78. An unusual sublimation of the female: Maternal power over paternal repression in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*

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Abstract

This paper aims at analysing William Faulkner's novel As I Lay Dying through a variety of contemporary reading strategies, especially to identify his famous character Addie Bundren. In the novel, Addie represents Faulkner's narrative ego, a monstrous-feminine double, who is capable of experiencing and sublimating the paternally repressed desires. In this respect, the major framework will be constructed on Julia Kristeva's theories of abject and abjection and her rereading of the Lacanian narrative of human subject. Within the scope of traditional Western culture and language, pre-oedipal stage, as identified with the mother, has been treated as a nonverbal, oppositional realm that threatens the subject's ego and the boundaries constructed through law and language. Unlike the traditional psychoanalytical approaches which conceptualize the maternal register as a threat to subject's identification process and his incorporation to the Symbolic order, contemporary theorists intersect at the point of investing on the subject's eternal bound to his pre-oedipal source of existence. Along with Kristeva, theorists with alternative literary perspectives will also be employed. Through several reading strategies based on issues like sexuality, gender or contemporary feministic politics to Grotesque and Surrealist approaches, this study will identify whether Faulkner's narrative ego in As I Lay Dying inspires a feministic voice for the emancipation and self-realization of marginalized or subordinated subjects of language.

Keywords: Kristeva, Faulkner, maternal register, feminist, abject, excluded-mother, monstrous feminine, subject of language, narrative ego, psychoanalytic, Lacan

Kadınlığın alışılmadık bir yüceltmesi: William Faulkner'ın Döşeğimde Ölürken romanında dişil gücün eril baskıya üstünlüğü

Öz

Bu çalışmada William Faulkner'ın Döşeğimde Ölürken romanını çağdaş okuma stratejileri doğrultusunda incelemek, özellikle de ünlü Addie Bundren karakterini anlamlandırmak amaçlanmaktadır. Romanda Addie, Faulkner'ın anlatıcı egosunu, aynı zamanda eril düzen/yasa ile bastırılmış arzularını deneyimleme ve yüceltme yetisine sahip şeytani-dişi bir dublörünü temsil etmektedir. Bu bağlamda, çalışmanın ana çerçevesi Julia Kristeva'nın abject ve abjection kuramları ve Lacan'cı insan-öznenin gelişim sürecini yeniden ele alışı üzerinden kurulacaktır. Geleneksel Batı kültürü ve dili bağlamında, anne ile özdeş oedipal öncesi safha, öznenin egosunu ve dil düzeni aracılığıyla kurulan sınırlarını tehdit eden, dilin dışı ve karşıtı bir alan olarak değerlendirilmiş ve kavramsallaştırılmıştır. Ancak annenin alanını, öznenin kimliklenme sürecine ve Sembolik düzene uyum sağlamasına bir tehdit olarak kavramsallaştıran geleneksel psikoanalitik yaklaşımlardan farklı

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olarak, çağdaş kuramcılar öznenin oedipal öncesi varoluş kaynağı ile özsel bağının önemi konusunda birleşmektedirler. Kristeva'nın yanı sıra, çalışma içerisinde alternatif edebi bakış açılarına sahip bazı kuramcılara da yer verilecektir. Bu kuramcıların, cinsellik, toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri, ya da çağdaş feminist politikalara ilişkin meselelerden Grotesk, Sürrealist yaklaşımlara uzanan çeşitli okuma stratejileri kullanılacaktır. Böylelikle, Faulkner'ın Döşeğimde Ölürken romanındaki anlatıcı egonun, dilin marjinalleştirilmiş ya da baskılanmış öznelerine bağımsızlaşma ve kendilerini gerçekleştirme adına ilham verebilecek feminist bir ses olup olmadığı değerlendirilecektir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kristeva, Faulkner, annenin alanı, feminist, post-feminist, abject, dışlanmış-anne, şeytani-dişi, dilin öznesi, anlatıcı ego, psikanalitik, Lacan

Introduction

This paper aims at analysing William Faulkner's novel *As I Lay Dying* through a variety of contemporary reading strategies, especially through Julia Kristeva's poststructuralist and feministic psychoanalytical approaches. One of the major reasons for choosing Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* is the way he was aware of the repressed feelings and unconscious motivations that remain outside the linguistic law and order but that haunt the ego constantly. Another reason is the unusual way he attempts to elaborate the female subjectivity with his famous character Addie Bundren. In the novel, Addie represents Faulkner's narrative ego, a monstrous-feminine double, who is capable of experiencing and sublimating the paternally repressed desires.

Within the scope of traditional Western culture and language, pre-oedipal stage, as identified with the mother, has been treated as a nonverbal, oppositional realm that threatens the subject's ego and the boundaries constructed through law and language. Unlike the traditional psychoanalytical approaches which assert the idea of excluding the mother and creating absence as the principal way toward establishing identity and culture, contemporary theories intersect at the point of reinvesting the mother and reidentifying the pre-oedipal stage in terms of a 'maternal register' that they see as crucially component to subject's psychosexual development and identification process as much as the Symbolic register, through lifetime.

As a poststructuralist feminist, Julia Kristeva affirms in her works that modern literature seems to be characterized by the recognition and affirmation of prelinguistic sources of subjectivity more than ever. In her *Desire in Language*, the writer is defined as a "speaking subject" articulating through a doubleness between the "semiotic" and the "symbolic" (Kristeva, 1980: 24). What she names "semiotic" is mostly interpreted as "a pre-symbolic language, emerging from the child's fluid and instinctual bond with the mother's body" (Wood, 1994: 107). While constructing his "poetic language," the writer, as a speaking subject, is more interested with productivity of meaning; with finding ways of writing and expression that strategically and playfully reformulate the linguistic paternal codes (Kristeva, 1980: 25).

According to Kristeva, the subject of language (particularly the speaking subject of literature), acknowledging his substantial connection to the excluded maternal body, exceeds the boundaries and experiences the thrill of *falling from language* so as to reidentify the very condition of his subjecthood as being 'at the threshold of language.' In her *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, Kristeva writes that:

> [literature] maintains a distance where the abject is concerned. The writer, fascinated by the abject, imagines its logic, projects himself into it, introjects it, and as a consequence perverts language -style and content. (Kristeva, 1982: 16)

Through this experience, the speaking subject recognizes the forms of repression constructed by the patriarchal order of language. This results as an act of emancipating his ego from repression and as a devaluation of the paternally sublime codes. This is how the modern writer maintains an authentic and autonomous field of signification for his speaking subject:

> [Contemporary literature] (..) seems to be written out of the untenable aspects of perverse or superego positions. It acknowledges the impossibility of Religion, Morality, and Law -their power play, their necessary and absurd seeming. Like perversion, it takes advantage of them, gets round them, and makes sport of them. (Kristeva, 1982: 16)

Faulkner's speaking subject represents an ego who can speak by challenging the borders but without falling, unintendedly or obliviously, into the place where meaning collapses.

In the *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva treats the "abject" as a third terrain where desire and Law are not only demarcated but also clash and intersect. She thinks that "great modern literature unfolds over that terrain" where "takes place a crossing over of the dichotomous categories of Pure and Impure, Prohibition and Sin, Morality and Immorality" (Kristeva, 1982: 16). In the same way, in this terrain " 'subject' and 'object' push each other away, confront each other, collapse, and start again - inseparable, contaminated, condemned, at the boundary of what is assimilable, thinkable: abject" (Kristeva, 1982: 17, 18):

> Writing then implies an ability to imagine the abject, that is, to see oneself in its place and to thrust it aside only by means of the displacements of verbal play. (Kristeva, 1982: 16)

In *As I Lay Dying,* Addie Bundren character appears both as a decaying dead body and as an empowered subject who can speak and act by her own ruling order. In this sense, according to Kristeva's theory, with her body Addie represents the "excluded mother" as "abject" threatening the borders, and with her mind she represents the speaking subject's capacity to challenge and devise the territories by transvaluating the basic codes of paternal repression.

In the beginning of the novel Addie passes away and as any dead body, her body requires a conventional burial (symbolically exclusion from the borders). But since her burial is delayed, the dead body remains in a purgatory position (neither dead nor alive) that can be identified with the in-between position of the abject which is "neither subject nor object" as Kristeva puts it. On the other hand, Addie's mind represents the speaking subject's subversive capacity because her power rises from her traumatic realization that she was "tricked by words older than Anse [her husband] or love" (Faulkner, 1930: 164). To Amy Louise Wood, "Addies comes to this understanding of language through her experience of primal connection and instinctive bonding that, Kristeva would argue, returns her to "the semiotic" and enables her to reflect and critique what Lacan called the "symbolic order" (Wood, 1994: 107).

As Clifford Davis also sees, "the semiotic subverts the Law of the Father. Since Kristeva proposes that this "other language" is opposed to the rigid significations of institutional, patriarchal language (God, state, father, etc.), the semiotic becomes revolutionary. Accordingly, Kristeva's language is often reminiscent of an insurgent political discourse" (Davis, 1995: 6).

As a female who is trapped in her traditional gender role, Addie seems to have recognized that the *truth* of experience cannot be fully expressed or acknowledged through language. Moreover, she also seems to have conceived that language is a patriarchal construction and that it operates to hide the impossibility of culturally constructed transcendentals or sublimity as Kristeva and Davis asserted. In her own words, Addie expresses how she came to the realization that she was deceived by words about 'motherhood' when she gave birth to her first child:

> That was when I learned that words are no good; that words dont ever fit even what they are trying to say at. When he [Cash] was born I knew that motherhood was invented by someone who had to have a word for it because the ones that had the children didn't care whether there was a word for it or not. (Faulkner, 1930: 163)

According to Wood's interpretation, "in her monologue, Addie recounts her struggle with the meaning of life and a sense of self in culture she finds oppressive and 'dead'." She struggles with and rebels "against her society, marriage, and religion, as well as the language that defines and circumscribes them." She accomplishes her rebellion "by grounding her identity in her body" and in doing so, she "finds meaning not only in her life, but in culture and language" (Wood, 1994: 99). Wood propounds that since Addie's "physical experiences enable her to question and challenge them," her "search for identity through her body allies her with present "French feminists like Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, and Julia Kristeva, who, in their work, reexamine women's bodies in order to 'rewrite' femininity." In this context femininity means "conceiving of a female identity and language not founded on and inscribed by masculine standards and expectations" (Wood, 1994: 99).

In his novels and stories, Faulkner occasionally identifies the ego of his speaking subject with multiple narrative subjects, but in the case of *As I Lay Dying*, astoundingly with the revenge of a sexually charged yet culturally repressed and excluded mother. Reminiscent of, and among all Faulkner's determinant and domineering female narrators, Addie appears as the fulfilment of a challenging endeavour his ego artistically undertakes to add and elaborate the meaning of feminine wisdom and subjectivity.

As another Lacanian feminist, Doreen Fowler, in her book *Faulkner: The Return of the Repressed*, maintains that the writer (namely the narrating ego) - in the pursuit of reflecting the repressed self - formulates his own strategy of expression through a *doubleness* established between the linguistic self and repressed other. Faulkner is one of the peculiar figures of modern narrative voice who has managed to construct his language on such doubleness to communicate with *that* which is beyond the borders. Fowler begins by suggesting that "the book is the "other" of the self, a representation, like dreams, of the unconscious" (Fowler, 1997: ix). While investigating "the role of the marginalized other in Faulkner's major novels," she significantly observes how "Faulkner used women and blacks as doubles for the white male protagonist." Quoting a character in Faulkner's *Mosquitoes,* who says: "A book is the writer's secret life, the dark twin of a man" (ix), Fowler calls attention to Faulkner's awareness of an archaic human heritage as his essential *other*, that corresponds to the drives outside of linguistic law and order. Drawing on Faulkner's admission that the artist is "a creature driven by demons," she suggests that,

> the demonic possession is a disguised image out of the unconscious, (…) and Faulkner's image of the writer as 'demon-driven' seems covertly to reflect that the writer is gripped by unconscious forces and that the writer's text is the site of a disguised return of denied desires. (Fowler, 1997: 5)

As I Lay Dying is one of Faulkner's particular novels bearing this "demon-driven" discourse. He advances from his major characters, but especially from Addie, as his dark twin: a *demonic female* who acknowledges herself primarily as a desiring subject:

> I believed that I had found it. I believed that the reason was the duty to the alive, to the terrible blood, the red bitter flood boiling through the land. (Faulkner, 1930: 166)

According to most critics, despite her intimidating power, Addie of *As I Lay Dying* inspires to produce discourses of subjectivity and subjecthood and provides insights for constructing feministic or individualistic standpoints as well as alternative reading strategies in literature.

In the field of Grotesque studies, especially the feministic grotesque theoreticians conceptualize their theory by focusing on the maternal body, because according to them what the grotesque signifies in language is eventually related with and results from the female body. While structuring her feministic grotesque theory, Margaret Miles identifies that at the root of how the female body is culturally categorized, either as sinful or virtuous, lies the patriarchal interpretation of Eve's role in the temptation of Adam to sin. In Western culture, fostering desire to the forbidden fruit is attributed to Eve more than her male counterpart Adam and thus Eve has eventually become a signifying source archaically related with the *tempting serpent* (most popularly represented by Medusa) as much as the primary wife and mother (represented by the Virgin).

The way Faulkner verbalizes Addie's mind unusually corresponds to Miles' criticism on Eve's culturally constructed virgin-whore dichotomy. After learning that she is pregnant for the second time, to her son Darl, Addie feels violated and tricked by Anse. Her estrangement to her husband is because, as a young and conventionally serving wife, she feels neither emotionally nor physically satisfied in her marriage:

> He [Anse] did not know that he was dead then. Sometimes I would lie by him in the dark, hearing the land that was now of my blood and flesh, and I would think: Anse. Why Anse. Why are you Anse. (Faulkner, 1930: 165)

In her boldly confessional section, Addie begins by speaking about her young adulthood when she used to teach at the town-school just before meeting Anse and getting married. Her account of her past reveals that she was raised without a mother, and her father had been a strict and oppressive figure who showed no care and loving but used brutal methods to grow and teach her. As a lonely young woman with no maternal figure to guide her, she seems to have grasped the necessity of channelling her uninhabited feminine instincts and desires. Thus, thinking that she has to tie herself up in marriage, she arranges her marriage with Anse. This is also a reflection of her dominancy lying in her nature: "And so I took Anse" (Faulkner, 1930: 162). However, despite marriage, Addie disappointedly feels that her libidinal desire is still uninhabited. This is why she fails to identify her sexual status with a 'word' (neither as a *virgin* nor as a *woman*) within the chamber of marriage:

> The shape of my body where I used to be a virgin is in the shape of a --- and I couldn't think Anse, couldn't remember Anse. It was not that I could think of myself as no longer unvirgin, because I was three now. (Faulkner, 1930: 165)

In the above quotation, Faulkner deliberately leaves the blank (---) part without putting a word because he wants to reflect Addie's inability to define herself as a sexually and emotionally gratified woman.

In their feminist grotesque perspective, inspired from Kristeva's monstrous-feminine conceptions, Justin D. Edwards and Rune Graulund attempt to empower the female body against the patriarchal labels which confine and objectify her corporeality, by offering that these very labels could strategically be operated against themselves. Their conceptions of the abject and monstrous-feminine consequently lead to raise critical questions such as:

> Is an abject body a potential site of transgression? Or to put this another way, can the 'monstrous-feminine' offer a potential source for theorizing a feminist political position? (Edwards, Graulund, 2013: 34)

These questions might be answered from a subjective perspective by investigating how Addie, Faulkner's demonic female persona, inspires power and awareness for the repressed subject of language.

In the context of this paper, while examining *As I Lay Dying,* as much as relating Faulkner's personification of the 'monstrous-feminine' with the feministic theories of grotesque and with Kristeva's theory; his peculiar imagery - as his artistic expression of pure and instinctual desire- will also be related with the Surrealists' pursuit of expressing a deeper and elemental truth beyond the conscious perception levels. Mary Rohrberger thinks that some qualities of Faulkner's fiction are very characteristic of surrealist works and philosophy. Even though with his artistic language Faulkner mostly pursued to be intricate and remain obscure, his narrative imagery paradoxically appeals to his readers' psychological perception by painting a moment of thought and sensation, in an unavoidable directness, through the combination of grotesque, natural and sensory imagery. Rohrberger uses Jean-Jacques Mayoux's definition of "the typical Faulkner scene" which "does not affect us as if set in a book or through words; it is before us; rather it surrounds us. It is around us as though we were in the process, not so much of living it as of dreaming it" (Rohrberger, 1983: 142). Also, Faulkner's way of articulating doubleness is another basic characteristic Rohrberger relates with Surrealism. Surrealists see "the double-center" as "the base of the surrealist view," and take their subversively expressive power from the similar pursuit that "the polarities are not left suspended" (Rohrberger, 1983: 145). "The basic drive of the surrealist is" also "to a reconciliation of opposites, to a *point sublime* where the contraries are identified." In this sense, "Darl [Addie's second child] is, more than anyone else, the medium through which the two worlds pass" (Rohrberger, 1983: 145).

1. Signifying from the borders: Excluded mother as Abject in *As I Lay Dying*

In *Powers of Horror*, from Kristeva's theory, abject is to be understood as an effect cast on the *unmediated* image of the maternal body during oedipal renouncement. Since in the imaginary/mirror stage, the infant exists in unity with the mother and yet lacks a true sense of difference between self and mother (as other); the mother's image is unmediated. However, in the oedipal stage, infant's substantial connection to the mother gets marked off by the father's presence (as Other). Paternal intervention symbolically prohibits the maternal body and accentuates a fear of castration on the infant. This way, mother's unmediated image clashes and fuses with the infant's ambivalent feelings resulting from fear of castration, renouncement of mother, and enforced transformation of desire from its original location to the father as Other. According to Kristeva, amidst this clash, at the threshold of language, abject emerges as an effect causing infant's primary "abjection." This primary abjection is defined as a *basic* reflexive response caused by the traumatic value shift from the unmediated image of the mother to the nauseating image of the abject.

Since the abject signifies in relation with the excluded maternal body, abject remains at the borders of secondary repression (language and law): "The abject is that pseudo-object that is made up *before,* but appears only *within* the gaps of secondary repression. *The abject would thus be the "object" of primal repression"* (Kristeva, 1982: 12). Again, since the abject emerges at the borders of language, Kristeva also identifies the abject "as already a wellspring of sign for a non-object," therefore as the primordial signifying source from which "objects and signs arise" (Kristeva, 1982: 10). In this sense, abject's emergence precedes language, and even though it is not a sign (but an exile in language), abject is

capable of signifying from the borders. As the abject signifies without being a sign (and thus without belonging to the system of language), and it signifies from its own primordial signifying source; 'the paternally excluded mother,' abject can accommodate itself simultaneously inside and outside the borders of Symbolic.

In the novel, Addie's body is not only a representation of the corpse as abject which literally operates as "death infecting life," but also a metaphor to the oedipally excluded maternal body which Kristeva posits as the primordial signifying source of the abject. After her death, due to a series of reasons and obstacles, Addie's burial gets held up and her body remains in the coffin for days. During the nine-day journey to Jefferson, the coffined body soon ends up decaying and smelling, also by being exposed to water and fire in *very* unfortunate ways. Instead of directly exposing an abject dead body unwarrantedly to the reader's imagination or the sight of the folks in the novel, Faulkner sedulously conserves it in a coffin which is conventionally the 'legitimate' signifier of a deceased body. However, as the dead body's smell is unconventionally diffusing out of the coffin, the coffin has lost its 'legitimate' meaning and begun to signify as abject because of containing a body in the status of a 'corpse.' Kristeva defines that:

> The corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life. Abject. It is something rejected from which one does not part, from which one does not protect oneself as from an object. Imaginary uncanniness and real threat, it beckons to us and ends up engulfing us." (Kristeva, 1982: 4)

By adding a tragic sense of humour and by constructing the Bundrens' journey to Jefferson as a parodical epic, the way Faulkner operates Addie's body provides an intricate metaphor to Kristeva's broader conception of the abject. Her body as a corpse becomes an abject issue not only by endangering "public sanity" but also by threatening identity and meaning. During their journey, Bundren family stop by a number of hosting families to rest and stay overnight at their farmhouses. During their stay, Addie's coffin is unavoidably placed in the barns. As one of the folks hosting Bundrens, Armstid recounts how he gets himself away from his farmhouse to the field early the next morning to extricate himself from the unbearable presence of the coffin. Even in the open field, he cannot save himself from being engulfed by the corpse's/coffin's smell and from being worried about the spectacle its unlikely presence might bring with the buzzards attracted to it:

> Along toward nine oclock it begun to get hot. That was when I see the first buzzard. Because of wetting, I reckon. Anyway it wasn't until well into the morning. But soon as I see them it was like I could smell it in the field a mile away from just watching them, and them circling and circling for everybody in the county to see what was in my barn." (…)
>
> There must have been a dozen of them setting along the ridge-pole of the barn (…). (Faulkner, 1930: 179)

Faulkner uses striking grotesque imagery such as the buzzards "setting along the ridge-pole of" Armstid's barn to reflect the pervading effect of Addie's corrupting dead body both as a sensory (smell) and as a visual experience. Here, the image of buzzards operates as a naturally indexical sign, signifying Addie's dead body as the abject "without God and outside of science." Armstid is concerned since the buzzards circling above his farmhouse expose his personal property and unavoidably cause public attention. He feels that this is threatening his private property and social identity. While "the ridge-pole of the barn" becomes a visual patriarchal symbol representing Armstid's identity and property, the image of buzzards "setting along" it appears as a grotesque symbol indicating the 'return of the excluded mother' as abject extending to the realm of Symbolic. This way, Addie's body metaphorically operates

as the paternally excluded mother threatening the Symbolic order by signifying from the borders the price of her exclusion, as abject.

2. Resisting the absorption of objectifying male gaze: Reidentifying the female body through Faulkner's Grotesque and Surrealist reflections

Objectifying male-gaze sees the female subject through patriarchally constructed lenses that confine her corporeality basically into two categories. Doubtlessly, through such categorizations women are perceived either as promiscuous or virtuous, but more importantly, here at this patriarchally constructed doubleness, promiscuity operates as an innate symptom ascribed to *female nature*, while virtue operates as its oppositional, a sublimated value negating female nature. Margaret Miles thinks that "women's bodies, permanently shaped by Eve's sin, symbolized the fact that humanity exists in a state of sinfulness and punishment" (Miles, 1997: 91). "For women, in societies in which they were defined as 'Eves,' the perpetual threat was that their 'true nature' would emerge" (Miles, 1997: 92). Some women, especially prostitutes "were seen as personifications of the grotesque" because they "epitomized the penetrable body, the body shaped by lust, the permeable body that produces juices and smells." Therefore "the prostitute's body" has been located as "opposite to the closed, self-contained, controlled male body, and the opposite of that of some virtuous women, especially of virgins, who were 'gardens enclosed'" (Miles, 1997: 92).

In their feministic grotesque theory, Edwards and Graulund consider the possibilities that the grotesque female body might operate as a genuinely self-evident defiance to confining categories of the objectifying male gaze by assuming all the 'intimidating' and 'negative' attributions related with *her* corporeality in culture. This way the female body becomes an accentuation of averting the fear of exclusion and operates as the very agent to dissolve, neutralize, or exchange the value of meanings ascribed to her by the objectifying male gaze. Deriving from Kristeva's theory, Edwards and Graulund relate the notion of 'monstrous-feminine' to grotesque and reidentify the physical and physiological potentials of a 'grotesque' female body:

> If the 'perfect woman's body is a product of the male gaze and its related power dynamics, then the affirmation and display of material bodies in all their diversity (shapes, contours, sizes, dimensions) and bodily functions (ingestions, excretions, menstruation, pregnancy, aging, sickness) have the potential to subvert patriarchal gender codes related to corporeality, grotesque bodies can, in other words, resist absorption into the objectifying gaze that seeks to contain them. (Edwards, Graulund, 2013: 32)

With his artistic language, in his narrative style of depiction, Faulkner seems to have constructed the effect of an unmediated gaze which is obsessed with seeing things *through* themselves, rather than *from* the conventionally ascribed categorical meanings. Especially Darl character sees almost in the manner of contemplative vision and, through his gaze Faulkner projects the female body with rather primordial, natural, and grotesque images which "might be used positively to subvert the veneration of existing normative gender-based conceptions of beauty or to realign the mechanisms of desire" (Edwards, Graulund, 2013: 33). From this perspective, it is possible to suggest that Faulkner's depiction of Darl's *imaginary* vision, which often and uncontrollably sees through a prelinguistic experience, represents a gaze both exempt from and eternally alienated to the Symbolic Law. For instance, when his sister Dewey Dell's leg appears, as she is trying to get herself on the wagon, Darl's mind portrays her body as follows:

> She sets the basket into the wagon and climbs in, her leg coming long from beneath her tightening dress: that lever which moves the world; one of that caliper which measures the length and breadth of life. (Faulkner, 1930: 97, 98)

Here, Darl first identifies Dewey Dell's corporeality as her leg uncontrollably exposes, yet his mind contemplatively perceives the leg beyond the culturally eroticized or tabooed meanings of the female body related with male desire and fear. In his 'repression-free' sight, his sister's leg appears as the essential, self-evident "measure" of life and creation. Similarly, in another moment, after the family members had to struggle in the river to collect Cash's tools and got wet, again Darl's mind reflects Dewey Dells's unintentionally exposed body with the wet clothes on:

> Squatting, Dewey Dell's wet dress shapes for the dead eyes of three blind men those mammalian ludicrosities which are the horizons and the valleys of the earth. (Faulkner, 1930: 156)

This time, Darl perceives Dewey Dell's exposed body both as a grotesque and an archaic image since the feminine curves of her body under the wet cloth appear unexpectedly comic yet primordially real like the nature's landscape. In Faulkner's text, through these images, the female body naturally becomes a defiance to its corporeal categorizations and thus gets liberated from the desire of the male gaze. Especially, Dewey Dell's grotesque body image as "mammalian ludicrosities" operates with a sense of humor, parodying the paternally objectified images of female body. According to Miles, "grotesque figuration contributes the bonus of laughter, permitting relief of tension; the simultaneously feared and desired object becomes comic" (Miles, 1997: 92). As for Mary Rohrberger, Faulkner's humor in *As I Lay Dying* is mostly typical of the kind "termed black humor or dark humor by [Andre] Breton, who considered it the 'superior rebellion of the mind' " (Rohrberger, 1983: 147). In this sense, Faulkner's style intersects not only with grotesque but also with surrealist strategies of expression, often in similar ways such as creating a sense of humor while revealing some elemental or repressed truth (i.e., an epiphany moment) because "the surreal image also carries within it the potential for humor as a necessary consequence of its makeup" (Rohrberger, 1983: 147).

In his narrative world, Faulkner applies humor not merely for authenticity or local color, but also as a strategy of mental survival; a comic relief so that the readers can *keenly* hold on to the Bundrens' deeply tragic and miserable journey to Jefferson. Like the reader, Darl is also an outsider incapable of acting in the text as he literally portrays an insane character. However, his madness represents, at the same time, an ego free from repression. Therefore, even in the middle of a tragic or catastrophic moment, he is mostly capable of appreciating the humor of events.

For instance, during Gillespie is hosting the family on his farm, the barn in which the coffin laid is set on fire. While Jewel and Gillespie struggle between the growing flames trying to save the mules, horse and the coffin, Darl's mind captures the whole tragedy as a theatrical scene, decorated almost in a surrealistic manner: "he [Jewel] is struggling with Gillespie; the one lean in underclothes, the other stark naked. They are like two figures in a Greek frieze, isolated out of all reality by the red glare" (Faulkner, 1930: 211). In this moment where men are fiercely trying to evacuate the burning barn, instead of assisting, Darl is more likely to appear almost as a mad figure, perhaps like *Nero*, to whom the fire he had already started is mostly a spectacle, with "sparks raining down" (Faulkner, 1930: 210, 211).

Rohrberger describes "Darl as embodying the concept of poetic madness, (...) as encompassing all possible modes of response and awareness" (Rohrberger, 1983: 144). Most of the time, his gaze is defined as strange and compelling by the other characters. According to Dewey Dell who observes him on the dinner table, Darl's "eyes gone further than the food and the lamp," "the holes filled with distance beyond land" (Faulkner 25, 26). Darl's vision is clearly the result of his initial trauma caused by the maternal figure instead of the paternal, which probably over-shadowed also his oedipal recognition. As Doreen Fowler points out:

> Rejected by Addie, he has never been able to establish the boundaries of self; unbounded, he embodies a lack of separation from the other and from the world. Ironically, because he has been rejected by the mother, he is like the mother; he too is a reminder of fusion with the encompassing material world. (Fowler, 1988: 122)

Since the speaking subject eternally exists in-between the semiotic and symbolic, similar to Kristeva's theory, Surrealists see "the double-center" as "the base of the surrealist view," and take their subversively expressive power from the similar pursuit that "the polarities are not left suspended" (Rohrberger, 1983: 145). "The basic drive of the surrealist is" also "to a reconciliation of opposites, to a *point sublime* where the contraries are identified." In this sense, "Darl is, more than anyone else, the medium through which the two worlds pass" (Rohrberger, 1983: 144). For example, in his 5th section, Darl imaginatively reconstructs the scene around his mother's death bed, while at the moment he is actually away in the woods with his brother Jewel collecting wood:

> Pa stands beside the bed. From behind his leg Vardaman peers, with his round head and his eyes round and his mouth beginning to open. She [Addie] looks at pa; all her failing life appears to drain into her eyes, urgent, irremediable. "It's Jewel she wants," Dewey Dell says. (Faulkner, 1930: 46)

Mary Ross reasonably remarks that it must have been easy for Darl to imagine the reactions of his family to Addie's death as a realistic scene because it is based on his lifetime observations of his family and on their predictable reactions and customary attitudes (Ross, 1980: 27). As much as that, it is also possible to suggest that Darl intuitively knows when his mother is dead and what happens, even though he is physically not there at the moment, because he is "more than anyone else a medium" who can exceptionally see things through. By the time the readers are on this section, they are already aware that Darl's imagination springs out from a deeper level of sensation and perception. In this sense, each scene of his imaginative reconstruction appears directly as some profoundly painted 'truth' about life and death, where polarities of life and death seem to come in unity. In one of these imaginary scenes, Dewey Dell's youthful strength (as life) is juxtaposed with Addie's old and outworn body (as death) in a poetic vision where Dewey Dell with the fan appears almost like a helplessly fluttering bird by her dead mother's bed:

> Her voice is strong, young, tremulous and clear, rapt with its own timbre and volume, the fan still moving steadily up and down, whispering the useless air. Then she flings herself (…) across the handful of rotten bones that Addie left, (…) her arms outflung and the fan in one hand still beating with expiring breath into the quilt. (Faulkner, 1930: 48)

Ross sees that Darl "has a highly developed sense of beauty" and "emerges as a character with an almost lyrical love of things." At the same time, she underlines that "his world is not, however, wholly beautiful and his sensitive nature must also confront much that is ugly" (Ross, 1980: 18). As the confrontation with "ugly" occurs through the repressed, Fowler also believes that "Darl, then, releases the repressed; he penetrates the unconscious and makes the conscious mind aware of chaotic, subversive, instinctive forces" (Fowler, 1988: 122). According to Rohrberger's remark "when [Darl's] language is most poetic we seem deepest inside the subconscious and the contraries and space-time dislocations are most clearly discernible" (Rohrberger, 1983: 144). Therefore, Darl is the only male character, who can see beyond the frame of symbolic prohibition. He intuitively sees that which is hidden *from men*; a capacity Rohrberger relates with the female psyche: "Women are the bond, a bridge between waking and dream, the source of wonder, the repository of unique and overpowering knowledge hidden from men" (Rohrberger, 1983: 147).

In this sense, Darl's situation as a *seer*, is also his curse which eventually drives him crazy. He ends up being handed to the authorities to be taken away to Jackson, at the end of the novel. Bundrens also participate in the exclusion of Darl character as they handed him to the authorities. Even though he is excluded from the realm of patriarchal common sense (isolation of the mad and insane), Darl will continue to remain as the only one who knows Addie's truth. In one of his sections, Darl reflects the day when fifteen-year-old Jewel bought himself a horse which had stirred a family conflict. He remembers the moment how he had recognized (as a flash of insight) that Jewel was not from Anse, that he is a product of "deceit:"

> That night I found ma sitting beside the bed where he [Jewel] was sleeping, in the dark. She cried hard, maybe because she had to cry so quiet; maybe because she felt the same way about tears she did about deceit, hating herself for doing it, hating him because she had to. And then I knew that I knew. (Faulkner, 1930: 129)

In terms of sexual love, "the role that Addie plays in the novel can be seen as surrealist in concept. Sexual love is a unique goal of human search because, as Ferdinand Alquie says: 'It contains all the obscurity, all the problems, all the ambiguity of man'" (Rohrberger, 1983: 147). As much as Addie, Minister Whitfield also pursues sexual love and experiences it, even though he could have foreseen the possible consequences, either the natural/spiritual and cultural handicaps or the responsibilities. Years later, on his way to do his final service to Addie in death bed, Whitfield appears as still worried on whether Addie remains confidential about their affair. It seems that, during all these years, he has been keeping himself unaware that Jewel is from him. On the other hand, Addie who has conceived her *beloved son* Jewel from this "sexual love" affair, finds the real meaning of life as "warm" and "calm" (Faulkner, 1930: 168). It is during her motherhood to Jewel that she feels love as sublimation. Therefore, unlike Whitfield, Addie has no worries as she seems to unconditionally believe that Jewel is her "cross" and her "salvation" (Faulkner, 1930: 160). Rohrberger concludes that "the woman is often the female counterpart of the centaur image of man, because she is presented as woman and as serpent. Addie fits the role. In her is also the merger of life and death and the material and the immaterial" (Rohrberger, 1983: 147).

3. Addie Bundren as the monstrous-feminine: Maternally speaking subject of law and desire

While identifying the notion of "monstrous-feminine," Edwards and Graulund see it as "related to the female grotesque, for the maternal body is a corporeal manifestation of horror, a feeling emanating from the fear of reincorporation into the mother, as well as in the fear of the mother's generative power" (Edwards, Graulund, 2013: 33). Faulkner's Addie is probably among the most intimidating examples of the monstrous-feminine in Western literature. With her closeness to nature, she represents an archaic dominant mother whose power rises from prioritizing her instinctual desire over the linguistic law.

While analysing Addie character as a monstrous-feminine representation, it is also essential to consider Camille Paglia's insightful conceptualization of the "femme fatale" as "the woman fatal to man" (Paglia, 1990: 13). Paglia believes that the femme fatal is an archaic sexual persona with a long lineage of existence: "Daemonic archetypes of woman, filling world mythology, represent the uncontrollable nearness of nature. Their tradition passes nearly unbroken from prehistoric idols through literature and art to modern movies" (Paglia, 1990: 13). She reproachfully points out that "feminism dismisses the femme fatale as a cartoon and libel. If she ever existed, she was simply a victim of society, resorting to destructive womanly wiles because of her lack of access to political power" (Paglia, 1990: 13). However,

as she claims, "the more nature is beaten back in the west, the more the femme fatale reappears, as a return of the repressed" (Paglia, 1990: 13).

It is possible to regard Addie as a femme fatale character because her power of existence results from being able to operate her body both as a gender construction and as a material acknowledgment of desire. Lying next to her sleeping husband Anse, "hearing the dark land talking of god's love and His beauty and his sin," (Faulkner, 1930: 166) leads her to experience her life not only within the maintenance of her role (identity) as a conventionally confined female but also as a body with libidinal/sexual stirrings and as an ego (subject) who wants to *feel alive*. Taking her own decision to experience the 'true nature of things,' she has gained a sense of self-awareness which provided her with an ability to be *alive* as a female yet remain *invisible* to the patriarchal ruling order. This way, she has been able to avert much of repression and live according to her ruling order within the Symbolic Register (i.e. society).

The extramarital affair Addie had with Minister Whitfield during a conventional religious camp meeting is recounted by her neighbour Cora's perspective which represents the society's gaze. Cora fails to perceive the truth because of the way her belief is constructed over the symbolic meaning of Whitfield's social status. Her belief also affirms the basic gender constructions subordinating women to men:

> She had never been pure religious, not even after that summer at the camp meeting when Brother Whitfield wrestled with her spirit, singled her out and strove with the vanity in her mortal heart. (Faulkner, 1930: 158)

Here, Cora appears like a blindfolded person who mistakenly, yet at the same time instinctually touches the right spots. At this stage of the novel, to the readers who are already skeptical about Addie's adulterous affair, the word "wrestling" Cora uses, without her conscious intention, operates also as a grotesquely humorous way of indicating the libidinal (true) nature of Addie and Whitfield's relationship.

Cora's unconditional belief in Whitfield is based on his status as *the* Minister. To her, his title signifies the highest, most respected subject position in her society. Likewise, her opinion about Addie is based on a language seeing the fellow female through virgin-whore dichotomy. In her plot, Whitfield appears as the 'true man of God' who has heartily dedicated himself to save Addie from her 'erroneous' spirit:

> "Not even after Brother Whitfield, a godly man if ever one breathed God's breath, prayed for you and strove as never a man could expect him," I said. (Faulkner, 1930: 159)

The above passage shows that while addressing Addie contemptuously, Cora, again without any conscious intention, reveals actually how Whitfield was passionately attracted to Addie. Faulkner often constructs his language to signify two meanings which are conventionally in opposition. Through his sharp and bitter sense of humor, the opposites, trickly complement each other. For the reader, Cora verbalizes a reality beyond her conception, and yet, unknowingly, she is both so mistaken and so right about it.

As for Whitfield, in his only section, he appears horseback on his way to the Bundrens' farm to serve as a minister on the night of Addie's expected death. During his horse ride journey, because of his guilty conscious, through a monologue, Whitfield imagines himself having a dialogue with God in which he is guided by a God personified by himself. During this self-judgment, Whitfield does not mention anything about the physical and libidinal truth of the affair; he only speaks about it as having a struggle with *Satan*:

> When they told me she was dying, all that night I wrestled with Satan, and I emerged victorious. I woke to the enormity of my sin; I saw the true light at last, and I fell on my knees and confessed to God and asked His guidance and received it. "Rise," he said; "repair to that home in which you have put a living lie, among those people with whom you have outraged My Word; confess your sin aloud. It is for them, for that deceived husband to forgive you: not I." (Faulkner, 1930: 169)

However, as he enters the house and finds that Addie is already dead, he acts with cowardice and instead of keeping his promise to confess and take the responsibility of his sin, he feels relief and only speaks as a minister: "God's grace upon this house" (Faulkner, 1930: 169).

Paglia believes that "the mystique of the femme fatal cannot be perfectly translated into male terms" (Paglia, 1990: 15). Whitfield's employment of the word "Satan" probably results from Addie's irresistible power, because to him, this is the only eligible word to verbalize his *fatal* attraction to Addie. According to Paglia, "the permanence of the femme fatale as a sexual persona is part of the weary weight of eroticism, beneath which both ethics and religion founder. Eroticism is society's soft point, through which it is invaded by chthonian[2] nature" (Paglia, 1990: 15). In the novel, Whitfield's failure to resist Addie as a 'temptation' represents society's soft point as eroticism.

Unlike Whitfield, Addie speaks by holding on to her "sin." She expresses her affair with Minister Whitfield in terms of *her* desire to experience sin. With her power to *tempt* a reverend, she represents Paglia's "femme fatale" who appears as "a return of the repressed." She acknowledges how Whitfield's social status has been the value which inspired her libidinal motivations:

> I would think of sin as I would think of the clothes we both wore in the world's face, of the circumspection necessary because he was he and I was I; the sin the more utter and terrible since he was the instrument ordained by God who created the sin, to sanctify that sin He had created. While I waited for him in the woods, waiting for him before he saw me, I would think of him as dressed in sin. I would think of him as thinking of me as dressed also in sin, he the more beautiful since the garment which he had exchanged for sin was sanctified. (Faulkner, 1930: 166, 167)

Paglia suggests that "the femme fatale can appear" in various images such "as Medusan mother or as frigid nymph, masquing in the brilliant luminosity of Apollonian high glamour" (Paglia, 1990: 15). From her theory, one can assume that, whether the femme fatale appears as dark or bright, she exists and executes with a keen/fine sense of classical aesthetics and its order (Apollonic). In this respect, again Addie literally represents a *Paglian* femme-fatale because of the way she takes pleasure from dressing herself with the awareness of transvaluating conventionally sacred codes. By masquerading herself, she probably takes advantage of the virgin-whore objectification in the male gaze. As Wood also remarks:

> By forming her identity through her body, both as mother and as adulteress (whore), she conforms to cultural gender constructions, without allowing her rebellion to be visible. Yet she manipulates the roles of mother and whore, affirming the pleasure and power they bring her. (Wood, 1994: 100)

Quoting from James Mellard, Fowler suggests that by rebelling "against the Law of the Father that (…) exists on the side of Thanatos, not Eros," Addie affirms life at the expense of law. Rejecting her father's teaching that "the reason for living is to get ready to stay dead a long time," she "locates the meaning of existence in the body and the living world" and thus "sets herself up in opposition to a repressive social order. Whereas patriarchal law identifies life with death, the origin in the mother with the end, Addie

[2] The word "chthonian" is used by Paglia, broadly, often as a reference to nature's uncontrolled forces, to the repressed instincts, in other words to what lies outside the Symbolic borders.

lives for 'the alive,' for the fluid, chaotic, elemental existence that the Law of the Father would repress" (Fowler, 1997: 50).

After the affair ends, Addie longs for Whitfield as a passionate lover and feels haunted by "the wild blood" for a while. In this stage, she overcomes her depressive sense of abandonment and loneliness not by destructivity or death but by discovering an archaic sense of belonging only to the earth and her children:

> My children were of me alone, of the wild blood boiling along the earth, of me and all that lived; of none and of all. Then I found that I had Jewel. When I waked to remember to discover it, he was two months gone. (Faulkner, 1930: 167)

In her conceptualization, Paglia also proposes that "the femme fatal was produced by the mystique connection between mother and child" (Paglia, 1990: 14). It is after having Jewel that Addie finds solace and prepares herself for redemption of her *wild* pleasure:

> With Jewel (…) the wild blood boiled away and the sound of it ceased. Then there was only the milk, warm and calm, and I lying calm in the slow silence, getting ready to clean my house. (Faulkner, 1930: 168)

After their "sin," unlike Whitfield who repents only imagining himself repenting, Addie repents by fulfilling her duty as a wife to Anse and her children:

> I gave Anse Dewey Dell to negative Jewel. Then I gave him Vardaman to replace the child I had robbed him of. And now he has three children that are his and not mine. And then I could get ready to die. (Faulkner: 1930: 168)

Eventually, Addie quotes her father's teaching statement one more time by reinventing its meaning and making it her own:

> My father said that the reason for living is getting ready to stay dead. I knew at last what he meant and that he could not have known what he meant himself, because a man cannot know anything about cleaning up the house afterward. (Faulkner, 1930: 167-168)

In her statement, the meaning of "cleaning up the house" has been transformed, from a patriarchally ascribed duty (domestic gender role) to an awareness of responsibility specifically associated with a kind of maternal wisdom. It is aggregable to suggest that Addie's generative power seems to be based primarily over a kind of value exchange between law and desire or culture and nature. For most feministic critics this means that Addie profits from the paternal foundations to restructure her own ethics.

Wood points out that according to Irigaray "femininity is a role, image, or value imposed upon women by male systems of representation" (Wood, 1994: 100). From this perspective, "Addie Bundren engages in a powerful form of mimicry" because even though she appears as a strongly self-motivated female character, "by having her find meaning in her life through her body, Faulkner is reaffirming cultural notions of femininity" (Wood, 1994: 100).

However, it is also plausible to argue that Addie's awareness of taking the responsibility of "cleaning up the house afterward" does not only mean a duty to Anse and to her household but also a duty to herself. This awareness places Addie as a *subject* above the patriarchal subject, namely above her father, then

her husband, and her beloved Whitfield as a man of God. This way Addie takes her revenge from the patriarchal order and realizes her true inheritance as a sexually femme fatale persona.

4. Addie Bundren's contested status as a symbolically feministic role model

Identifying Addie character has often been a challenging and contested endeavour to literary and cultural critics of feminist perspective. Whether Addie can be regarded as a representative model for inspiring a feministic political position has often been an issue of academic argument bringing with it either methodological or ethical problems.

One of the problems in applying a feministic approach to Addie rises from the fact that in real life, her rural, domestic status would mainly correspond to that of subordinated women, who would often remain repressed, being conventionally consented to traditional gender roles, or limited socio-economic and cultural environments. Annette Wannamaker critically points out that:

> The modernist view of the inexpressibility of the creative spirit does not apply to Addie simply because she is not an artist; she is a woman and a mother, a person who feminist theorists would describe as 'traditionally mute.' To characterize her using universalizing, humanist terms erases the way that her character is marked by her biological sex and by the gender roles she is forced to play. (Wannamaker: 2017)

Wannamaker is aware that evaluating Addie from a feminist perspective has its challenges. In order to avoid being "lead to negative readings of Addie," one has to "move outside the traditional patriarchal definitions of 'womanhood' or 'motherhood' that demand selflessness from others, blame mothers for all familial dysfunctions" (Wannamaker: 2017). She points out that:

> Addie is not a representative of humankind, or even of womankind, but an individual woman trapped in a patriarchal world that represses her desires and silences her; a woman who longs to find an identity of her own that is outside patriarchal constructions and not always definable in relation to the men and the children in her life. (Wannamaker: 2017)

Despite representing a "traditionally mute" character; a backlash to feministic strategies, Addie appears as an ever-ready subject to speak her truth, not only to the reader; but also to the other characters, as well. Her silence is a preference not because of her submissive role, but because of Whitfield's fear and identity:

> I hid nothing. I tried to deceive no one. I would not have cared. I merely took the precautions that he thought necessary for his sake, not for my safety, but just as I wore clothes in the world's face. (Faulkner, 1930: 167)

Another basic problem to identify Addie as a feministic or a self-activist role model appears from the fact that she victimizes her children, but mostly Darl while "accomplishing her revenge on patriarchal culture." Fowler observes that:

> From the beginning, Addie's revenge focused on Darl. She formulated her revenge with his birth: 'And when Darl was born I asked Anse…to take me back to Jefferson when I died'; and his expulsion occurs almost simultaneously with her own final displacement. (Fowler, 1988: 123)

Fowler reads Addie's rejection of Darl in terms of accomplishing her revenge on patriarchal culture by seeing her revenge first, as an assertion of "the value of the repressed," and second, as an exacting of "equal justice." Identifying her with "the archetypal avenging mother, Clytemnestra," Fowler thinks that "to avenge her lifelong exclusion, Addie ensures that Darl is excluded:"

> Ultimately, Addie's revenge is to make Darl suffer the mother's endlessly reenacted fate: he is sacrificed to insure the continuance of the social order. (Fowler, 1988: 123)

Besides these allegorical interpretations, Addie also seems to suffer simply from a postpartum depression so feels totally exhausted and consumed through her domestic experience with Anse. But unfortunately, Darl becomes the accidental victim of her frustration and estrangement:

> Then I found that I had Darl. At first I would not believe it. Then I believed that I would kill Anse. It was as though he had tricked me, hidden within a word like within a paper screen and struck me in the back through it. (Faulkner, 1930: 164)

Still, many critics agree that Addie embodies a significant female character within the scope of Western literature, at least in the symbolic ways she represents the revenge of culturally and politically excluded mother.

For Wood she "is one of Faulkner's most intriguing women characters because she is one of the few who tells her own story, in her own voice" (Wood, 1993: 99). Her ability to act and speak with her own ethics makes her a cutting-edge character and marks her eventually as an *asset* on the side of feministic and marginalized identity politics in literature:

> Addie's grounding of meaning in her motherhood and her sexuality at the same time is so striking, and indeed insurgent, because motherhood and sexuality have been so dissociated in Western culture (whose greatest female icon is the Virgin Mother). (Wood, 1993: 100)

Fowler defines the language Faulkner constructed to reflect Addie's mind as a "feminine voice that is fully engaged in" the "attempt to delegitimize the privileged voice of the father and to represence the mother's body over and against the exclusion of it required by the father's law." In this sense, as Faulkner's *speaking subject*, Addie reflects the experience and rebellion of "that women writers trapped in" the patriarchal myth which constitutes "the murder of the mother as a positive step toward establishing identity" (Fowler, 1997: 114). Faulkner, as a white, male writer presents a double position: on the one hand "he rewrites the dominant myth of" Western culture, "the mythic identification of the mother's body with castration and death" on the other hand "he allows the dead mother to speak" (Fowler, 1997: 115).

Wood concludes by confirming that "Addie remains such a powerful character for feminists because she challenges patriarchal culture by redefining, refiguring, and playing with everything that culture has given her, including language, religion, and, of course, her body" (Wood, 1993: 112).

5. Conclusion - Author as the deviser of territories: The empowered speaking subject of Faulkner's artistic language

According to Kristeva's perspective, great modern literature unfolds over the abject's terrain. She traces the possibilities of emancipation and self-realization for her speaking subject through a repertoire of the classics of modern literature such as "Dostoyevsky, Lautreamont, Proust, Artaud, Kafka, Celine" (Kristeva, 1982: 17,18). Undoubtfully, Faulkner is also one of these figures of literature. As already suggested, Faulkner's fascination with the abject, and his capacity to incorporate the abject to language find expression through his style and content in *As I Lay Dying*.

Kristeva uses the term "deject" to define the condition of the subject "by whom the abject exists" (Kristeva, 1982: 8). In her theory "deject" is conceptualized as follows:

> A deviser of territories, languages, works, the *deject* never stops demarcating his universe whose fluid confines (..) constantly question his solidity and impel him to start afresh. (Kristeva, 1982: 8)

According to Kristeva, as "a tireless builder, the deject is in short a *stray*. He is on a journey, during the night, the end of which keeps receding" (Kristeva, 1982: 8). From this perspective, the writer (with his *egoistic* desire to write) identifies with the condition of a 'deject-subject.' Since he has committed himself, artistically, to the act of straying (through the night), his ego is intrinsically aware that "the more he strays, the more he is saved" (Kristeva, 1982: 8).

> Faulkner seems to be intuitively aware of this kind of an archaic experience which is related with human subjectivity, without ever getting acquainted with any philosophical or academic theory. Through his character Darl, Faulkner expresses the self almost as a deject subject. Darl's mind reflects the awareness of Kristeva's subject about his fatal condition both as a stray and as a deviser of territories:
>
> Life was created in the valleys. It blew up onto hills on the old terrors, the old lusts, the old despairs. That's why you must walk up the hills so you can ride down. (Faulkner, 1930: 217)

Here in this depiction, "valleys" might be seen metaphorically as the maternal body or nature's womb whereas "up onto hills" might be identified with the impulse of rising to the patriarchal. Darl sees how life is sourced from the maternal, and how it is a struggling experience ongoing down the valleys and up the hills. Eventually, the deject character is in-between culture and nature, duty and desire, submission and freedom, death and resurrection. He is in a sense, an intermediator of these opposing poles.

Kristeva moves on through her theory by pointing out that "the abject is edged with the sublime" through the subject's primary response of "abjection." According to her, through the lingering sense of primary abjection, the linguistic subject manages to escape from being absorbed by the abject and avoids (the fear of) death or castration. In her narrative of human subjectivity, "at the limit of primal repression," springs an ego who "has discovered an intrinsically corporeal and already signifying brand, symptom, and sign: repugnance, disgust, abjection" (Kristeva, 1982: 11). Primary abjection occurs as the subject's response of acknowledging the denouncement of his maternal desire and his want of paternal submission because, in this experience, "there is an effervescence of object and sign -not of desire but of intolerable significance" (Kristeva, 1982: 11). Therefore, she sees that the "sense of abjection that [one] experience[s] is anchored in the superego," (Kristeva, 1982: 15) and thus defines abjection as a resurrection that has gone through death (of the ego): "It is an alchemy that transforms death into a start of life, of new significance" (Kristeva, 1982: 15).

Kristeva also edges the abject with sublime in terms of the ego's relation to death because at the root of what they both signify in language, lies the fear of death. However, the abject signifies a threat as "it takes the ego back to its source on the abominable limits from which, in order to be, the ego has broken away -it assigns it a source in the non-ego, drive, and death" (Kristeva, 1982: 15). On the other hand, the sublime signifies "*something added* that expands us, overstrains us, and causes us to be both *here*, as dejects, and *there*, as others and sparkling." The sublime narrates death as a transcendental experience, "a divergence, an impossible bounding." Sublime promises to the ego "everything missed, joy - fascination" (Kristeva, 1982: 12).

The writer as the deviser of territories (a deject), can masterfully transform the abject to sublime or exchange his sense of abjection with sublimation. In this sense, the (writer's) speaking subject becomes empowered with his capacity to unite the semiotic with symbolic. Thereby "the abject is edged with the

sublime," because it is the Author's subjecthood as "the same subject and speech" which "bring them into being" (Kristeva, 1982: 11).

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