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SHORT TITLE: MOTIFS OF ALIENATION IN FAULKNER'S

AS I LAY DYING

Motifs of Alienation in William Faulkner's

As I Lay Dying

by

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Preface

All references to the text of *As I Lay Dying* made in this essay correspond to the pagination found in the Modern Library Combined Edition (*The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*), Random House, New York, 1946.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. H.G. Files, Professor Emeritus, McGill University for his continuing help and encouragement; to Professor William Bruce of the Faculty of Engineering for a scientist's view of Cash's theories (given in Appendix C); and to my husband, Jim, for most valuable criticism and suggestions.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This summary of criticism will be concerned with two aspects of work on Faulkner: first, the articles and chapters of books relating to *As I Lay Dying*; secondly, those concerned with polarity and antithesis characteristic of his novels.

The early critics of *As I Lay Dying* objected primarily to the subject matter of the novel. Faulkner's delight in moronic, vicious, and dissipated people was deplored by the critics of the 1930s who, like Henderson,[1] found his work cheap and melodramatic since it did not even have a social conscience.[2] The New York Times' review of *As I Lay Dying* declared that the novel was unfortunately second rate because its content made it inferior.[3] Granville Hicks, though he admired the form of *As I Lay Dying*, disliked its preoccupation with unpleasant subjects.[4] Only a French critic, le Breton, admired the work, finding the writing "precise and vivid."

George O'Donnell was the first of many to suggest literary and mythological parallels for the action of the novel. He found the Bundrens' funeral journey "not unlike that of the mediaeval soul to redemption."[5] The poor whites were, he felt, in the Sartoris tradition, keepers of the traditional morality based on honour and courage.[6] Warren,[7] Howe, and

O'Connor[8] upheld O'Donnell's admiration for the Bundrens, speaking of them in terms of heroic fulfilment, and dignified courage in the face of insurmountable obstacles. Cash, particularly, was cited as showing humane sympathy and understanding. Having rejected the earlier critics' condemnation of the novel's horrifying subject, the men of the 1940s upheld the worth of _As I Lay Dying_ by ignoring its grotesquely humorous quality, and exaggerating its, to them, positive contribution as a novel of affirmation.

Olga Vickery made the first analysis of the novel _per se_ in her discussion of the levels of communication on which the characters operated. As the basis of her later chapter "Dimensions of Consciousness,"[9] her article,[10] while rejecting the intrinsic worth of what she feels is a "travesty of the ritual of interment," directs its attention to the characters and their relationships one with the other. During the 1950s there were two main approaches: the first, arising from Vickery's study, concentrated primarily on the characters; the second, following O'Donnell's earlier lead, approached the novel from the standpoint of myth and religion in an attempt to find a symbolic and mythical structure within _As I Lay Dying_.

In the first category one might suggest Sawyer's study of the novel's hero,[11] Goellner's "Closer Look at _As I Lay Dying_,"[12] Stonesifer's article concerning Dewey Dell,[13] and Handy's account of "Faulkner's Inner Reporter."[14] While Sawyer and Stone-

sifer argue the relative merits of specific characters; Goellner defines the ages of the Bundrens and the aspect of Addie that each child represents; and Handy compares the ironic difference between the Bundrens "as participants in a journey" and their "existence as living, experiencing beings."[15] Though there are mentions of the novel as being neither a farce nor noble, the tone of the novel's world or its outlook on life is decidedly in the background while kinship and psychological relations are in focus.

In the second category, symbolic parallels are gleaned from two main sources: Collins and King choose Greek myth; Blotner and Waggoner, The Bible. While King searches the Janus symbol,[16] Collins finds a more elaborate parallel in the Demeter (Addie), Persephone (Dewey Dell), and Kore (Cora) myths.[17] Demeter's forms as mother, dolphin (Vardaman's fish), and horse's head, together with decaying pigs (AILD 451) used in Demeter worship, and cows as Isis symbols (apparently the Greeks equated Demeter with Isis) are all grist to Collins' mill, capped by the discovery of the title of the novel in ~~Sir~~ William Morris' translation of The Odyssey.[18] Though less ingenious than Collins, Blotner[19] finds his parallel in the Old Testament story of Noah who builds to encase life, in contrast to Anse whose concern is death, and whom the storm and flood injure rather than sustain. Waggoner[20] finds that the novel not only re-enacts the Eucharist, but is incarnational in its very form.

Wasiolek, at the turn of the decade, discussed the

distortion of *As I Lay Dying* through the belief that it is an affirmative work. He emphasizes that "the 'humour' of *As I Lay Dying* grimaces grotesquely through the doomed protest of Addie and Faulkner against the condition of isolation which all men share, and against the insensitivity of that isolation."[21] Faulkner's insistence on "the bitter conditions of man's life"[22] is reiterated by Rossky who sees man as dying throughout his life. He finds in the novel an abyss of truth into which Darl falls, and which sensitive men (Cash, Tull and Dewey Dell) will glimpse but must "veer away lest they see it too clearly."[23] Studies which view *As I Lay Dying*'s world in less tragic terms are Howell's "Jumblies" which sees the novel "as it was meant to be, primarily a nonsense story," relaxing tensions through laughter so that "a kind of balance out of which purposeful action may be resumed"[24] is restored; and also Slabey's treatment of the existential aspects of the novel which deals with "the absurdity of human existence" in such a way that a "reaffirmation of life is found, not in the plot, but in Faulkner's creative and critical awareness and interpretation of the situation."[25] Volpe discusses the novel as a consideration of the meaning of "life's absurd paradox"[26] in a ludicrous world. He finds death and sex, non-being and being, and illusion and reality as the most important themes of the novel.

Earlier modes of analysis are also repeated in the decade of the 1960s;[27] Watkins and Dillingham prove that Vardaman

is no idiot, and Simon[28] traces Darl's developing schizophrenia. This concern with character is repeated in Robert's discussion[29] of the individuals' motives, their relationships to Addie, and to Darl who is the only sane member of the family. Kerr[30] approaches the novel archetypally but with a new twist, through its ironic deviation from the romance (as defined by Northrop Frye). This somewhat theoretical parallel is made more concrete in the form of the Arthurian legend with Anse as Merlin, Dewey Dell as an anti-princess, and MacGowan as the evil magician. Dickerson[31] adds an attempt at parallelism in her comparison of As I Lay Dying's theme and imagery with that of Eliot's The Waste Land.

Antithesis and Polarity

The importance of Faulkner's use of tension-sustaining devices was first noted by Warren whose essay concerned primarily with Faulkner's themes, also poses the crucial question, "to what extent does Faulkner work in terms of polarity, opposites, paradoxes, [and] inversions of roles."[32] Though both Roth and Thompson (briefly) discuss the sentence form as, respectively, "a way of holding polarities in balance,"[33] and "Faulkner's fondness for the technical principle of antithesis,"[34] the first clear statement of and analysis from the approach of polarity was made by Slatoff in "The Edge of Order." He believes that

> there is much evidence . . . that Faulkner is willing and even anxious to leave most [parts of the jigsaw puzzle]

> in a high degree of suspension, or at least a suspension that cannot be resolved in logical or rational terms. Nor has it been recognised how very much his moment to moment presentation of experience involves a juxtaposition of elements which do not seem to fit together and which to some degree resist synthesis or resolution.[35]

He finds evidence of such intention in "opposed or contrary suggestions,"[36] in extended metaphors as, for example, in the metamorphosis of the preacher in The Sound and the Fury; in the novels that end without disclosure or resolution; and in Faulkner's most frequent use of the oxymoron, a figure of speech which is itself contradictory, and defies logical synthesis or resolution. He mentions, too, Conrad Aiken's discovery "of deliberately withheld meaning, of progressive and partial and delayed disclosure."[37]

However, both in this article and in his later book,[38] which is primarily concerned with the oxymoron, Slatoff unfortunately turns psychiatrist and ascribes Faulkner's use of such devices to a "quest for failure." In this context, the use of polarity and antithesis is analysed as being self-defeating and stultifying rather than as representing a valid perceptual viewpoint.

Mention should also be made here of Klotz's article[39] which, while being restricted primarily to Faulkner's withholding of syntactic intelligibility, ascribes a positive rather than negative purpose to this characteristic. He analyses Faulkner's suspension of meaning as "reflexive reference,"[40] the withholding of understanding "until the concept is completed, at which time the reader understands what might

have been a rather lengthy narrative in a moment of time."[41] Leaver's discussion of "the negative ultimate" is also of interest, particularly in the positive effect achieved by the use of words denoting "the absence of a quality which itself in context has a negative connotation."[42]

Polarity in As I Lay Dying

The ironic qualities of As I Lay Dying have been suggested in much of the criticism to date. "Character criticism" has been aware that the humour is based in large part on the tension generated by the ironic difference between the external and internal lives of the characters, and, like Kerr, certain of the critics have posited the ironic antithesis between the novel and some external literary or mythological source.

This paper is based on a belief that As I Lay Dying is of particular importance in reference to Faulkner's use of polarity. Aside from its inclusion in paradoxical and antithetical devices and structures, polarity forms the actual theme of this novel which is concerned with the splitting of perception into two antithetical and dissonantal parts, with extreme tension involved in any attempt to reunite them. This divided vision can also be seen in the very genre of the novel, the tragi-comic. The study of As I Lay Dying as a novel central to Faulkner's concern with polarity and antithesis will be made through an examination of his use of the recurrent motif, a device that is the imagistic embodiment of perceptual division.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1 Philip Henderson (*The Novel Today*, 1936), quoted by Frederick J. Hoffman, "An Introduction," *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism* (New York, 1963), p. 4.

2 New York Times ("Review of *As I Lay Dying*," Oct 9, 1930), quoted by Hoffman, *ibid.*, p. 17.

3 Granville Hicks (*The Bookman*, Sept., 1931), quoted by Hoffman, *ibid.*, p. 3.

4 Maurice le Breton (*Revue Anglo-Americaine*, June, 1936), quoted by Hoffman, *ibid.*, p. 17.

5 George Marion O'Donnell, "Faulkner's Mythology," *ibid.*, p. 87.

6 Robert Penn Warren, "William Faulkner," *ibid.*, pp. 109-125.

7 Irving Howe, *William Faulkner: A Critical Study* (New York, 1951), pp.147-142.

8 William Van O'Connor, *The Tangled Fire of William Faulkner* (Minneapolis, 1954), pp. 45-54.

9 Olga Vickery, "The Dimensions of Consciousness: *As I Lay Dying*," *Three Decades of Criticism*, pp. 232-247.

10 Olga Vickery (Westland), "*As I Lay Dying*," *Perspective*, III (Autumn, 1950), 179-191.

11 Kenneth B. Sawyer, "Hero in *As I Lay Dying*," *Faulkner Studies*, III (Summer-Autumn, 1954), 30-33.

12 Jack Goellner, "A Closer Look at *As I Lay Dying*," *Perspective*, VII (Spring, 1954), 42-54.

13 Richard J. Stonesifer, "In Defense of Dewey Dell," *The Educational Leader*, XXII (July, 1958), 27-33.

14 William J. Handy, "*As I Lay Dying*: Faulkner's Inner Reporter," *The Kenyon Review*, XXI (Summer, 1959), 437-451.

15 William J. Handy, *ibid.*, p. 437.

16 Roma King Jr., "The Janus Symbol in *As I Lay Dying*," University of Kansas City Review, XXI (Summer, 1955), 287-290.

17 Carvel Collins, "The Paring of The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying," The Princeton University Library Chronicle, XVIII (Spring, 1957), 114-123.

18 I, as I lay dying,
Upon the sword, raised up my hands to smite her;
And shamelessly she turned away, and scorned
To draw my eyelids down or close my mouth
Though I was on the road to Hades' house.

Agamemnon speaks to Odysseus. Translated by Sir William Morris, The Odyssey (Oxford, 1925).

19 Joseph L. Blotner, "As I Lay Dying: Christian Lore and Irony," Twentieth Century Literature, III (April, 1957), 14-19.

20 Hyatt Waggoner, "Vision: As I Lay Dying," William Faulkner: From Jefferson to the World (Lexington, 1959), Chapter 4.

21 Edward Wasiolek, "As I Lay Dying: Distortion in the Slow Eddy of Current Opinion," Critique, III (Spring-Fall, 1949), 15-23.

22 Wasiolek, ibid., p. 23.

23 William Rossky, "As I Lay Dying: The Insane World," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, IV (Spring, 1962), 90.

24 Elmo Howell, "Faulkner's Jumblies: The Nonsense World of As I Lay Dying," Arizona Quarterly, XVI (Spring, 1960), 70.

25 Robert M Slabey, "As I Lay Dying as an Existential Novel," Bucknell Review, XI (no. 4, 1962-63), 23.

26 Edmond L Volpe, A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner (New York, 1964), p. 136.

27 Watkins and Dillingham, "The Mind of Vardaman Bundren," Philological Quarterly, XXXIX (April, 1960), 247-251.

28 John K. Simon, "Why Are You Laughing, Darl?" College English, XXV (Spring, 1964), 104-110.

29 J.L. Roberts, "The Individual and the Family: Faulkner's As I Lay Dying," Arizona Quarterly, XVI (Spring, 1960) 26-38.

30 Elizabeth M. Kerr, "As I Lay Dying as Ironic Quest,"

Wisconsin Studies on Contemporary Literature, III (1962), 5-19.

31 Mary Jane Dickerson, "As I Lay Dying and The Waste Land: Some Relationships," Mississippi Quarterly, XVII (Summer, 1964), 129-134.

32 Warren, op. cit., p. 124.

33 Hoffman, op. cit., p. 44, paraphrasing Russell Roth (Western Review, Spring, 1952).

34 Lawrence Thompson, "Mirror Analogues in The Sound and the Fury," Three Decades of Criticism, p. 217.

35 Walter J. Slatoff, "The Edge of Order: The Pattern of Faulkner's Rhetoric," Three Decades of Criticism, p. 174.

36 Slatoff, ibid., p. 174.

37 Conrad Aiken, "William Faulkner: The Novel as Form," Three Decades of Criticism, p. 138.

38 William J. Slatoff, Quest for Failure (Ithaca, 1960).

39 Marvin Klotz, "The Triumph over Time: Narrative Form in William Faulkner and William Styron," Mississippi Quarterly, XVII (Winter, 1964), 9-20.

40 This term is Joseph Frank's and is employed in his "Spatial Form in Modern Literature," Sewanee Review, LIV (1945).

41 Klotz, op. cit., p. 11.

42 Florence Leaver, "Faulkner: The Word as Principle and Power," Three Decades of Criticism, p. 203.

CHAPTER II

GENRE AND THEME

That *As I Lay Dying* is based on the Quest Myth has been apparent to several critics.[1] Some have even gone so far as to specify an allegorical or an epic form for the novel, with a system of values based on Christian or Greek myth. It is evident from Faulkner's work that he uses associations from Christian or mythical conventions (for instance, the last days of Holy Week by which *The Sound and the Fury* is dated; or the Christlike associations of Joe Christmas' life) without adopting the one-to-one relationship of character and event that typifies allegory, nor even the defined background of belief that would make his work truly symbolic. Modern literature which is generally searching for values, often declaring a sense of loss for former beliefs (or at least reverting to an earlier or synthetic system-- e.g., that of Yeats or Blake), cannot therefore be assigned to the classic literary categories which take for granted the existence of some teleological force (Fate, God, or gods) and some preordained ideal. Genuine tragedy necessitates a fallen world from which the hero is alienated, and the development of the work moving toward a catharsis in which the world of the hero is puri-

fied by his death as well as by his reaffirmation of those ideal values which become mirrored in real life.

Without ideal values to be affirmed there can be no tragedy. In the same way the classic comic form implies a birth-death-rebirth cycle with perhaps the pastoral influence as a cleansing agent in the development. The classic configuration is perfectly exemplified in the later Shakespearian comedies such as A Winter's Tale and The Tempest which culminate in a world set right, order restored, and villains defeated. The existence of belief in some kind of order, social, natural, or even supernatural is essentially the yardstick by which character and action are measured. The reader is never at a loss as to where the right and the good lie.

Against the basic outline of classical comedy and tragedy, the genre of As I Lay Dying is thrown into sharp relief.[2] The main action of the novel is the fulfillment of Anse's promise to his wife that she will be buried in Jefferson. The revelation in Addie's monologue that she exacted this promise in calculated revenge, provides the basic dissonance at the heart of the novel, in which the touchstone of value is shown to be itself valueless. As Addie, both instigator and love object, rots within her coffin, the bizarre mission becomes increasingly absurd, the sacrifice meaningless. All actions and motives become existential in their isolation from any absolute; unless

they are self-justifying they are arbitrary.

This struggle at the centre of the novel is made manifest in its form. Far from giving "simply the point of view of the omniscient author,"[3] the splintered vision created by the peculiar shifting of narrator, perception, and even position in time, communicates a most disjointed, even surrealistic sense of reality. The viewpoints of the narrators are so disparate and so frequently eccentric that the very structure of the novel involves the formulation of a question rather than an affirmation. The reader sees the action and motives of the characters as though reflected in a variety of mirrors rather than through a clear glass. Since he can never see for himself, he can never truly know which of the mirrors are distorted, and then again, whether perhaps the least distorted shows the least truth.

The difficulty of presenting "truth" or "reality" where values are in doubt is a problem familiar to this century, and the reason why the tragi-comic mode has become particularly important. Tragi-comedy contains a schizoid view of reality in its very structure, largely conceiving of a world in which there are no absolutes. Though the tragi-comedy is not a modern invention (in English literature alone one can trace certain of its features to Measure for Measure, and to some of Congreve's comedies-- notably The Way of the World)[4], its recent popularity is apparent in all literary fields.

As I Lay Dying is written in a tragi-comic vein with certain gothic or grotesque overtones. In its chronological position between *The Sound and the Fury* and *Sanctuary*, the novel may be seen as a meeting point for the poetic sensitivity and psychological insight displayed in the earlier work, and the macabre horror of *Sanctuary*'s materialistic modern world. The Compsons represent a tradition of decadent grandeur based on showy pseudo-values: *Sanctuary* exemplifies another mask, this time not an artificial honour but an artificial evil, the banality of which must be bolstered up by a stagey melodrama as in the scene describing Red's funeral. *As I Lay Dying*'s absurd presentation signifies the death of both good and evil. In rejecting both masks, Faulkner does not turn the world upside down so that good and bad or black and white are reversed. He asserts a reality of dissonance and flux where tension between violent opposites constitutes the only existence.

The strange quality of *As I Lay Dying*'s humour, which frequently borders on the hysterical, arises from the extreme tension of the Bundrens' situation. Alienated from their community by the corpse, and broken as a family as well as within their own personalities by the death of their mother, the Bundrens become the objects of an extended "sick joke," a form of humour having strong ties with the tall tale with which Faulkner would have been familiar since childhood. As such, the novel gathers into one unity many opposing elements

embodied in the strange conglomeration of characters who seem almost arbitrarily chosen from different modes -- the farcical, the grotesque, and the tragic. There are the normal "low comedy" figures ranging from the good-natured Samson to the indefatigably pious Cora; Addie and Darl expressing the lucid, fantastic worlds of the dead and of the psychotic and capable of arousing awe touched with fear; Jewel, born of chaos and attracted by it, whose description in metaphors of wood and metal with surrealistic coloration[5] would seem to place him against the background of Sanctuary's Popeye.

Thus, formally, the tragi-comic presentation incorporates and expresses the novel's view of reality as a basic dynamic dissonance. This splintered vision is developed through a device of multiple narrators who represent both a variety of theatrical mode, and a range of temporal and ethical perception: the speakers describe the action from past, present and future viewpoints (see Appendix B), and judge it according to religious, social and aesthetic standards. The novel's thematic structure is formed from a balance of interrelated paradoxes.[6] Volpe chooses "stasis at the centre of motion" as the central image, with "death and sex" and "illusion and reality" as the subsidiary themes in "life's absurd paradox." In fact, the ramifications of this schizoid or paradoxical treatment are so extensive that schism itself becomes the theme of the novel, alienation the human predicament. The burial procession of Addie Bundren represents

man's attempt to cope with the naked violence of disorder and to carve from it the reality in which he must live. The fact that the reality he creates is meaningless seems unimportant; what ultimately matters is the process. "A ritual," Northrop Frye believes, "seems to be something of a voluntary effort (hence the magical element in it) to recapture a lost rapport with the natural cycle."[7] That Addie's funeral may be brought to a successful conclusion, whatever the cost, is a ritualistic necessity, for death presents the ultimate source of man's alienation.

As the central figure of the novel, Addie Bundren is presented as larger than life, her position and influence surrealistically magnified. Though Peabody is joking, one feels a sense of truth in his protestation that Addie "picked out a fine time to get me out here and bring up a storm" (269). With her death the delicate balance of order is violently disrupted, daylight becomes "the colour of sulphur matches" (368), and chaos extends over the land in the shape of storm and flood, destroying what man has created with his sweat (crops, livestock, buildings), and even crippling Cash, the man who tries to confront it. The progress of the corpse initiates more violence: the fire Darl sets repeats the destruction of the flood, while Jewel's quarrel with the townspeople and Dewey Dell's seduction are further manifestations of the outrage that the buzzards represent.

In her life Addie has been obsessed with division. Her

schizoid view of life which polarizes experience into two irreconcilable absolutes, word and deed, prohibits her marriage from giving any degree of wholeness to her life, and condemns her children to a limited perception of reality. "Her" children are consigned to action: their realm is the earth; Anse and "his" children of air apprehend only through the medium of words.[8] Her sexual fulfilment, paradoxically through Whitfield, preacher of "the Word," produces Jewel capable only of violence yet longing for peace.

Addie's death reiterates division. The children become alienated within their own personalities[9] and lose their sense of self. Socially the family becomes progressively isolated from the community by reason of the decaying body, and torn between the ethic of common sense and that of honour.[10] The hostility of the natural world, expressed in the contraries of fire and water, and in the process of decay, objectifies the Bundrens' alienation from the natural cycle.

The ritualistic journey is an attempt to negate the divisiveness that Addie stood for, to draw the antithetical poles together. The importance of the promise Addie extracted from Anse is not the sanctity of a person's dying wish, nor the revenge of the dead upon the living. Addie's burial in Jefferson is the successful transformation of the promised word into deed, a process that is reflected in the development of the individuals involved. Cash, for instance, is by his injury removed from the realm of action and forced into a

verbal apprehension of the situation: Darl is driven to action by an imaginative reconstruction of Addie's pleas. Their attempt "to shape and coerce the terrible blood to the forlorn echo of the dead word high in the air" (466) explains the violence generated by the efforts to reconcile, or at least set into a balanced relationship, the powerfully opposing forces.

The journey does, to a certain degree, resolve the crisis brought about by Addie's death, and subdue the violence with her burial. The mode of the final section of the novel, set predominantly in the past tense, is primarily comic. Addie has been buried, Darl committed, and the remaining Bundrens are justifiably satisfied with their triumphant reacceptance into society. The children of earth and air have passed through fire and water, completing the cycle of elements; they have brought word and deed into a harmonious relationship, replaced the eccentric obsessions with fish, horse, and coffin with the more comforting and controllable concerns of toy trains, bananas, and a new mother who brings the "graphophone." The imagery reflects the sense of accomplishment, replacing the broken elements at the beginning of the novel -- the smashed wagon wheel, the cracked lantern, the broken traces of Peabody's team, and Cash's injured leg -- with the circular images, at first sinister like the wheeling buzzards, and later more serene, the turning wheel upon which Jewel rests, or the circular motion of train and gramophone.

But the resolution is entirely formal, the conflicts, like Darl, cast out from further consideration,[11] and the meaning of the struggle avoided. Even Darl is left with no word but his ironically affirmative "Yes," and his paradoxical image of the two-faced coin and its antithesis, the two-backed figure in the spyglass. His future perception will be governed by the alternate bars of light and dark provided by his cage in Jackson. A riddle, then, remains as the permanent core of life, the _status quo_ of existence.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1 Northrop Frye, in his Fables of Identity (New York, 1963), p. 17, suggests that the Quest Myth lies at the root of all literary genres. Certainly the form of the early epics was based on the search for an object, person or place. Frye sees the comedy as the fulfilled or achieved quest; tragedy as the quest in terms of a preordained cycle.

2 An attempt to place Darl Bundren's role in the context of tragedy or comedy vividly illustrates the novel's bizarre elements as far as structure is concerned. In one sense Darl could be seen as the novel's central or heroic figure whose overacute observation and understanding together with a hesitation to act is reminiscent of Shakespeare's Hamlet. The two systems of ethics, the rightness of the promise and of the demand for immediate burial, clash in him and drive him to commit an act that destroys him. On the other hand, Darl might be treated as the villain of the piece, a mentally disturbed individual whose hatred for Jewel, born of jealousy, causes him to delay Addie's burial, taking away the wagon when he knows Addie will die, and later trying to prevent his family from keeping its promise to Addie. An enemy of constructive action, he is successfully ejected from society at the conclusion of the novel, and order is restored.

3 Richard Chase, The American Novel and its Tradition (New York, 1957), p.207.

4 In plays: Beckett's Waiting for Godot, Albee's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?; in poetry: Eliot's Sweeney Agonistes and some of Auden's shorter poems; and in the novel: most of Kafka and Evelyn Waugh's work, and, closer to Faulkner's own style and subject matter, Caldwell's Tobacco Road.

5 Examples of this descriptive technique may be found in such passages as: "His pale eyes like wood set into his wooden face" (Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying, Random House combined edition, New York, 1946, p. 339); "He springs out like a flat figure cut cleanly from tin" (498); "His face is kind of green, then it would go red and then green again" (426).

6 Edmond L. Volpe, A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner (New York, 1964), p. 136.

7 Frye, op. cit., p. 15

8 "...I would think how words go straight up in a thin line, quick and harmless, and how terribly doing goes along the earth, clinging to it, so that after a while the two lines are too far apart for the same person to straddle from one to the other . . ." (465).

9 This effect on their personalities is foreseen by Peabody when he defines death as "a function of the mind -- and that of the ones who suffer the bereavement" (368).

10 The associations with the idea of being bound (O.E. -bunden) and with the word "burden" that the name Bundren evokes, emphasize this sense of isolation imposed upon the family by their responsibility.

11 This attitude to experience is succinctly stated by Tull: "Now and then a fellow gets to thinking about it. Not often, though. Which is a good thing. For the Lord aimed for him to do and not to spend too much time thinking, because his brain it's like a piece of machinery: it won't stand a whole lot of racking. It's best when it runs along the same, doing the day's work and not no one part used no more than needful" (389).

CHAPTER III

MOTIFS OF ALIENATION

The Motif and the Symbol

The particularly violent and grotesque imagery necessary to convey the sensations of the Bundrens immersed in the outrage and alienation of their strange funeral journey finds its most striking effect in the technique of recurrent motifs.[1] In terms of character, the motifs represent the individual's attempt to come to grips with and to understand the significance of Addie's death: Vardaman, for instance, finds his thoughts obsessed with the fish he caught as Addie was dying; Cash concerns himself with the coffin he builds for his mother's body. In terms of a more general network of imagery, the use of motifs not only provides foci around which the novel's seemingly disparate images coalesce (for example, in the coffin itself are localized all images involving wood); but also creates an ordered complex of associations which operates within the novel as a whole. This complex though not definitive, is cumulative and developmental; it is therefore meaningful only within its immediate context. It differs from a symbolic system by intensifying the reader's perception through the sensuously immediate exploration of the object on its own terms, rather than by interpreting it in the light of a fixed theory of meaning.

A symbolic work strives to eternalize the ephemeral

events of this world by relating them to a definitive body of belief whose essential factor is its timelessness. In the context of this everpresent yet unchanging symbolic referent, the insignificant can gain stature and meaning, but only at the expense of its own particularity. The meaning of the event, person, or object is developed only insofar as it accords with the grand scheme, a requirement which involves the denial of a large part of its inherent nature. For example, the sheep is the Christian symbol of meekness, humility, and gentleness. It is arbitrary, because a cow or a cocker spaniel would have adequately served the purpose, and it flattens rather than enriches the vividness of one's sensory perception by ignoring not only the other stereotyped features of a sheep (its stupidity and blind inclination to follow the herd), but also its unique sensuous qualities (the sound, smell, and feel of the animal or the way it moves): elements that clearly distinguish it from other creatures.[2] Though the symbolic framework is not as narrow as the allegorical schema's one-to-one relationship, it is nevertheless a constricting rather than an expansive system, channelling perception toward one area of understanding. In short, it transforms life; it fails to explore it.

Thus the most important differences between a motif and a symbol are: first, that a symbol points <u>away</u> from the object to an external body of meaning, while a motif concen-

trates the sensuous characteristic of the object (or situation) into a single unified focus, drawing the reader directly into the perception of the character. Thus the action of the symbol is centrifugal in the direction of evaluation; that of the motif is centripetal in the direction of total involvement. The second significant difference lies in the fact that the symbol refers to a timeless structure of meaning while the complex of associations radiating from the individual motif is in flux.

The Dichotomous Nature of the Motif

The motifs of As I Lay Dying, as do its tragi-comic form and its theme of paradox, reflect a world of schism and disorder. Unlike a symbol, a motif does not need to be consistent, but can contain and explore many dimensions of life. Since the reality of a tragi-comedy such as As I Lay Dying is inherently dichotomous, it would seem logical that the motifs should encompass facets of meaning that sustain the tension of dissonance. However, there is a continuum of the dissimilar ranging from the harmonious joining together of complementary opposites, to the fierce clash of two antagonistic and warring elements which both attract and repel one another. The former is expressed in motifs of integration, the latter in motifs of alienation.[3] It is to the second category that the motifs of As I Lay Dying belong. Thus the road to Jefferson is both the means for travel and yet a hazard to be overcome; the perfection of the coffin is countered by its basic

imbalance caused by the reversed body within.

A second system of antithesis may be found in certain pairs of motifs which explore two approaches to a single, basically ontological problem. The horse and the fish are developed as motifs of life and death respectively: they approach the question of being and non-being. The road and the baby serve to probe alienation from nature and from society, man's dual environment. Finally, the coffin becomes a focus of Cash's spatial perception of life in contrast to Darl's obsession with time.

Last of all, the dualism of the motifs is reinforced by the technical principle of juxtaposing contrasting perceptual modes to create a sense of dissonance. This technique will be considered before turning to a more detailed analysis of the motifs themselves.

Perceptual Modes

The most elemental counterpoint between perceptual modes that occurs in As I Lay Dying is the balance between the mythical-religious (or abstract) mode and that of the sensuous. While tending to reject symbolic or mythical traditions generally (as mentioned above, page 11), Faulkner preserves certain of their associations, manipulating the symbols themselves so that they no longer refer solely and directly to the body of conventional belief from which they have been derived. When Vardaman wants Tull to see the mark of the fish

in the dust (388), the reader will recall the early Christians' sign of recognition and their belief that Christ conquered death. However, it would seem clear that Faulkner does not intend Addie as a Christ figure. For one thing her death is final and irreversible. Rather he is exploring man's mythologizing instinct and the human urge to negate death. The reference emphasizes the ironic contrast between the Christian symbol of a simple fish (with overtones of the fishes of the miracles), and Addie as Vardaman's grotesque fish which "slides out of his hands, smearing wet dirt on to him, and flops down, dirtying itself again, gap-mouthed, goggle-eyed, hiding into the dust like it was ashamed of being dead" (359). The mark of the fish in the dust carries an intensity of meaning in human terms comparable to that of the Christian symbol, while concurrently stimulating a sensuous response almost contradictory to it.

This jarring effect created by the juxtaposition of symbolic and mythical allusions and unglamorized reality is repeated in ironic comparisons of Addie's horrifying funeral journey with the mediaeval soul's progress to paradise, or with archetypal myths of rebirth.[4] Faulkner includes these elements for the purpose of parody rather than in any real spirit of the original. His understanding of myths seems to be a primarily psychological one, viewing them as human phenomena rather than as sources of metaphysical insight.

"Personal myth" is also widely used as a mode of

perception. In this category one might cite Cash's scientific lore which to the initiated (see Appendix C) seems hardly consistent with the realities of engineering. Anse's belief that if he sweats he will die contrasts both with the biblical pronouncement that man must cultivate the land and "In the sweat of [his] face shal[l] [he] eat bread,"[5] and with commonsense, or medical science. The "dissonance" in these cases is between "myth" and an objective instead of a sensuous appreciation of reality; and again in these examples, the reader's reaction is to express his sense of the tension through laughter rather than shock. Yet the same contrast in other instances can produce a reaction of horror, as is shown when Vardaman bores holes through the coffin into his mother's face in the belief that he is allowing her to breathe; or when Cash's broken leg is encased with cement to help it heal.

Other planes of perception that Faulkner uses are the figurative (blending the imaginary with the imaginative as, for example, in Dewey Dell's "killing" of Darl, 423); the associational (the reference to Jewel's horse as "one of them Snopes hoses," 415); and the aesthetic as expressed in Darl's description of the coffin boards ("yellow as gold, like soft gold," 340).

Such perceptual modes could presumably be categorized almost indefinitely. Their interplay, based on the principle of contrast, is most complex. A single motif embraces a

variety of these modes in its cumulative development through the novel. Faulkner has given a compact blueprint of the relationship of several of these modes in Cash's monologue which will now be treated in some detail.

Cash's Coffin (397)

Though the average reader is not in a position to judge the technical validity of Cash's pronouncements on stress, it is nevertheless readily apparent that his theory of carpentry embraces certain imaginative propositions -- for instance, number 9 -- which must render illogical the statement as a whole. To those with greater knowledge (see Appendix C) it becomes even more evident that the intermingling of fact and fiction is almost complete. Rather than a dissertation on coffin building, Cash's monologue becomes a study of the perceptual process and its translation of sensuous apprehension to emotional and intellectual comprehension. Since the coffin is the focus of Cash's perception, the statement is interesting as a means of emploring the range of perceptual modes that a motif can evoke. In addition, the pattern of imagery may be related to certain other configurations in the novel to show the interweaving of complexes of associations surrounding the various motifs.

The propositions in themselves show various combinations of illogicality and dissonance. Number 1 combines correct visual observation with inaccurate analysis: there is more surface to the joint, but the surface by which a nail grips

is independent of this. Verbally the statement is almost true: there is a greater surface for the nails themselves. The obliteration of "to grip" (which might be understood as the sole purpose of a nail) would clarify and rectify the sentence.

Number 2 in itself is a relatively true statement, but its inclusion of the word "gripping" which was inaccurately used in number 1 nullifies the statement in terms of any logical development. Emphasis has moved from a visual apprehension of the situation to a more abstract one.

Number 3 moves from a consideratimn of the "gripping surface" to the question of water penetration, one which is more relevant to the coffin's survival than Cash knows at the time of making these observations. The proposition is composed of half truths, illogicalities, and irrelevancies. The question of water moving "easiest up and down or straight across" is based, one would imagine, on an anthropomorphic concept, since man moves with difficulty on a slant. But water penetration is governed by far more complicated laws. This transference to water of a man's actions may be found also in Anse's view of the rain "a-coming up that road like a durn man" (364). The world of <u>As I Lay Dying</u> is to a significant extent anthropomorphic, with the natural environment sharing man's characteristics. As Peabody puts it, "That's the one trouble with this country: everything, weather, all, hangs on too long. Like our rivers, our land: opaque, slow, violent; shaping and creating the life of man in its implac-

able and brooding image" (369).

Numbers 4 and 5 bring together the idea of people and stress. It is interesting that Cash's obsession with stress confines the meaning of the word to its physical sense, while neglecting the emotional connotations of the word which are the more significant in the "death" situation. Both propositions fall into a definite logical pattern, with the use of "so" and "because" pointing up their supposed developmental process. Each takes a visual observation and misapplies it to produce an at least partially incorrect conclusion. The logical process is reminiscent of Darl's similarly strange logic regarding the wagon load of wood, Addie's death, and his own existence (396), which immediately precedes Cash's monologue. The implicit contrast is, of course, that Cash has created something despite his misapplied logic, while Darl is incapable of constructive action.

Number 5 is formed from a more fluent sentence than number 4's three jerky statements. However, this movement to greater fluency is broken by the sharp "Except" of number 6 which creates a visual and to some extent, thematic axis for the monologue as a whole. The conditioning of the "Except" to expect a contradictory point of view or important exception means that the irrelevance of the succeeding statement (number 7) creates a jarring effect. It is number 8's "animal magnetism" that is in fact the exception Cash has been leading up to, since this is supposedly what makes the difference in stress. The squareness of the cross-tie is of little moment.

6

Number 7 posits the close association between man and wood. Cash himself is a wooden man("Cash broke his leg and now the sawdust is running out," 491), but his body's stresses are not the same as those of wood. His leg does not withstand his fall from the church nor his accident at the ford. In comparing man with wood, Cash is forced into the mythical realm of "animal magnetism" to explain the difference.

Numbers 9, 10 and 11 show the opposite method of development to that of the earlier statements. Where the first propositions are based on a kind of induction derived from visually acquired information, the series centred around animal magnetism is deductive in that it states the reason for certain phenomena before the phenomena themselves. Qualitatively, the focus is much changed. Prior to the introduction of animal magnetism, the statements, though incorrect, deal with concrete observation, and hence matters that do exist objectively. With the introduction of animal magnetism Cash has moved over entirely to the imaginative, in fact, the the surrealistic. The idea of an inherent magnetism in a body belongs to the realm of primitive magic, and the strangeness of such a subject is enhanced by its use in the context of scientifically objective stress. Vardaman, a child, becomes involved in a magico-religious figment of his imagination when he transforms his mother into a fish. When he feels the horse's "life running up from under my hands, up my arms" (377), his experience is again essentially magical,

positing some almost electrical current. Cash, however, is a grown man, and his unthinking acceptance of the uncanny force as part of natural phenomena emphasizes the irrationality of man's mind, as well as perhaps the ultimate impossibility of understanding the world in exclusively scientific or impersonal terms.

The statement comes full circle with Cash's repetition of "I made it on the bevel," this time preceded by the word "so" which presupposes that 1 through 11 have constituted a logically valid argument.

Number 13 initiates a new approach, the aesthetic. Cash's reactions in this sphere may seem very limited and confined to "neatness." As a man of deed, according to Addie's definition, he illustrates the lack of aesthetic sensibility and awareness that Darl shows. Wood, not words, are Cash's medium. His lack of fluency, however, means that sensitive thought is inhibited. Words are not merely "a shape to fill a lack" (464); they actually govern thought and feeling to a significant extent. Cash's clumsiness in this sphere distorts and renders untrue what might have made sense in, for instance, proposition number 1. Even more than Darl's expressive and poetic speech, Cash's attempt to communicate emphasizes the importance of the word.

The dissertation thus covers a range of perceptual modes and complex of associations that are quite extensive. It reveals the inherent clash between emotional, intellectual, imaginative, and superstitious aspects of man's thought

processes and their effect in organizing the raw materials of perception, in Cash's case the visually derived "facts" about the world in which he lives. Besides being a relevant comment on the word-deed conflict that Addie so dwells upon, as part of the novel's imagistic complex Cash's monologue embodies the central configuration expressed in the body of vertical-horizontal imagery that may be found throughout the book. Stress, according to Cash, is naturally an up-and-down or straight across affair, as is the movement of water. This idea may be related to Anse's contention that "when [God] aims for something to stay put, He makes it up-and-down ways, like a tree or a man"; "when He aims for something to be always a-moving, He makes it long ways like a road of a horse or a wagon" (362). The coffin itself, of course, ironically fits Anse's definition. Further to this, and relating to both bodies of belief is Addie's division of word and deed: "words go up in a thin straight line, . . . doing goes along the earth, clinging to it" (465). As an object to be moved along the earth and finally to be laid in it, the coffin is once again readily assignable. As a concrete object and the result of Cash's handiwork, it is also a technological product of deed.

Though it is possible to classify the motifs to some degree according to, for example, simplicity, surrealism, or extent of emotional intensity, it will be apparent that any such categories are not exclusive but will cross-cut each

other in complex interplay. In this sense, the coffin shares something of the magical qualities of the fish, though these are manaistic rather than totemistic.[7] Unlike the fish, it is of central practical concern, and consequently its balance or imbalance has repercussions on the journey as a whole. It appears to be a simple concrete object, like fish and horse, while carrying ramifications (such as the body of "scientific" theory with which Cash views it) which ally it to a more inclusive motif such as the road.

On the linguistic level of the oxymoron, the range of contrasting perceptual modes might be traced through Faulkner's use of different degrees and levels of contrast. In addition to such obvious contradictions as "a spent yet alert quality" (374), or "cold flames" (379), he employs the more subtle dissonance evoked by "infinitesimal and ludicrous care" (458), and the mixing of perceptual senses in such synesthetic phrases as "opaque, slow, violent" (369), or "thin smell" (501). Such examples parallel the use of levels and complex forms of perception embodied in the motifs.

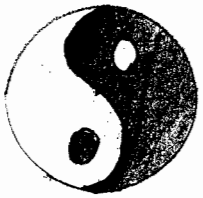
Following this brief outline of perceptual levels, the chosen motifs will be traced through the important facets of their development to show the operation of the perceptual modes in the context of their antithetical structure.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1 The motifs to be considered here are: the coffin, the road, the horse, the fish, and Dewey Dell's baby. Page numbers giving significant references from the novel may be found in Appendix A.

2 Vardaman experiences the presence of Jewel's horse (379) through auditory, olfactory and tactile sensations. His perception "develops" the animal as a motif of life (see further, page 38) the features of which add to its overtones of violence and glamour that have already been established in the novel (pp. 345-346).

3 A harmonious view of reality is represented in the yin-yang principle, in which light and dark, male and female, what you will, is pictured (see diagram) as forming a whole with the one partaking of the other, the black fish incorporating a white eye, the white a black. This is a motif of integration, expressing man's peaceful acceptance of life, in contrast to Western man's more aggressive view of antagonistic elements.



4 See Introduction (page three) for specific references. In fact, Faulkner uses many parallels from primitive as well as from Greek and Christian conventions: most probably he derived such knowledge from Eliot's The Waste Land.

5 Genesis iii, 19.

6 See further, page 39.

7 Mana is a non-differentiated amoral force (like electricity) which pervades the universe. It may become dangerously concentrated in significant articles (for instance, Uzzah who was struck dead when he tried to save the Ark of the Covenant from falling to the ground was a victim of mana).

Totemism is a socio-religious system of rules, including the special relationship of each individual with a chosen totemic animal, plant or object (see Ralph Linton, The Tree of Culture, New York, 1957, p. 168).

CHAPTER IV

MOTIFS OF ALIENATION

Motifs of Alienation Concerning Life and Death

Since it is Addie's death that is responsible for the novel's central action, the topic of being and non-being is a crucial one in the minds of her family. The title of the book emphasizes that the distinction between life and death is manifestly unclear: Addie lies dying after she is dead, just as Peabody has observed that the live woman "has been dead these ten days" (368). Similarly, Addie herself has lived by the paradox that "the reason for living is getting ready to stay dead" (467). While Dewey Dell's baby offers the obvious counterpoint to Addie, a new life taking the place of the old (paradoxically the foetus is unable to be destroyed just as the dead woman cannot be preserved), the motifs of fish and horse sustain an exploration into the relationship between life and death.

"Jewel's mother is a horse. My mother is a fish" (483), asserts Vardaman. His transubstantiation of Addie into the form of the fish he caught as she was dying -- ironically conferring upon the fish an immortality that his mother is unable to possess -- is the culmination of a religio-magical structure of belief that he builds around the dead animal. The proximity of the two deaths develops in his mind into a positive association (the presence of the fish negates his

mother's death), accompanied by ritual (his mother becomes part of those who eat the fish), and defended in a "logical" discussion (409). The transmutation is completed when Addie's rebirth in fish's form is expected: "when we come to the water again I am going to see her" (483). Though the development of the motif is in the direction of a life-preserving myth, the sensuous nature of the fish-mother metaphor serves nevertheless to accentuate the disgust that the dead body arouses. The original presentation of the fish, its "under-side caked over with dust where it is wet, the eye coated over, humped under the dirt" (358), and its later description as lying "out into jagged pieces, bleed[ing] quietly in the pan" (380), form stronger impressions in the reader's mind than does Vardaman's primitive struggle to deny the fact of death. For Dewey Dell the fish in itself becomes almost a symbol of death in the personal language of belief that Vardaman has developed. In her dream-fantasy sequence, the girl embodies the fish in her imaginary murder of Darl: "I rose and took the knife from the streaming fish still hissing and I killed Darl" (423). Instead of refuting death, the fish motif exaggerates life's aspect of death and decay.

While the fish motif by negating death paradoxically allows it to take almost total possession of Vardaman's perception, the horse motif is developed as a touchstone of life. The emphasis in the case of the fish motif is plainly on the decaying, fleshly body of the fish-mother. With

the horse, the body is characterized rather as a temporary organization of vital properties. Hence Vardaman will describe it "as though the dark were resolving him out of his integrity, into an unrelated scattering of components -- snuffings and stampings; smells of cooling flesh and ammoniac hair; an illusion of a coordinated whole of splotched hide and strong bones" (379). It is violent chaos that the horse embodies and which Jewel expresses in his fierce love-hate reaction to it. The horse incorporates aspects of glamour and romance with hooves like "an illusion of wings (345), its mane "tongues swirling like so many flames" (345). In contradistinction to this romantic presentation, it has the air of "a durn circus animal" (411), a "spotted critter wilder than a cattymount" (411), and of "a patchwork quilt hung on a line" (457). It also carries the slur of being "one of them Snopes horses" (415), a reference to Flem's exploitation of the original spotted horses.[1] The ambiguity of the image as both proud and comic,[2] does not blur the quality of life-force that the creature imparts. Darl and Jewel express it in words and in action, but the simplest statement is made by Vardaman: "The life in him runs under the skin, under my hand, running through the splotches, smelling up into my nose where the sickness is beginning to cry.. . . I can smell the life running up from under my hands, up my arms" (376-77). For Vardaman the very experience of perceiving the animal through his senses makes him so aware of being alive that he

can assert despite the horror of his mother's death, "I am not afraid" (379).

It is Darl who applies Vardaman's fish-mother metaphor to Jewel's horse (409). It is obvious to Darl that Jewel's relationship with the latter has for a long time paralleled or even taken the place of that with his mother. Darl's goading, "It's not your horse that's dead" (405) is an attempt to make Jewel aware that the basis of his feeling, the horse, has died with his mother, and that it cannot be perpetuated in the animal, any more than can Vardaman immortalize his mother through the fish.

The coffin, since it holds Addie's body, constitutes a direct focus of attention throughout the journey, and like the body, is endowed with certain quasi-magical qualities of life-in-death. Being made of wood, it remains a central epitome of the wood imagery that pervades the book. Wood is presented as an ambivalent substance embodying death and rigidity as well as life and power.[3] Addie's dying body is "no more than a bundle of rotten sticks" (369), and Jewel has "pale eyes like wood set into his wooden face" while walking with "the rigid gravity of a cigar store Indian" (339). Conversely, Dewey Dell holds life in the "acorn in [her] belly" (519); and a more surrealistic image is projected in Peabody's assertion, "Too bad the Lord made the mistake of giving trees roots and giving the Anse Bundrens he makes feet and legs. If He'd just swapped them, there wouldn't ever be

a worry about this country being deforested some day" (367). In the intense scene where Cash finishes the building of the coffin, "a thin thread of fire running along the edge of the saw (392) as he works through the thunderstorm, the planks are depicted as partaking of both light and darkness, "like long smooth tatters torn from the flat darkness and turned backside out" (392).

Motifs of Alienation Involving Nature and Society

Though society may be viewed as a gathering of men to help one another master and use the forces of nature creatively, in this novel Faulkner concentrates on the various points of friction between society and nature, between socialman and natural man. Flood and fire portray nature's attack on man, and death which is traditionally controlled and rationalized by funeral ritual and assertions of afterlife, leads in the Bundrens' case, to social alienation. The motifs which focus particularly on this problem (Jewel's horse as a supposedly domesticated animal that is scarcely manageable might also be considered in this connection) are those of the road and Dewey Dell's baby.

The most dramatic presentation of the road motif is Anse's. He must travel along the road to Jefferson in order to fulfill his promise, which is his sole point of contact with the dead Addie (as soon as he reaches Jefferson, he feels entirely free to forget her). His perception of the road widens from a challenge to his promised word to the cause

of each and every difficulty he experiences. It is the road that brings misfortune to his door; it is responsible for Cash's carpentry that in turn led him to break his leg, for Darl's strangeness, for Addie's illness, and for the storm. Anse's paranoic outbursts against the road strike themselves against man's misuse of the land, which used to lie "up-and-down ways" (363): "It wasn't till that ere road come and switched the land around longways" that the trouble started. God "never aimed for folks to live on a road" (362). Presumably this is why "a man in his need [can] be so flouted by a road" (364).

It is clear that Anse feels this road as a part of civilization offends natural order. Yet even he must admit "the Lord put roads for travelling" (362). Without charted paths the land would surely be a wilderness. Signboards wheel up "like motionless hand[s] lifted above the profound desolation of the ocean" (413). Though Anse feels that the road deters him from keeping his promise, it is also the means of fulfilling it.

The dissonance between the road and the land, society and nature, is again expressed by Anse in his belief that "if he ever sweats, he will die" (348). He therefore cannot work on the land as befits the natural man. Instead he operates comfortably in the social sphere, manipulating people with a Snopes-like facility, confident they will do his work for him. Here he illustrates the other side of the social and

natural friction. Though he sees the road as a social object impinging on him and his land, it is the natural force which oppresses him in this instance, as social man alienated from the land.

Dewey Dell is in a similar position, caught between social and natural forces. She considers her relationship with Lafe (a name significantly similar to "life") to have been something fated, natural, almost outside her control: "And so it was because I could not help it" (356). Lafe is contrasted with Anse; he is the natural man who worked Anse's land. Yet Lafe is a city boy who no doubt jeers at country people and who suggests to Dewey Dell the inherently unnatural act of abortion. What is natural in the pastoral scene of the cottonfield gives rise to an awareness in Dewey Dell of social alienation. Though the child makes her feel "like a wet seed wild in the hot blind earth" (384), she must consider it a terrible misfortune. To MacGowan Dewey Dell's condition is a joke. The absurd paradox of her situation is summed up in Moseley's contention that "the Lord gave you what you have, even if he did use the devil to do it" (488).

Motifs of Alienation Involving Time and Space

It is worthy of note that the Bundrens speak almost entirely in the present tense until Addie is buried, when all except Vardaman (523) and Darl (527) revert to the past. The onlookers or "chorus," though they too speak in the present

at the beginning of the book, swiftly move into the past tense. They describe actions that are over and finished, while the Bundrens remain at an earlier point in time, still involved in the present tense telling of these actions. This contrast between the Bundrens and the narrative's more objective observers illustrates the significance of the temporal distortion that the family experiences throughout. A normal manner of speech should not involve the translation of present action continually into words, a process that is illogical because of the inevitable time-lag between the two. It would seem that the Bundrens' realm of consciousness has become limited to the period of perception that lies immediately between present and past. The result of this is an artificial preservation of action by recording it in the present tense. It becomes literally a "freezing" of time.

Faulkner's statement that "the aim of every artist is to arrest motion, which is life, by artificial means and hold it fixed,"[4] finds its expression in his work in the repetitive device of frozen movement with "the outward semblance of form and purpose, but with no inference of motion, progress or retrograde" (504). Without progress, movement becomes defined within an increasingly spatial rather than temporal context.

Man's perception and his artistic expressions distort the scientifically real world where time and space are functions of one another. For the ordinary man, time and space are discrete entities. Literature (particularly the novel,

which is based on the logical development of events in the form of a "story") is, by virtue of its literary structure, a primarily linear and thus temporal medium. A non-linear apprehension of reality generally gravitates toward expression in the wholly spatial medium of graphic art. Faulkner's impression of this process may be traced to several passages of As I Lay Dying: Jewel and his horse are "rigid, motionless, terrific" (346); "they stand in rigid terrific hiatus" (346), "like two figures carved for a tableau savage" (italics mine, 345). For Cash, Addie's "gaunt face framed by the window in the twilight. . . is a composite picture of all time since he was a child" (italics again mine, 371); "the coffin on the saw-horses [is] like a cubistic bug" (498).

The basic tension between time and space in man's perception and in artistic expression is examined through several of Faulkner's chosen motifs. The coffin obviously represents the most direct and pragmatic way to approach Addie's death, and as such is particularly adapted to Cash's personality. This somewhat eccentric expression of his love forms a central motif on numerous levels. Of particular interest is the significance of the coffin as mute representative of Cash's primitive ontology. As a carpenter he voices his thoughts and feelings in the language of his trade: "Folks seems to get away from the golden right teaching that says to drive the nails down and trim the edges well always like it was for your own use and comfort you were making it" (510).

He transfers his emotions over his mother's impending death to the coffin, and once she is nailed into it, refers only to the box and not what lies within. Even time becomes a matter of spatial consideration, for "Cash like sawing the long hot sad yellow days up into planks and nailing them to something" (355). The coffin's "clock-shape" (400) epitomizes this perceptual focus.

This view of time-space is countered by the development of Darl's obsession with the temporal. Though he originally sees the path in geometric terms, "straight as a plumb line," curved "at four soft right angles" (339), as his sense of alienation increases after Addie's death, his perception alters so that the road seems "back running, tunnelled between the two sets of bobbing mule ears, . . . vanish[ing] beneath the wagon as though it were a ribbon and the front axle were a spool" (365). If the road in front is wound onto the axle, there is presumably no road behind them, no past. This process by which space becomes time is further developed when Darl sees Jewel's horse approaching and feels it is "as though time and not space were decreasing between us and it" (413). He looks at their way across the ford "as though the space between us were time: an irrevocable quality. It is as though time, no longer running straight before us in a diminishing line, now runs parallel between us like a looping string, the distance being the doubling accretion of the thread and not the interval between" (443). By reducing reality to

an obverse function of time, Darl becomes obsessed with its "irrevocable" commanding presence, and like Quentin Compson, also becomes a victim of temporality.[5]

Cash and Darl flatten reality by their simplistic interpretations. The image of Addie herself, her body time-bound in death as in life (a condition made manifest by the process of decay), expresses more powerfully the impossibility of separating time from space. Dewey Dell's baby, the counterpart of the dead Addie, gives the girl a similarly comprehensive application of the dynamic quality of reality: "That's what they mean by the womb of time: the agony and the despair of spreading bones, the hard girder in which lie the outraged entrails of events" (422).

The Disappearance and Transformation of the Motifs of Alienation

The motifs that have been the prime consideration in this paper are As I Lay Dying's eccentric motifs of alienation, the expression of people aware of the fragmentation of an unharmonious world. As the funeral journey progresses and the Bundrens successfully overcome the various obstacles, these motifs slowly fall away or undergo a metamorphosis into a more normal and controllable form of expression. The road which "so flouted" (364) Anse, and was responsible for all his bad luck becomes "a public street and he reckons [he has] as much right there as anybody" (488). Once Anse has overcome his inability to move, the road poses no impossible threat; it becomes the street where the new Mrs. Bundren will

live, the square where the family can sit in peace eating bananas. Jewel allows Anse to trade his horse so that they may continue the journey, abandoning the idiosyncratic relationship he had with it, as he comes to realize that the basis for this relationship, his feelings for his mother, no longer needs a substitute. He can express his violent love in personal sacrifice as he saves Addie's body from the water and the fire. Vardaman too, loses the need for his eccentric comprehension of death. His preoccupation with the fish disintegrates when Darl provides him with the culturally acceptable form of Addie "calling on [God] . . . to hide her away from the sight of man. . . So she can lay down her life" (495). In place of his claim that "My mother does not smell like that. My mother is a fish" (483), Vardaman can at last tell his sister, "I can smell her. . . Can you smell her, too?" (497). The coffin is laid in the earth, its violence spent in the final savage attack on Darl as the Bundrens leave the graveyard, and Dewey Dell is relieved of her ten dollars and thus the possibility of breaking the natural cycle of conception and birth.

It is Darl who embodies the alienation and who is sacrificed for the others' re-integration into society, a reacceptance capped by Anse's comic marriage. Darl has not focused on one particular motif to the extent that the others have. His mother's death means more a loss of the <u>possibility</u> of having a mother than the loss of a mother's love. Jewel

becomes the embodiment of Darl's own rejection, and the relationship between Jewel and the horse seems in many instances to obsess Darl's thoughts (for example, every mention of his brother and the horse in section 470-472 is in italics). It seems primarily this relationship that preoccupies him, just as it is the relationship between time and space or between illusion and reality that becomes his chief concern. It is process that constitutes Darl's central motif rather than any concrete object which serves as a focus for his perception of reality. Darl approaches the world through words, translating his perception into vivid imagery and establishing some control over reality through his oblique logic. In his discussion with Vardaman (409) and in the "logical proofs" of his own existence,[6] his words read like parodies of philosophical discourses based on such premises as "cogito ergo sum." His verbal apprehension operates on two levels: the transposition of a detailed perception of reality into words, and the manipulation of words themselves in an attempt to manipulate reality.

This use of words to explain the individual's place in a world from which he feels alienated is liable to increase his alienation by keeping it in the forefront of his mind. It is noteworthy that Darl's attempt to come to terms with Vardaman on the logical level does little to increase the child's understanding of his situation. Darl's use of words is, however, despite its dangers, an honest attempt to come to terms

with the world, unlike, for instance Anse's based on the attempt to manipulate his fellows and to fill the void of real feeling. "The Lord giveth" (399), or "I don't begrudge her it" (458) are idioms expressing little. It is Darl's insistence on the near magical power of words that leads him to provoke Jewel about his relationship with the horse, and to tell Dewey Dell, "The reason you will not say [that you are pregnant] is, when you say it, even to yourself, you will know it is true" (365). Darl tries to bring his family to a direct acceptance of reality without the intervention of illusion to cushion its harshness. He himself has a clear understanding of the separation between illusion and reality.

It is noteworthy that his often violent imagery is always presented in the form of a simile or conditional construction: "his coat, bunching, tongues swirling <u>like</u> so many flames" (italics mine, 345); "It is <u>as though</u> the space between us were time" (italics mine, 443); Jewel "is enclosed by a glittering maze of hooves <u>as by an illusion</u> of wings" (italics mine, 345). But, unlike the others who sustain the horrors of the journey, Darl breaks down. When he takes Vardaman to the coffin, the distance between reality and its perception is lost: Addie is talking. Words have betrayed Darl, just as they had previously led him to the truth. This breakdown in his verbal apprehension and ability to manipulate the world is replaced after the fire, but lost, presumably permanently, after he is rejected by his family to the

point where he can no longer speak apart from the ironic "Yes." The schizoid state of his personality in which he speaks of himself in the third person (526-527) reiterates that split in reality that seems a basic premise of the novel.

The development of the explicitly comic imagery, as against that of the grotesque motifs of alienation, has been mentioned above (page 18). The toy train, the gramophone, and Anse's teeth are also aspects of the journey from the beginning, and with the Bundrens' departure from the wilderness of storm and flood, fire and birds of prey, and their arrival in civilisation, these take pre-eminence,[7] just as the new Mrs. Bundren with pop-eyes and duck shape replaces the sensitive though disturbed Addie as the centre of their lives.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1 This story is to be found in the chapter "Spotted Horses" in the novel The Hamlet (1940).

2 The ambivalence of the image seems related to Gail Hightower's vision of galloping horsemen (Light in August, 1932), which illustrates a forteriori the artificiality of the Southern myth. Where Hightower sees only the glamour and bravery that the Southern soldiers embodied, this is, in fact, a romantic view of what was frequently juvenile derring-do and bravado bordering on stupidity. Hightower's grandfather, it will be remembered, was killed in a dashing attack on a henhouse.

3 The tree representing life and death is well known as a Christian symbol, for instance the cross and the tree in the Garden of Eden.

4 Jean Stein, "William Faulkner: An Interview," Three Decades of Criticism, edited by Hoffman and Vickery (New York, 1963), p. 80.

5 Volpe (Edmond L. Volpe, A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner, New York, 1964, p. 138) analyses Darl's "sixth sense" description of scenes at which he is not present as a function of the mind "free of the limitations imposed by his body. He is beyond time." However, it would seem that this gift reveals a conquest of space, not time. He can never, for instance, project his mind into the future (which would warn him, for example, of his family's intention to commit him). He is not beyond time but engulfed in it, and desirous of becoming one with it, "If you could just ravel out into time. That would be nice. It would be nice if you could just ravel out into time" (492).

6 In a strange room you must empty yourself for sleep. And before you are emptied for sleep, what are you. And when you are emptied for sleep, you are not. And when you are filled with sleep, you never were. I don't know what I am. I don't know if I am or not. . . . Beyond the unlamped wall I can hear the rain shaping the wagon that is ours, the load that is no longer theirs that felled and sawed it nor nor yet theirs that bought it and which is not ours either, lie on our wagon though it does, since only the wind and the rain shape it only to Jewel and me, that are not asleep. And since sleep is is-not and rain and wind are was, it is not. Yet the wagon is, because when the wagon is was, Addie Bundren will not be. And Jewel is, so Addie Bundren must be. And then I must be, or I could not empty myself for sleep in a strange room. And so if I am not emptied

yet, I am *is*. (396)

7 In this connection it is interesting to note Northrop Frye's catalogued outline of comic and tragic archetypes (*Fables of Identity*, New York, 1963, pp. 19-20). It may be observed that *As I Lay Dying*'s tragi-comic structure is borne out by the application of this silhouette to the novel. See Appendix D.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Conflicts Arising from Ambivalent Perception

Though *As I Lay Dying* is perhaps the work most centrally concerned with the splitting of perception, Faulkner seems constantly to be preoccupied with the problem of ambivalence, a problem that recurs, in one form or another, in most of his novels. "Life is not interested in good and evil," Faulkner believed;

> Don Quixote was constantly choosing between good and evil, but then he was choosing in his dream state. He was mad. He entered reality only when he was so busy trying to cope with people that he had no time to distinguish between good and evil. Since people exist only in life they must devote their time simply to being alive. Life is motion, and motion is concerned with what makes a man move -- which is ambition, power, pleasure. [1]

Faulkner's compulsive interest in ambivalence is probably due in large part to the region that forms the setting of most of his work. Faulkner's South was obsessed not only with its puritannical Baptist heritage, the division between good and evil ("moral conscience . . . the curse [man] had to accept from the gods in order to gain from them the right to dream"[2]), but with the intense social repercussions in the separation of the white man from the black. The situation was invested with the symbolic overtones of whiteness as purity, blackness as evil, yet made ambivalent by the black man's properties of redeemer as well as devil, the taint of the inherently superior white man being derived from the moral guilt of enslaving

a people.

In addition to this, the cultural milieu was permeated with the division and dissonance separating myth and reality, and past and present. The hold of the past over the present (as illustrated, for example in The Sound and the Fury, or a "A Rose for Emily") was extreme and damaging, since it embraced both the outdated values by which people still tried to live, and the historical fact of slavery. The Southern Myth (that body of verbal tradition and legend which expressed the ideal values of the Ante-Bellum South) was further destructive since it idealized a past that had never been. The glamour that had made Southerners look backward to their former glory, instead of forward to a creative future, was a sham, and its falsity is revealed in a work such as The Unvanquished.

In terms of the individual -- and it is about people that Faulkner always insists he is writing -- the various contradictory positions seem, as Addie says, "to be too far apart for the same person to straddle from one to the other" (465). Joanna Burden of Light in August is tortured by the separation of white from black; Rev. Hightower is obsessed with the myth of the past so that he cannot cope with the exigencies of the present; Bayard Sartoris of Sartoris (and Addie) can see life only in terms of death; and Addie expresses her internal sense of shattered experience in the separation of word from deed. Those forced to incorporate both extremes, like Joe Christmas (Light in August) and Bon (Absalom, Absalom!) who are part

white and part Black (whether genetically or imaginatively is not important), generally embody violence and destruction.

For Faulkner the most important conflict is between the past, which contains the sources of dualistic perception, and the present which must be lived creatively that such divisions may be negated. The past with its aura of falsity and guilt becomes man's greatest liability, impinging upon his present perception so that, as in the case of Quentin Compson, it can eventually gain a stranglehold on life.[3]

As I Lay Dying and The Sound and the Fury are in a sense sister novels, depicting the alternate sides of the past/present conflict. Enmeshed and immobilised in the past, the Compsons have lost the creative ability to perceive and adapt to a new situation. Their degeneration and decay reveals their urge to self destruction. The Bundrens, in contrast to this, are faced with a crisis that means the ultimate loss of a governing force wholly capable of shaping men's minds. Where the Compsons are so bound by the past that the present slips by unnoticed, the Bundrens have had their past destroyed and are forcefully cast into the present. It is the ordinary people who will be left the task of "burying" what remains of the old aristocratic life after its spirit has passed away.[4] The Bundrens are infinitely freer to come to terms with a present existence than are the Compsons still burdened by a past that has imposed its apparent security and order on a twisted reality. The ultimate level of this conflict is the

philosophical clash between absolutism and relativity. It is noticeable that *As I Lay Dying* is perhaps unique in its avoidance of what Leaver calls "Negative ultimates," those terms expressing the absolutes of the "human heart"[5] With Addie's death the static absolutism of the past is superseded by the relativity of a present which accepts the principle of life in motion.

As I Lay Dying: The Idea of Conflict

As I Lay Dying is at the same time one of the simplest and yet most literary of Faulkner's novels. Its comparatively small number of characters and its unity of action gives a straightforward story unimpeded by elaborate time-shifts, awkward fragmentation or contradictory reports.[6] Though Faulkner could not entirely resist the temptation to withhold certain information from the reader,[7] the novel is markedly uncomplicated by the oblique use of diction and sentence structure, or of deliberately confused motivation. Time is almost entirely limited to the nine to ten days between Addie's death and her burial; place, to the forty miles between the Bundrens' house and Jefferson.

The literary effect of the novel's disciplined from is strengthened by the almost perfect balance of antithesis and paradox, to the point where these become the central theme of the novel. Since conflict, rather than certain particular conflicts, is the main focus, the novel becomes one primarily concerned with ideas rather than with character or plot. Its

mythical and ritual overtones depersonalize the Bundrens to a certain degree so that they become figures representing universal man faced with death's inescapable destruction.

The conflict of As I Lay Dying is clearly expressed because Faulkner seems less inclined than in other novels to allow "the characters themselves [to] rise up and take charge and finish the job."[8] He preserves an ironic distance between reader and characters that prevents too much involvement with personalities to the neglect of ideas. Faulkner's emotional involvement in, for instance, The Sound and the Fury, provides an aura of tragedy to the action of the novel. The figures, even the neurasthenic Mrs. Compson, are drawn in a depth that forces the reader to take them seriously as human beings. Even Dilsey, whose idiosyncratic trappings and stereotypic racial mask tend to blur the personality within, is a figure of grandeur. The Bundrens, however, remain tragicomic figures. Capable of poetic speech and heroic acts, ignorant stupidity and obstinacy, they simultaneously attract and repel the reader, preserving his critical detachment. He is not distracted in any way that would blind him to the novel's statement, the agony of man's divided vision.

Finally, the novel's thematic concern with words themselves, and the tension between the spatial and the temporal, give some insight into the problems Faulkner experienced as a writer. Since his style embodies so many techniques of polarity and dissonance, the novel's comments which are

relevant to the literary process itself are of particular interest in regard to Faulkner's attitude to his work.

Techniques of Polarity and Antithesis

It is apparent that devices such as the oxymoron and motif differ significantly from the techniques of polarity and tension that critics have discussed in connection with Faulkner's work. Though he is sometimes inclined to abuse tension-arousing devices by employing them in the manner of a thriller to involve and frustrate his reader, much of Faulkner's use of antithesis in structure, theme and style is a meaningful attempt to reproduce the tensions arising from man's ambivalent attitude toward the world in which he lives, and the sense of dissonance evoked by the impossibility of resolving this ambivalence.

Structurally the principle of antithesis ranges from the juxtaposition of discrete entities to a more central embodiment of perceptual relativity. Requiem for a Nun (1951) alternates a play about Temple Drake with prose concerning the historical background of Jefferson; The Wild Palms (1939) juxtaposes two discrete stories. Faulkner explains his reason for creating the latter work in this form:

> That was one story -- the story of Charlotte Rittenmeyer and Harry Wilbourne, who sacrificed everything for love, and then lost that. I did not know it would be two separate stories until after I had started the book. When I reached the end of what is now the first section of The Wild Palms, I realized suddenly that something was missing, it needed emphasis, something to lift it like counterpoint in music. So I wrote on the "Old Man" story until "The

> Wild Palms" story rose back to pitch. Then I stopped the "Old Man" story at what is now its first section, and took up "The Wild Palms" story until it began again to sag. Then I raised it to pitch again with another section of its antithesis, which is the story of a man who got his love and spent the rest of the book fleeing from it, even to the extent of voluntarily going back to jail where he would be safe. They are only two stories by chance, perhaps necessity.[9]

In Light in August (1932) the "perhaps necessity" is no longer in doubt. Though the stories of Joe Christmas, Lena Grove, and the Rev. Hightower are clearly distinquishable, they are interwoven to form one whole, balanced work. This movement is further pronounced in The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying in which the balance is created by different narrators who focus on what is essentially one story. Here the accent is on different kinds of perception rather than on a balance of stories.

Similarly, tension and dissonance appear in the irresolution of a great number of Faulkner's stories. Requiem for a Nun, Light in August and Absalom, Absalom! (1936) end in a statement of paradox or apparent irrelevance rather than in any attempt to resolve the problems involved. In The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying the lack of synthesis is qualitatively different. Rather than leaving the reader baffled by a somewhat tangential statement, Faulkner presents him with a central question; that of the validity of an idiot's order restored by a basically evil man, or the complex statement of antithesis in the image of Darl's two-faced coin, his two-backed telescope which pose the unanswerable riddle

of life: and of truth, honour, courage and all the other absolutes of the Southern heart. The juxtaposition of contrary elements as found in the interminable sentences of *Light in August*, in the time shifts of *The Sound and the Fury* and in the withheld and contrary information of *Absalom, Absalom!* are further attempts to create a literary texture that corresponds to life's complexity.

The oxymoron and the motifs of *As I Lay Dying* differ from these devices because they are centrally concerned with the ambivalence of perception *per se* instead of being peripheral to the question. However, it is apparent that the imagistic motif is far more sophisticated than the rhetorical device. The oxymoron states the conflict in sensuous apprehension; the motif, while firmly based on sensuous perception, creates a complex of associated imagery expressing a *gestalt* or anagogic revelation of the work of art within which it is defined.[10] In its realization of the two-way process of perception, where the perceiver imposes his personal configuration on the situation, besides being influenced by the situation itself, the motif involves *modes* of perception which pertain to many levels of thought, emotion, and ultimately ontology.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

1 Jean Stein, "William Faulkner: An Interview," William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism, edited by Hoffman and Vickery (New York, 1963), p. 80.

2 Ibid., p. 80.

3 Jean-Paul Sartre sees the time view of The Sound and the Fury in the image of

> a man sitting in a convertible looking back. At every moment shadows emerge on his right, and on his left flickering and quavering points of light, which become trees, men, and cars only when they are seen in perspective. The past here gains a surrealistic quality; its outline is hard, clear and immutable. The indefinable and elusive present is helpless before it; it is full of holes through which past things, fixed, motionless and silent, invade it. . . . The present does not exist, it becomes; everything was, . . . and the present makes its way in the shadows, like an underground river, to reappear only when it has become past.

Jean-Paul Sartre, "Time in Faulkner: The Sound and the Fury," Two Decades of Criticism, edited by Hoffman and Vickery (Michigan, 1951), p. 183.

4 In this connection Faulkner may have been aware of the meaning of the name Addie (Adelaide, Adeline) as "of noble birth."

5 See Introduction, page 7.

6 The only character whose sections provide consistent misinterpretation of the action is Cora, and her blindness is made very apparent.

7 A deliberate step in this direction is shown by his substitution of "Addie Bundren" instead of "maw" and of "box" in place of "coffin" in Darl's first speech (340). See George P. Garrett Jr., "Some Revisions in As I Lay Dying," Modern Language Notes, LXXIII (June, 1958), 414-417.

8 Jean Stein, op. cit., p. 73.

9 Ibid., p. 75-76.

10 In this sense it is somewhat similar to Klotz's reflexive referente. See Introduction, pages 6-7.

APPENDIX A

SOME SIGNIFICANT REFERENCES TO THE MOTIFS

The Fish

Page 358 through first paragraph of 369.
364, penultimate paragraph through first paragraph 365.
376, first paragraph.
378, bottom of the page.
380, fourth paragraph.
386, second paragraph.
387-388, several references
398, Vardaman's statement.
399, middle of the page.
405, end of Tull's section.
409-410, Vardaman's section.
446-448, Vardaman's section.
422-423, second paragraph.
483, italicised section.

The Path

Page 339.
362-364.
365, second paragraph in Darl's section.
373, italicised paragraph.
389, final line.
413, second paragraph.
422, first paragraph.
488, final paragraph.
513, first line.

The Baby

Page 355-356, Dewey Dell's section.
365, final paragraph.
375, first paragraph.
379-384, dispersed references throughout this section.
422, second, third and fourth paragraphs.
435, last sentence of Darl's section.
484-488.
517-523.

The Coffin

Page 340, second paragraph.
347, dispersed references.
350, first three paragraphs.
371, third and fourth paragraphs ending on page 372.
384, references throughout Vardaman's section.
390, fourth paragraph.
391-396, Darl's section.
397, Cash's approach to the coffin (reproduced in Appendix C).
400, several references.
414, first paragraph.
444, second paragraph.
446, third paragraph.
452, penultimate paragraph.
458, last paragraph.
475, second and fourth paragraphs.
498, second paragraph.
501, last paragraph.

The Horse

Page 345, second paragraph and page 346.
376, third paragraph ending on page 377, first paragraph.
379, first paragraph.
405-406, several references.
409.
411, end of Darl's section, beginning of Anse's.
412-414, references throughout Darl's section
415, beginning of Samson's section.
418, bottom of the page.
427-435, Darl's section.
441.
445, third paragraph.
446, third paragraph.
470-472, references in italics.
475, first paragraph.
478, bottom of the page through page 481.

APPENDIX B

USE OF TENSE

((Description of Past Action or Future Action (prior to or later than its chronological position in the novel) is noted. All other passages describe action that is chronologically correct. Passages by onlookers (non-Bundrens) are marked *.))

Darl (339)	Present
*Cora (340)	Past then present
Darl (344)	Present
Jewel(347)	Present
Darl (348)	Present
*Cora (351)	Past
Dewey Dell(355)	Past and present mixed
*Tull (357)	Present
Anse (362)	Present
Darl (365)	Present
*Peabody(366)	Predominantly present (first pragraph past)
Darl (371)	Present
Vardaman(376)	Present
Dewey Dell(379)	Present
Vardaman(384)	Predominantly present (past and future in-
*Tull (386)	Past (future action insert) serts)
Darl (391)	Present
Cash (397)	Predominantly present
Vardaman(398)	Present
*Tull (398)	Predominantly present (begins in past)
Darl (405)	Present
Cash (406)	Present
Darl (407)	Present
Vardaman(408)	Present
Darl (410)	Present
Anse (411)	Present
Darl (412)	Present
Anse (414)	Present
*Samson(415)	Past
Dewey Dell (422)	Present
*Tull (424)	Past becoming present
Darl (427)	Past (past action)
*Tull (435)	Past
Darl (438)	Present
Vardaman(446)	Past ending in present
*Tull (448)	Past
Darl (451)	Present
Cash (458)	Past
*Cora (459)	Past (past action)
Addie (461)	Past (past action)

*Whitfield (468)	Past (<u>past action</u>)
Darl (470)	Past ending in present
*Armstid (473)	Past
Vardaman (481)	Present
*Moseley (484)	Past
Darl (490)	Present
Vardaman (493)	Present
Darl (494)	Present
Vardaman (495)	Present
Darl (498)	Present
Vardaman (502)	Predominantly past
Darl (504)	Present
Cash (509)	Past
*Peabody (515)	Past
*MacGowan (517)	Past
Vardaman (523)	Present with past inserts
Darl (526)	Past and present
Dewey Dell (528)	Past
Cash (529)	Past

APPENDIX C

CASH (AILD, 397)

I MADE IT ON THE BEVEL

1. There is more surface for the nails to grip.

2. There is twice the gripping-surface to each seam.

3. The water will have to seep into it on a slant. Water moves easiest up and down or straight across.

4. In a house people are upright two-thirds of the time. So the seams and joints are made up-and down. Because the stress is up-and-down.

5. In a bed where people lie down all the time, the joints and seams are made sideways, because the stress is sideways.

6. Except.

7. A body is not square like a cross-tie.

8. Animal magnetism.

9. The animal magnetism of a dead body makes the stress come slanting, so the seams and joints of a coffin are made on the bevel.

10. You can see by an old grave that the earth sinks down on the bevel.

11. While in a natural hole it sinks by the centre, the stress being up-and-down.

12. So I made it on the bevel.

13. It makes a neater job.

SOME COMMENTS ON CASH'S "SCIENTIFIC THEORY"

(From a letter (dated 23 April, 1965) of Professor William Bruce, Faculty of Engineering, McGill University.)

Technically speaking, the statement is of little value. The following comments are from a <u>technical</u> point of view.

1. The surface by which a nail grips is independent of the type of joint. If the joint were glued, then the statement that more surface for gripping is available, is true.

2. Bevelling tends to give more rigidity than a right-angled joint, and in this sense the statement is true.

3. Gravity (that is the earth's force of attraction) means that water will move downwards most easily; certainly <u>not</u> upwards. Such things as absorptivity, tightness of joint, etc. will affect the ease by which the water penetrates a joint. Therefore statement No. 3 has little meaning technically.

4. Nonsense!

5. In supporting a mass stresses are distributed in the supporting member in various ways. However, the expression sideways has some significance (in layman's terms). There is no doubt that vertical as well as horizontal stresses are present.

6. ?

7. A cross-tie of circular section is not unlike the shape of a body. However, this statement is of no consequence with regard to the construction of the coffin.

8. This term might be conceded in regard to a living organism but has absolutely no significance in the construction of a coffin.

9. Shades of Edgar Allen Poe.

10. Any granular material such as soil has a particular co-
11. efficient of friction which will determine the natural slope existing under the action of the Earth's gravity. Therefore old grave, sand pile, ditch, or post-hole will behave in similar fashion.

12. Properly done, this is true and makes not only a neater
13. job but a stronger joint.

APPENDIX D

Northrop Frye's "Central Pattern of the Comic and Tragic Visions"[1] applied to As I Lay Dying

> 1 In the comic vision the human world is a community, or a hero who represents the wish-fulfilment of the reader. The archetype of images of symposium, communion, order, friendship and love. In the tragic vision the human world is a tyranny or anarchy, or an individual or isolated man, the leader with his back to his followers, the bullying giant of romance, the deserted or betrayed hero. Marriage or some equivalent consummation belongs to the comic vision; the harlot, witch and other varieties of Jung's "terrible mother" belongs to the tragic one. All divine, heroic, angelic or other superhuman communities follow the human pattern.

As I Lay Dying falls into the comic pattern with the Bundren family as the community whose purpose of fulfilling Addie's wish finds sympathy with the reader. Anse's marriage at the end of the novel belongs to the comic vision. The novel's tragic vision is expressed in the Bundrens' growing isolation from the community at large, and in Darl's betrayal by his family. Addie may be seen as the "terrible mother" in her instigation of the painful journey, in the violence her body arouses in both people and the natural elements, and in her adultery with Whitfield.

> 2 In the comic vision the animal world is a community of domesticated animals, usually a flock of sheep, or a lamb, or one of the gentler birds, usually a dove. The archetype of pastoral images. In the tragic vision

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[1] Northrop Frye, Fables of Identity (New York, 1963), pp. 19-20.

> the animal world is seen in terms of beast and birds of prey, wolves, vultures, serpents, dragons and the like.

The animals of As I Lay Dying range from the domesticated cows and mules (the latter, of course, being stereotypically stubborn rather than gentle), to the buzzards as somewhat debased birds of prey ("the buzzard was a useless kind of hawk"[2]). Animal imagery of both kinds is prevalent: "the flashing limberness of a snake" (345), "the hair pushed and matted up on his head like a dipped rooster" (369).

> 3 In the comic vision the vegetable world is a garden, grove or park, or tree of life, or a rose or lotus. The archetype of Arcadian images, such as that of Marvell's green world or of Shakespeare's forest comedies. In the tragic vision it is a sinister forest like the one in Comus or at the opening of the Inferno, or a heath or wilderness, or tree of death.

As farming land, the Bundrens' habitat, though by no means Arcadian, is basically though somewhat scantily fruitful. With Addie's death the storm, flood, and fire destroy man's work (crops and animals) but do not render the land sinister nor a wilderness. "If nothing didn't happen and everybody made a big crop, do you reckon it would be worth the raising?" (403) represents the general view towards man's tragi-comic plight. The "tree of life" and "tree of death" are presented as wood -- the wood from which Addie's coffin is made, the wood imagery through which Jewel's violence and Addie's dead body (see above page 39) are presented. The images are

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[2] Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford, 1959), p. 242

ambivalent, rppresenting both death and rigidity, life and power.

> 4 In the comic vision the mineral world is a city, or one building or temple, or one stone, normally a glowing precious stone -- in fact the whole comic series, especially the tree, can be conceived as luminous or fiery. The archetype of geometrical images: the "starlit dome" belongs here. In the tragic vision the mineral world is seen in terms of deserts, rocks and ruins, or of sinister geometrical images like the cross.

Jefferson represents the comic world. Perhaps a certain luminosity may be ascribed to Vardaman's view of the town at night when "the lights pass on the windows when we pass. The lights are in the trees around the court-house" (523). The land wasted by the flood, or seen as having the quality of the "profound desolation of the ocean" (443) tends toward the tragic. The ambivalence of the geometrical image may be seen in the circle, which both buzzards and the toy train trace.

> 5 In the comic vision the unformed world is a river, traditionally fourfold, which influenced the Renaissance image of the temperate body with its four humours. In the tragic vision this world usually becomes the sea, as the narrative myth of dissolution is so often a flood myth. The combination of the sea and beast images gives us the leviathan and similar water-monsters.

The fruitful river in which Vardaman catches his fish becomes the source of the flood which destroys life, the flood being referred to as the "wasted world" (443). Apart from this there seems little relevance of proposition 5 to the novel in question.

In summing up, it would seem apparent that *As I Lay Dying* consistently embraces both tragic and comic aspects of the imagery discussed, both in the separate forms, and in ambivalent imagery. This result upholds the assumption that *As I Lay Dying* has a tragi-comic form.

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