes to my brothers and sisters and my aunt Fatouma who are the brightest and most discerning for their support and encouragement.

Many thanks go to the members of CFA administration campus: Mrs Fatima BELFOUL, Sarah, Samra, Chafia and Zahra.

Warmest thanks to my beloved friends: Nadjat, Asma, Rania, Meryem, Hanaa, Ikram, Zahia, Wahiba, Ouarda, Rabia, Amina and to all my classmates of the second year Master, and everyone who supported and helped me

Thank you.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the social and economic escapism in Faulkner's *tour de force*, As I Lay Dying. Written according to the aesthetics of Modernism such as; stream of consciousness and multiple narratives, As I Lay Dying is an authentic delineation for suffering and ordeal of many Americans represented by the Bundren family, who set a journey of death in order to reclaim the lost meaning of life. Fundamentally, the poor white American Southern farmers' escapism constituted the paradoxes of the twentieth century Economic Great Depression. Therefore, this work aims to reveal the extent to which the socioeconomic hardships affect people's psyche. This study recourses to two theories to unveil the paradoxes rendered in the novel. In a sense, Marxist and Freudian Psychoanalytic theories provide interpretations of the individuals' and community's thoughts and behaviour's towards each other in a society shaped by the materialistic beliefs. After investigation, it has been revealed that the psychological behaviour is dependent on a great extent on the socioeconomic circumstances that determine the fate and the destiny of the poor.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In a significant departure from the modernist and Southern writing, William Faulkner in his works brings black and white as well as poor, middle class and wealthy characters face to face in a situation they reflect a vivid picture of the American South. Moreover, Faulkner established himself as a writer who viewed the American South as the right background to project his fiction.

The Great Depression and the growing influence of the Modernist movement contributed to the change in the aesthetic landscape of Southern fiction. Faulkner's As I Lay Dying was written in the aftermath of the stock market crash of 1929. During this period, the American agriculture in the South did not share the prosperity of the booming 1920s. Farmers' life involved a constant struggle for survival; they were profoundly affected by the Economic Depression. This novel, hence, can be interpreted as a reflection of the modern problems that were commonly addressed in modern works, and the focus in As I Lay Dying is on the lower class farm white labourers from South Yoknapatawpha County. Besides, Faulkner is interested in man who is in conflict against himself, against his fellow man and against his time and place. In other words, it is the conflict of a man who is the product of a particular set of historical and socioeconomic circumstances.

As I Lay Dying mirrors the ills and the confusions of the American South during the 1920s. That is, it reflects the familial conflicts and social inferiority. As a result, the individuals are at the mercy of socioeconomic power and cultural dysfunction of the South, "*... the main and constant protagonist is best understood as their time and place, the social and intellectual environment which has produced their alienation*" (Urgo xiii).

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Hence, this study reveals the opposing thoughts and paradoxical situations in Faulkner's journey of As I Lay Dying. This latter reflects a philosophical statement about the absurdity of life. In addition, Faulkner creates a picture of human psyche, which is dominated by the controversial thoughts, and its relation to the socioeconomic hardships of that time. Similarly, this work portrays the struggle of human life as closely connected with the paradox of being in an uncertain state of existence, in between a dying life and an active death.

Furthermore, the reaction of the characters, toward the social and economic conditions, is also revealed through illustrating the social and economic escapism which was a kind of rescue, in the characters' point of view, from their troubles and their failure to cope with the hard situation. Therefore, this study tends to answer the following question: why do the poor white southern farmers adopt the social and economic escapism when they are put face to face to the different socioeconomic hardships? This leads us to search for answers for other sub questions such as: what are the ideologies that dominate their society? What kind of conflict that was caused by the outer conditions on their psyche? And what are the paradoxes does the journey render?

Many scholars tackled Faulkner's As I Lay Dying from different angles. Kevin Railey's view on As I Lay Dying is based on the assumption that William Faulkner was deeply affected by the socio-historical forces that surround his life, and it portrays his artistic development as occurring within the larger historical development of the United States. Railey, in his book Natural Aristocracy: History, Ideology, and the Production of William Faulkner (1999), identifies and historicizes Faulkner's specific authorial ideology, and he illustrates Faulkner's obsession with history and with his position in history. As a result Railey's concern with the relationships between literature and history is to explore the inter-relationships between American history and Faulkner's fiction.

In her work Learning from the Banana (1987), Susan Willis sees the Bundrens' journey as "*a historical metaphor..... for the migration of the country's agricultural work face to the cities*" (587), and John Matthews, in his book As I Lay Dying in the

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Machine Age: National Identities and Post-Americanist Narratives (1994), forwards a similar claim; reading the novel as “*a fable of social upheaval... with the modernization of the south implied both in the Bundrens' move to town and in their centrifugal impulses away from the broken forms of family and community*” (83). Both of the writers attempt to tie the Bundrens to the mass migration from farms to factories that, in the first half of the Twentieth Century, produced significant demographic shifts from rural to urban areas and in some cases from South to North.

Jolene Hubbs’ William Faulkner’s Rural Modernism shows that Faulkner uses the experimental forms associated with modernism to depict the impact of the sociocultural era called ‘modernity’, and the process of urbanization and industrialization, known as ‘modernization’, on the poor whites in the rural South. As I Lay Dying makes clear that Faulkner’s rural modernism has not simply a geographical logic but also a socio-political significance. Moreover, it represents the effects of migration of the southerners, toward the North and cities, on those like the Bundrens who stayed in rural areas and continued to pursue farming. Additionally, Maria Ruth depicts the theme of death based on Freudian analysis and his views towards death “*The aim of all life is death*” (Freud, qtd in Miller 105). Ruth in her work A Bakhtinian Reading of William Faulkner’s As I Lay Dying (1998) tries to demonstrate how the multiplicity of voices, fifteen in total, expresses their reactions to death.

These literary works provide different interpretations for As I Lay Dying; some writers deal with Faulkner’s ideologies and his relation to history, others depict the economic and social sides of the rural south and the other ones tackle the psychological reaction of the Bundrens towards the death of their mother. But neither the relationship between social and economic conditions and psychology, nor the effect or the impact of one on the other is shown in their works. This study, hence, tries to reveal the inter-relation between these elements. Therefore, this work is an attempt to depict the influence of the social and the economic hardships on the individuals’ behaviour, and particularly it sheds light on the social and economic escapism as a solution, for the Bundrens, for their difficult situations, as well as on the paradoxes that are portrayed in this journey.

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Essentially, in order to fully understand any society, one must view it in a multifaceted ways. This is an idea that Faulkner, himself, posits in his novel As I Lay Dying, where several characters narrate the same scene, and the reader, by listening to the evidence which is provided within the multiple retellings, can discern the various truths. Similarly, in order to capture the novel's wide scope as it grows from individual concerns to communal ones, it is necessary to approach the novel from multiple theoretic angles. Therefore, the body of this dissertation will deliberately move from the socioeconomic conflicts of the lower and upper class, in addition to the ideologies that the novel treats, and then the effect of these elements on the poor white southern farmers' psyche. Marxist and the Freudian theories are employed together, because Marx argues that all mental or ideological systems are the products of real social and economic existence.

Fundamentally, Faulkner wrote his novel during the economic crisis of 1929 to reflect the social and economic sufferings of the Southerners and to feature the ideologies that imprison the lower class farmers. Hence, the Marxist theory is appropriate for this study. On the other hand, Faulkner's use of interior monologue in a multi-voiced novel, in which he deliberately decides to display the characters' minds, leads us to use the Freudian theory. In other words, Marx's and Freud's visions are necessary for gaining a reliable understanding of what William Faulkner accomplished when he penned As I Lay Dying.

As for the organization of this study, it is divided into two chapters. The first one entitled "*Historical and Theoretical Backgrounds*". It is about the historical and theoretical backgrounds of the novel. On one hand, the historical background is concerned with the Economic Great Depression that the novel is written to portray its effects on the poor white Southerners and the Modernist movement as well as Faulkner's style and techniques of writing since Faulkner is a modernist writer who examines the modern themes in his works. In addition, the concept of escapism is tackled in this theoretical part by providing its different types and how the philosophers and thinkers view this psychological concept. On the other hand, the

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theoretical background provides an overview about the Marxist and Freudian theories by illustrating their fundamental premises which serve to analyse As I Lay Dying.

Besides, the second chapter is a practical one. It is entitled “*Journey of Paradoxes: As I Lay Dying through Marxist and Psychoanalytical Perspectives*”. In this chapter, the social and economic conflicts are revealed, and the way how the ideologies, mentioned in the first chapter, work through demonstrating their effect on the individuals’ psyche. That is, to analyse the novel through the Marxist and Freudian perspectives and during the process of analysing the novel, the concepts of escapism and paradox are depicted.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL

BACKGROUNDS

I decline to accept the end of man...I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet's, the writer's duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past. The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail. (Faulkner's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech 1950)

Introduction

A literary work is not intended only to be read, but rather to be analysed through showing reactions towards its words, events, characters and its messages that are involved implicitly or explicitly in the body of the work. Thus, to study William Faulkner's As I Lay Dying is not only to read the novel, but to shed light on the different angles that shape this literary text.

One of these angles is to apply two literary theories; Marxism and Psychoanalysis by exposing their different premises. What is more, examining, first, the historical context in which the novel is produced gives more insights and provides more interpretations because human beings are connected to their history; time and place. In addition, this study provides an overview about the Modernist literary movement and its characteristics. Likewise, it presents Faulkner's style and his techniques of writing. Since this work is revolving around social and economic escapism, the concept of escapism is tackled too.

I-Historical Background

History has its role in explaining and shaping the world as well as literature; every literary work is influenced by the historical context in which it is written. Moreover, understanding the historical circumstances that produces any piece of writing provides valuable insights about the purpose behind composing this work. William Faulkner, for instance, is inspired by the Great Depression of 1930s, to write his novel As I Lay Dying, one of his most socially and politically responsive novels, which was written in the immediate aftermath of the 1929 crush. This study,

hence, tries to portray the crisis of the Great Depression and its effects on people's lives.

I-1-The Great Depression

The Great depression is a severe worldwide economic depression in the decade preceding the Second World War. It was the largest, most spread and deepest depression of the twentieth century. The Great Depression started in United States; on October 24th, 1929, the black Thursday, in which prices on New York Stock Exchange, Wall Street, dropped sharply. Investors were shocked by the sudden and unprecedented decline and people realized that the market had crashed. The tragedy had soon reached the markets in Western Europe and throughout the world. As a result, the stock market crash was a direct cause behind the Great Depression of the 1930s. This latter lasted until the late 1930s, in which, banks collapsed, unemployment increased from 5 million in 1930 to 13 million in 1932, businesses failed, stores and factories closed and people lost their homes and savings (Reeves 101).

I-1-1Causes of the Great Depression

Economists reveal that different intertwined factors contributed to this crisis. Robert W. Smith, in his book The Great Depression, has mentioned some of the direct causes to the Depression:

a) The Stock Market Crash

The stock market developed during the 1920s, and the more it grew, the more people were eager to pour their money into it because they were buying on margin. That is, they buy stocks only by paying part of the stocks' worth and the rest when they sold it. As a result, people had benefited as long as the stock prices kept going up. But when the market crashed in late 1929, the stock's worth lost its value and investors were forced to sell their stocks with prices far less than they paid them up. Moreover, they borrowed to pay the stocks they have bought, and when the stock market went belly-up, the

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borrowers couldn't repay their loans and the lenders couldn't get their money again.

b) Bank Failure

Small as well as big banks had faced this failure; small banks, especially in rural areas, have over extended credit to farmers who had not shared in the prosperity of 1920s. Thus, they couldn't repay their debts. Big banks as well have foolishly made huge loans to foreign countries, so that they could repay their WWI's debts. When US banks stopped lending, European nations were not able to pay their loans. Consequently, many banks went bankrupt and the country's banking system was shut down.

c) Too Many Poor People

Whereas the overall American economy had soared during 1920s, only few Americans enjoyed the wealth. In 1929, 40 per cent of the Americans were living below the poverty line which made them unable to buy goods and services, also too poor to pay their loans.

d) Environment Disasters

Rural America felt the full force of the depression. Between 1929 and 1932 farm incomes dropped from almost \$13 billion to \$5.56 billion and nature made things worse. Beginning in 1933 and lasting for as long as a decade, the farm belt experienced one of the worst droughts in the nation's history. On the Great Plains hundreds of dust storms known as "black blizzards" blew away the soil and intense heat killed livestock. Grasshoppers moved in huge waves, devouring crops and even fence posts.

e) Government Inaction

The Hoover Administration did nothing to fix the crisis; rather it took small actions that weren't enough to head things off. The Hoover Administration, instead of pushing the Federal Reserve System to lend money to banks at low interest rates and pumping money into through federal public works projects, it did nothing. It just took small and tentative actions that were not enough to face the depression (7-8).

I-1-2 Consequences of the Great Depression

Steve Wiegand, an American political journalist and history writer, documents, in his book U.S. History for Dummies, that anyone who doubts the Great Depression deserves the adjective “great” probably hasn’t studied numbers like these:

- More than 5,000 banks closed between 1930 and 1933, 9 million savings accounts were wiped out and depositors lost \$2.5 billion.
- Unemployment rose from less than 1 million in 1929 to more than 12 million by 1933, equal to about 25 per cent of the total US workforce.
- Capital investment dropped from \$10 billion in 1929 to \$1 billion in 1932.
- The stock market’s industrial index dropped from 452 in September 1929 to 58 in July 1932.
- The Gross National Product went from \$104 billion in 1929 to \$59 billion in 1932.
- Farm income dropped 60 per cent in the three years after 1929. In 1932, per capita income from farming was only \$80 a year for farmers (243).

Although the groundwork for the depression had been laid long before the President Hoover was elected in 1928, most people of the country blamed him for the depression. Hoover’s big mistake was that he kept saying things would get better if everyone were just a little patient, however, things just got worse.

By 1932, the president Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected and his famous words: “*Take a method and try it. If it falls, try another. But above all, do something*” (qtd in Weigand 249), had an enormous impact on people; they pushed them to trust his method in solving the Depression’s troubles. As a solution, Roosevelt introduced his “New Deal” programs that contains some Acts to recover from the Depression were passed. These Acts include: the Emergency Banking Act (EBA), in which the Congress passed a bill to re-open the closed banks under close supervision. Besides, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) created 1300 camps

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around the country to give young man new jobs. The Federal Emergency Relief Act (FERA) was also introduced to provide about \$500 million as support to state and local governments. In addition to other Acts which provide jobs in building roads, airports, schools and other civic projects. Moreover, farmers, through the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA), were convinced to produce less products; meat, corn and cotton, so that the products scarcer. Therefore, the selling prices would rise and farmers would be better off (O'Callaghan 100).

I-2-The Economics and Culture in the Rural South

Farmer's life during 1920s involved a constant struggle for survival despite the efforts to improve technology and farming methods. In essence, a farm family's land, labour, livestock and equipment were its only properties. Thus, the loss of any of them could prove disastrous fact.

cotton farmers. First, farmers work under a lien system, whereby they get their necessary supplies in exchange to their future crops. Therefore, they are in a continuous debt. Second, because of the longstanding depression in cotton market, farmers are forced to go further into debt to support their farms and their families. Third, natural disasters; heavy rains and floods, in the late 1920s, ruined their products. Besides these elements, the outdated farming methods also contributed in making difficult conditions even worse.

In culture; religious conviction and racism are two belief systems provided many Southerners with pride and sense of purpose. Religion in the Southern community is a strong emotional and psychological force which shapes one's relationship with God, and provides him/her with a set of beliefs and values and builds friendships upon. Moreover, it is used by the wealthy whites to impose their supremacist beliefs. On the other hand, the poor whites use religious beliefs as means of coping with economic deficiency, social inferiority and political weakness.

The economic circumstances that characterized the 1920s brought various changes at all the levels; socially, politically and even intellectually. This era

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witnessed the emergence of a new literary movement, Modernism, which reached its peak during 1920s. Therefore, this study provides an overview about Modernism, and it sheds light on its major characteristics and its prominent writers.

I-3-Modernism in Literature

Modernism is a movement that began before the First World War and gained prominence during 1920s. The literature of the modern period has its roots in the literature of Europe and grows out as a reaction to Realism and Naturalism. Moreover, Modernism is characterized by a new spirit, under the form of reaction against the established system of values and breaks with tradition, Ezra Pound captured the essence of Modernism with his famous dictum “make it new”. Additionally, modernist authors incorporate the new Psychoanalytic theories of Freud in their works. These works reflect the pervasive sense of loss and despair in the wake of the Great War. Hence, they focus on historical discontinuity and the alienation of humanity. Julian Wolfreys states:

Modernism is a term referring to the literary, artistic and general culture of the first half of the twentieth century.

Modernism is distinguished by its general rejection of previous literary traditions, particularly those of the late nineteenth century and of bourgeois society. In addition to involving an existentialist view of the universe, modernists explore myth as a device of formal organization. (67)

Moreover, the term modernism encompasses the activities and outputs of those who felt that the traditional forms of art, architecture, literature, religious faith, social organization and daily life are becoming out-dated in the new economic, social and political conditions of an emerging fully industrialized world. Furthermore, many thinkers influence the world of thought such as: Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, Karl Marx's Communism, Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis, Friedrich Nietzsche's 'God is dead' and other theories which have an immense impact in modernizing the different aspect of life.

In American Literature, group of writers and thinkers known as the ‘Lost Generation’ has become synonymous with Modernism. In the wake of the First World War, several American artists chose to live abroad to pursue their creative impulses such as: Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, and the painter Waldo Pierce and others. Moreover, the term “lost generation” refers to the spiritual and existential hangover left by four years of unimaginably destructive warfare. The artists of the Lost Generation, thus, struggled to find some meaning in the world in the wake of chaos (VanSpanckeren 61-2).

I-3-1-Characteristics of Modernism

Modernism expresses a sense of modern life as a sharp break from the past and its rigid conventions. This leads modernist writers to tackle modern themes in their writing that accompanied the new style of life such as: destruction and chaos, fragmentation, loss and exile, escapism, social evils and so on. While presenting these themes, some characteristics of modernism are taken in consideration, among them:

- The replacement of a belief in absolute, knowable truth with a sense of relative, provisional truths. That is, any literary work can be interpreted in many ways.
- A focus on the unconscious as an important source of motivation through the use of stream of consciousness technique which is often seems to be lacking the explicit cohesion, unity and selectivity of direct thought or idea.
- A turning away from teleological ways of thinking about time to a sense of time as discontinuous and overlapping and non-chronological in the way we experience it. In other words, it is a shift from linear time to ‘moment time’.
- Less emphasis on art's reflection of external reality and a greater emphasis on art's reflection of the perceiving mind.

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- Narration through fragmented, internalized or multiple perspectives or viewpoints.

I-3-2-Prominent Modernist Writers

Many prominent poets and novelists emerged during Modernist era such as: Gertrude Stein (1874-1946) and her famous works Three Lives (1909) and The Autobiography of Alice B. Tocklas (1933), Ezra Pound (1885-1972) wrote The Contos (1917), a vast epic free verse. In addition to T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) and his famous poem The Waste Land (1922), F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1920) wrote The Great Gatsby (1925), Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) wrote ten novels among them; The Sun also Rises (1926), A Farewell to Arms (1929) and many other modernist writers. William Faulkner, the core of this study, is another prominent modernist novelist who wrote The Sound and the Fury (1929), A Rose for Emily (1930), As I Lay Dying (1930), Go Down, Moses (1942), Light in August (1932) and so on. In his writings, Faulkner used different techniques and he examined various modern themes.

One of the themes that Faulkner tackles in his works is the isolation of the modern man. This isolation is a kind of escapism to get rid of life's problems. So what is escapism?

I-4- Escapism

I-4-1- Concepts of Escapism

It is hard to get a constant definition for escapism; the Collins English Dictionary, for example, defines it as: "*an inclination to or habit of retreating from unpleasant or unacceptable reality, as through diversion or fantasy*". The Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary represents escapism as: "*the avoidance of reality by absorption of the mind in entertainment or in an imaginative situation or activity*". In addition, the Merriam Webster dictionary defines escapism as "*habitual diversion of the mind*."

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In addition, some writers tackle the concept of escapism in their writings such as the Argentine writer Alberto Manguel in his book: A History of Reading, in which he reflects the intention to create his own world far from the life's challenges. He states: “*Each book was a world unto itself, and in it I took refuge*” (qtd in Pflaum 122). For him, seeking refuge through books is a form of escapism that brings relaxation and helps avoiding real world's problems. Besides, the British poet Arthur Christopher Benson mentions that it is fascinating when you think that a lot of our art and literature is about escaping. He says: “*All the best stories in the world are but one story in reality-the story of escape. It is the only thing which interests us all and at all times; how to escape*”¹. Escapism, thus, is anything one does to distract, forget or take a breather from real life.

I-4-2- Classification of Escapism

Many thinkers and researchers classify escapism in different categories; they take in consideration its aim, its effect and its context. Based on these concepts, Olkina Oxana Igorevna classifies escapism into different types. Among them:

- a) Avoiding Escapism:** The aim of this type of escapism is running from reality and real life difficulties. For example, we try to avoid our financial situation, the fact that life hasn't turned out quite the way we thought it would or a marriage relationship that is deterioration. In short, it is blaming the circumstances for our failure.
- b) Passive Escapism:** This type of escapism includes activities when doesn't have to make efforts such as: listening to music, watching TV or movies.
- c) Active Escapism:** Active escapism assumes a change of activity from the main one, a job for example, to the alternative one, such as hobbies; poetry, drawing, singing and so on.

¹ https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/6345253.Arthur_Christopher_Benson

- d) **Extreme Escapism:** This type of escapism contains activities that are actually or potentially dangerous such as: addicting drugs or alcohol and roof jumping.
- e) **Cause-Based Escapism:** It emerges when a person gets bored and wants to escape from routine daily life, or the opposite, when one gets too stressed and he/she desires to avoid life challenges. That is, avoiding problems by looking for alternatives.
- f) **Effect-Based Escapism:** This kind of escapism is aimed to go beyond the limits of the reality by means of day-dreaming, as a way to create one's special world, or getting involved into activities in order to get pleasure. Researchers suggest that effect-based escapism is productive and contributes to personal-self-actualization. Thus, it is a positive type (103-4).

Consequently, escapism is not always a dangerous vice that runs people's lives; it can be healthy, which includes working, daydreaming, travel, reading, art, hobbies, mediation, or anything that distracts oneself from life problems or lets the mind expand into a new realm, unhealthy, includes behaviours like addicting drug use, sex, self-harm, suicidal isolation, and it can also build lines of confusion between fantasy and reality. Or it can be neutral. The only differences that occur between these types are the physical, mental or emotional impact of the activity in the long term. Thus, escape will be a lifelong attempt for us but it should be controlled (Klein 68).

As the historical context plays a crucial role in shaping literature, the literary theories provide insights in interpreting literature. Since As I Lay Dying is a responsive novel to the economic crisis of 1920s, and Faulkner uses modernist literary techniques that stress the character's psychology more than the event itself, this study employs two literary theories; Marxism and Freudian Psychoanalysis.

II-Theoretical Background

II-1-Marxist Theory

Marxist theory is among the most popular, influential and controversial literary theories which are currently practiced throughout the universal academic thought. However, the principles of Marxism were not intended to serve as a theory about how to interpret texts. Instead, they were meant to be a set of social, economic and political ideas that would, according to their supporters, interpret and change their world. Moreover, Marxist principles are the basis of a system of thoughts that takes unfair and inequitable economic relationships as the core of class conflict. That conflict is the system by which Western society developed from Feudalism to Capitalism, which according to Marxism will, eventually; give way to Socialism, the system that will characterise the world of economic relationships. Hence, Marxist theory has provided a revolutionary way of understanding history.

II-1-1- Historical Background of Marxism

Marxism has a long and complicated history; because it was the basis of the social governmental system of the Soviet Union, it is often thought that it is a twentieth-century phenomenon. But it actually reaches back to the thinking of Karl Heinrich Marx, a nineteenth-century (1818-1883) German philosopher and economist. His book The German Ideology (1845) is the first announcement of his non-traditional way of perceiving things. In this book, he introduces the notion of “dialectical materialism”, which emphasizes that the means of production controls and shapes a society’s institutions and beliefs, and believes that history inevitably is progressing toward the triumph of Communism (Dobie 79).

When Marx met the German political economist Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) in Paris in 1844, and they discovered they have similar views independent of each other, they decided to work collaboratively in order to explain the principles of Communism, later called Marxism, and to organise an international movement. As a result, The Communist Manifesto (1848) was the book in which they identified

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the idea of “class struggle” as the driving force behind history, and anticipated that it would lead to a revolution in which workers would stand against the capitalists, take control of economic production and make an end to the private property by turning it over the government to be distributed fairly. Therefore, class distinctions would disappear (80).

Marxism was not designed as a method of literary analysis; however, its principles were applied to literature early on. Literature is linked to the philosophical principles set down by Marx and Engels, in which it is apparent that Marxism provided a new way of reading and understanding literature.

To understand the Marxist theory, light should be shed on its fundamental premises.

II-1-2- The Fundamental Premises of Marxism

II-1-2-1-Materialism versus Spirituality

Marx states that: “*The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it*”. He adds: “*The mode of production of material life determines altogether the social, political, and intellectual life process. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their beings but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness*” (qtd in Fokkema 84). Marx comes in contradiction to the widely accepted doctrines by trying to put people’s thoughts into reverse gear. He believes that philosophy has been merely airy contemplation. So it is time that it should be engaged with the real world, not just interprets it but to create a change within it. Moreover, Marx shows that some philosophers have convinced people that the world is governed by thoughts which form the laws of reason (Curtis 4).

Furthermore, people have been led to believe that human and divine reason create their ideas, their cultural life, their legal systems and their religions and humans should regard these beliefs as unquestioned guides for their life. Accordingly, Marx argues that all mental or ideological systems are the products of

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real social and economic existence. So reality is material not spiritual. Moreover, the material interests of the dominant social class determine how people perceive human existence. For Marx, legal system, for example, is not the creation of human and divine reason, but ultimately reflect the interests of the dominant class in particular historical periods (Seldan 82).

II-1-2-2-Class Conflict and the Economic Power

Lois Tyson states, in her book Critical Theory Today: A User-friendly Guide, that: “*For Marxism, getting and keeping economic power is the motive behind all social and political activities, including education, philosophy, religion, government, the arts, science, technology, the media, and so on*” (53-4). Tyson demonstrates the relationship between the two capitalist spheres of influence; the “base” and the “superstructure”. For Marx the base refers to the economics on which the superstructure; social, political and ideological realities, is built. Hence, the economic power always includes social and political power as well. This latter led the today’s Marxists refer to “socioeconomic” class, rather than economic class when talking about the class structure.

For the Marxist perspective, the division of people based on the differences in socioeconomic class is much more significant than differences in religion, race, ethnicity or gender. In addition, Marx stresses the idea that social life is based upon “conflicts of interests”. The most fundamental and important of these conflicts is that between the “haves” and the “have-nots”, between the “bourgeoisie”, who control the means of production by owning the natural and human resources, and the “proletariat”, who supply that labour that allows the owners to make a profit. Those in the proletariat are the majority of the world population who live in substandard conditions (Magee 139).

Moreover, the proletariat usually allow differences in religion, race, ethnicity or gender to separate them into warring factions rather than unify them around a common belief, and recognize the reality of their suffering in order to accomplish some social changes. According to Marx, the proletariat can revolt against their

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oppressors and create a classless society only if they spontaneously develop the class consciousness needed to create this revolution regardless of their differences (Tyson, “Critical” 54).

II-1-3- The Role of Ideology

For Marxism, an ideology is a belief system which is produced by the relations between the different classes in a society. These classes are the product of the modes of production in this society. Heather B. Johnson, in his book The American Dream and the Power of Wealth, states that: *“Ideology is more than just a set of ideas that is used to legitimate and justify social inequalities. Belief systems become ideological when we use them to justify and mask structural inequalities”* (183).

Moreover, an ideology can be positive, leading for a better world for people, or negative, serving the interests of a repressive system. For this reason undesirable ideologies ensure their acceptance among citizenry by presenting themselves as natural ways of seeing the world instead of expressing themselves as ideologies. For example, the sexist ideology demonstrates how men are superior than women due to their biological superiority. It represents men more physically, intellectually and emotionally capable than women. This ideology, thus, sells itself as a function of nature rather than as a product of cultural belief (Dobie 86).

In order to extend the concept of ideology we need to tackle some basic concepts that represent socioeconomic ideologies which have existed for centuries, and according to Marxist theory, each of these ideologies encourages a socioeconomic hierarchy that grants enormous wealth and power to small number of people in the top, and prevents a large number of people in the bottom from escaping their poverty.

II-1-3-1-Marxism versus Capitalism

The word “capital” means money. So Capitalism is a system in which everything, every object, every activity and even every person can be defined in

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terms of its worth in money. That is you are what you own. Julian Wolfreys defines Capitalism as:

any system of economic relation which is driven by the profit motive; capitalism depends on the investment by private individuals and companies of their own funds to provide the economic means of production, distribution and exchange in return for profits from their investment and which typically relies on competition. (19)

In addition, capitalist governments tend to avoid regulating business profits which lead in leaving industries in private hands. Since making the most money, according to Capitalism, is the only virtue anyone really wants to cultivate, Marxist theory believes that unregulated business profits would lead to promote ethics of greed.

Moreover, Capitalists believe that the best way to promote a strong society is encouraging competition “*a free economic market, and private or corporate ownership of the means of production*” (Wolfreys 19); competition for jobs, for pay raise, for awards and so forth because competition ensures that the most capable, the most intelligent people will rise to the top. In contrast, Marxist theory suggests that uncontrolled competition is oppressive because it leads to ensure that the most selfish, unethical people will rise to the top. What is more, these people are willing to do whatever it takes to win. Therefore, the needs of a community as a whole are usually ignored because competition emphasizes the importance of the individual instead of the group (Tyson, “Learning” 57).

II-1-3-2- The Ideology of the American Dream

The American dream is a capitalist ideology which is connected specifically with American history and culture. According to this ideology, America is the land of equal opportunities for all. That is, anyone who has the determination to work hard enough can rise from “rags to riches”.

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Marxist analysis reveals that the American dream is an ideology, a belief system not an innate or natural way of perceiving the world. Moreover, the Marxist theory points out that our belief in the American dream blinds us to the reality that some people have not equal opportunities in education, employment or housing due to some factors such as: gender, race, religion...etc. And worse, the American dream leads us to believe that poor people who are not able to improve their financial status must be labelled as lazy. Lois Tyson supports this idea by saying:

The American dream blinds us to the enormities of its own failure, past and present, the genocide of Native Americans, the enslavement of Africans, the virtual enslavement of indentured servants, the abuses suffered by immigrant populations, the widening economic gulf between America's rich and poor, the growing ranks of the homeless and hungry, the enduring socioeconomic barriers against women and people of color.
("Critical" 58)

In short, the success of the American dream and the acquisition of a wealthy lifestyle for few stand on the misery of the many.

II-1-3-3-Marx's Views on Religion

For many people, religion is a source of spiritual strength and moral guidance. Every religion entails a system of beliefs and rituals that celebrate a deity or leader. However, Marxist theory observes that religion plays a role in oppressing the poor. Marx states: "*religion is the opiate of masses*" (qtd in Raines 5). That is, religion acts as a kind of drug that keeps poor people quiet. Hence, the primary purpose of religion is to control the behaviour and strip the individual of identity (Renee 155). Moreover, Marx believes that religion functions to distract people from the injustice under which they live, by promising them justice in the afterlife. It is for this reason that Marx's philosophy is atheistic (Magee 139).

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These ideologies are just a sample of the ideologies that Marxism opposes. There are, of course, additional ideologies such as: classicism, rugged individualism, consumerism and so on.

II-1-4-Marxism's Insights in Human Behaviour

Capitalism defines everything in terms of its monetary worth, which means that the value of any object becomes impersonal. For this reason, Marx's concern over the rise of capitalist economy is to show its effects on human value. Therefore, the focus of many later Marxists on the way in which ideology is transmitted through popular culture and how it operates in our emotional lives is, in reality, a natural extension of Marx's own interest in human behaviour and experience.

Many Marxist insights into human behaviour depict the damaging effects of Capitalism on human psychology, and they link those damaging effects to our relationship to "commodity", which is anything that has a price tag. For Marxism, a commodity's value lies not in what it can do, 'use value', but in the money or other commodities for which it can be traded, 'exchange value' or in the social status it grants to its owner, 'sign exchange value'. Thus, two forms of value define an object as a commodity; 'exchange value' and 'sign exchange value', and both forms are determined by the society in which this object is exchanged.

Besides, Marx demonstrates that 'use value' is a relation between the consumer and the object consumed, however, 'exchange value' is a relation between people (Price 32). For example, one commodifies a work of art when he buys with the intention of selling it for more money, here it has exchange value, or when one buys it to impress others with his good tastes, and here it has sign exchange value. Moreover, we commodify human beings when we build our relations with them to gain social or financial advancements. For example, one commodifies his friend because he's wealthy or because he spends a great deal of money on him, in this case this friendship has exchange value. Also, one commodifies his friend when he goes out with him to impress his friends; in this case it has sign-exchange value (Tyson, "Critical" 62).

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Furthermore, Marxism depicts that imperialist governments colonize the consciousness of subordinate people by convincing them to see their situation the way these nations want them to see it. For example, to convince the colonized people that, in order to develop, they need to work under the guidance and protection of their new leaders because they are mentally, spiritually and culturally inferior to their conquerors.

II-1-5-Marxism and Literature

Marx considers art and literature as an attractive and effective means of convincing the proletariat of their oppressors. In addition, literature is a particular powerful tool for maintaining the social status quo because it works under the guise of entertainment, which helps to influence its audience even when its members are not aware being influenced (Dobie 86).

Furthermore, Marxist critics consider a literary work as a product of the socioeconomic aspects of a particular culture not as an aesthetic object to be experienced for its own intrinsic worth. Therefore, Marxist critics concern with identifying the ideology of a work and pointing out its worth or its deficiencies. Hence, the function of literature is to make the populace aware of social ills and to encourage acting toward wiping those ills away.

The ideology that a literary work inevitably carries can be found in both the content and the form as well; the content represents actions, themes...etc. And the form is: realism, naturalism... and other genres and literary devices. As a result, if the content is the “what”, the ideology carried by the literary work, the form is the “how”, that is, how is this ideology presented through characters’ actions, themes and so on.

For Marxism, realism is the best form for Marxist purposes because it depicts the reality clearly and accurately, and it shows the real world with all its socioeconomic inequities and ideological contradictions. In contrast, postmodernism literature and non-realistic literature distance and estrange the

reader from the narrative and the characters it portrays because it is written in a fragmented, surreal style that seems to defy our understanding.

As Marxism stands on different premises which form the core of the theory, Freudian Psychoanalytic theory, also, has its own tenets. This study focuses more on the concepts of the unconscious, repression, defence mechanisms and death drive.

II-2-Freudian Psychoanalytic Framework

Psychoanalytic theory is a form of literary criticism in which some of Psychoanalysis techniques are used to interpret literature. On the other side, Psychoanalysis is a science concerned with the interaction between conscious and unconscious processes and with the laws of mental functioning. Its aim is to bring out the individual's repressed fears and conflicts, which are causing the troubles, to the conscious mind, rather than remain buried in the unconscious. As a result, Sigmund Freud, based on this practice, developed specific theories to explain how the mind, instincts and sexuality work (Barry 96).

Furthermore, all of Freud's work depends upon the notion of the unconscious and the repression, as well as the idea of defence mechanisms such as: regression, denial, avoidance and so forth. And later in his career, Freud suggested a three-part model of psyche; the id, the ego and superego. In addition, many of Freud's ideas related to the aspects of sexuality are connected to "Oedipus complex", in which Freud reveals that the male since his infancy conceives the desire to eliminate the father and become his mother's sexual partner. Another important Freudian terminology is the "dream work"; the process by which real events and desires are turned into dream images.

II-2-1- Historical Background of Psychoanalysis

Different psychological questions and theories were discussed by various thinkers and philosophers before the emergence of Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis. For example, Aristotle in the fourth century B.C noticed that

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tragedy has great effects on the audience by saying: “*through pity and fear, tragedy created a catharsis of those emotions*” (Dobie 47). Aristotle was the earliest among many writers and critics to search for the purpose behind writing stories and poems, and why people enjoy reading them. Matthew Arnold from his side believes that literature influences our behaviour and makes us a better person, especially through poetry which could inspire and rejoice the reader. Moreover, Friedrich Nietzsche speaks about personality as being guided by the use of critical reasoning and ruled by creative-intuitive power (47).

Despite the fact that those theories are efforts to explain the progress and the structure of human personality, they lack the broad theoretical basis that would give them validity. It was Sigmund Freud who developed theories connected to the functions of human psyche; its formations, its organization and its illnesses, and then his students and followers build on his ideas to understand why people behave as they do. With Freudian theory, then, it is possible to find out what is not said directly, which means to read between the lines.

II-2-2- Freud's Conception of the Human Psyche

II-2-2-1-The Unconscious

The unconscious is one of the keystones in Psychoanalytic theory, it “*is the storehouse of those painful experiences and emotions, those wounds, fears, guilty desires, and unresolved conflicts we do not want to know about because we feel we will be overwhelmed by them*”(Tyson, “Critical” 12). To become conscious of these conflicts, it would cause us pain or guilt or some other unpleasant feelings. Thus, we create a barrier between our consciousness and unconsciousness and we prevent repressed materials to pass through that barrier. As a result, we are not fully aware of everything that is going on in our minds; only a small portion of our mental lives is accessible to us.

II-2-2-2-Freud's Structural Hypotheses about Mental Functioning

In an attempt to describe the conscious and the unconscious mind; Freud, first, introduced the theory of mental functioning, known as “Topographic”, which divides the psyche into three systems: conscious, preconscious and unconscious. Later on this theory is superseded by another one known as “Freud's structural hypotheses about mental functioning” which divides the human psyche into three parts; the id, the ego and the superego and they are corresponding to, respectively, unconscious, conscious and conscience. And those three areas of mind are in a constant wrestle for dominance as we grow from infancy, to childhood, to adulthood. (Berger 85-6).

II-2-2-3-Repression

Freud believes that certain ideas and thoughts are repressed, that is, pushed out of conscious and put into unconscious. This happens when we are threatened by these ideas and thoughts because awareness of them produces anxiety. Repression, thus, functions like an immune system which protects us from dangerous things including anything that can threaten self-esteem or feelings of comfort or pleasure.

Besides repression, Psychoanalytic theory suggests other protective devices of the unconscious, known as “defence mechanisms”, by which the unconscious protects us.

II-2-2-4-Defence Mechanisms

Defence mechanisms such as: denial, avoidance, regression and so on “*are the processes by which the contents of our unconscious are kept in the unconscious. In other words, they are the processes by which we keep the repressed repressed in order to avoid knowing what we feel we can't handle knowing*” (Tyson, “Critical”15). Defences, then, are the various techniques the ego employs to control instincts and to prevent anxieties.

When these defences break down and this happens when people experience anxiety, it leads to reveal the core issues.

II-2-3- Core Issues

II-2-3-1- Oedipus Complex

Oedipus complex is a theory about the mental life of the child. It assumes that in early childhood between the ages of three and six, the young child develops two emotional ties to its parents. The oedipal child wishes to be the primary recipient of the love from the desired parent, and fears revenge from the rival parent. Consequently, a complex of network feelings constructed; love and hate, desire and jealousy, disappointment and hope and competition and fear (Keitlen 3).

Moreover, Freud, in his famous letter to Wilhelm Fliess, he describes how he came to recognize the existence and importance of the Oedipus complex “*Being entirely honest with oneself is a good exercise. Only one idea of general value has occurred to me. I have found love of the mother and jealousy of the father in my own case too, and now believe it to be a general phenomena of early childhood*” (qtd in Berger 81).

Freud borrowed the name ‘Oedipus’ from classical Greek drama. In Sophocles’s play “*Oedipus Rex*” the prince of Thebes unknowingly kills his father and marries his mother. When he discovers what he has done, he blinds himself as a punishment. In Freud’s view, this fate is inescapable because Oedipus action, without intention, is derived of his desire to his mother since his childhood (Dugdal 63).

Although the idea of Oedipus complex is essentially concerned with the life of the child, its sphere of application extends beyond the boundaries of child psychology. Besides, it can be applied to problems of adult psychology since adult behaviour is greatly shaped by events which take place in childhood.

II-2-3-2-Low Self-esteem

Before dealing with this concept, some notions need to be explained

Self: the self is that part of personality that represents the ‘I’, ‘we’ or ‘who I am’, it is “*that part or aspect of personality that represents a meaningful organization of life experiences and, at least to a considerable degree, is capable of recall and recollection on appropriate occasions*” (Lionells 873). Moreover, the self is the aspect of personality that every individual esteems, cherishes and shelters from questioning and criticism. Besides, the self includes accessible and habitual thoughts and attitudes about one’s world, familiar feelings, motives and way of perceiving and storing memories.

Self-esteem: “*The self-esteem is the personal evaluation which individuals make of themselves, their sense of their own worth, or their capabilities*” (Hayes 249). Similarly, it is the experience of self-respect in interpersonal experiences that relates the self, whether in a realistic or fantasy ways, with what the others perceive it. Furthermore, the interpersonal experiences; past, present or even anticipated experiences, represent the source of increased, sustained or lowered self-esteem.

Low Self-esteem: “*is regarded as indicating a likelihood of psychological disturbance, and is particularly characteristic of depression*” (Hayes 249). Additionally, it is the belief that one is less worthy than other people or inferior to them, therefore, don’t deserve attention, love, or any other of life’s rewards.

There are other core issues such as: Fear of intimacy, the feeling that emotional closeness will seriously hurt or destroy the person, Fear of abandonment, Fear of betrayal and so on. It is important to notice that core issues are related to each other. For example, low self-esteem may lead to fear of intimacy because the belief that one is less worthy than other people can lead him/her to distance himself, emotionally, from others, in the hope that they will not discover that he is not worthy of them (Tyson, “Critical” 17). Generally, core issues shape our beings in fundamental ways; they do not consist of occasional negative feelings, rather, they

remain with us throughout life. What is more, they define people's behaviour in destructive ways without being aware of that.

Another aspect of the human psyche that Freud interested in is the concept of death drive or death instinct.

II-2-4-Death Drive

Freud perceives all human behaviour as motivated by drives or instincts, which are neurological representations of physical needs. These instincts perpetuate the lives of individuals by motivating them to seek food and water. In the same way, it perpetuates the lives of species by motivating members of the species to have sex. Freud called the motivational energy of these life instincts the 'libido', which means "I desire" in Latin. Moreover, Freud views sex as more important in the dynamics of the psyche than other needs. Humans are social creatures, and sex is the most social of needs. And, for Freud, sex involved much more than sexual intercourse. So, libido is the sex drive. Thus, Libido keeps human beings in constant motion. However, the goal of this motion is to be at peace, to have no more needs. Therefore, the ultimate goal of life is death. So, Freud began to believe that every person has an unconscious wish to die.

Consequently, two major controversies that have been raised by Freud's prominent discoveries are his theory of 'libido' or 'the sexual drive', presenting the struggle between life as centred in erotic impulses, and his theory of the 'death drive', presenting aggression. Besides, Freud considers the two drives as the fundamental motivational principles determining the unconscious conflict. Furthermore, they are what drive human beings towards the search for gratification and happiness on the one hand, and to severely destructive aggression on the other hand (Akhtar 173).

Freud reveals that a drive "*is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing force*" (qtd in Billias 243). That is, Freud considers that the aim of the drives is to promote the expression of the inertia inherent in the

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organic life, and the only reason for change is the pressure of external circumstances which disturb this inertia. Therefore, the most fundamental aim of every living creature is to return to an inanimate form. This latter is the earliest state of things in organic terms. In other words, it is to die "*The aim of all life is death*" (Feud, qtd in Miller 105). This leads Freud to the conclusion that life is a detour on the way to death, based on the drive to return to the inanimate state. As a result, death becomes an organizing principle in life; death as the aim of life does not appear as a random fact, but rather as the silent defining and de-limiting force of life itself. Moreover, Repetition of painful situation, self-destructiveness, death wishes and self-inflicted suffering are all expression of the internal directed death drive (Billias 241).

Marxism and Psychoanalysis are means to read between lines and to reveal what is not said by authors. William Faulkner, for instance, examines the ills as well as the pride and the honour of the American South through his writings. He marries modern themes with modernist techniques to give birth to thoughts which are intended to enlighten the populace.

III-William Faulkner's Style and Techniques of Writing

William Faulkner is one of the major American innovative figures in literature. He wrote novels and short stories combining stream of consciousness narrative technique with linguistic innovations and vivid characterization. Faulkner, in an interview of the Paris Review (1956), was asked: what technique do you use to arrive at your standard? He answered:

Let the writer take up surgery or bricklaying if he is interested in technique. There is no mechanical way to get the writing done, no shortcut. The young writer would be a fool to follow a theory. Teach yourself by your own mistakes; people learn only by error. The good artist believes that nobody is good enough to give him advice. He has supreme

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vanity. No matter how much he admires the old writer, he wants to beat him².

Moreover, he used a fictional region, Yoknapatawpha, in many of his novels. The reason behind choosing this region to be the setting for many of his novels is that Faulkner as a writer wants to: *“probe his own region, the deep South... The county is a microcosm of the South as a whole, and Faulkner's novels examine the effects of the dissolution of traditional values and authority on all levels of Southern society”* (qtd in Aldouri 6). Furthermore, Yoknapatawpha novels voice the decades of economic decline after the American Civil War, and examine themes of racism, class division, family as both life force and curse and feelings of despair and alienation.

Additionally, Faulkner was a good observer of what he is surrounded by. As a result, his novels deal with many aspects of humanism; tragedy, energy, and humour of ordinary human life. In other words, William Faulkner is primarily interested in man who is in conflict against himself, against his fellow man, against his time and place and against his environment as well. Whatever the kind of conflict that Faulkner deals with in his novels, it is the conflict of man who is the product of a particular set of historical circumstances against which he must struggle to reform the world and create his own one which is independent from what he is told or given. In such a world man can express his own vitality and mark his own place (Aldouri 7).

The most remarkable feature of Faulkner's fictional style is his use of stream of consciousness narrative technique as *“a literary technique that presents the thoughts and feelings of a character as they occur”*, and psychologically, it is *“the conscious experience of an individual regarded as a continuous, flowing series of images and ideas running through the mind”*³. Therefore, his experimentation with stream of consciousness technique, multiplicity of narration, unreliable narration,

² <http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/4954/the-art-of-fiction-no-12-william-faulkner>

³ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Stream+of+thought>

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interior monologues, symbolism, allegory, imagery, irony, flashback, foreshadowing and disordered time sequences makes him a leader to the new generation of fiction writers.

What is more, Faulkner in many of his novels imitates the way man's brain produces flow of images and thoughts. That is, Faulkner interprets this flow of images and thoughts and puts them in the form of words. Moreover, through stream of consciousness Faulkner explores the state of isolation of modern man because modern life imposes on people to live in isolation from each other, as if they don't live on the same planet. Each of them has their own affairs and does not care whether these affairs hurt or please others. Besides, interior monologue is a form of stream of consciousness technique and also it is a kind of presenting a character's inner thoughts and emotions in a direct or sometimes disjointed or fragmented manner. This technique admits the presence of the author acting as a kind of mediator between the characters' mind and the reader, and at the same time keeping control over the whole story in its progress (Peek 110).

Faulkner's techniques were not only fundamental to an understanding of the modernist form, but heralded much of what would come later. John Bassett states that: "*Mr. Faulkner seeks to get at the essence of his characters thought. He is carrying on an experiment that he has widened the boundaries of modern fiction*" (94). The appropriate nature of the episodes in a story, the jumping from one point of view to another, the lack of apparent connection between parts of a whole, use of unreliable narrators such as Benjy, the mentally retarded son, in The Sound and the Fury and multiplicity of narrators, show how Faulkner's texts helped establish those practices that would become his trade mark.

William Faulkner's use of multiple narrators in his works such as The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying would seem to create novels that would support a more complete and accurate view of the story. In the first novel, four narrators narrate the story from their own perspectives. The perspective differs from one narrator to another. In the second novel, fifteen narrators narrate the fifty nine

sections of the short story in their own narrative perspectives. Hence, Faulkner's method of combining stream of consciousness, multiple narrators and unreliable narrator results in a narrative that is both a commentary on history and a reflection of history. As a result, he tried to bring out the problems and inner sufferings of the American Southerners.

Conclusion

William Faulkner is among many modernist writers who document the different socioeconomic conditions of the American South during the economic hardships of 1920s and its impact on the collective psyche.

Through the literary theories mentioned in this chapter, it is revealed that Marxism and Psychoanalysis theories study human behaviour and motivation in psychological terms. While Marxism emphasizes on the material and historical forces, the politics and ideologies of socioeconomic systems by which the psychological experience and behaviour of individuals and groups is shaped, Psychoanalysis focuses on the individual psyche and its formation within the family. For Marxism, both the individual and the family are products of material and historical circumstances.

Marx stresses the struggle of the socioeconomic classes; the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Moreover, he considers class societies are the result of the different ideologies which serve the dominant class; ideologies like: Capitalism, the American Dream and Religion. However, Freud demonstrates how the outer conditions influence people's psyche by illustrating the role of the unconscious and repression in shaping the individual's behaviour, and creating some psychological problems such as: the Oedipus complex and low self-esteem. In addition to the theory of Death Drive through which Freud introduces the notion of death and he explains that the most fundamental aim of every living creature is to return to an inanimate form.

CHAPTER TWO

JOURNEY OF PARADOXES: “AS I LAY DYING”

THROUGH MARXIST AND

PSYCHOANALYTIC PERSPECTIVES

“It wasn’t on a balance”

(Faulkner 165)

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Introduction

This chapter is the practical part of this dissertation; therefore, a range of critical theories will be applied on Faulkner's As I Lay Dying. Hence, Psychoanalysis and Marxist perspectives are the means to provide interpretations for the novel from different angles. However, before any attempt to start analysis, some critical views about the novel will be provided. These views tackle the process of Faulkner's writing his 'tour de force', the title and the framework of the story.

I-Critical Views on As I Lay Dying

I-1-Faulkner's Tour de force

Faulkner claimed that the concept for As I Lay Dying, his fifth novel, consists of taking a family and subjecting them to the twin catastrophes of flood and fire;

That is simple '*Tour de force*'. I took this family and subjected them to the greatest catastrophes which man can suffer flood and fire, that's all. Well, I judge my books by how much work and agony went into 'em. Something like '*As I Lay Dying*' was easy, real easy. '*Tour de force*'. It took me just about six weeks I could write a book like that with both hands tied behind my back. It just came like that. I just thought of all the natural catastrophes that could happen to a family and let them all happen. (Faulkner, qtd in Reed 84)

Six weeks only is the time Faulkner consumed to finish his 'tour de force' while he was working in the night shift at a power plant. He felt proud of his work

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and he reveals in his own words: “*I set out deliberately to write a ‘Tour de force’ before I ever put a pen to paper and set down the first word I knew what the last period would fall*” (Faulkner, qtd in Reed 85). Moreover, Faulkner called the novel ‘tour de force’ as a result of the splendid virtuosity technique used which takes command of the writer’s vision. He emphasized the clarity of the conception and the simplicity of the plot, with no reference whatever to the uniqueness of the adventure. John Dennis Anderson, an American performance studies scholar, who focuses his research in the area of narrative theory and performance, quotes in his book Student Companion to William Faulkner: “*Of all Faulkner’s novels, [As I Lay Dying] is perhaps the most agile, the most adroit, the one in which the writer’s new-won mastery of his craft and the versatility of his gifts reveal themselves in the most spectacular ways*” (45).

I-2-The Mythical Journey

From Homer’s The Odyssey and the Gospel of New Testament to Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales, plot and thematic foundation for much great literature were built upon journeys. Similarly, Faulkner’s As I Lay Dying centres around a journey. This “*quixotic quest*” (Brooks 79) is a journey in a wagon, from Yocknapatawpha county to Jefferson, conducted by the Bundren family to bury their matriarch Addie.

Furthermore, Faulkner’s title of his novel As I Lay Dying demonstrates his use of intertextuality¹ to reflect his cleverness and his acknowledgement of literary tradition through allusion to previous texts and writers. The title “As I Lay Dying” refers to Book XI of Homer’s Odyssey as translated by Sir William Marris. Faulkner quoted a line from The Odyssey that occurs as Agamemnon, the fallen Greek leader, relates to Odysseus the manner of his death. He says: “*As I Lay Dying, the woman with a dog’s eyes would not close for me my eyelids as I descended into Hades*” (qtd in Fowler 48). Even Agamemnon’s speech, as scholars

¹ Intertextuality is a term coined originally by Julia Kristeva. It can take place consciously, as when a writer sets out to quote from or allude to the work of another (Wolfreys 57-8).

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have frequently observed, is relevant to Faulkner’s novel because it stresses the indignity of death as an apparent theme in As I Lay Dying (Anderson 57).

Furthermore, Nathaniel Hawthorne’s The Scarlet Letter is the American literary source to which Faulkner alludes in his novel. In Hawthorne’s novel Hester Prynne, like Addie, commits adultery with a man of God and bears a child named Pearl, whose name means preciousness like Jewel’s in As I Lay Dying. Moreover, just as Hester wore the scarlet letter “A” for adultery as a symbol for her sin, Addie says that she thought of herself and Whitfield, the priest, as dressed in garment of sin “*I would think of sin as I would think of the clothes we both wore in the world’s face*” (Faulkner 174). Additionally, Addie’s monologue imitates T.S. Eliot’s The Waste Land. Her statement “*In the early spring it was worst*” (170) resembles to the one of Eliot’s “*April is the cruellest month*”.

I-3-The Novel’s Framework

The scenes in As I Lay Dying are introduced simply by titles identifying the speaker, similar to such description in plays. The novel has a linear structure based upon the movement of the nine days’ funeral procession traversing the forty miles from the Bundren farm to Jefferson. Therefore, Faulkner, in his novel, depicts a Bundren family’s quest to carry out a husband’s promise to his dying wife, and examines the nature of grieving of community and family.

The plot of the novel is very simple but the technique of presentation is not simple. Nothing is told by the author; instead, the novel is broken into fifty nine sections, each assigned to a character in the novel, which represents his or her inner thoughts. Moreover, the process of narration in As I Lay Dying can be compared to a football game where the shifting in narration from one character to another occurs; first Darl speaks then Cora, and then Darl again and then Jewel. The reason behind this shifting in narration is that Faulkner wants to present varying and contradictory versions of the same event.

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As a result, the reader will be the jury who will decide what actually happened and who is telling the truth. For example, when the coffin is lost in the river, several narrations allow the reader to see the same event from many different vantage points. Darl, the second son, gives his narration of the loss of the coffin. From Vardaman, the youngest son, it is revealed that his mother is a fish swimming in the river, and from Cash, the eldest son, the reader understands that the coffin wasn't on balance. Lastly, Anse, the husband, shows that it is just one more burden they must afford before he can get his false teeth. Therefore, with the multiple narration of each event, one can see that event from different angles and observe what type of emphasis each character puts on the event.

Moreover, what the writer is conveying here is not the absolute truth but a truth that depends in large measure on viewpoint. Judith Lockyer, an assistant professor of English at Albion College, comments: “*...by reading the narrators' unspoken thoughts, the readers are able to judge the Bundren's personality from their conducts throughout the story*” (73). Consequently, As I Lay Dying is a novel of subjectivity; it is easy to be attracted and to get into the Bundrens points of view. Hence, Faulkner includes some non-Bundren characters to bring a touch of objectivity to the novel. Olga W. Vickery, a faculty member of the University of Southern California's Department of English, in her book The Novels of William Faulkner: A Critical Interpretation states that:

The novel is a legend, and the procession of ragged, depraved hill men, carrying Addie Bundren's body through water and through fire to cemetery in Jefferson, which people flee from the smell of buzzards circle overhead. This progress is not unlike that of the medieval soul towards redemption. The multiple narration of each event helps the understanding of the plot of the novel. The different levels of consciousness are rendered by Faulkner through variations in style ranging from the dialect of actual speech to the intricate imagery and poetic rhythm of the unconscious. (233)

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Another reason for the use of shifted narration is that Faulkner aims to explore the way the characters are isolated from each other despite the fact that they are living in the same place. This is asserted by Lockyer: “*Addie has been isolated and deceived by what was once an absolute faith in words; the unbearable gap between word and deed has emptied her of feeling and the world of meaning*” (74).

Besides the multiple narrations, Faulkner uses the stream of consciousness not only to convey the impression and the feelings of his characters, but also to explore the world they inhabit. Moreover, by the use of this technique, the writer concentrates on psychology rather than events, as if the narrative of mind is the story, and he makes the narrators participate in the actions they describe. That is, they take part in these events, and the reader is made to access the pure world of subjectivity since the author removes himself from the story.

Correspondingly, Faulkner’s use of stream of consciousness is to transfer ideas, thoughts and perspectives inside the character’s head to the mind of the reader. In the same way, many of the themes that Faulkner deals with in his novel are explored through this technique. For example, the theme of death is one of the main themes that are tackled in the novel beginning with the title “*As I Lay Dying*” and within the story itself “*I can remember how when I was young I believed death to be a phenomena of the body, now I know it to be merely a function of the mind-and that of the minds of the one who suffer the bereavement*” (Faulkner 43-4). In addition, through the use of this technique the characters of As I Lay Dying reveal the difficulty of human communication caused not only by the problem of finding the right word, but also by the contradiction between words and deeds. Addie Bundren expresses this theme when she says: “*Words are no good; that words don’t ever fit even what they are trying to say it*” (171).

Hence, William Faulkner uses stream of consciousness to make the reader as closer as he can to the unspoken thoughts of the characters, that is, through this technique Faulkner becomes invisible in order to bridge the distance between the characters and the reader. In short, Faulkner employs stream of consciousness to

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present his characters, to develop the actions and to explore the major themes of his novel As I Lay Dying. In that case, the writer detaches himself completely and let the reader be face to face with everything inside the novel.

Besides the multiple narrative and stream of consciousness, Faulkner limits himself by using present tense narration, in many parts of the novel, where the point in time, when the narrator tells the story, coincides with the point in time when the action takes place. Furthermore, the point at which the reader experiences the action coincides with both the action itself and the narrator's telling of it as well. Therefore, by employing present tense, multiple narratives and stream of consciousness, Faulkner is risking losing control on his events since there is no time gap between the event and the character's recording of it.

Faulkner's As I Lay Dying addresses subjects that challenge stereotypical perceptions of poor Southerners. For instance, characters examine issues of love, death, identity and the limitations of language. Their actions and adventures draw attention to rural life, class conflicts, and the reflections of desire and selfishness. As a result, this description fits the Marxist view which considers a literary work as a product of the socioeconomic aspects of a particular culture not as an aesthetic object to be experienced for its own intrinsic worth. Therefore, the function of literature is to make the populace aware of social ills and sympathetic to action that will wipe those ills away.

II-As I Lay Dying through Marxist Perspectives

As I Lay Dying is one of Faulkner's most socially and politically responsive novels, which was written in the immediate aftermath of the 1929 crash. Moreover, it is considered the America's first Depression-era novel. Faulkner started writing the book immediately after the stock market collapsed “*On October 25, 1929, the day after the panic had broken out on Wall Street, Faulkner took a blank sheet of paper and wrote at the top in blue ink, “As I Lay Dying”, then he underlined it twice and wrote the date in the upper right-hand corner*”(Entin 170).

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Since the novel is especially noted as a representation of the South, this study provides reading on Faulkner’s novel through the Marxist lenses with the aim to answer the following questions: how does Faulkner reveal the ideologies that As I Lay Dying treat? And how the conflict of socioeconomic classes is portrayed?

II-1-The Conflict of the Socioeconomic Classes

For the Marxist perception, the division of people based on the differences in socioeconomic class is much more significant than differences in religion, race, ethnicity or gender. Additionally, it emphasizes the idea that social life based upon “conflict of interests”. Thus, this perception necessitates discussion of the roles, values and struggle of the working class proletariat compared to those middle class bourgeoisies; between the “haves” and the “haves-not”.

In As I Lay Dying, Faulkner uses many physical descriptions of the characters to stress how poor, dirty and rural folks the Bundrens are. For example, Darl paints a picture of Anse’s physical appearance with his description. He says: “*Pa’s feet are badly splayed, his toe cramped and bent and warped, with no toenail at all on his little toes, from working so hard in the wet in homemade shoes when he was a boy*” (Faulkner 11). Besides, Faulkner uses not only the physical description, but also dialect to provide deeper insight about the characters. Much of the Bundrens grammar is elementary in structure, and they have a strong Southern dialect. They pronounce ‘ate’ as ‘et’ and ‘it’ as ‘hit’. These indirect characterizations create the image that the Bundrens are poorly educated and belong to the lower class.

Another aspect that demonstrates how the Bundrens are members of the proletariat is how they prepare themselves before going to town. They wear nicer clothes and Jewel receives a haircut “*Anse meets us at the door. He has shaved...and he is wearing his Sunday pants and a white shirt with the neckband buttoned*” (86). Similarly, Dewey Dell pretends that she is carrying Mrs Cora’s cakes to sell them in Jefferson, but the fact she puts her Sunday clothes there in the package. When they approach Jefferson, she stops them to go to the bushes and then

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“Dewey Dell returns. We watch her emerge from the bushes, carrying the package, and climb into the wagon. She now wears her Sunday dress, her beads, her shoes and stocking” (Faulkner 228-9). The Bundrens feel as if they need to appear better in order to go to town.

Moreover, interactions between characters in the novel reveal how the Bundrens are despised by the wealthy city dwellers. Throughout the story, it is clear that the wealthier people who live in the town have a negative attitude toward the Bundrens. On their way to Jefferson, the Bundrens stop in a town called Mottson for some supplies. When they arrive, people living in the town complain about the rotting smell, and the Bundrens are asked to leave by the city Marshal. After their leaving, the Marshal comments: “*I reckon they’re in Jefferson now*”. Moseley, the drugstore, responds: “*Or in jail. Well thanks the Lords it’s not our jail*” (205). This reply represents the entire town’s opinion of the Bundrens; they think they are dirty and dumb farmers. This incident, then, is an example of how the lower class struggles with the wealthy bourgeoisie.

Similarly, the struggle between the two classes is shown again when Dewey Dell has sex with a city dweller, Lafe, and becomes pregnant. The only support he offers her is giving her ten dollars to get an abortion “*He give it to me. Ten dollars. He said that would be enough*” (201). As a result, she finds herself obliged to hide her pregnancy and suffers alone without his help. In the same way, when she goes into drugstore in Jefferson seeking an abortion. First MacGowan asks his friend Jody “*What kind of woman she is?*” Jody responds: “*Country woman*” (241). Then clerk of the store lies to her by saying he is the doctor “*Are you the doctor?*” Dewey Dell asks Macgawan, he answers: “*Sure*” (242). He then gives her fake medicine and takes advantage of her sexually.

Consequently, these events illustrate how the proletariat often rely on the resources of the bourgeoisie to escape their hardships, even when the bourgeois themselves cause those troubles. What is more, they take advantage, for personal gain, of the lack of resources and options of the lower class members.

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Furthermore, another remarkable example of class conflicts appears in Cora's section at the beginning of the novel. Cora describes, in detail, how hard and painfully she saved the eggs to bake cakes to a lady from town; “*And that week they [chicken] laid so well that I not only saved out enough eggs...I have saved enough so that the flour and the sugar and the stove wood would not be costing anything*” (Faulkner 7). But Miss Lawington told Cora the lady has changed her mind and she is not going to have the party after all, leaving Cora with near-worthless cakes, shortage eggs and days of wasted effort. This reflects the lower class oppression; with Cora represents the proletariat and the town lady the upper class who treats them unjustly.

However, Cora's daughter, Kate, comments: “*She ought to take them...But those rich town ladies can change their minds. Poor folks cant*” (7). Kate's words reveal, on one hand, how the proletariat allow the rich to make a profit and oppress the lower class. On the other hand, Kate represents the conscious proletariat who wishes to change the status quo. Marx believes that the proletariat can revolt against their oppressors and create classless society only if they spontaneously develop the class consciousness needed to create this revolution. Unlike Kate, Cora does not show any reaction, she simply says: “*Well, it isn't like they cost me anything... It isn't like the cakes cost me anything...so it was like we had found the eggs or they had been given to us*” (7-8).

II-2-The Ideology in As I Lay Dying

For Marxists the ideology dictated by the dominant class functions to secure its power, and works to make people accept a system that is unfavourable for them without protest or questioning. That is to accept it as a logical way for things to be. Marxism works to rid society of such deceptions by exposing the ideological failings that have been concealed.

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II-2-1-Religion between Oppression and Hypocrisy

Marxist theory observes that religion plays a role in oppressing the poor. One of the best-known Marxist sayings is that "*religion is the opiate of the masses*"². This means that religion acts as a kind of drug that keeps poor people quiet. Its purpose is to control behaviour and strip the individual of identity. In As I Lay Dying, when the lady town nullifies the deal with Cora to bake her cakes for the party, Cora comments: "*Riches is nothing in the face of the Lord, for He can see into the heart*" (Faulkner 7). She adds: "*If it is His will that some folks has different ideas of honesty...it is not my place to question His decree*" (8). Cora, then, has no objection towards the event as if her faith is enough to calm her down, and make her accept the oppression. Moreover, Faulkner reveals the hypocrisy of the religious man when Addie commits adultery with Whitfield, the Church man, who, normally; it is expected to refuse such deeds.

Furthermore, Cash, while he is working on the church roof, falls down and is badly injured. Because of his broken leg, Cash is unable to work for six months. Here Faulkner is trying to demonstrate that there is something unjust about this action. Although Cash is a good person and he is trying to repair the church roof, he is rewarded such injury. Through the novel, Cash is an honourable and reliable man who does not have time for monologue until he has finished his mother's coffin. In addition, he is creative, careful in his work and considerate of his fellow man. When Jewel was working at night, in another field, to save money in order to buy a horse, Darl and Cash doubted that Jewel is rutting with a married woman. It is Cash who proposes that he is "...wallowing in somebody else's mire" (132). That is, Cash possesses all the aspects that would make him a pious individual. However, Faulkner sees fit to hurt him from a religious temple (Renee 155).

² It is mentioned in the first chapter (p 21).

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II-2-2-Commodification and Materialistic Tendencies

For Marxism, a commodity's value lies not in what it can do, use value, but in the money or other commodities for which it can be traded, exchange value or in the social status it grants to its owner, sign exchange value. In Faulkner's As I Lay Dying, Cash Bundren works hard to construct his mother's coffin for the approaching burial journey to Jefferson. Despite the limitation of time, Cash is paying great attention to every step while constructing the bevel design. Thus, the coffin has a use value since it stands as a means of transporting Addie to her final resting place.

However, when the coffin was about to drown in the flooded river, Cash said “*It wasn't on a balance*” (Faulkner 165). This is an indicator of the coffin profound meaning for him not only as a means of transportation, but it has an exchange value. It represents a work of art that Cash constructed carefully and he was about to lose his leg in order to ensure their arrival to the town, not only to bury his mother, but also to show his work to the town people, so he may get opportunities to work in the town. In the same way, he may have an intention to impress the townsfolk and then his work has sign exchange value.

Cash's thought has been materialised by the environment that produced material greed and deteriorated the human values. Viz, Cash is a person who thinks that material not intellectual well-being can promote his social position, “*Materialism is a doctrine or system of beliefs that maintains that economic or social change occurs via material well-being rather than intellectual or spiritual phenomena*” (Wolfreys 64). In addition his name indicates Money. Therefore, Cash is commodifying his work of art for having both; exchange value and sign exchange value.

Moreover, Anse is constantly complaining about not having teeth “*...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*” (Faulkner 37), and

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when Addie dies he says: “*God’s will be done...Now I can get them teeth*” (Faulkner 52). Thus, he wants them so he can look nicer and hopefully find another wife. To get the money, Anse argues with Dewey Dell who can offer him the ten dollars she has. The argument ends with Dewey Dell narrating: “*He took the money and went out*” (257). Therefore, by having the teeth Anse would look nicer to impress a woman from the town. As a result, Anse is commodifying his teeth for having a sign exchange value.

II-2-3-The Failure of the American Dream

The American dream is an ideology that its beliefs stand on the concept of working hard to achieve success. In As I Lay Dying, Addie’s children are hard workers; Jewel was working at night to buy a horse from Mr Quick, he “*cleaned up that forty acres of new ground Quick laid out last spring*” (135). Cash is a hard worker, a carpenter who is creative and careful in his work. The same for Darl, three days before the death of his mother he went to town to sell woods in order to get three dollars.

However, during the journey to Jefferson Cash injures his leg, Jewel loses his horse because Anse traded it with a team of mules and Darl is imprisoned in an asylum for burning Gillespie’s barn. Unlike the Bundren children, the lazy Anse is the only one who succeeded by getting a new set of teeth and a new Mrs Bundren. Therefore, the story of the Bundrens reflects the failure of the American dream as an ideology which presents America as the land of equal opportunities for all (Hamblin 23).

II-2-4-Capitalism, the Loss of Human Values

Capitalism is a system in which everything, every object, every activity and even every person can be defined in terms of its worth in money. The characters in As I Lay Dying, have been affected by the historical changes that elevate the concept of town/city values which forms the citizenship over country values. That is, the Bundrens see themselves, as their world does, as second class citizens. As a

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result, they seek a different life. Faulkner reveals that this society enforces a trivialization of human desire; it allows people to become fully released only if they earn material appearances that make them just like everyone else.

Therefore, Capitalism, as Faulkner portrays it, encourages and even forces self-development and constant motion and movement, however; people in this society can only develop in distorted and limited ways. Moreover, this world reveals that much of what lives inside human beings never has the chance to come to the active life at all. People in As I Lay Dying “...go on, with a motion so soporific, so dreamlike as to be uninferant of progress” (Faulkner 107-8). That is although the Bundrens get to Jefferson and bury Addie, their accomplishments do not indicate progress. For Faulkner, thus, life in new capitalistic and materialistic South is defined by social mobility, and this latter leaves much to be desired.

Consequently, this kind of society allows only those who acquire the necessary material signs of class affiliation to join. On the other hand, it creates a social order in which people have no relation to others. The Bundrens, because they don't belong to this society, they were chased out of Mottson town. Furthermore, like Addie believes that the words structure their worlds “...words are no good; that words don't ever fit even what they are trying to say at” (171) she adds: “But then I realised that I have been tricked by words” (172). Faulkner recognises as Kevin Raily, who served in the departments of English at both Skidmore College and SUNY Buffalo State before becoming associate provost and dean, in his book Natural Aristocracy: History, Ideology, and the Production of William Faulkner that: “Capitalism creates a world where everything solid melt into air, where people are left to identify themselves only with material sign to success” (95).

In addition to the economic conditions that characterized the American South, as it is illustrated in Faulkner's As I Lay Dying, the familial conflicts also are revealed in this novel. Since Freud's theories have long been used to explore the dynamic of family relationships, and Faulkner's writings are full of familial

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conflicts; Freud’s theories and Faulkner’s writing, thus, make an exceptional coupling.

III-As I Lay Dying through Psychoanalytic Perspectives

Psychoanalysis theory helps in interpreting the work of literature by focusing on the characters’ actions towards each other. Since As I Lay Dying is full of familial conflicts, this study tackles the concepts of the Oedipus complex, low self-esteem and death drive.

III-1-The Paradox of the Oedipus complex

The Oedipus complex is one of the investigate tools from classic Freudian Psychoanalysis which signifies the combination of love for the parent of the opposite sex and jealousy for the parent of the same sex. Freud asserts that this complex creates a necessary familial struggle between the parent and the same sex child for the attention of the parent of the opposite sex.

In As I Lay Dying, the first section of the novel is narrated by Darl and also the first word of the novel is ‘Jewel’, so the novel emphasizes on the oedipal conflict between Darl and his half-brother Jewel. Faulkner spins a Freudian tale of parental rejection; he reveals the aspect of familial dysfunction, as a primary theme of the twentieth century, through the Bundrums who suffers from the oedipal chaos. This latter is reflected in the Bundren struggle under parental neglect, which leaves its mark on most of them.

Faulkner, in his novel, creates a formula of mother/son/son between Addie/Jewel/Darl. It is too complex to be merely sibling rivalry. Moreover, Darl is the only one who knows that Jewel is Addie’s illegitimate son, conceived without Anse, and he is aware of the extent of Addie’s favouritism towards Jewel. Therefore, Darl realizes that Jewel is his mother’s partner not Anse. He understands that Jewel is the one whom he must displace because the relationship between Addie and Jewel goes beyond that of mother and son. He states: “*She would fix him*

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special things to eat and hide them for him” (Faulkner 130), he adds: “*And times when I went in to go to bed she would be sitting in the dark by Jewel where he was asleep*” (130). Thus, Anse is not a threat.

It is obvious that the primary Oedipal in the novel is not between father/mother/son like traditional Freudian premises dictate, instead, As I Lay Dying “*is essentially a novel [about] the tensions between Darl and Jewel, the one unwanted and the other an illegitimate son*” (qtd in Rennee 22). Therefore, it is an Oedipal triad consists of: mother/treasured son/rejected son; Jewel is predestined to be Addie’s savior “*...he will save me from the water and from the fire*” (Faulkner 168), and Darl is marked as the destroyer of his mother’s coffin and her corpse.

On one hand, Anse is unable to act the role of ‘father’ for the Bundren children, because the patriarch authority consists from his control over the woman. This control is expressed in terms of devotion to her. In the same way, this authority is demonstrated from a sense of responsibility to his dependents, children, through their obedience (Rennee 25). Furthermore, Anse’s lack of devotion to Addie is obvious in his quick recovery after her death when his primary thought focuses on getting a new set of teeth “*God’s will be done...Now I can get them teeth*” (Faulkner 52). Additionally, his lack of control is revealed through Addie’s affair with Whitfield and Dewey Dell pregnancy. Accordingly, Asne’s tendency to ignore all his familial responsibilities in favour of looking out for his own needs and benefits, labels him not only irresponsible in the extreme, but also lacking patriarchal traits.

On the other hand, Darl concentrates on Asne’s shortcomings by describing him as “*...dangle-armed, humped, motion-less*” (51). These observations suggest that Darl sees his father as fumbling and incompetent. That is, Asne cannot provide the fear of castration that should lead Darl to the Oedipus complex. As a result, this latter is seeking his identity by tormenting his half-brother, Addie’s favourite child, whom Darl perceives as a threat and obstacle between himself and Addie’s

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affection. Therefore, the tension between the brothers cannot be classified as sibling rivalry; it is too complex because Anse is not Jewel’s father, but Whitfield.

III-2-Escapism and Low Self-esteem

Low self-esteem is the belief that one is less worthy than other people and, therefore, don’t deserve attention, love or any other of life’s rewards. In As I Lay Dying Faulkner reveals some aspects of the effect of poverty, namely low self-esteem and shame, on people (Carr 90). This is seen when Dewey Dell insists “*We are country people, not as good as town people*” (Faulkner 60), she is talking about Lafe, a town boy who makes her pregnant and then leaves her suffering alone. Similarly, when Vardamm wants to buy the train behind the glass in the town, his father explains that it is expensive and the priority is to buy flour, sugar and coffee. Vardamm complains: “*Why do flour and sugar and coffee cost so much when he is a country boy... Why ain’t I a town boy, pa?... God made me*” (66).

Consequently, the Bundrens at the beginning of their journey perceive the town as an escape to their social and economic hardships. Moreover, they consider it as a mysterious land where they can achieve their dreams, but instead, it grants them a sense of self low-esteem to recognize that they are inferior to the townsfolk.

III-3-Addie’s Paradox and Escapism, the Silent Presence

The character of Addie Bundren is presented through not only her narration, but also through the narrations of other characters including her husband, her children and non Bundrens. These narrations reveal that Addie is a woman who is driven to bitterness, despair and longing for death as a result of the conflict between the reality of her situation and the expectancy of her dreams. When she fails to achieve her hopes and ambitions, she longs for death and requests to be buried in her father’s town. She lies in her bed near the window and watches Cash’s making her coffin and waits for death “*The aim of all life is death*” (Freud, qtd in Miller 105). Freud believes that death becomes an organizing principle in life; death as the aim

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of life does not appear as a random fact, but rather as the silent defining and de-limiting force of life itself.

Basically, Addie’s request is a response to her father’s saying “*The reason for living was to get ready to stay dead a long time*” (Faulkner 169). She narrates this at the beginning of her chapter when she was a schoolteacher and would refuge to a spring in order to make sense of her father’s words. There in the spring, she observes the natural cyclical process of the world, “*...the quiet smelling of damp and rotting leaves and new earth*” (169). This reflects Freud’s idea that the most fundamental aim of every living creature is to return to an inanimate form and life is a detour on the way to death.

However, Addie’s retreating to spring is not necessary to mediate on dying but also to hate her students for being outside of her own circle of birth, death and decay “*... each with his or her secret and selfish thought, and blood strange to each other blood and strange to mine*” (169-70). In the same way, Addie wonders to understand how she can prepare herself to death, when her body will turn damp, rot and become new earth; while she is spending her life with those of strange blood and thoughts (Thomas 16).

Furthermore, Addie believes that a woman can make change in man’s life, but as she fails to accomplish this with her husband, she is led to a feeling of incompetence and disappointment. Addie is aware that Anse, whose means of survival is mainly based on the kindness of his neighbours and God, does not take care of his physical appearance. He does not cut his hair and he cannot hold his shoulders “*If you’ve got any womenfolks, why in the world don’t they make you get your hair cut?... And make you hold your shoulders up*” (Faulkner 171). What is more, Addie considers her husband dead because he can neither satisfy her expectations of companionship to free her from aloneness, nor can he fulfil her sexual drive. Under these circumstances, she mentioned that Anse’s attempts at sexual intercourse make no difference in her life.

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Moreover, Addie’s children are victims of her inability of fulfilling her role as a mother. Each of her children’s personality is marked by a lack of love, caring and attention. Consequently, none of them worries about getting her medical attention while she is laying in her deathbed. However, they were, including her husband, simply preoccupied with their selfish motivations. Whereas Cash is interested in doing a perfect bevel on her coffin, Dewey Dell is worried about her pregnancy and how to get an abortion. Similarly, Darl worries about making an extra three dollars and keeping Jewel away from Addie.

Additionally, not only her family were the victims of her incompetence, but also her students before she gets married. She comments that she cannot wait for the last of them to leave the class and then be free to go to spring, which serves as a source of relaxation and retreat. As a result, Addie reaches a degree of hatred to all those who surround her. This hatred pushes her to hate even her father by commenting “*I would hate my father for having ever planted me*” (Faulkner 170). Basically, Addie’s failure to love her husband prevents her from achieving a satisfactory identity (Aldouri 13). This, perhaps, is what makes her children victims of her frustrated and unfulfilled relationship with Anse.

Accordingly, she decides to revenge, “*... and then my revenge would be that he would never know I was taking revenge*” (Faulkner 173). Addie’s revenge takes three forms; committing sin of adultery with Whitfield the Church Minister, laying on bed waiting for death and being buried in Jefferson. The form of her revenge is an indication of the way she is isolating herself from her family; as a wife, a mother and as an inhabitant of her family’s land. Furthermore, this isolation is a kind of avoiding escapism because she blames the others; her father, her husband and the environment she is living in for her failure and incompetence. By committing adultery, she is isolating herself from being a faithful wife for Anse. Amada Chan confirms that: “*The sexual affair with the Church Minister may be interpreted as a form of revenge, for she sees Whitfield as the forbidden fruit, and thus considers her adultery as defiance to Anse’s ‘control’ over her as a ‘wife’*” (118). In addition,

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laying on her bed waiting for death is a sign of isolating herself from being a good mother. What is more, being buried in Jefferson reveals her desire in isolating her corpse from being in the same land where her family, husband and children, are living on.

Hence, Addie seeks to distract herself from her troubles by escapism. Unfortunately, it is the unhealthy kind of escapism because it leads her to suicide isolation, this latter led her to longing for death. Additionally, Addie adopts cause-based escapism as a solution to her unfulfilled sexual desires with her husband. So she escaped this problem by searching for an alternative for her husband; it is the Minister Whitfield, with whom she gave birth of her third son Jewel. Jewel for Addie is her favoured son, her relief and her salvation. She expresses that by saying: “*...he will be my salvation. He will save me from the water and from the fire*” (Faulkner 168).

Moreover, Addie expresses paradox in her rebellious desires which push her strongly towards the need to be released. Her rebellious desires provide her with a sense of living and existing whereas living with her family makes her feel as if she is buried alive. In addition, she rejects Anse’s love but accepts the birth of her children. She wants to isolate herself from others, but she tries to impose her personality upon others. Instead of trying to escape her isolation through human relationships, she prefers to make it permanent but temporary violation through her relations with Whitfield. In the same way, she is not a pure religious woman but Cora says: “*...she knew more about sin and salvation than the Lord God Himself*” (167). Also she contradicts herself about the concept of words; whereas she believes that abstract words such as: love, motherhood and pride are meaningless, and they indicate her rejection to her family, these words themselves connect her to her family. She accepts to be a mother, she loves Jewel and Cash and she decides to die alone “*...hiding her pride and her broken heart. Glad to go*” (23).

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Conclusion

From a simple story, Faulkner creates events that reveal the suffering of the poor white Southern farmers in facing their troubles caused by their economic hardships. Through the Marxist perspectives, it is revealed the dark side of the capitalism that values people in terms of money and wealthy. In addition, the American dream proves its failure by promoting laziness over hard working. Religion, also, is reflected as a way to oppress the poor and materialism as a belief to commodify things.

Additionally, the economic hardships affect also the familial ties and create conflict among its members. It is a conflict between wife and husband, mother and son, son and son and brother and sister. What is more, it is a conflict of a community against individuals. Therefore, escapism and paradox are two features that characterize the journey of the Bundrens to fulfil their mother's request. Moreover, it is a mental journey for Addie, from death, while she is alive with her family, to life, when she gets buried in her kin's ground in Jefferson.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

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William Faulkner is among so many writers who believe in the power of the word to bring about changes, and examine the ills and the evils of any society. Therefore, he uses his pen to uncover the suffering of the American Southerners, represented in the Bundren family, during the economic crisis of the 1920s.

This study, “*Social and Economic Escapism in a Journey of Paradoxes through William Faulkner’s As I Lay Dying*”, has investigated Faulkner’s novel by examining it from different angles in order to get knowledge of all the circumstances that produced this piece of writing, likewise, to provide interpretations to what the events of the novel are revolving around. Hence, Faulkner creates an environment, in his novel, resembles the one that characterised the American South during the stock market crash. He takes the Bundren family as a sample and subjects them to the socioeconomic hardships and to the ideologies that dominated that period. To portray the paradoxes of that era, Faulkner uses modernist techniques of narration, especially, stream of consciousness and multi-voiced narratives.

Accordingly, by taking in consideration the previous elements, this helped us to apply the appropriate theories to provide interpretations to the novel’s events and characters’ behaviour and their reactions towards their troubles and hard times. Therefore, this study uses two theories, Marxism and Freudian Psychoanalysis, to dig deeper in the novel’s socioeconomic circumstances that shaped its events and its characters’ psyche.

First, through the Marxist perspectives, it has been revealed that Marx considers the moving force behind human history is its economic systems, and people’s lives are determined by their economic conditions. In addition, he believes

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that reality is material not spiritual. That is, we are not products of divine design but creations of our own cultural and social circumstances. Moreover, achieving insight into ourselves and our society is by examining the relationships among socioeconomic classes, as well as by analysing the ideologies dictated by the dominant class which function to secure its power; ideologies like: Capitalism, religion, commodification and the American Dream.

When analysing As I Lay Dying through the Marxist perspectives, it is revealed that Faulkner, on one hand, uses the characters' physical description to stress how poor and rural folks, the Bundrens, are. Besides, he portrays them as poorly educated people and they belong to the lower class. Another aspect that demonstrates how the Bundrens are members of the proletariat is how they prepare themselves before going to town; they give great importance to their appearance, so they will not be rejected by townsfolk.

On the other hand, Faulkner renders the conflict of the classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, by focusing on the interactions between characters in the novel to reveal how the Bundrens are despised by the wealthy city dwellers. Instead of helping them, the Bundrens are chased out when they reached Mottson town because of Addie's rotting corpse. Similarly, the struggle between the two classes is shown again when Dewey Dell has sex with a city dweller and becomes pregnant. He offers her ten dollars to get an abortion. While searching to buy a drug in the town, she was tricked by a drugstore clerk and he seduces her.

These events illustrate how the proletariat often rely on the resources of the bourgeoisie to escape their hardships, even when the bourgeois themselves cause those troubles. Moreover, they take advantage, for personal gain, of the lack of resources and options of the lower class members.

Marx believes that the only way to get a classless society is when the proletariat spontaneously revolt against their oppressors. This idea is presented in the novel when Cora accepts the oppression of the town lady who nullifies the deal to buy her cakes. Cora's reaction reflects how the proletariat allow the rich to make a profit

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and oppress the lower class. However, Cora's daughter refuses the oppression and stands against the town lady's decision. Kate, then, gives hope that one day the lower class will, spontaneously, achieve their dream and bring change to the status quo.

Moreover, Marx accentuates that the ideologies work to make people accept a system that is unfavourable for them without protest or questioning. Faulkner hints at some ideologies in his novel to make people aware of wrong beliefs that imprison them and to rid the society of such deceptive ideologies. Religion is one of them and it acts as a kind of drug which keeps poor people quiet. Its purpose is to control behaviour and strip the individual of identity. Faulkner tackles this ideology from two sides; the oppression and the hypocrisy. The oppression is presented through Cora's reaction when she is told about the lady's nullification of the deal. Cora expresses her satisfaction towards the incident by considering her faith as a relief for her oppression. The Hypocrisy is expressed through the Church man Whitfield and his affairs with Addie which indicates that religious men use religion as a disguise to achieve their personal desires. Moreover, to expose the hidden side of religion, Faulkner, intentionally, creates an event in the novel in which Cash is harmed while he was repairing the Church roof. So he, deliberately, sees fit to hurt him from a religious temple, even though Cash is a pious individual.

Furthermore, Faulkner, in his novel, portrays the materialistic behaviour of people by relating it to the ideology of commodification. This latter materializes the way people perceive or evaluate things and how they build their relations with other people. In As I Lay Dying, Cash commodifies his mother's coffin and Anse his teeth. Moreover, Faulkner seeks, through his work, to make an end to the myth of the American Dream and to show its failure because it stands on wrong principles. He proves that when he makes the lazy Anse the only one to be rewarded, in the journey to bury Addie, despite the fact that the American Dream believes that working hard leads to success.

Capitalism is another ideology that causes the imbalance in society. This ideology expresses the loss of human values, because it defines everything in terms

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of its worth in money, which means you are what you own. Capitalism, as Faulkner portrays it, encourages and even forces self-development and constant motion and movement, however; the Bundrens in this society can only develop in distorted and limited ways. Throughout their journey to Jefferson, they didn't achieve any progress.

Consequently, these ideologies lead to classify people into categories; first class and second class. This classification creates people's troubles and, profoundly, affects their psychology. Through the psychoanalytical perspectives, it is revealed that all the Bundrens' hardships are caused by the socioeconomic circumstances of that time. The Bundrens are poor white farmers, who suffered from the economic crisis of the 1920s. Addie, the core of the novel, is a Jeffersonian woman; she got married to a lower class man, Anse. Failing to fulfil her desires, Anse is considered dead for her. Therefore, she seeks to distract herself from her troubles by escapism.

Basically, the conflict among the Bundrens reflects the great impact of the socioeconomic conditions on people's psyche and on the familial ties as well. These hardships prevent Addie from conforming to the new environment in the countryside. As a result, she commits adultery with a man from the upper class to fulfil her desires, and she gives birth to her favourite child. This over-love to her son creates a familial conflict among her sons. Faulkner expresses the paradox of the Oedipus complex when this latter goes out of the norms, and it was between son / son/mother instead of son/father/mother.

In addition, Addie's neglect to her children pushes them to search for care from other people. For example Dewey Dell finds in Lafe her relief, but it costs her much; he caused her pregnancy. Darl, also, failing to accept his mother's neglecting leads him to the state of insanity. Addie's confusion to understand life forces her to isolate herself from the world around her and to long for death. This is what Freud called the Death Drive, in which he expresses that life is a detour on the way to death, based on the drive to return to the inanimate state. Addie, then, escaped her life for death; she escaped her role as a mother and as a wife. Furthermore, Addie allows herself to live in paradoxes. She, herself, creates them; paradox to die alive

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and reclaim life after death when she gets buried in Jefferson and paradox to reject her husband's love but to accept the birth of her children. Unfortunately, her escapism led her to death.

Moreover, Addie's family also adapt escapism to get rid of their economic hardships. Their journey to bury their mother was not in the sake of fulfilling her request only, but it has personal reasons which express the paradox of the journey. This journey exposes the family members as united but in fact it is a dysfunctional family; no one cares about the other. Even when Addie was alive none of them worries about getting her medical attention, and when she died all of them want to fulfil her request.

Furthermore, the struggle between the socioeconomic classes grants them a feeling of low self-esteem. They perceive themselves inferior to the townsfolk, so they think that their dreams will come true in the town. But unfortunately, they didn't achieve any progress. This indicates that all the Bundrens adapt the unhealthy escapism which causes their loss; Dewey Dell is tricked, Cash is about to lose his leg and Darl is imprisoned in an asylum.

In one word, social and economic escapism that the Bundrens adapt is the result of their failure to face their socioeconomic troubles. This latter is the product of the deceptive ideologies that dominate their society. Therefore, to reduce the effect of such ideologies, one should be aware of their systems.

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APPENDICES

“AS I LAY DYING”: LITERARY ANALYSIS

Introduction

William Faulkner in his novel As I Lay Dying deals with the poor white Southerners, a group of people associated with illiteracy, laziness and brutality. He generally treats them, in his works, with sympathy, seeing in these poor whites dignity and sense of values which, at first sight, seem totally contradicting to their terrible poverty, illiteracy and cruel behaviour. An episode occurring late in this novel reveals this fact; when the wagon with its smelling corpse draws near Jefferson and is passing three Negros, one of them shocked at the evil smell and expresses his anger. Jewel fiercely curses him, but a white man who is walking in front of the Negros thinks that it is he who is being insulted, and immediately takes offence. However, Darl succeeds in conciliating the white stranger while holding Jewel back from starting another fight.

This incident, thus, is nicely illustrates a code of honour similar to the one of Southern aristocrats. Through this incident, it is obvious that there is willingness on the part of the Bundrens to apologize for a wrong done. In the same way, it must be clearly understood that they are not afraid of facing the consequences if the family honour is in risk (Bakker 57).

1- Author's Biography

William Cuthbert Faulkner was born on September 25, 1897, in New Albany, Mississippi. He changed the spelling of his last name to Faulkner. In 1918 he was refused admission into the armed forces because of his size. After that, Faulkner attended the University of Mississippi for two years as a special student, from 1919 to 1921. Then he returned to Oxford and became postmaster at the university until 1924. In the same year, he published his first book, a collection of poems entitled The Marble Faun and in 1925; he lived for a few months in New Orleans. During that short time he socialized with Sherwood Anderson. It was Anderson's wife, Elizabeth Prall, who encouraged Faulkner to abandon poetry for fiction.

“AS I LAY DYING”: LITERARY ANALYSIS

Faulkner's first three novels, Soldiers' Pay (1926), Mosquitoes (1927) and Sartoris (1929) gained little attention. However, with Sartoris the real journey of Yoknapatawpha County begins. This novel is considered the basis of huge literary output. Initially, it was a failure being rejected by numerous publishers but Faulkner did not give up his hope. The self-confidence resulted in him to give the literary world the best of his novels, The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying. For the rest of his life, Faulkner made his living as a writer of fiction and Hollywood screenplays. His most accomplished works during the 1930s and 1940s include Light in August, Absalom, Absalom! The Hamlet and Go Down, Moses. In 1949, Faulkner received the Nobel Prize for Literature and in 1954 the Pulitzer Prize for his novel The Fable. During the last ten years of his life, he travelled, lectured and became an outspoken critic of segregation. From 1957 until his death, he was writer-in-residence at the University of Virginia, near his daughter Jill and her children. In 1962, after years of drinking and a succession of physical problems, he died of a heart attack on July 6 in Oxford.

2-Plot Summary

As I Lay Dying chronicles the dark, comic story of a Mississippi family's long and arduous journey to bury Addie, the family matriarch, in her family's burial ground in Jefferson. When the novel begins, Addie is on her deathbed watching Cash through the window building her coffin. After her death, Addie is kept in the coffin for three days before Darl and Jewel return home with the wagon. On the first day, the family wakes to find that Vardaman has bored the top of the coffin full of holes, two of which bored straight through Addie's face. By the time the family finally gets the coffin on the wagon, and the journey begins. Many incidents occur which seemingly frustrate the progress of the journey; the coffin is overturned while the family is crossing a river and nearly gets washed away. As a result, Cash injures his leg and later on they apply fresh cement on his broken leg. The mules are lost and the body begins to decompose. Followed by buzzards and accompanied by a terrible odour, the family is chased out of towns. After the disastrous river crossing,

“AS I LAY DYING”: LITERARY ANALYSIS

the Bundrens spend the night at Armstid’s farm. In the morning, Anse rides off on Jewel’s horse to purchase a team of mules.

The narrative action pauses as Addie narrates a section in the novel. She describes her youth, her miserable life as a schoolteacher and her decision to marry Anse. Unfortunately, her marriage is an unhappy one. After giving birth to Cash, she suffered from depression, and after giving birth to her second son, Darl, she makes Anse promise to bury her in Jefferson when she dies. Her revenge, she says, would be that Anse would never know that she was taking revenge. Addie also reveals her secret affair with Reverend Whitfield, a union that produced Addie’s favourite child, Jewel.

After eight days in the stifling heat, Addie’s body is endangering the public health. Jewel, who disappeared after Anse traded his horse, reappears and rejoins the family. They spend the last night of their journey on a farm belonging to Mr. Gillespie. During the night, Darl sets fire to the barn and Jewel’s back is burned rescuing the coffin from the flames. When Gillespie discovers that it was Darl who set the fire, he threatens to sue unless Darl is committed to the mental institution in Jackson.

As they arrive in Jefferson the next day, Anse borrows a couple of spades on the way to the cemetery from a local woman, and finally, after nine days of Addie’s death, Anse lays his wife to rest in her family plot. As they leave the cemetery, Darl is jumped by Dewey Dell and Jewel and handed over to the men waiting to take him to the mental institution in Jackson. When Cash finally gets to the doctor, Peabody cannot believe that Anse treated his son’s broken leg with raw cement. Shocked at the damage they have done to him, the doctor wonders why Anse simply didn’t bring Cash to the nearest sawmill and stick his leg in the saw. Meanwhile, Dewey Dell finds another drugstore. After requesting something that will terminate her pregnancy, she is given a box of useless capsules by the drugstore clerk and he tricks her into exchange sexual services. The next morning, Anse disappears only to reappear with a new set of teeth and a new Mrs Bundren, a local woman who loaned him the tools to bury Addie.

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3-Summary Analysis

Fundamentally, the action of As I Lay Dying is simple; Addie Bundren, a Mississippi farm wife, dies and her husband and her five children overcome flood and fire in their attempt to fulfil her request to be buried in her kin's town, Jefferson, forty miles away. Moreover, their task is complicated by washed out bridges, the loss of their mules in the flood river, the stinking corpse and the fire set by Darl.

Although the Bundrens finally succeed in their mission, its costs are horrible and only Anse, the husband, actually triumphs. The eldest son, Cash, almost loses his leg. Darl, the second son, is committed to state insane asylum for having set the fire in Gillespie's barn. Jewel, third son, loses his horse in a trade for a new span of mules and suffers severe burns in the barn fire. Similarly, the only daughter, Dewey Dell, is prevented and tricked in her effort to buy an abortion drug. What is more, her father steals the ten dollars her faithless lover, Lafe, had given her to buy the abortion drug. From another hand, the little Vardaman ends by grieving not only for Addie but also for Darl, because this latter communicates only with Vardaman. In addition, the youngest son fails to understand the mysteries of death “my mother is a fish” (Faulkner 84), and madness “Darl went to Jackson. Lots of people didn't go to Jackson. Darl is my brother. My brother is going to Jackson” (250). Anse, however, is rewarded with a new set of teeth as it is narrated by Jewel: “He got them teeth” (260), and a new Mrs Bundren as well, and the others get to share a sack of bananas. Consequently, the reader is left to decide whether this signifies celebration of heroism, an affirmation of life, an absurd dilemma and an insulting irony of fate or some combination of the four;

As I Lay Dying depicts a world in flux, in which earth is fluid and water opaque, sanity and insanity are barely distinguishable, existence is a function of other people's consciousness, and death is as much a psychological as a physical phenomenon. No reality is stable and no one is quite able to keep up with the flow of reality. The inhabitants of this world are frequently telepathic, but

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still profoundly mysterious to each other and often enigmatic to the reader as well. Mystery, indeterminacy, and uncertainty pervade every aspect of the novel: structure, action, setting, themes, discourse, characters...Together, Addie and Anse maintain the balance between tragedy and comedy, with Addie serving as the tragic and Anse as the comic focus of uncertainty with the world of the novel. (Yamaguchi 117)

4-Characters

Addie Bundren: is the family matriarch; she is Anse's wife and the mother of the Bundren children. The action of the novel revolves around transporting her body to her family's burial ground. As a young woman, Addie was a schoolteacher in Jefferson. To escape this life, she married Anse, a local farmer. She was happy when she gave birth to her eldest son Cash; but with her next child, Darl, she began to resent her situation. Years into her marriage, she had a passionate affair with the Reverend Whitfield. During the affair, she became pregnant with Jewel, her favourite child. She had two more children, Dewey Dell and Vardaman. Considering them as products of an unhappy time, she does not feel affection for them.

Anse Bundren: is the patriarch of the Bundren family. A selfish and lazy man, he claims sweat will kill him, and therefore refuses to work. When the mules drown in the flooded river, Anse steals Cash's money and barters away Jewel's beloved horse to obtain new team of mules. While in Jefferson, he takes Dewey Dell's money, buys false teeth and secretly woos a local woman. He ends the novel with his new teeth and introducing his new wife to his children.

Cash Bundren: the oldest son of Anse and Addie, Cash is a carpenter of extraordinary precision and skill. As his mother is dying, he carefully builds her coffin, and when the Bundrens try to cross the flooded river, Cash is knocked out of the wagon and suffers a severely broken leg. While in Jefferson, Cash is torn by the decision to commit Darl to an insane asylum. On one hand, he feels empathy for his

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brother; on the other hand, he recognizes that a man cannot simply burn down another man's hard-earned property. He eventually agrees with the decision to commit him.

Darl Bundren: the second of the Bundren children, Darl is a veteran of World War I. He narrates more sections of the book than any other character. He is profoundly jealous of Addie's obvious preference for Jewel, and throughout the book, he scrutinizes and often goads his brother. He even connives to separate Jewel from Addie when she is dying by volunteering both himself and Jewel to haul lumber. While on this trip, a wagon wheel breaks. As Jewel tries to fix the wheel, Darl narrates his mother's death for the reader and informs Jewel of her death. This form of “second sight,” or telepathy, also manifests itself in his knowledge of Dewey Dell's pregnancy. Darl participates in the journey to Jefferson, but he is never committed to it. Embarrassed by his family and the experience of dragging his mother's corpse all over the county, he burns down Gillespie's barn with Addie's coffin inside. For this act, he is committed to the insane asylum in Jackson. He ends the novel on a train, laughing and talking about himself in the third person.

Dewey Dell Bundren: seventeen years old, she is the only daughter of the Bundren family. Like Darl and Vardaman, she feels rejected by her mother, Addie. Because Darl knows about her pregnancy, she resents and fears him. She desperately wants to go to Jefferson so she can obtain medicine that will illegally abort the pregnancy. To make matters worse, a sleazy drugstore clerk, Skeet Macgowan, gives her worthless pills filled with talcum powder. He then seduces her. After Addie's burial, Dewey Dell is strongly in favour of committing Darl to the mental institution.

Jewel: is in his late teens, is Addie's third son and her favourite child. The product of her affair with Reverend Whitfield, Jewel does not know his true paternity. After a lifetime of being his mother's favourite, he loves her fiercely and feels a strong devotion to her. He loses his horse on the third day of the journey when Anse trades it for a new team of mules. Giving up his horse is one indication that Jewel is the

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family member most committed to fulfilling Addie’s wish to be buried in Jefferson. In addition to this sacrifice, he helps retrieve his mother’s coffin when it gets thrown from the wagon during the river crossing. He also saves the coffin from Gillespie’s burning barn, suffering many burns as a result. Like Dewey Dell, he is in favour of committing Darl to the mental institution.

Vardaman Bundren: is the youngest Bundren child. He cannot fully comprehend the reality of his mother’s death. He believes that Addie is not dead but has mutated into a fish. He bores holes in her coffin to give her air, mutilating her face. At the end of novel, he sees his brother set fire to Gillespie’s barn, which disappoints him. Vardamm struggles to understand Darl’s insanity and feels the loss when his brother is taken away to the mental institution in Jackson.

Armstid: is a local farmer who provides shelter for the Bundren family after their disastrous river crossing.

Gillespie: is a farmer who allows the Bundrens to stay on his farm during their journey. Darl burns down his barn to destroy Addie’s coffin and end the humiliating journey.

Skeet Macgowan: is a drugstore clerk in Jefferson. He cons Dewey Dell, giving her fake abortion pills and he seduces her in the cellar of the store.

Moseley: is a drugstore owner in Mottson; a religious man. He refuses to sell abortion drugs to Dewey Dell and condemns her for trying to purchase them.

Dr. Peabody: is the local doctor, he tends to Addie on her deathbed. His help is limited, however, because Anse sends for him too late. He comments on the family’s behaviour from an objective perspective.

Cora Tull: is Vernon Tull’s wife. She narrates many of the early chapters in the book, offering her perspective on the Bundrens. Throughout the chapters she narrates, her judgments are almost always self-serving and wrong, often comically so.

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Vernon Tull: is the farmer who lives closest to the Bundrens. A thrifty, hardworking man, he is very successful as a farmer. He helps Cash build the coffin, tries to guide the family across the flooded river, and retrieves Cash's tools from the water. He feels especially drawn to Vardaman, and his interest in the boy may result from his own lack of a son.

Reverend Whitfield: a local preacher, Reverend Whitfield had an affair with Addie in their youth; in fact, he is Jewel's father. He has never admitted the affair to anyone. He visits Addie on the night she dies, supposedly to reveal the affair to the Bundren family. When Addie dies, he believes that he has been absolved of his sin by God and remains silent.

5-Themes

a) Alienation and Loneliness

Faulkner's use of multiple narrators underscores one of his primary themes; every character is essentially isolated from the others. Moreover, the characters in the novel do not communicate effectively with one another and none of the characters adequately express their dilemmas or desires to others. Darl is the only one who knows about Addie's and Dewey Dell's secrets through intuition. The other characters can only guess at the motivations, beliefs and feelings of others. As a result of their communication problems, members of the Bundren family live alienated from each other, whether wilfully, like Addie and Jewel, unknowingly like Anse, Cash, Dewey Dell and Vardaman or painfully like Darl

b) Death

In a novel that features a disastrous journey to bury a decomposing corpse, one would expect death to be a central concern. Moreover, Vardaman's chapters revolve primarily around defining the nature of death, and his confusion proves both moving and unsettling. The theme of death also takes other forms in the novel. Through Addie's narrative, Faulkner investigates the possibility of living in a deadened state. On the one hand, Faulkner has

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her “speak” from the dead. On the other hand, however, is Addie’s thwarted desire to live life; the antithesis of her desire is Anse, who, to Addie, is dead.

c) Identity

Questions about the nature and strength of self-identity recur throughout the novel. Some characters, like Anse, Cash, Jewel and the Tulls, possess a defined sense of self. Yet it is through the characters of Darl and Vardaman that Faulkner explores the fragile nature of identity. Vardaman almost compulsively defines his relationships with others, repeating “*Darl is my brother*” (Faulkner 101) and “*My mother is a fish*” (84). Through these repetitions, Faulkner articulates the development of identity as Vardaman relates to others. For Darl, the process will never reach completion. The absence of his mother’s love leads Darl to isolation not only from others but also from himself. He expresses the differences between himself and Jewel when he says, “*I don’t know what I am. I don’t know if I am or not. Jewel knows he is, because he does not know that he does not know whether he is or not*” (Faulkner 80) . In such passages, Darl’s insights prove both compelling and disturbing since it calls into question the very essence of human consciousness.

d) Language and Meaning

One of Faulkner’s central themes in the novel is the limitation of language. From the inability of the characters to communicate with one another, to Addie’s singular distrust of words, to the unlikely vocabulary the characters employ in their narration, Faulkner explores the inadequacy of language to express thought and emotion. However, for Addie, words cannot express human experience because they are so distant from human experience. Only action matters for her.

e) Love and Passion

Love and passion are major themes of the novel. The relationships and destinies of the characters rely heavily on love and intense emotions. In particular, Addie is defined by passion. Her affair with Whitfield results from genuine feeling and the rejection of her husband and three of her children is

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equally intense. Her commitment to Cash and Jewel is fierce and loving. This love helps them to nurture a strong self-identity, which Darl, Dewey Dell and Vardaman often lack.

f) **Sanity and Insanity**

By chronicling both the Bundrens' journey and Darl's descent into madness, Faulkner explores the themes of sanity and insanity. The fact that the Bundrens would undertake such an arduous journey strikes both the reader and other characters as deranged folly. For most of the Bundrens, however, the trip is perfectly sensible considering their ultimate goals: Anse's new teeth, Dewey Dell's abortion, and Jewel's loyalty to his beloved mother. They may be selfish and blind to social convention, but their desires are understandable, even if they seem misplaced in the current context. Darl exhibits signs of telepathy, and when he burns Gillespie's barn he is eventually committed to an insane asylum, and ends his final narration in a rant. Yet Darl is reacting to circumstances beyond his control. He cannot help feeling the lack of his mother's love, nor can he contain his hypersensitivity to the world.

6-Setting

As I Lay Dying takes place in the northern part of Mississippi in 1929. The Bundrens must travel forty miles to bury Addie in Jefferson, the primary town in Faulkner's fictional Yoknapatawpha, Lafayette County. The Bundrens live in a time of economic hardship for cotton farmers, who have had to suffer through a depressed cotton market and disastrously heavy rains.

7-Point of View

As I Lay Dying consists of fifty nine chapters which are narrated by fifteen different characters. Darl is the most frequent voice, narrating nineteen chapters. Some characters, like Addie Bundren, Jewel Bundren and various townspeople, narrate only one chapter. At times, Faulkner extends beyond the realm of credible

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narration, such as when Darl narrates Addie's death when he is not present and when the deceased Addie recollects her life.

8-Symbols and Motifs

Animals

Animals are most used symbols in *As I Lay Dying*. Immediately after the death of Addie, her youngest son, Verdaman, compares her dead mother with the fish he has caught. Here the fish is the symbol of Addie for Verdaman. In addition, the cow which is swollen with milk is a symbol of Dewey Dell. She is taking the unwanted burden of pregnancy. In the same way, for Darl, Jewel's horse is his mother. He finds the replica of Addie in the horse of Jewel and Jewel's love to his mother is presented through his love to the horse. Moreover, the riding of Jewel on the horse stands for the freedom he has acquired from the Bundren Family. Furthermore, the bond between Jewel and the horse implicitly depicts his nature and attitude towards his mother Addie. Jewel is a product of illicit relationship of Addie with the preacher, Whitfield, and he is characterized by violence as he is the result of Addie's violence of marital life; she sought this form of violence so as to feel alive. Jewel's monologue is rich in violent imagery. Whenever he walks around the house he walks fiercely in a rage and people are afraid of him. To show his love to mother he acts violently; it is he who saves his mother's coffin from the flood and from the fire. He cannot show his emotions of love in a proper manner except in a violent way. In this regard, the horse symbolizes the relationship of Jewel with mother and his own violent nature.

The coffin

The coffin of Addie Bundren symbolically refers to the unnecessary burden of the family and at the same moment the dysfunctional family members. The coffin is made with great craft and care by Cash, but the moment Addie is placed in it, the burden of the family to take her to Jefferson for the burial starts. The last wish of Addie is too irrational in the context of the poor Bundrens since it was obvious to Addie that for them it is costly to travel up to Jefferson. Moreover, the imbalanced

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coffin in the river stands for the imbalance life of the Bundrens. No one in the family is mentally and emotionally balanced; Cash gets his leg fractured when he goes to rescue the coffin from the flood, Anse accompanies the coffin to Jefferson because he has a selfish motive to go there so that he can buy false teeth for him. As a result, the coffin becomes the gathering point for all of the family's dysfunction, and putting the coffin to rest is also crucial to the family's ability to return to some sort of normalcy in life and in mental state.

Tools

Cash's tools are a metaphor for his desire to fix and make things right. Throughout the novel, Cash does not reveal much about his inner life, but he is a man of action, and consistently displays the virtues of charity and mindfulness for others. He tirelessly works to finish Addie's coffin before her death in an apparent effort. When the log interrupts the Bundrens' river-crossing, Cash's tools are lost in the chaos, setting the family into frenzy, as even they know how important they are to him. Cash does not express his own needs, never complaining once about his broken leg; however, he does fixate on things like the coffin's lack of balance, wishing for the entire journey that he could fix it.

ملخص

تعالج هذه الدراسة فكرة الفرار من واقع اقتصادي واجتماعي مزدوج تميزه خوض شخصيات الرواية قيد الدراسة " بينما ارقد في حضرة الموت " " As I Lay Dying " لكاتبها ولIAM فولكنر Faulkner - رحلة مفارقات . و تعد هذه الرواية من أهم ما كتب خلال فترة الكساد العظيم Great Depression حين تفردت بتجسيد جماليات الأدب الحدائي من تقنيات كتابة مثل: تيار الوعي المستمر . Multiple narratives Stream of consciousness . وتأصل الرواية و توثق لمعاناة العديد من الامريكيين في صورة عائلة باندren Bundren الذين شدوا الرحال في رحلة الموت من أجل استعادة المعنى المفقود للحياة في زمن المحن الاقتصادية والاجتماعية . ويشكل فرار الفقراء - من أصحاب البشرة البيضاء في الجنوب الأمريكي من واقعهم المريض . يشكل مفارقات الكساد الاقتصادي . وعلى هذا الاساس فإن الدراسة تعكف الى ابراز مدى تأثير الصعوبات الاقتصادية والاجتماعية على نفسية انسان تلك الحقبة . وبالتالي فإن الدراسة استعانت بعدها نظريات من أجل إماتة اللثام عن المفارقات التي تحملها الرواية . وتشكل النظرية الماركسية ونظرية التحليل النفسي لفرويد حجر الزاوية في هذه الدراسة حين تسهم في تقديم تأويلات لطريقة تفكير الأفراد وسلوكهم تجاه بعضهم البعض في مجتمع تحكمه المبادئ المادية . وخلصت الدراسة الى نتيجة مفادها ان السلوك النفسي للفرد يعتمد الى مدى بعيد على الظروف الاقتصادية والاجتماعية التي تحدد مصير وقدر الفقراء .