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ALIENS IN *LIGHT IN AUGUST*[*]

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Abstract

Alienation is a feeling of not harmoniously blending in. This feeling can manifest itself in various sorts such as physical, psychological, economical, mental, social, religious, political or spiritual. Even though the term 'alienation' is not widely used in American literature, it is an issue that manifested itself quite frequently and vigorously in the literary works of several writers of the twentieth century. Among various contemporary authors to grapple with this issue of alienation, William Faulkner's vivid accounts of twentieth century man's quest for self in his literary works reveal the reader the morbid facets of the sense of being alienated. This paper tries to find out the traces of alienation in several characters and delve into the roots of their isolation in Faulkner's *Light in August*.

Key Words: alienation, self-alienation, social alienation, estrangement, outsider.

LIGHT IN AUGUST'DAKİ YABANCILAR

Özet

Yabancılaşma bir uyumlu olarak karışmama duygusudur. Bu duygu kendisini fiziksel, psikolojik, ekonomik, zihinsel, sosyal, dini, siyasi ya da manevi gibi farklı şekillerde açığa çıkarabilir. 'Yabancılaşma' terimi Amerikan edebiyatında yaygın bir şekilde kullanılan bir terim olmasa bile, kendisini bir çok yirminci yüzyıl yazarlarının eserlerinde oldukça sık ve aktif bir şekilde gösteren bir sorundur. Yabancılaşma sorununu kıskacına alan çağdaş yazarlar arasında, William Faulkner'ın eserlerindeki yirminci yüzyıl insanının kendini arayışını tasvir eden etkili beyanları yabancılaşmış olma duygusunun korkunç yönlerini okuyucunun gözleri önüne sermektedir. Bu yazı Faulkner'ın *Light in August* eserinde bulunan muhtelif kişilerdeki yabancılaşma izlerini ortaya çıkarmak ve soyutlanmalarının esas nedenlerini araştırmaya çalışmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: yabancılaşma, kendini-yabancılaştırma, sosyal yabancılaşma, uzaklaşma, yabancı.

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Editörlük

1. INTRODUCTION

William Faulkner (1897-1962), one of the distinguishing authors of American modernism, has managed to secure more literary response than any other American writer, and this literary response has immensely changed since the 1980s. Faulkner's writing depicts the American South, enlarging upon issues such as racial, class, gender conflicts, while most interestingly suggesting that the major problems ultimately spring from the individual's inner conflicts. He can also discover all the beauty and innocence within the human soul that we can find in life. Alfred Kazin, in his article entitled "William Faulkner and Religion: Determinism, Compassion, and the God of Defeat," nicely captures the major issues that Faulkner covers in his literary works:

> "*William Faulkner is the greatest writer the South has produced. In twentieth-century American fiction, in capturing the rich variety and disorder of American life, no one else has come anywhere close to the depths of intensity and comprehensiveness of Faulkner's imagination. But if ever an American writer took on a subject filled to overflowing with war, violence, pain, cruelty, exclusion, servitude, impoverishment, racial pride, hatred and resentment of the rest of the country, defeat, deceit, and delusions of everlasting power over others, it was Faulkner*" (Kazin, 2006, p.2).

The notion of alienation is not a recent phenomenon in social and political conjecture. G.W.F. Hegel and Karl Marx had widely discussed it more than a hundred years ago, but, lately, several sociologists and psychologists such as Erich Fromm, Melvin Seeman, and Karen Horney have started to consider alienation as a leading, if not prevailing, element in modern community. It is an extremely emphatic emotion. Its regular and widespread use by several literary authors has to do with the major events that have taken place in the twentieth century. It is probable that William Faulkner experiences the terrors of World War I and World War II that forces changes not only in political design and power liaisons, but also in domestic, communal, psychological, and ethical values. The two major World Wars have exposed a pressing threat to the safety and prosperity of human lives. Although people were not involved directly and, probably hundreds or thousands of miles away from conflicts, they had to confront with the adverse effects and horrible outcomes that these conflicts brought in the form of insecurity, demise, death, distress, withdrawal, isolation and loneliness. William H. Rueckert attests to the isolation and detachment of the modern man and further adds that:

> "*One of the most powerful motives operative all through the twentieth century from World War I on, and with ever-increasing force as one gets further into the century, is this very motive of withdrawal into the private self, of flight from society and ongoing history, from the outrages, nausea, and extreme revulsion at so much human destruction*" (Rueckert, 2004, p.201).

Parallel with several authors like Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Sherwood Anderson who have endured those adverse effects of these major conflicts on the ethical, communal, political, and spiritual values of mankind, Faulkner had witnessed all of the agony and pain that wars have accompanied and this experience, sequentially, has affected his sense of modern life. Alienation is, briefly, one of the atrocious outcomes that wars have added into the lives of individuals. In a world where meaningful relationships are measured by happiness and contentment, the sense of alienation has turned out to be man's most formidable fear. The idea of losing everybody and everything one has strived extremely hard to acquire is enough to make a person to rise from a nightmare soaked in sweat. On the other hands, the solitary individual may prefer to be alienated due to its consolatory effects of harmony and tranquility. Twentieth-century social psychologist and sociologist Erich Fromm, who was accredited with publicizing and spreading the use of the term 'alienation' in the United States, describes the self-alienated person in his book *The Sane Society*, and states that "He has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts - but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys"(Fromm, 1990, p.120).

Many would identify alienation generally with the twentieth century and beyond, and, in fact, the Modernist Movement, dated approximately from 1890 to 1950, has included this phenomenon as one of the principal themes. The individual and society are in complete disagreement due to their growing dependence on science and technology in modern era, and the steady departure of the people from countryside into urban detachment and isolation. Ephraim Mizruchi contends that "*alienation has for a long time been a dominant idea in the writings of nineteenth and twentieth century men*"(Mizruchi, 1973, p.111). Modernism explores how our relationships with each other and with social institutions such as church, school, work, and family have grown weaker, leading us to be increasingly individualistic in our thinking and thus, rendering us alienated and estranged.

With particular reference to American literature, Blanche Gelfant, in her article entitled "The Imagery of Estrangement: Alienation in Modern American Fiction", states that "*alienation is the inextricable theme of modern American fiction*" (Gelfant, 1973, p.295). Many literary characters feel painfully alienated from the social institutions that surround them. Some, like Jake Barnes in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, feel alienated from their own communities. Others, like Joe Christmas in William Faulkner's *Light in August*, feel alienated from their closer connections, including family members and loved ones. On the other hand, Marcus Klein contends that "*the word 'alienation' means, should mean …. or does refer to that dissident outsideness which is simply the constant and the most conspicuous tradition in American literature*"(Klein, 1970, p.16). Probably the most intense mode of alienation exists with literary characters such as Meursault in Albert Camus's *The Stranger*, who feel estranged and alienated

from everything with which they gets in touch with: their family, their community, and the entire modern life. Frederick A. Weiss, in his article entitled "Self-Alienation: Dynamic and Therapy," stated that the alienated individual if often "*a good observer of himself. Together with the therapist, he looks at himself as though he were a third person in the empty chair*"(Weis, 1962, p.466). He appears not to care about anything, not wish for anything, especially anything that he could commit himself into. Experiences are detached from emotions, and emotions do not rise to consciousness. Incidents befall on him as they befall on Camus's Meursault: the demise of his mother, the romantic love of a woman, the struggle, and the killing. He keeps on repeating, "*It's all the same to me.*"(Camus, 1989, p.120). No emotion, no pleasure, no desire, no love, no annoyance, no melancholy, no succession of time and life, and no self are experienced in the end.

This article will concentrate on the individual, particularly in William Faulkner's novel *Light in August*. My concern with such an issue comes as an effect of realizing the fact that it is certainly a primary subject in his literary works. Fairly often his character's quest for identity plainly or obliquely portrays a theme in itself. Moreover, the individual, due to various reasons, stays detached, alienated or separated, a feature which, against all anticipations, eventually renders him quite unique and distinctive. Therefore, his alienation is not merely a denouncement, but it also serves as a way of self-denouncement. At this point, it is essential to stress the significance of the theme again and start doing proper analysis.

2. ALIENATION

The term "alienation" is a vague one, generally indicating several specters of meaning both denotative and connotative varying from the positive to negative, which might be as wide as they are incoherent. Even though the notion of alienation is used in various areas like psychology, sociology, psychiatry, theology and literature, "it is possible," David Oken states, "*to derive a useful working definition… that alienation represents a sense of estrangement from other human beings, from society and its values, and from the self*"(Oken, 1973, p.84). In addition, Frank Johnson points out that:

> *"… alienation may refer to objective social conditions or just as readily be employed to describe two rather different subjective states, the first being states of self-alienation inferred to the present by outside observers. Second, by contrast, it may also refer to subjective states of alienation not detectable to outsiders, but felt by the person himself"* (Johnson, 1973, p.36).

It is also favorable to keep in mind that *"in other scholarly fields and in general currency, alienation is customarily reserved to characterize states in which*

the particular estrangement exists as a major element, whether or not associated with clinical disorders"(Oken, 1973, p.36).

The alienation concept transmits the individual the sense of estrangement, detachment and integration with or disintegration from the physical environment. The term is a derivative of the verb "to alienate," which means: "*a withdrawing or a separation of a person or his affections from an object or position of former attachment*"(Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 2008). On the other hand, in *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, "to alienate" means: "(1) to do something that makes someone unfriendly or unwilling to support you, (2) to make it difficult for someone to belong to a particular group or to feel comfortable with a particular person"(Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2009). Thus, alienation is a condition in which an individual or an object is detached or isolated from his or its own environment.

3. TYPES OF ALIENATION

Psychoanalyst Frederick A. Weiss asserts that it "*has social and individual aspects which can be found in the two original meanings of the term*"(Weiss, 1962, p.464). Social alienation stresses the social aspects that cause isolation and withdrawal from others and from the surroundings. A socially alienated individual stays outside the conventional life of his community. He is removed from the communal life. Community does not want to consider him as its organic member. Furthermore, he also distances himself from any meaningful relationships with his peers whom he considers as outsiders. He has no intention to participate and to emotionally engage in the usual course of life which, in his opinion, is the cause of all his problems. Social alienation is a spectacle that can befall upon any one of us at certain point in the course of our lives. It is not a contagious malady and is completely treatable. Social alienation is hard to pinpoint, even within ourselves, since it is usually followed by mental breakdown. Generally it is difficult to determine which happens first: social alienation or depression? Social alienation might cause depression or vice versa.

Self-alienation stresses the individual aspect –i.e., detachment from the self. A self-alienated individual completely is estranged from his actual self. He is quite an alien to himself and also regards his fellow humans as alien. According to psychiatrist Paul Schilder, the detached individual observes his own personal conduct as if he is just an onlooker. His "*central ego does not live in his present and previous experiences. The self appears with without soul*" (Schilder, 1999, p.138). On the other hand, psychoanalyst Karen Horney asserts that individual's alienation reveals itself in "*the remoteness of the neurotic from his own feelings, wishes, beliefs and energies. It is a loss of the feeling of being an active, determining force in his own life. It is a loss of feeling himself as an organic whole … an alienation from the real self*"(Horney, 1991, p.157). Horney suggests that that individual possesses two selves, the Ideal or Actual-self and the Real-self. The Actual-self is an umbrella term covering everything that an individual experiences

at an appointed time, whereas the Real-self is the 'original' stimulus towards individual development and gratification, with which we might again obtain complete identification when delivered from the injurious chains of neurosis. When man is estranged from Real-self, he is also estranged from the inner source of energy which is the focus of his personal growth. Self-alienation emerges when there is a breach between his idealized statue and his real-self. Another feature, which is generally considered as specific to self-alienation, is an insensitivity to emotional experience, and skepticism regarding what one is, what one adores, abhors, wishes, aspires, fears, dislikes and truly believes. Thus his connection to himself assumes an impersonal status after losing his individuality. Self-competence and privacy will be all that he will require.

4. ALIENATION IN *LIGHT IN AUGUST*

Light in August portrays Faulkner's own anxious encounter with the profound racial prejudices of the South, and the book depicts both individual and societal experience, frantic and unreasonable brutality, crude malice, and reclaimed hope. A grasp of the complicated psychology of *Light in August* requires a diligent reading of Faulkner's female characters, especially their synergy with and alienation from the male characters of the novel and the society in general. In an interview at a seminar in Japan in 1955, Faulkner addressed his portrayal of female characters:

> "*the women that have been unpleasant characters in my books were not created to be unpleasant characters, let alone unpleasant women. They were used as implements, instruments, to tell a story…which I hope showed that injustice must exist and you can't just accept it, you've got to do something about it*" (Meriwether & Millgate, 1968, p.125).

As *Light in August* discovers the anatomy of racial and sexual brutality, Faulkner designates the dubious image of the female activist as a 'tool' to frustrate the well-known hypocrisy of Southern justice. However, as a criticism/rejection of Southern womanhood, the figure of the enthusiastic and candid woman is an intensely fascinating and questionable choice. To challenge the traditions of Southern racial impartiality through a liberal female character, who is at the same time a sexual variant, confuses Faulkner's statement as he must also involve and corrupt the very basis of the Southern patriarchy: feminine ethical dignity, sexual submission, and vulnerability to masculine authority. An examination of Joanna Burden as one of Faulkner's symbolical literary 'instrument[s]' within the framework of historical records of women's activism in the South presents a fresh and satisfactory reading of her part in *Light in August*, and of the methods in which Faulkner included her character not only to 'tell a story,' but to influence both Joe Christmas' dramatic lynching and the greater issue of unfair racial brutality in the South.

The major character of the novel, Joe Christmas prevails as one of the book's most mysterious characters. A man with a temper, he is a gloomy image who strolls over borderlines, wandering neither freely nor comfortably in both the black and white worlds. For Robert Rudnicki, Joe Christmas is "*Faulkner's most bewildered fugito*"; for Joel Williamson, he is "*the ultimate in displaced persons*" (Rudnicki, 1999, p.5; Williamson, 1995, p.423). Joe's isolated style of life, his alienated actions and conducts, his indifferent attitude toward family and affection all adequately demonstrate the sense of alienation in his portrayal. Joe's alienation can be assigned to three major reasons: racial prejudice, religion, and women's impacts upon him. Joe feels alienated by birth because he will have no opportunity to exactly discover and realize his true nature, his own being on many significant levels. Thanks to Eupheus Hines, Joe will never come to know about his father or his mother and, therefore, will continue to be ignorant of his place of origin, his family title, and his real ethnicity – three matters which usually helps to designate one's position in Southern society. Additionally, if Joe, in fact, does possess black heritage, he will even be further distanced from himself as an offspring of people dismissed from their native lands and deprived of their cultural identities even down to their very names.

The seeds of Joe's self-alienation are also inseminated in the orphanage when the other children and the dietician first address him as 'nigger,' though his skin is 'parchment color' and his hair apparently not curly. Mr. Hines presents a detail of young Joe's experience with a black employee during which Joe is evidently struggling to find out how the racial 'category' of 'nigger' could possibly be applied to both of them. Joe asks, *"'How come you are a nigger?'" and the nigger said 'Who told you I am a nigger, you little white trash bastard?' and [Joe] says 'I aint a nigger' and the nigger says 'You are worse than that. You don't know what you are. And more than that, you wont never know. You'll live and you'll die and you wont never know'"* (Faulkner, 2002, p.384). This dialogue shows Joe's incapacity to recognize his own being and his own immanence, apart from the other-dictated indicator of 'nigger.'

Joe's alienated youth reaches its climax with the vital relationship he has with the waitress Bobbie who, firstly unknown to Joe, is also a prostitute and this aspect of her life is only revealed to her Joe when he sees her with another man. After being provided his first look of the town, Joe starts to slip out of the house at night to foster a relationship with Bobbie. However, their first sexual intercourse, much awaited by Joe, is spoiled when Bobbie tells that she cannot perform due to her feminine period. Joe strikes her and runs to the nearby woods. His revulsion over Bobbie's usual feminine aspect reflects, in a very metaphorical way, the same revulsion and alienation he experienced over the toothpaste event. It was when Joe accidentally witnessed the sexual encounter between the dietician and the doctor and this very incident fueled the dietician's racial attitudes, blended with her fear of being exposed, to alert the matron about young Joe's biracial background and to speed up his removal from the orphanage. After Joe

overcomes this repulsive feeling and restores his relationship with Bobbie, he, in what might be called an intentional act of self-treason, confesses to her that he has 'some nigger blood' in him. Bobbie, considering Joe solely a 'foreigner,' responds to him that she does not accept it and keeps on seeing him, possibly charmed by the money and different presents he gives to her, which she regards as payment for her services. But after seeing Bobbie with another man, "*he knew then what even yet he had not believed*"(Faulkner, 2002, p.198). The narrator states, "*Then he found that he was crying. He had not cried since he could remember. He cried, cursing her, striking her*"(Faulkner, 2002, p.198). These incidents prepared the conditions for the alienated path Joe Christmas would take forever and change the way how he approaches himself, approaches women, and, finally, approaches the world. After letting Bobbie back into his life with a realization of her new 'role' in it, "*two weeks later he had begun to smoke …and he drank too." He started to "cock his hat as they [the other men] did …and spoke of the waitress to the others, even in her presence, in his loud, drunken, despairing young voice, calling her his whore*"(Faulkner, 2002, p.199). It is only after he lands the deadly blow on McEachern that he realizes that Bobbie does not have any genuine feelings for him and refuses to run away with him. He is again left alone and completely deserted by everyone.

It is in this alienated condition that Joe came to Jefferson to be employed in the white world, appearing more contented now with his completely alienated relationships. Functioning as 'the stranger,' Joe did not intend to engage in any sort of conversation with his fellow workmates (neither did they with him except Byron Bunch). Author Marjorie Kimball McCorquodale, in her book called *William Faulkner and Existentialism*, states out,

> "*He [Joe] still had nothing to say to anyone, even after six months. No one knew what he did between mill hours. Now and then one of his fellow workers would pass him on the square down town after supper, and it would be as though Christmas had never seen the other before… No one knew where he lived, slept at night… None of them knew then where Christmas lived and what he was actually doing behind the veil, the screen, of his Negro's job at the mill*" (McCorquodale, 1956, p.31).

Joe refuses Byron's act of kindness and remains even isolated and malignant towards his potential roommate and potential friend, Lucas Burch. It is pretty appealing to state that Joe's alienation which Lucas prefers to call "the work of a nigger slave" at the planning mill might be what pushes Joe into the bootlegging business. This could be interpreted as Joe's attempt, however defective, to "see himself in a world he made," contrary to never quite engaging himself in a world prepared for him by others (Faulkner, 2002, p.295). Even the narrator states that Joe "could almost believe that it was not to make money that

he sold the whiskey but because he was doomed to conceal always something from the women who surrounded him"(Faulkner, 2002, p.262).

Furthermore Joe's relationship with the spinster Joanna Burden, another isolated and alienated soul, is not an exception. It also commences in alienation and ends in it. Joe, for the first time, steps into Joanna's house to look for food. The narrator states that even though their relationship gradually passes through phases of lust and what could actually be called mutual love, Joe, at first, gets into the house every night through the window, seduced at first with food in a similar manner reminding us the story of the Fall of Man and its versions. Joanna and Joe seldom talk to one another at first, the reader is informed that their alienated speech is relating "*nothing at all since it didn't try to and didn't intend to*"(Faulkner, 2002, pp.232-233).

The former preacher of Jefferson Reverend Gail Hightower's alienation is an outcome of his inadequacy as a minister together with his wife's notorious stature. Hightower's Puritan father, a "minister without a church" who possessed a "very cold and uncompromising conviction" about his religion, compels Hightower to regard religion as bereft of human contact. In fact, Hightower, in the past, considered the church and seminary as sanctuaries into which he could imprison his own spirit rather than ponder over. This is exactly what Christianity should be concerned about.

> "*He believed with a calm joy that if ever there was a shelter, it would be the Church; that if ever truth could walk naked and without shame and fear, it would be in the seminary …That was what the word seminary meant: quiet and safe walls within which the hampered and garment-worried spirit could learn anew serenity to contemplate without horror or alarm its own nakedness*" (Faulkner, 2002, p.478).

Hightower also contemplates on the self-devastating components of the church which, he believes, work against man.

> "*It seems to him that he has seen it all the while: that that which is destroying the Church is not the outward groping of those within it nor the inward groping of those without, but the professionals who control it and who have removed the bells from its steeples. He seems to see them, endless, without order, empty, symbolical, bleak, skypointed not with ecstasy or passion but in adjuration, threat, and doom. He seems to see the churches of the world like a rampart, like one of those barricades of the middleages planted with dead and sharpened stakes, against truth and against that peace in which to sin and be for1iven which sic is the life of man*" (Faulkner, 2002, p.487).

The most harmful attribute in Hightower's alienation is that he does not realize (until too late) the fact that he uses the church as a means of withdrawal from society, a withdrawal that itself is opposing the 'life of man.' He does not even perceive that he had withdrawn so deep into his sanctuary. The townspeople came to realize this matter a lot earlier than he did and forced him to leave position. As a consequence, he manages to estrange and detach himself from his convocation.

William Faulkner's outcast narrator, Byron Bunch is a non-described man in the book. But the reader assumes that he is over thirty years old and is a kind of man who leaves no favorable first impression on others. One observer in the novel sums him up as "*the kind of fellow you wouldn't see the first glance if he was alone by himself in the bottom of a empty concrete swimming pool*"(Faulkner, 2002, p.495). He is detached from the society and prefers to keep to himself. The reader discovers that Bunch had been working "six days of every week for seven years at the planning mill" in Jefferson, arriving and leaving work exactly on time, never extending his lunch break, "*feeding boards into the machinery," and heaping "the finished boards into freight cars*" (Faulkner, 2002, p.47).

Byron's isolation is not due to any societal myth; he could not successfully relate himself to townspeople and fail to establish meaningful relations with them except with the Reverend Hightower. Olga W. Vickery, in The Novels of William Faulkner: A Critical Interpretation, claims that he is simply "*the one uncommitted character in the novel, since he has isolated himself from both nature and society*" (Vickery, 1961, p.82). Bunch failed to build any significant and substantial connections in Jefferson until Lena Grove's arrival. He immediately falls in love with Lena. However, he has to compete with Lucas Burch for Lena's love. Byron's rival for Lena's affection, although handsome, Lucas Burch is apparently a callous opportunist whose cunning designs attracted derisive scorn and contempt from townspeople. However, labeling Joe Christmas as a nigger, Byron skillfully diverts attention from his own illegitimate activity and sets the manhunt for Christmas in motion leading to his death. When tricked into facing Lena and her baby through Byron's provocation, Burch responded it with his commonplace roar and ran away. At the closing pages of the novel, Byron and Lena are evidently still in search of him, but from a traveling furniture repairman's perspective that they travel with, Lena seemingly accepted Byron's presumably courting of her.

Joanna Burden, the daughter of an abolitionist family, has lived in Jefferson for over forty years. Joanna detaches herself from the southern society due to her affinity to the black people. Her anti-slavery sentiments render her a displaced person in town and she has often been jeeringly addressed to as 'Yankee' and a 'foreigner.' Joanna Burden is a benign and pleasant person to start with because Faulkner has focused, in her character, on three major forms of agony and distress one can possibly discover in this fictitious book: religion, race

and woman sexuality. She consumes with several kinds of radical fundamentalism and desires; she usually just burns, and the objective of her desire is sexual at times, sometimes racial, but generally religious, and occasionally all three combined at once in the character of Joe Christmas. Being raised in the midst of families where religion not only imposes values but also presents an absolute knowledge of one's part in the world, Joanna Burden, just like Joe Christmas, is eventually inclined to rebel, but not able to change: forcefully confronting with the beliefs with which they were initially instilled, she is incapable of shaping a more tolerable perspective on life. Living with a Calvinistic father, Joanna was compelled to believe, by her father when she was just an innocent child, that she is 'cursed' to fight against a smothering racial hierarchy which she should nonetheless embrace and preserve; she digests this contradictory message together with a troubling image of spiritually established infanticide. Joanna's misfortune is that very chaos emerged through the struggle between her 'selves' which renders her completely incapable of having meaningful interaction with any other fellow human being.

The Southern society, which Joanna is a member, renders her alienated due to her presumed feminine and cultural treachery. She is a spinster who has dedicated herself to education and progression of the black communities in Yoknapatawpha County. Even though obliged with the Southern conventions of respectable white femininity, she springs from a legacy that tolerates inter-racial marital union and supports abolitionist humanitarianism. Therefore, she cannot ultimately comply with the standards of strict social order. Her prohibition from the communal company in general demotes her to isolation in the physical area of her plantation – the novel's 'dark house'- and it enslaves her to the sentimental oppression of alienation and cruel memory. From the minute of her birth, Joanna's mixed lineage only provides her a status of need, and her character is often interpreted by her otherness considered as the origin of that particular need.

The criminal-hunter Percy Grimm's sense of alienation from the inhabitants of Jefferson is almost as grave and serious as that of Christmas. Grimm is extremely angry about all the lost fame and honor. He failed to participate in the war because he was considered "too young to have been in the European War," and his grudge had become more agonizing because "*he had no one to tell it, to open his heart to*"(Faulkner, 2002, p.450). Grimm grieves from not having been able to confirm his own identity, like Christmas, and from the gap this produces between himself and the war perception of the South after World War I. It is not surprising that Grimm gladly welcomes the remedy for his existential and communal troubles with an extreme sense of relief. Faulkner renders Grimm's chance of removing his burden equivalent to his choice of the military and racist mores of his place and period. Delivered by "the new civilian-military act" of the postwar period, Grimm feels delivered, for the first time, from the isolation and estrangement of the "wasted years" of his adolescence (Faulkner, 2002, p.451).

> "*He could now see his life opening before him, uncomplex and inescapable as a barren corridor, completely freed now of ever again having to think or decide, the burden which he now assumed and carried as bright and weightless and martial as his insignatory brass: a sublime and implicit faith in physical courage and blind obedience, and a belief that the white race is superior to all other races and that the American is superior to all men, and that all that would ever be required of him in payment for this belief, this privilege, would be his own life. And . . . he walked among the civilians with about him an air half belligerent and half the self-conscious pride of a boy*" (Faulkner, 2002, p.451).

In championing these mores and carrying them to such tense extremities, Grimm's over-correcting aspiration is to acquire the recognition and admiration of his society. His passion is not to cause disturbance, but to restore the toughest kind of rule. A great deal of Joe Christmas's tragedy was, as Faulkner stated later, due to "not to know what he is and to know that he will never know," Grimm's personal confrontation of ambiguity stimulates him to a diverse but equally violent need for order (Gwynn & Blotner,1995, p.72). Grimm's confrontation, of course, is a perceptible feature of the white struggles to preserve segregation.

Questionably Faulkner's least purgative character in Light in August, Eupheus Hines symbolizes three main sorts of alienation that indicate the widespread historical alienation of the South - alienation from labor, alienation from others in the manner of racism and misogyny, and alienation from God in the manner of religious radicalism, which debatably generates and maintains the first two sorts. When Faulkner's narrator presents Hines, he seems to be an enigmatically infatuated and unnamed caretaker employed at the orphanage where the young Christmas is retained. Faulkner promptly lays Hines aside in imagery of alienation. As the dietician meets Hines seeking help for handling young Joe, Hines is, at first, portrayed as "almost a fixture," "*in a splint chair in a sootgrimmed doorway,*" with "*mad eyes,*" and reciting Bible (Faulkner, 2002, p.126). He is "a hard man, in his prime" but "*whom time, circumstance, something, had betrayed, sweeping the hale body and thinking of a man of fortyfive into a backwater suitable for a man of sixty or sixtyfive*" (Faulkner, 2002, pp.126-127). For Hines, the evidently biracial Joe is a "*walking pollution in God's own face*" because of his naturally inferior black blood and because of its mixture with white blood (Faulkner, 2002, p.138). Hines insist that because Joe himself is "*a sign and a damnation for bitchery,*" he cannot be the incidental witness of the dietician's sexual affair with the doctor, but a tool assigned by God to reveal "*woman sinning*" (Faulkner, 2002, p.128). Here, Faulkner provides the reader just a hint of Hines's misogynistic stance. When Hines's moral sermon ends, the dietician "*seemed to see herself as less than nothing*" and "*trivial as a twig floating upon a pool*" in Hines's eyes (Faulkner, 2002, p.132).

Faulkner's depiction of alienation in Light in August has also emphasizes the misogynistic tone of the book. The novel swarms with female characters who assist the reader in exploring both the conventional notion of women, and Faulkner's own peculiar convictions. Encumbered with such women, who act the part of wives, grandmothers, mistresses and lovers; every woman plays a crucial part in nurturing the blazes of Faulkner's conviction. Way distant in deviating from the commonplace perspective on women, Faulkner does not only exhibit but also welcomes this misogynistic opinion. Faulkner brands women as feeble and shallow whose primary function is to satisfy men's sexual desires. One of the first women, the reader is introduced in the book, Miss Atkins, a dietitian at the orphanage in which Joe Christmas stays, is a faithful example of the stereotype. Miss Atkins, against her desires, surrenders to the sexual desires of a male colleague who wants to have sexual intercourse with her. Depicted as a whore, Miss Atkins gives birth to the prevalent theme of misogyny in the book. This incident also serves as a catalyst for Christmas's perennial distress and anger towards female gender. Joe's relationship with Bobbie, a waitress at a local diner as well as a prostitute, helps to strengthen his misogynistic demeanor towards women. Joe Christmas falls in love with her and loses his virginity, but, she fails to reciprocate his feelings and after he lands a deadly blow on McEachern, she does not want anything to do with him. Mr. Eachern even calls her 'Jezebel' and 'harlot' after he caught her and Christmas attending a dance. Two other effective women in the novel, Lena Grove, a girl who escapes home to search for the father of her child, and Millie, Joe Christmas's mother, also demonstrate Faulkner's perspective that women, being feeble and gullible individuals, tolerate themselves to be manipulated and exploited to gratify men's sexual lust and cravings.

5. CONCLUSION

Alienation is a prevalent subject matter in several of the Faulkner's novels. Light in August is a depiction of the individual fighting with and against the Southern curse of alienation. Every brutal, racist, estranged, misogynistic character is trapped somewhere between alienation and non-alienation in a land striving to overcome its own; whereas a character's absence of physical or literal 'movement' suggests detachment and separation, a futile attempt towards the attainment of wholeness. He introduces the reader this theme plainly in Light in August through his preference of a detailed setting as the reader strolls through Jefferson from the Reverend Gail Hightower's shack to the enigmatic dark house of Joanna Burden. The somewhat complex plot narrates the story of every character and how they arrived at their current state of alienation. And his use of tone, inherently misogynistic, contributes to the main theme. Faulkner's use of these methods helps the reader to comprehend and realize the prevalent sense of alienation. Throughout his fictional novels, William Faulkner portrays a bleak and dismal picture of the South during the course of the Civil War. The abomination, prejudice, discrimination, and treachery extensively dominant during that period provide several instance of alienation. Faulkner presents various characters who

can easily be recognized as detached and alienated such as Joanna Burden, Reverend Hightower and the protagonist Joe Christmas. The causes of their alienation differ from being persecuted by racial or sexist bias to taking delight in the tranquil emotion of being alienated. The alienation can be present within families or can even stretch to a whole society. Particular characters have difficulties in struggling with their alienation, and, ultimately, it becomes the cause of their demise while others appear to overcome it. Joe and Joanna had to endure as a consequence of their alienation, whereas Byron and Hightower manage to overcome theirs through the company of other fellow human being and the re-discovery of the meaning of life respectively. Faulkner's alienated characters embody the various tribulations and noticeable isolation and solitude that most encountered at the tragic moment of their oblivion.

Faulkner is explicitly interested in obstacles – both racial and socio-economic - that society builds between these diverse communal parties, obstacles that do not only lead to friction and hostility between these parties, but also causes a severe sense of isolation and alienation of people. Faulkner confers his imaginary country the gives his mythical county the emblematic name of 'Yoknapatawpha,'' which indicates a separated land. The most apparent separation in Light in August is that the breach between black and white which figuratively necessitates further communal hostilities: between male and female, Southerners and Northerners, internals and externals. The obstacles between black and white are obvious throughout Light in August. The blacks reside in Freedman town, congregate in their own Negro churches, and go to their negro schools and colleges. Their specific expression also isolates them from the whites: "You can whup the blood outen me" announces the black speaker. Referring to Faulkner's use of whiteness, author and professor John N. Duvall suggests that "rather than as a way to normalize himself in white Southern culture, Faulkner often uses his "whiteface" males to underscore their otherness and alienation that result from their fundamental inability to assimilate to the values of their community"(Duvall,2007). Reflecting on Faulkner's frustration with the South, historian Joel Williamson states that, "Faulkner was critical of the South for its failure to rise to its potential, for its rape of the land, this Southern Garden of Eden, and the license it gave to the practice of inhumanity by man to man...the South, he declared, had not met its history...it had not coped with its past"(Williamson,1984,p.491). Author Ralph Ellison, however, was not only making a social judgment but an artistic one when he ridiculed Faulkner's public opposition of desegregation:

> *"Faulkner has delusions of grandeur because he really believes that he invented these characteristics which he ascribes to Negroes in his fiction and now he thinks he can end this great historical action just as he ends a dramatic action in one of his novels with Joe Christmas dead and his balls cut off by a man not nearly as worthy as himself; Hightower musing, the Negroes scared, and everything, just as it was*

> *except for the brooding, slightly overblown rhetoric of Faulkner's irony. Nuts! He thinks Negroes exist simply to give ironic overtone to the viciousness of white folks, when he should know very well that we're trying hard as hell to free ourselves; thoroughly and completely, so that when we get the crackers off our back we can discover what we really are and what we really wish to preserve out of the experience that made us . . .*" (as cited in Posnock, 2005, p.223).

It should be kept in mind that historical period was not a narrative method that Faulkner could only treat selfishly for his own delight, nor were black people invention of his exceptional imagination. Ellison simply exposes the limitation of Faulkner's capability. The moral duty that Ralph Ellison expresses is meticulously asserted by Professor Barbara Ladd in the following words: "*the necessity for white writers to represent black characters in all their human complexity not only as a way to understand black humanity but as a way for whites to come to understand "the broader aspects" of their own humanity*"(Ladd, 2007, p.134). In spite of his very bitter words for Faulkner's depiction of black characters, Ellison also somewhat famously credits him for his capacity to portray Southern blacks meaningfully. He asserts that Faulkner is "*more willing perhaps than any other artist to start with the stereotype, accept it as true, and then seek out the human truth which it hides*"(Ellison, 1995, p.43).

Faulkner confers the individual his due significance; and, like his literary forerunners, as well as Carl Jung and William Barret, Faulkner, in delivering his Nobel Prize acceptance speech and literally offering guidance to young man or woman writing, recognized that the solution to man's modern predicament lies with the individual himself. He states that the solitary person who:

> "*must teach himself that the basest of all things is to be afraid; and, teaching himself that, forget it forever, leaving no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed – love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice*"(as cited in Allison ,2003, p.14).

The deliverance of the world thus resides with the isolated and alienated individual who tries first to better himself before he strives to better his world. As a result, Faulkner's community, like Ralph Waldo Emerson's, constantly conspires against the masculinity of its inhabitants; and, oftentimes, the individual should revolt against it. No man can ever progress if he solely relies on the community to initiate progress. Transformation should first take place within the individual himself. In this regard, Faulkner's opinion resembles to that of Emerson's: that when all men take pride in the progress of the community, no man makes any progress. Recently, Carl Jung voiced the similar idea: "*It is, unfortunately, only too clear that if the individual is not truly regenerated in spirit, society cannot be*

either, for society is the total sum of individuals in need of redemption"(Jung, 2006, p.56).

Faulkner is conscious of his South as a place trapped between traditional alienated beliefs and newer, more dynamic views which tended to render people equal. In his essays, like "Mississippi," he usually describes the connection he managed to establish with his native land, "*loving it even while hating some of it*"(Meriwether, 2004, p.36). Characters, like Byron Bunch and Lena Grove, can be regarded as the manifestation of Faulkner's firm belief in the South's capability to move past, however slowly, its alienated historical background. Faulkner, like Fromm and somewhat like Marx, entrusts most of this belief, not upon usually-held notions imposed upon individuals by some external and profound force, but in the individuals themselves who, Faulkner considered, were able, if provided the opportunity, to reside and let others to reside in honor and tranquility. In a 1955 essay entitled "On Privacy," Faulkner states:

> "*This was the American dream: a sanctuary on the earth for individual man: a condition in which he could be free not only of the old established closed-corporation hierarchies of arbitrary power which had oppressed him as a mass, but free of that mass into which the hierarchies of church and state had compressed and held him individually thralled and individually impotent.*" (Meriwether, 2004, p62).

As has been manifested, Faulkner's characters either symbolize long-established alienated beliefs or they confront traditional standards; they are either trapped in diverse levels of alienation or are striving to overcome it. They only await for the right moment to commence their struggle.

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