Chapter IV

THE ENCOUNTER WITH ETERNITY

Human reality is the pure effort to become God without there being any given substratum for that effort, without there being anything which so endeavours. Desire expresses this endeavour.

... object madness which we bring here with us ... carry stubbornly and furiously with us into the earth again.

It is not the nightmarish shadow of history or the inevitable emplotment to rid the ego of a certain illusion which focuses the movement of quest in Faulkner's fascinating, yet intriguing novel *As I Lay Dying*. Nor is it a dichotomy which distinctly attends its destined course. The Bundren family travels to Jefferson to fulfill Addie Bundren's wish to be buried among her ancestors. It is in this journey that the dynamics of quest are intrinsically woven. Carrying the corpse, symbolically, signifies an attempt to bury the unsavoury material into the unconscious. In fact, but for Darl, each member of the Bundren family has a concealed motive to visit the town of Jefferson. Addie's coffin, ironically, becomes the carrier of unconscious energies, and its carriage to Jefferson offers the Bundrens an encounter, an opportunity to measure their strength and awareness. In fact, the multiple point of view technique of Faulkner
complicates the problem of categorically formulating
a criteria which should help in drafting the quest for
selfhood in *As I Lay Dying.* The rapid pace of the
narration is obvious only after the thread of order
stretches out smoothly. That is only after the story
emerges out of the chaos of deepening obscurities. The
course of the journey runs through the trials and
tribulations and brings out in clear dimensions the psychic
growth or eXpense which the characters gain in their
endeavour, or remain stranded due to certain individual
traits. The encounter also brings out in certain frank
terms man's nakedness which he tries to hide in a carefully-
carved out persona, when even his emotional projections
give the lie to his inner longings. At the end, in most
cases the persona is adjusted to new dimensions after the
Shadow, which had split the ego-self axis, is resolved or
assimilated.

This short novel of Faulkner has both baffled and
bewitched the critics. The quality of attention, it has
generated, is indeed an assurance of its greatness. Viewed
as "a legend and an allegory" or as a "a master-piece of
black humour", *As I Lay Dying* is also described as "a tale
of madness told by a madman." The journey to Jefferson,
it is observed, tends to become "a grotesque travesty." Certainly, the novel does not present human existence as
"an absurd joke." In fact, it presents man's encounter with the elements which sustain the very cosmos. Its characters, like Addie, Darl and Jewel, assume a larger perspective than the role assigned to them in the novel. Addie's wish triggers the possibility of the journey which projects an encounter between human existence and eternity.

The present author's attempt to analyse the quest motif starts with the premise that it is the quest of the Bundren family as a whole. Darl, Cash, Dewey Dell, Anse, Addie and Wardman - all represent different psychic moulds, but together their journey shapes into a collective quest. The consequent surrealistic picture reflects the psyche of an impoverished Southern American family vis-a-vis human reality in general. The activation of desire, particularly in Addie, Darl and Jewel embodies the human endeavour to grow beyond the existential substratum. Although the road and the destination are the same, yet the psychic routes are distinctly at variance and hence at the end of the novel, each reaches a psychological terminal which is individual and separate. The altitude for the launching pad in each case is of varying degrees, signifying the progress made by the person concerned. No doubt, none reached the pedestal of Self. The journey in the novel ends, but the quest continues. Nevertheless the journey is marked by moments of fulfilment as well as of
failure, of revelation and completion. The frustrating
sense of failure reflects the experience of the harrowing
absurdity of the conflict between the comic, cruel reality
and the emergence of an inward calm. In fact all the members
of the Bundren family undergo the experience of death, and
the process of dying is an event in the novel which does
not highlight in the quest-dynamics a sense of morbid
insecurity or biological extinction but a phenomenon which
is accepted existentially. The degree of understanding
signifies a subdued psychic state or a resurgence of which
an individual psyche is capable. It may be admitted at
the outset that the Bundrens do experience the 'dying' in
the empirical sense, but with the exception of Darl, they
do not imbibe the new experience existentially, at least
not at the conscious level.

The nucleus of this novel of Faulkner is Addie Bundren.
Her own voice is rather ironically planted by the author
at the time when she is being carried in a coffin to
Jefferson. In fact, she is the hub of the wheel of the
Bundren family. Right here, it would be proper to state
that mythically Addie is the eternal feminine, the Great
Mother, and she represents the terrible Mother as well who
wants the blood sacrifice of the male. While the Great
Mother is a positive personification of the eternal
feminine where she is all-nourishing, giver and protector,
the terrible feminine represents the negative aspects of
the Great Mother. Psychologically, the terrible feminine devours and petrifies like the great mythical characters of Medea and Medusa or in the Indian matrix, the figure of Kali. The activation of these aspects in her personality contribute to the failure of the family dynamics of the Bundrens. But for this, it would have been a smooth journey to Jefferson. Addie combines in her personality both the feminine and the masculine principles. Her androgynous presence in the Bundren family causes an upheaval in the possible being of the Bundrens. Addie's strange perspectives about her being and the being of the world and the super-structure of the Logos ever the Bros dispel any possibility of Addie acting as the external Compassionate Mother in the family dynamics of the Bundrens. Addie questions her own being and the being of others and her broodings fluctuate between the existential being and the possible nothingness.

Addie's experiences as Anse's wife or of motherhood spell little fulfillment for her, for her quest in life is to find a compensatory relation with her own masculinity. She is aware of her "duty to the alive, to the terrible blood, the red bitter blood boiling through the land" (p.138). It will be obvious in this analysis that she fails in her quest, because she is content to devote the best part of her life to a foggy perception of
fulfilment in Jewell who becomes a kind of Christ-figure, a saviour for her. Earlier it was remarked that this novel represents the quest of the Bundren family as a whole. In carrying Addie's coffin to Jefferson, they are carrying the dead figure of their family dynamics. During this journey of the dead, the Bundren family encounters death; the experience of death and the eternal symbols of natural catastrophes, Flood and Fire, bring into bold relief their journey towards selfhood. Their march to Jefferson, though apparently, ends on an anti-climax with Anse ("kind of hangdog and proud too, with his teeth and all" (p.208) introducing the new Mrs. Bundren to his progeny. They indeed are not his; all have altered psychologically even though Anse remains the same. It is, as if, he has retreated to start afresh; the retreat was facilitated with Addie's death. Maybe, the quest for Self is not fulfilled even in case of the young Bundrens, but they do manifest at the end of the journey a certain psychic advance, the point from which they could always move forward to an experience of totality. The shifting waves of their psyche emerge into an expanse of new awareness. No doubt it is

through the shocks of difficulty and death
Man shall attain his godhead.9

The godhead implies the evolving of selfhood, the Bodhi-Chitta - the enlightened mind. The self is after all a god-image.10 The Bundrens' journey takes them on to an experience of wholeness, howsoever little their gain may
have been. Of course, the progress made by Darl and Jewel is indeed considerable.

II

It has been observed above that Addie embodies the terrible mother and that the feminine and the masculine principles are juxtaposed in her psychic responses. Teaching at the school, she looked "forward to the times when they faulted; so I could whip them ... I would think with each blow of the switch: How you are aware of me!" (p. 134). She believed that each being had a "secret and selfish life" and the urge in her was to imprint her own mark on the others' blood "for ever and ever" (p. 134). It is after such a frank focus on herself that Addie tells us:

And so I took Anse. (p. 134)

It was her acute sense of loneliness too which made her feel how incomplete in herself she was. "To be is to be incomplete, unfulfilled," writes George Steiner, "but at the same time, all authentic being is a being - towards its own end," and he quotes Heidegger, "Death is a way to be, which Dasein takes upon itself as soon as it is."11 The faint and loud honking of the wild geese at night and the days as well made Addie's loneliness unbearable and hence, says Addie again:

So I took Anse. (p. 136)

She recalls her father's advice to her: "The reason for
living was to stay dead a long time" (p. 138). A lot of repression is implicit in the attempt to continue living as such. Practising a kind of living death in order to attain a meaningful life leads to a kind of inertia in the psyche, seldom stirred by any interplay of desire and depression. The repression acts as a kind of block in one's progress, because there is nothing kinetic to activate the libido. In the widening stretch between desire and fulfilment stands the newly-invented self, which indeed is nothing short of finding new garters for the ego.

The problem, in case of Addie, takes upon itself a deeply complicated character since she has her own peculiarly strange perspectives about her own being and the being of others. The ambiguity of her own emotional projections make her conclude that "sin and love and fear are just sounds that people who never aimed nor loved nor feared have for what they never had and cannot have until they forget the words" (p. 138). Thus she questions the traditional transaction between word and sound. Her major function is thinking; Ansa represents the physical aspect of Anima for her. Thus the ground is prepared on which collapses the Ansa-Addie relationship. Addie's need for eros is submerged
in the predominantly active logos principle in her psyche. For her, the words ought to represent much more than the well-known dimensions; not for her "the fumbling at deeds like orphans to whom are pointed out in a crowd two faces and told, that is your father, your mother" (p.138). So when Anse violates her aloteness, it is just in a temporary way. Anse's love is just like one of those words which are "like spiders dangling by their mouths from a beam, swinging and twisting and never touching ..."(p.136). Even as she gets her first son Cash, she records how perhaps her father never understood the meaning of 'staying dead' a long time. The experience of mother-hood leaves her with the feeling that the living was terrible. The child born as well violated her aloteness but the "violation had left her again whole" (p.136). But significantly, Anse or love just remained "outside the circle"(p.136). It means that psychologically she could not accept Anse as a part of her 'Self', the mandala. Thus when she becomes mother for the second time, she feels that Anse had tricked her into it. Her anger has a kind of violence which she tries to suppress and gets from Anse the promise that she would be buried in Jefferson among her own people. She intended it as a kind of "revenge"(p.137) on Anse. It can be explained as the urge of the Great Mother to be at the place of her origin. Addie's desire to be buried in Jefferson,
an archetypal thrust of the Great Mother, takes the whole
Dundren family through an encounter with death.

For Addie, Anse was just of no consequence. He did
not know he was "dead" (p. 136). He was only a word, she
records, "a shape, a vessel, and I would watch him liquefy
and flow into it ... a significant shape profoundly
without life like an empty door frame" (p. 137). Thus Anse
could not provide her with the psychological bread and
butter that could sustain her psychic diet. She drifts
to Whitfield, the preacher—a persona sanctified by the
Church. In this secret and profoundly unorthodox liaison,
Addie's revolt could expand to frank and obvious projections
and this also gave the vitality to her suppressed urge for
Bros. In the dynamics of bipolarity, this marriage of
Logos and Eros in Addie results in a psychic comminutio
of the principles of male and female, of Shiva and Shakti,
of Prakriti and Prakriti. 12 But the androgynous nature of
Addie's psyche does not solve her problem, and what is
more, it further complicates the family dynamics of the
Dundrens. Her extra care and love for Jewel—the son
born of her affair with Whitfield—is just a foggy
perception of her sense of fulfillment with Whitfield.
Nevertheless, for her Jewel assumes the significance of a
symbol, as we learn it from Cora Tull.

Now as a contrast to Addie, Faulkner has planted
Cora Tull, an unassuming woman with a pedestrian outlook
towards life. Steeped in Christian lore, her snug faith in prayer and the will of the all-loving God is stupendous. It is from her that we learn about the sin Addie had "committed in being partial to Jewel that never loved her and was its own punishment, in preference to Darl that was touched by God Himself ... and that did love her" (p.133). Core felt that it was Addie's vanity, and that sacrilege marked her speech, when she implicitly remarked that Jewel would save her "from the water and the fire" (p.133). Flood and Fire are two eternal calamities which can humble men, and mythically, it is the Great God himself who would save the mortals when He deems fit for His choice. Core thinks that Addie had "closed her heart to God and set that selfish mortal boy in His place" (p.133). In fact, this signifies Addie's revolt against the tradition and the Church. For her, Cash, Darl, Dewey Dell and Vance are all bastards. And her 'Jewel' is the son of God, the Saviour. If the off-springs of Anse are bastards for her, the one born of Whitfield is sanctified in her psyche with an aura of holiness. Nevertheless, this philosophising on Addie's part or ascribing divinity to Jewel was only for "hiding the fact that she had remained a lonely woman, lonely with her pride" (p.21). Her love for and her eulogising of Jewel indeed embodies the love that passeth understanding: that pride, that furious desire to hide that object nakedness which we bring here with us, carry with us into operating-rooms, carry stubbornly and furiously with us into the earth again. (p.39)
Thus Addie's singular experience of positive emotion also turns into a negative construction.

It is through the inter-play of an individual's responses and projections in regard to others that new dimensions emerge in a psyche. Human vanity drives a person into practising some kind of deceit on one's own self. The adopted persona, though only a garb, is mistaken for the very skin of the body. Thus the energy is withdrawn from the endeavour to realise true being. The road to Godhead or selfhood stretches to a dizzy distance, and the desire is understood only in terms of having found some vague fulfilment. Addie Bundren also withholds herself. About her dying relation with Anse, she remarks: "I would be I; I would let him be the shape and echo of his word"(p.138). Theorising is good as far as it goes. When it implies pulling down shutters and getting into a narrow shell, it just means arresting one's growth. Instead of finding pragmatic and authentic relationships with others, Addie belittles the significance of those around her. Her partial treatment to Jewel is voiced by Cora Tull and Darl. The latter is an 'extension' of Addie Bundren. He was the unwanted son and grew into a queer fellow through neglect. He is the most vocal among the Bundrens. He has observed the whole Bundren family at various stages and like Addie, he is
seized of the existential implications of being. Even as he "sits at the supper table", Desey Dall feels that his eyes are "gone further than the food and the lamp, full of the land dug out of his skull and the holes filled with distance beyond the land" (p. 24).

It is Darl who provides us with a closer focus on the Bundren family for the authorial licence of narrative lies with him — whether it is Jewel stealing out at night to clean up Quiek's forty acres to get that horse, or it is the last moments of Addie Bundren. It is interesting to watch the frequencies on which Darrl's mind operates. Of all the characters in the novel, it is Darl whom we see as writhing under the existential queries. A faint silhouette of nothingness seems to envelop his being. He is well aware of this as many of his observations (discussed later in this chapter) indicate. His intellectual credentials, apparent in his comments and broodings throughout the novel, warrant a guarded attention from the reader in order to follow the burden of the major argument in the novel. Addie has queer notions about her own being and the being of others. Darl, of all the children, inherits this trait from his mother. Addie enters a blind alley in her endeavour, for she limits her desire to her sense of fulfillment in Jewel. Darl reports:

She would fix him special things to eat and hide them for him. And that may have been when I first found it out, that Addie Bundren should be hiding
anything she did, who had tried to teach us that
decay was such that, in a world where it was, 
nothing else could be very bad or very important,
not even poverty. And at times when I went in to
go to bed she would be sitting in the dark by 
Jewel where he was asleep. And I knew that she was
hating herself for that decay and hating Jewel
because she had to love so that she had to act the
decay.(pp.100-1)

This frank comment from Darl spells in lucid terms Addie's
influence on the family dynamics of the Bundrenes. Her
partiality to Jewel and the decay on herself definitely
activated a trend of disintegration in the family. The
children grow in years; but for a faint presence of one
another, they all grow into separate beings: Cash's
passion to become a good carpenter, Jewel's assertion of
his individuality by flaunting Anse's word when he brings
the horse, Dewey Dell drifting astray with Ida, Anse's
basiness secure in his pack of words, Darl's peculiar
anxiety and reaching after the reality of Being. Verdamen,
the youngest boy is just at the stage of trying to tally
words and sounds to the echo and shape of sensations.
Thus, each member of the Bundren family joins the journey
to Jefferson; each encounters on the way the fury of
flood and fire, threatening their very being, distracting
each from the secondary motive that each had in going to
the town. Cash wanted new tools; Dewey looked for pills
or abortion. Verdamen hoped to see the train and Anse
wanted to buy new teeth and perhaps a new wife too. In
fact, in nursing secondary motives, Darl and Jewel are
certain exceptions. These two emerge with accomplishments
to their credit, born of a definite conflict between
the endeavours of the two of them, though their desire
was the same: quiet death and a decent burial for their
mother. One may hazard a statement that Darl set the
born on fire in order to save the corpse from further
putrefaction. Jewel, on his part, as a pragmatic
person, stops that attempt and helps in giving a formal
ritual burial to his mother. A detailed analysis however,
later!

III

Addie deprives the Bundren family of the energising
presence of the feminine principle. From her failure
to carve a role for herself emerges the unconscious
manifestation of the Great Mother to go back to the
container, the Vessel, the Mother Earth—the place
from where she had sprung. In fact her revenge started
the moment she decided to sever all connection with the
Bundren family. Her consciousness, no doubt, expands
after her sexual experience with Whitfield, but this
consciousness immediately inverts into a narrow selfish
concentration of Jewel. After that she indulges in a
kind of moral arithmetic and as a compensatory measure
she gives Ance Dewey Doll and Vardaman to "negative
Jewel" and "to replace the child I had robbed him of"
(p.140). After this she "could get ready to die"(p.140).
For her, sin and salvation were never a matter of words. That was her approach in life. Death also is not a matter of words. Not only that she encounters death in subjective terms, but she also encounters the very process of dying as well. If she questioned her 'being,' death she could not ignore. If the reason for living was to stay dead a long time, for her meeting with death she has to stay 'alive' with the shock of the aide chipping into her ears. To know that one has to lie in a coffin finally may even be a comforting thought, or an orrible one to somebody who is uncertain about life. But to suffer the sight of the very planks which are to shape and form the coffin one has to lie in is just terrible. Even before Addie has burst into emptiness, she has to suffer the emptiness in life; the coffin is waiting for her to breathe her last. Now her encounter with eternity, while she is just fixed in her finitude, could give Addie little consolation. The feeling is too big for the human heart to bear. A composite picture of the agony which Addie undergoes as she lay dying is recorded by Darl as well as Peabody:

'You, Cash,' she shouts, her voice harsh, strong, and unimpaired. 'You, Cash!' (Darl,p.50)

... she calls his name; her voice harsh and strong.

'Cash,' she says; 'you, Cash!' (Peabody,p.39)

Addie's state of dying and her after-death state in the coffin are cruelly juxtaposed, reflecting the ambivalence
and paradox that life is.

Among the Bundrens, Darl and Jove react to this snoring of saws near Addie's death-bed. The novel opens with Darl's voice. His complimentary 'good carpenter' for Cash and his remark that "Addie could not want a better box to lie in" (p. 8) convey to us in no uncertain terms the inherent discomforting nature of the situation. Core Full could almost 'see' the sound of sawing in Addie's face. It is Jove whose reaction is most violent: "Sawing and knocking, and keeping the air always moving so fast on her face that when you are tired you can't breathe it, and that goddamn else going one lick less" (p. 15). He wishes that he were better dead than having to watch this sight of Addie's own kin "sitting there like buzzards" (p. 15). The novel is aptly entitled 'As I Lay Dying' and Faulkner's focus, just as the novel begins, is on the unenviable and yet inevitable human condition. Human beings can be so natural and confident to accept the death of another person. After an individual's encounter with eternity, in an almost though through a complicated mental terrain, Faulkner subjects the whole Bundren family to the fury of flood and fire. 13

In a tremendous way, this short novel brings into our experience man's enigmatic encounter with the elements of nature: air, water, fire, earth and ether. Even as Addie breathes her last, the wild air engulfes the space;
the storm unleashes its fury even on the little boy
Vardaman, frightened, goes to Cora and Vernon Tull to
tell them about the passing away of Addie Bundren. The
rain storm is "the first manifestation of the cosmic
forces which are going to be unleashed against the Bundrens." 14
Then the whole Bundren family struggles to take Addie
back to the earth she belonged to; they have to brave the
fire and the wild and violent waters, threatening to
jeopardise the intended journey to Jefferson. Either
represents the nothingness, the void. Most of the Bundrens
experience this nothingness, but they miss the meaning.
Parl alone tries to look into this void and in the process,
seems to suffer and wriggle under the sense of nausea.
The Bundrens' struggle is marked by their unimpeachable
instinct to survive amidst the unknown - the threat
held out by the violence of the other elements combined.
The dark omens, writes Andre Breton, "announce the
coming catastrophe and proclaim the imminence of the
descent into Hell. The wagon is soon to become Charon's
ferry: The river crossing, like that of Styx or Acheron,
marks the Bundrens' entry into the underworld." 15

Breton's formulations reveal only half the truth.
His comments on the last journey and the encounter with
the river as a mythic extension of a paradigm - the descent
into Hell are perhaps perceptive. Nevertheless, he seems
to make a quantum jump in as much as the experience of the journey and the encounter of the river is for the Fundrens a sojourn in the purgatory. Although the novel does not stipulate visibly a new health or a new dimension in the personality of all the Fundrens after the journey, yet there is seemingly a cathartic relief. Anse, however, unconcerned, uncorrupted and indifferent as he was makes his own connection with the reality with a new set of teeth and with a new wife. It can also be said that the is revenge of the feminine/over with the death and burial of Addie; metaphorically the albatross has fallen from the neck of the Fundrens. The major character, who triggered this revenge motif in Addie, remains, however, unaffected and as much in his masculinity as ever. And one is driven to the conclusion that the Fundrens are purged and perhaps on way to a new psychic balance.

IV

The animus component of Addie's psyche would require a detailed examination. Her psyche, being full of impenetrable complexities, changing with the flux of time, filling and emptying the space of the novel simultaneously as it were, would perhaps shape itself into a seemingly acceptable pattern if viewed from the psychological perspectives, especially depth psychology. Anse was too
dwarf for the robes which flourished out of her psyche. 
Anse is only a physical companion who is there in the 
novel to fulfill the role of siring Bundren children.
He does not conform to Addie's animus projections at all.
The fact is that Addie feels 'tricked' or in a manner of 
saying, she considers her earlier fascination for Anse 
as a flux pas. A verbose man, he had been just 'words'
and finally remains a parasite in the family. "Pa dissents 
sewet because he will catch his death from the sickness" 
(p.24), reports Dewey Dell. He himself comes out with
futile arguments that God made men vertical like trees,
because "when He aims for something to stay put, He 
makes it up-and-down ways, like a tree or a man"(p.31).
This defense of his laziness does "expose him to be a
sanctimonious humbug."16 He takes shelter behind a
meaningless platter of wordy jugglery. Ironically his
promise to Addie for burial in Jefferson seems to be
presented in the novel by Faulkner as a genuine or
authentic commitment.

At the beginning it was observed that carrying the
corpse symbolises an attempt to bury the unsavoury
material back into the unconscious. By trying to fulfill
Addie's wish, Anse, in one leap, intends to morally
justify to himself his own stance in life. He is most
insistent on carrying out Addie's wish. The outrageous
aspect of the sound of saying does not embarrass him.
It is rather too late when he sends for the doctor, Peabody. "Why didn't you send for me sooner?" Peabody confronts Anse with the question and Anse replies:

"Hit was just one thing and then another," he says. 'That ore corn me and the boys was aimin' to git up with, and Dawey Bell a-takin' good keer of her, and folks comin' in, a-offerin' to help and such, till I just thought..."

'Dem the money," I say. 'Did you ever hear of me worrying a fallow before he was ready to pay?" 'Hit ain't begrudgin' the money," he says. 'I just kept a-thinkin'. ... She's goin', is she?' (pp.37-8)

This dialogue rhyming with the snoring sound of Cash's saw pinpoints Anse's indifference or seeming gullibility. He can be no help to Cash in mauling down the planks. It is Vernon Bull, the neighbour, who helps Cash even as it is pouring and dark. During the journey too, he is of little help to the boys. All the time he is harping on one thing that Addie would not like to be beholden to any one else than her own flesh and blood.

Though Addie's condition is not understood to be encouraging at all, Anse sends Jewel and Peri to take another load on the wagon for this will fetch three dollars. During the journey to Jefferson, he refuses help from others especially when the flood takes in its toll the team of the Bundrens' wagon. It was with sheer audacity that Jewel had asserted his individuality when he brought the horse and in no decent terms had told Anse that he would rather kill the horse before it eats
a handful of Anse's land. But when it comes to settling a bargain, Anse unhesitatingly and without demur exchanges this very horse of Jewel for a new team. Not only that, he deprives Dewey Bell of her ten dollars in order to acquire a new set of teeth for himself, whereas she personally needed that money so badly. He does not even brush his moral or emotional bonds to hand over Darl rather than suffer the loss of a few dollars in a law-suit. Addie lay three days, waiting for Darl and Jewel to come clean back home and get a new wheel to where the wagon was in the ditch. Anse refuses the offer of Bell, saying, "we'll wait for ours ... she'll want it so. She was ever a particular woman"(p.73).

In exactly where her particularity lay never became a point of genuine curiosity for Anse. He understood only literally her sense of pride and could never wake to her intrinsic needs. The ten day delay in the burial does not distress him. When it comes to spades - the instrument needed for digging the grave - he conveniently forgets about his earlier insistence on Addie not liking to be beholden to anybody but her own flesh and blood. Though there is little direct reference to any pre-existing traffic between Anse and the new Mrs. Bundren, yet the very manner in which he goes to a particular house, takes all the time in the world to
return with the spices, and then a hand moves the
curtain to wave— all this apparently suggests Anse's
insincerity to Addie. Not only was he making a ceremony
of the situation of her burial, but his perfunctory
attitude to Addie's sickness and, as it were, to her
whole life while living or as she lay dying suggest
inhabitually that Anse was looking for an opportunity
to buy a new woman like a new set of teeth. Cleanth
Brook's rightly calls Anse Faulkner's "most accomplished
villain." 17

When miseries start attending the journey to
Jefferson, he starts touting at the Lord's ways with
words:

I am the chosen of the Lord, for who He loveth,
so doeth He chastiseth ... But now I can get them
teeth. That will be a comfort. It will. (p.65)

It can not be denied that Addie is an eccentric and,
if one were to hazard a statement, an abnormal woman
in the matrix of family. She has certain reservations
about her essential role as a mother and it appears
that she is herself unsure about her expectations from
the environment or the people around. But, about that
later. Presently, we are concerned with Anse's relation-
ship with her. The tragi-comic presentation of Addie-
Anse relationship brings to the mind of a reader an
inevitable answer. That Anse is not a door in the
sense of being a father, a husband and head of the
family. That he does not partake any of the hypersensitive emotionality of Addie is also apparent. If he could only fill in the role of being a 'door' in the family, it would have set at rest the meanderings of Addie's mind. Anima projections crystallize the masculine counterpart of the feminine. Emotionally, however, after the initial stirring of the frequencies, the projections of Anima or Animus, as the case may be, undergo the process of grinding in the water-mill of Reality. And there appear the gaps in between. Anse, therefore, remains a piece of furniture in the house bought involuntarily.

If Anse remained a man of words, Whitfield embodies no different Anima figure for Addie. No doubt at a particular turn in Addie's life, he extends to her a sense of fulfillment. But he too is a man of more words. The missing links between his voice and the words, the sound and the sense is brought to us in his own monologue as well as when Tall comments on him:

His voice is bigger than him. It's like they are not the same. It's like he is one, and his voice is one, swimming on two horses side by side across the ford and coming into the house, the mud-splashed one and the one that never even got wet, triumphant and sad. (p. 73)

His persona indeed lies like a shadow between the mud-splashed one and the one that never got wet, triumphant and sad. His hypocrisy gets a more proper focus in his
own monologue. It is after he learns that Addie is dying that he emerges victorious from his bout of wrestling with Satan. The enormity of his sin is all too obvious to him: "Let not the tale of mine and her transgression come from her lips instead of mine" (p. 141). His statement frankly owes itself to his vanity than any sense of humble understanding of sin and salvation. His intellectual propensities warn him that "eternity was a fearsome thing to face" (p. 141). So as Addie lay dying, she could be driven by her own moral consciences to confess the sexual trespass. His gratitude to the Lord for not letting Addie make a confession as she was trespassing to the other world needs little comment. This just betrays his careless swing from the 'mud-splashed' psychic terrain to the one that never got 'wet'. The fact remains that he lacks the moral fibre which imparts one an energy and courage to confess. He just procrastinates.

In fact, Addie's special relation with Jewel is the only clue in the novel which suggests a kind of fulfilment in her relationship with Whitfield. Whitfield, however, does not measure up to the stature of Addie, because, in moral terms, he is just a fledgeling. In Anima-Animus relationship, it is not one way traffic alone. Addie might have thought herself straying into the holiness of the priest's world, Whitfield did not
think so. This is demonstrated by the fact that Addie did not confess while dying, whereas Whitfield is assailed by the satanic fears, and yet he procrastinates.

It seems that along with Addie's coffin, the whole Bundren family is being devoured by the flood. It will be interesting to include in our analysis a mythic dimension to the scene of flooded river encountered on way to Jefferson. To make it clear it would help to chart out the incidents sequentially. A scene of immense desolation was charged with the voice of the river voters. It was a bridge across a hundred yards. Faulk tells Anse to wait for a day and that by the next morning, it could go down if it did not rain at night. But Anse's refrain is "I give my promise ... she is counting on it" (p. 110). So they all move on to brave the thick dark current. This confrontation assumes significance for it seemed that they "had reached the place where the notion of the wasted world accelerates just before the final precipice" (p. 115). Looking at the voters and the tilting coffin in the wagon, Cash wonders whether it was all in balance and Jewel shouts at him to walk across the bridge along Darl: "Let me on the wagon" (p. 114). Finally, Jewel is asked to pull with the rope from across the river, and Cash lowers the team carefully into the stream. Jewel goes ahead, wading through the voters on his horse. Then appears the log,
with "a long gout of foam" hanging to it "like the beard of an old man or a goat" (p. 117). Darl reports that the log "stood for an instant upright upon the surging and heaving desolation like Christ" (p. 116). For Cora Tull too "it was the hand of God" (p. 121). Later, Cash also feels the same way and (before and after crossing the river) wonders if they were "going against God in a way" (p. 165). But that is after the event. The log struck the wagon, tilting it and thus the reins stretched taut in Cash's hand and disappeared into the water. With the other hand, he tried to push at Addie's coffin and asked Darl to jump clear. Darl reports how the head of the mule vanished after looking at the men with its eyes wide, "making a sound almost human" (p. 117). Even as the log struck the wagon again and Darl jumped off the wagon, the legs of the mules had lost contact with earth. Thus the flood had almost swallowed them along Addie's coffin.

The violence in the encounter with the flooded river had slain the mules. Cash's log is another casualty. Jewel emerges in heroic dimensions after the rescue-operation. He dives into the river to search for the carpenter's tools (of Cash). He tells Darl to rouse Cash who lay unconscious on his back. Vernon also helps him in tracing the tools. He again dives into the river, but then there the narration
fades out. It is Jewel indeed who drags Addie's coffin back to the earth. Then the Bundrens borrow Aramid's team to pull the wagon and they settle down to wait in Aramid's shed. At this time the buzzards are seen poring on the barn. The corpse's stench is the obvious reason. Aramid's wife, Lula thinks it to be "an outrage. He should be hanged for treating her so" (p.148). Jewel is furious at Lula and starts pulling the wagon out of the shed. Meanwhile, Anse goes away on Jewel's horse and strikes a deal for a team with Snake. Jewel glares at Anse, "You mean you tried to swap my horse?"(p.151). Anse for once stands the fury with the shield of self-pity and explains that he had saved money to get teeth and he had to spend that too on the team. Thus he would still not be able to eat even the ordinary food in a proper way. Aramid's offer of a team is rejected by Anse with the same old consideration that Addie would like to 'go in corn'. Let us have a look at the price of the team which had to be bought to continue the journey: the cultivator and the seeder are mortgaged, Cash's money meant for buying tools, Jewel's horse and Anse's own savings for the new teeth. How far the last is correct depends on how far we can trust Anse's words. Jewel mysteriously disappears only to take the horse to Snake's place in a typical gesture of violence and heroism.
The journey to Jefferson continues; the wagon with the eight-day-old corpse brings down the buzzards, lighting on the coffin, chasing it. On the way the Marshal tells them to bury the corpse soon: "Don't you know you're liable to jail for endangering the public health"(p.162). When they stop near a hardware store, ladies put "handkerchiefs to their noses, and a crowd of hard-nosed men and boys"(p.161) stand around the wagon as the Marshal argued with them. Don't these Bundren feel the rising stench of the corpse? What mysterious force drives them on? Has Addie become the still point of the turning wheel of the Bundren family? Mrs. Vickery makes a very vital observation that the central problem of the novel is "Addie, not as mother, corpse or promise but as an element in the blood of her children which they must integrate whether she lives or dies."

Addie represents the terrible aspect of the Great Mother. Quite precisely, her first contact with school children was through 'pain'. By whipping them she wanted to make them aware of her. It is to fulfill her wish that all her children undergo the tortuous journey. They all experience the negative impact of the terrible mother. Cash suffers a certain amount of loss and amputation. Thus their secondary motives are submerged or forgotten. Cash suffers a fracture in his leg and his dream of buying new tools
is also doomed. Verdenan's curiosity to see the town is of little significance. Devay Dell's search for a cure that could miscarries the unwanted conception in her womb also suffers a lapse. For Darl the pressures pile up; his sensitive temperament revolts against the nauseating presence of the corpse with the buzzards hovering over the wagon. His evaluation betrays his sense of "disembodiment and splitting of self, obsession with identity, sense of isolation and deadness." 19 He observes:

How do our lives revel out into the no-sound, no-sound, the weary gestures wearily recapitulant; echoes of old compulsions with no-hand on no-strings; in sunset we fall into furious attitudes, dead gestures of dolls. (p.164)

It is from Verdenan that we learn about Darl's broodings over the outrageous nature of the eight-day-old-dead Ma Addie Bundren:

'She's talking to God,' Darl says. 'She is calling on Him to help her.'
'She want Him to help her?' I say.
'She wants Him to hide her away from the sight of man,' Darl says.
'Why does she want Him to hide her away from the sight of man, Darl?'
'So she can lay down her life,' Darl says. (p.170)

This conversation gives us a clue which does help us to understand how Darl was forced to set fire to the barn itself. He is charged with madness. He is indeed queer, but this setting fire to the barn itself.
explains his succumbing to an impulse. Walter J. Cletsoff finds it difficult to make out the reason for Darl’s action and observes: “Our inability to resolve these questions about the fire prevents us from resolving our notions about Darl’s sanity or insanity, and this in turn helps to prevent us from resolving the meaning of the book.”20 The present author feels that Darl is not at all mad. This is very apparent from his behaviour after the fire.

In setting the barn on fire he had succumbed to a feeling of nausea at the rising stench and the implicit insult to the dead. Even as the fire is about to lap the whole of the barn, the narration about the rescue-operation is also in Darl’s voice. The present author finds no reason to doubt the authenticity of this account. Darl is just very sane. If Darl were insane, he would have reacted indifferently to the stinking corpse or he would have demonstrated least of his emotional concern for Jewel. Despite his conflict with Jewel, which is obvious through-out the novel, it is Darl’s compassion towards Jewel which marks this part of the narration. Jewel again emerges in heroic dimensions. Though all, including Darl, shout in alarm to warn Jewel from entering the red glare of the fire, Jewel runs “crouching to the far end of the coffin” through “the rain of burning hay” (pp.175-6). Jewel’s under-shirt blooms with
"widening-crimson-edged holes" (p. 176) as he saves Addie from fire. Javel emerges "from the blazing barn carrying the coffin like a trophy saved from the flames, his body silhouetted against the fire becomes the magnified image of a conquering hero." 24 Thus, in the battle against the fury of the elements, Javel, like the mythic heroes, fights the formidable and triumphs.

VI

In contrast to Darl's cerebral configurations, Javel represents vitality, action and is perhaps the energising force in the family. His fascination for possessing a horse is very significant. The horse is a symbol of energy and that of age. 22 Both Javel and Darl had a special importance in Addie's psychic scheme; the former symbolised Addie's passion and the feeling of fruition, the latter symbolised her state of mind prior to her fulfilment. Darl also symbolised Addie's dilemma about the nature of 'being' in the world and its relation to and prerogative over the other beings. The distinction between the two is found in Darl's words:

I don't know what I am. I don't know if I am or not. Javel knows he is, because he does not know that he does not know whether he is or not. 25
The two represent Addie's dilemma between word and action. Whereas Jewell represents action, Darl represents the word. It is the moment when the word and his usual empty configurations crystallise in a revolt against the numbing presence of the eight-day-old dead body culminating in action, that the 'act' is termed as a mad one. Mad it is in the sense that he betrays lack of concern by endangering the life of the cattle along the barn in which lay the dead body of Addie Bundren. But in the rescue-operation, Darl's behaviour is extremely sane. As the fire sucks swiftly towards the stalls where a horse is screaming, Darl shouts as he reports in his monologue: "Quick, I say the horse" (p. 173). The horses are saved and the cow rushes out, but Jewell brushes past the dissolving space to reach the place where the coffin lies. In this Jewell endangers his own life and Darl 'shouts' for him to stop.

However towards the end of the novel, Cash's calm and sober voice fails to find any sanity in Darl's act of setting the barn to fire, and thinks that "in a sense it was the value of his [Jewell's] horse Darl tried to burn up" (p. 185). Cash makes a pedestrian comment that it is the majority opinion that can decide the sanity or craziness of a particular action. But even as the flooded river hindered their journey, Cash
admits that it would have been "God's blessing if he did take her outen our hands and get shut of her in some clean way..."(p.185). There is a lot more in the novel to disapprove of the suggested madness of Drel. A critic has described Drel's "risibility and his rage of insanity as "the violent manifestations of a radical sanity within, which can place life above personality and truth above fact."23 As further evidence of his sanity, it can be argued that it is Drel who in a very sensible way saves Jewel from getting into a fatal argument with townsfolk and explains Jewel's abusive volley to his being "sick; got bruised in a fire last night, and he ain't himself"(p.182). After the fire, he is seen lying on the coffin, crying. There is no doubt that he is confused and over-whelmed, yet deeply emotional.

When it comes to choosing between sending Drel to Jackson or have Gillespie sue the Bunchens, the family opts for the former. Anse thinks, "I reckon there ain't nothing else to do" and Jewel supports the decision and offers to "catch him and tie him up"(p.184). Cash reports these remarks and he too, in a rather decile way, submits to the proposed cruelty to Drel. Devey Dell's hatred surprises Cash also. How do we explain her sudden spurt of violence against Drel as, like a wild
cat scratching and clawing, she attacks Darl? Certain facts emerge, as they ought to, from no where else but the novel. It is Darl's indifference to Deway's fate; it is important for her to reach the town to cure herself of the "agony and the despair of spreading bones, the hard girdle in which lie the outraged entrails of events"(p.93). Darl know Deway's anguish that she needed to abort. We also learn from Deway that Darl knew about her relation with Lafe and possibly even more and that she had asked him if he was "going to tell Pa"(p.25). However by trying to burn the coffin Darl makes the journey to town more complicated and almost jeopardises the very possibility of reaching the town. Deway would talk to Darl "with knowing with hating because he knows"(p.25). When Darl's eyes fall on her, her feeling betrays this very knowledge of Darl: Darl's eyes "begin at my feet and rise along my body to my face, and my dress is gone: I sit naked on the seat above the unburrying mules..."(p.93).

The activation of Deway's unconscious also suggests her growing hatred for Darl. In a dream, she rises and takes "the knife from the streaming fish"(p.94) and kills Darl. The physical assault on Darl fulfills this unconscious urge in Deway's psyche. Quite interestingly, Addie is compared with a fish, rather identified with the fish in Vardaman's mind. In Deway's
dream, the fish represents the unborn child, and her symbolic killing of Earl suggests her intrinsic hatred for Earl, not only because he knew the secret but also because he delayed her journey to the town to get aborted. Besides this, Dasey is an extension of the feminine principle embodied in Addie Bundren. Thus, as an extension of Addie's psychic compulsion, Dasey vindicates in the sacrifice of the male. Of course, we are not concerned with the purpose in function in Dasey Dell as representative of the feminine principle in the novel, because the focus of this chapter is on Addie Bundren. However, she is a pivot around whom the whole Bundren family revolves in a complementary, supplementary, positive and negative way. It has been stipulated that Addie takes a revenge upon Anse, an organ of the masculine principle and the Bundren family by making a hazardous demand to be buried in Jefferson. Dasey Dell, however, partakes some portion of the revengeful, negative feminine aspect of her mother and in a mimetic way repeats the adultery of her mother by desecrating her own virginity and later, symbolically kills Earl for his knowledge and his indifference to her needs.

VII

The narrative reverberations not yet over, the reader is again bogged with the foggy, silhouette-like
out-line of Addie's story through the flashes of Darl's mind. When the shabby miles go climbing down the hill and Jefferson is less than a kilometre away, Darl's broodings bring alive to us the life-story of Addie Bundren in a symbolic way: "Life was created in the valleys. It blew up on to the hills on the old terrors, the old lusts, the old despairs" (p.179). Having been born and brought up in the town of Jefferson, deep set in the valleys, she went with Anse to settle at a place which was among the hills. Her hatred for her own father for having 'planted' her, her terror of loneliness and thus her choice of Anse, her despair in him, her lusty liaison with Whitfield and her partial care and concern for Jewel - that is how the dynamics of human desire activated in Addie's life. After her burial in Jefferson, the journey ends. The catalogue of the achievements includes the fulfilment of Addie's wish, the sober vision of Cash, Jewel's heroic potential; the teeth and the new Mrs. Bundren for Anse spell a comic ending to the high-powered dynamics of quest which the journey embodied in no insignificant terms.

Now the lessons are not severe in case of Wardman missing the train in the town, but in the case of Dewey and Darl the living is going to be terrible. For Dewey it would be mere shocking than what Addie felt when she experienced motherhood, since she has
no word even to fill the lack; life is worse than
Anse was for Addie. To his own convenience, Anse
deprives Dewey of the ten dollars too, for he is to
get a nice shave, a set of teeth equipping him to
look a foot taller than he was (as he turns up with
a new wife at the end).

Waggoner remarks perceptively, though cryptically,
that the archetypal journey of the Bundrens has for
its back drop "a search for a lost centre of values,
a direct probing of ultimate questions," and also that
"the Bundrens take up where they left off."25 The
present author's attempt has been to delve into all
this analysis only to rip open a straight line,
signifying a quest for self-knew. When the revealed
narration is knit into a clear design, we find that
Darl retains the most important place among the Bundrens,
though he meets a tragic end. Perhaps Cash's remark is
more than true: "This world is not his world; this
life his life"(p.208). Addie's comparison with fish
in Varasam's mind symbolically gives her a redemptive
dimension, for fish is symbolic of emotion and of
Christ.26 It is also a symbol of regeneration and
rebirth. But Addie's way of life has been of pain,
of rejection and of succumbing to the old terrors,
old lusts and falling a prey to old despairs. But for
her partial affection to Jovell, her approach was 'staying dead'. Jovell emerges as the 'divine' hero to save her body from the trials of flood and fire, but the affection that he got was the little oasis in her psyche, otherwise inhabited by deserts of rejection and pain, starting with the school kids down to her negative feminine presence in the Bundren family as the Great Mother. Thus a natural corollary on the symbolic level is that her presence in the novel, in the final analysis, remains no longer redemptive. During the journey to Jefferson, Jovell's horse, a symbol of energy and libido, too is sacrificed along with some contribution from every member of the family to buy a new team. Addie becomes in the literal sense, the fish - dead, exalting stench, inviting buzzards. No wonder Vardaman (in a monologue of five words) says, "My mother is a fish!" (p. 67). The immediate association in his mind is with the dead fish that he brings to the house as Addie lay dying.

Darl is the centre of consciousness in the novel. Whether he emerges with a new centre of values, a reaching after larger human meaning - is a question which the end of the novel answers in the negative. Does he not advance an inch or two towards selfhood with a wholesome awareness of human existence? For his, man is "the clothing" which dissolves into "the
n myriad original notion" (p.130). His broodings on
being and nothingness deserve attention and comment:

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 were filled with sleep,
you never were. (p.65)

The strange room signifies the human condition; it
is the presence of the Heideggerian concept of the
'they' which threaten individual being.27 Sleep is
indeed the state when we are unaware of ourselves.
This 'Sushupta Avastha', the state of deep sleep is
when the conflict between the being and 'they', the
dilemma of being and nothingness is no longer a part
of the conscious state of man.28 Jesus' call was
'Empty yourself and I'll fill thee'. Till one is
emptied, the Christ-consciousness or the divine
consciousness cannot descend into the human frame of
awareness. It may be added here that it is this
Christ-consciousness which is just the same as the
experience of totality or the experience of self-hood,
the God-image. So Darl knows that till one is emptied
for sleep, one is nothing. When once one is emptied
in favour of the state of sleep, one is simply not
there, for being just unaware of one's own separate
being. Darl further adds that when one is filled with
sleep, one never was. Once a person reaches that state,
he is full of the experience of merging into a psychic state where one merges with no-consciousness. But Darl cannot as yet 'dissolve' into 'the myriad original motion'. He is yet to empty for sleep. Till he is emptied, he is in. As far as his career in the novel is concerned, he is a victim on the road to Self, or to be more precise, he is a sacrificial victim for the sake of the rest of the Bunrren family, which could now start on further in their own curious, mundane way to an experience of wholeness.

Repeated references to Darl's laughter towards the end do not tend to stamp on him the seal of insanity as several critics have commented. No doubt, he is being sent to an asylum, yet let us just look at what Cash reports after Darl has been physically assaulted upon by Dewey Dell and is over powered by the rest. Cash admits, "Jewel is too hard on him" (p.184). He also records: "I thought you would have told me, he said, I never thought you wouldn't have" (p.188). That is Darl speaking to Cash and is accusing him of having joined the rest of the family in the secret conspiracy against him. The madness of Darl is beyond doubt the ticket to the Bunrren's' security as it is just obvious in Cash's words:

It wasn't nothing else to do. It was either send him to Jackson, or have Gillespie sue us, because he knew some way that Darl set fire to it. (p.184)
For Cash, right is "what the most folks says is right" (p. 185). Thus one certain way to save the family from legal action was the madness of Darl. So the curtain on As I Lay Dying falls with the laughter of Darl, which, to say the least, is just enigmatic. From the depths of his own madness, "Darl discovers — and makes us discover — the madness of the universe." The encounter with eternity has not left the Bundren's any viser. After the tortuous journey (the stench of the corpse, the visits of the Buzzards, the catastrophes of flood and fire), eating bananas, the children are waiting for Pa Anse and the new Mrs. Bundren. Darl's enigmatic laughter on the human behaviour and the situation thereof is symbolic of the insufficiency of the encounter with eternity. He, being the sacrificial victim, cannot but represent the incompleteness and insufficiency of man's ability to reach the point where one can dissolve into the myriad, original notion, where the merger proclaims the emergence of Self-hood, the God-image. His departure on the train is brought to us in his own voice, which betrays certain dizzy exuberance but not madness. His going to Jackson is no doubt shocking, but his laughter is provoking to the extent that it invokes the reader to endeavour to penetrate the enigma of human existence.
While we have rung the curtain on As I Lay Dying, it still needs to recapitulate the gains and losses of the Bundren and the gaps in between in this encounter with eternity. The nodal points of Bundren lie pre-eminently on Addie Bundren, Darl and Jewel. However, the nucleus of the novel proliferates from Addie’s wish to be buried in Jefferson which carries the family through all hell and fire. It has been stated that Addie epitomises aspects of the terrible feminine in as much as she takes a revenge against the goddressing power of the masculine. In the matrix of feminine manifestation as expounded by Sonie Wolf, Addie fulfills non/of the four categories of Mother, Hetairae, Amazon and Medial. Addie was cautious in affection towards her children and her special affection for Jewel is, ironically, not as a result of her natural role as a mother but because of her vague sense of fulfilment with the priest, Whitfield. Anse’s parasitical and indifferent attitude apart, Addie does not demonstrate any of the requisites of a Hetairae woman either. She participates in the family almost involuntarily and more often than not feels tricked in the completion of her natural role as a feminine.

The journey to Jefferson is the outcome of Addie’s unavailing, unconscious connexion with her
past. Archetypally, in order to fulfill her desire
to mingle with the dust and earth from where she
sprang, she compels the whole family to wade through
the fathomless depths of human existence. Neverthe-
less, Addie Bundren's journey brings to the mind of
the reader the nauseating stench of human life,
existence vis-a-vis eternity. Her intentions,
archetypal, mythic, psychological besides, she forces
the reader to an awareness of the tragic sense of
life, or the dilemma of human existence. To reiterate,
symbolically, the journey encounters various elements
which sustain the very cosmos. The other characters
Darl and Jewel commence from the periphery of this
nucleus but as demonstrated before, less larger than
the role assigned to them. Of the whole family of
Bundrens, it is Darl alone who speaks like a pontiff
in his abracadabra style about life, reality and
eternity. Jewel, no doubt, is in hero consciousness,
but he neither cathart nor elucidates, nor educates
and is least transformative. Darl does not attain
transformation, but he does cathart, he does elucidate
and he does educate.
REFERENCES


3. Tom Chatwin, A Dictionary of Symbols, op. cit., p.117.


12. The male and female, Yang and Yin, Adas and Eve, Shiva and Shakti, Moon and Sun, Purusha and Prakriti are constantly in a state of dialectical interaction. As a result of this interaction, one makes contact with that in-built self-regulation of the psyche where the
opposites are in a state of conjunctio. It is not necessary to act out the paradox empirically "in order to survive and evolve. It is an inner process through which, in the long run, changed behaviour is the result. The new development of the individual comes out of a perspective in which man and woman view themselves as whole and complete particles of being, functioning within an ordered cosmic reality." See June Singer, Antropos: Toward a New Theory of Sexuality (New York: Anchor Books, 1977), p.22.

13 See Faulkner in the University: Sloan Conference at Univ. of Virginia, 1952-3, ed. Frederick L. Gwyn & Joseph L. Mothor (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 1959), p.87. Faulkner remarked: "I took this family and subjected them to two greatest catastrophes which man can suffer — flood and fire, that's all."

14 Andre Bleikasten, op. cit., p.110.

15 Ibid., pp.110-11.


19 Andre Bleikasten, op. cit., p.90.


21 See Andre Bleikasten, op. cit., pp.75-6.

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26 See Tom Chetwynd, op. cit., p.151.

27 See George Steiner, Heidegger, op. cit., pp.89-92.

28 The Upanishads describe the Brahmam Apantha as the state where man has become one who is all a man of sentiment, who is of the nature of bliss, who is the enjoyer of bliss and whose mouth is the mind. See T.S.R. Mohideen, trans., The Upanishads op. cit., p.117.

29 Andre Bliekeman, op. cit., p.125.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has analysed the quest theme with reference to its major protagonists in the ten classics of American Fiction. The analysis has been done using the ideas of Jung, existentialists, Maslow, Joseph Campbell, Buddhism, etc. Even though the quest for the Self of each of the protagonists has been unique, and unique have been the life-circumstances, certain patterns emerge which deserve to be outlined and evaluated. The quest for the Self— in the first stage in the life of the protagonist— is the stage of leaving one’s family milieu one has grown in, the things one is used to; the ‘leaving’ may be cataclysmic or disruptive or may be gradual maturing of certain impulses, yearnings and seekings. As for example, in the case of Tom Joad, the leaving is brought about by historical changes. In the case of Yemol Yek, the life-circumstances bring about the leaving and the further course is conditioned by the historical contingency. Some times, the leaving is as a result of axiomatic experiences which give to the protagonist a flavour and taste of Self. As a result of this experience, the life that one has led prior to the experience becomes flat and insipid; one leaves the security of the familiar and launches out
with fear and enthusiasm into the new zones, into a strange land where one is open to challenges and experiences which could not have come in one’s previous condition and environment. As for example, both Jay Gatsby and Jake Barnes enter into their unfoldment as a result of love experience which they want to recover. Marzog, too, will partially fall in this category in the sense that he heard the love ‘call’ from Madeleine and took after to the countryside to realize himself.

The ‘leaving’ of the familiar and the known and one’s entry into the unfamiliar and the unknown is the nine and a half to the quest for the Self. If the quest works out satisfactorily which it usually does not, because the yellow brick road is strewn not only with victims on the roadside, arrested purses but literally corpses of the questers. Addie Bundren, for example, perishes as a result of the quest and becomes a weird mixture of a preta and a hell-born spirit. Gatsby also perishes after a decade’s devotion to his love dream. Isabel Archer who looked for experience becomes a veritable prisoner in the house of Osmond. No doubt, in reaching out to help Pansy, she manifests the Wagnerian aspect of her evolving personality, and this indeed shares the shine of the all-encompassing compassion which is a characteristic of the Bodhichitta, a great
milestone on the way to the Self. By deciding not to escape into her lover’s embrace but to confront her reality, she exhibits aspects of the archetype of a quester.

The citadel of the Self cannot, of course, be stormed; one has to go through the journey and make all kinds and manner of gains. To speak in the archetypal terminology, a quester has to unfold the potentials of his physical, vital and mental in life-situations, in inter-personal dynamics and also loosen and open the knot of the heart to the higher spiritual powers in order to get somewhere. In the adventure with the Self, the biblical statement that ‘many are called but few are chosen’ is absolutely correct. All the ten major protagonists together with the support characters who have been the subject of internecine analysis in this thesis did hear the ‘call’ but only Hest Pinn, Tom Joad, the protagonist of the Invisible Man, Yakov Bob, Frenzy and Dorsey make it, others remain gasping behind or remain stranded in various postures of self-defence, coping strategies, life-denying stands, etc. For example, Isabel Archer does expand her mind as a result of her experiences in Europe, does grow in compassion and does develop discrimination but at the expense of sealing her
physical and vital. Gatsby opened the psychic centre as a young man but it remained cathedraed on a narrow and trivial object. As a result, most of him remained undeveloped. He side-tracked the royal road to Self to a cul-de-sac, a blind alley. Jake Barnes had tremendous potentials but has petrified himself underneath his cool exterior with yearly Dionysian fêtes in which he could experience certain measure of participation mystique.

Jung emphasized the need for dedication and unreserved offering of the ego as a sacrifice to the Self. To put it in psychological terms, the analysand must consciously offer his ego as a sacrificial gift to the Self without any strings attached to the offering. It must be a conscious commitment, otherwise it cannot be a genuine consecration of the ego to the service of the Self. Tom Joad and Yakov Pok exhibit this conscious commitment to a communal cause, something broader than their personal appetites and aspirations. Invisible Man also ends at this terminal in his quest, and considers it to be a crime if he does not leave his isolated stay in the hole and looks forward to a socially responsible role. That is exactly what Yakov and Tom Joad also apprehend; Yakov
Huck in his piercing, incessant pain under the Russian
Reign, Tom Joad in his recognition and assimilation
of the archetype of a Messiah-like figure in Jim Casey.
Putting aside the polemics and conundrums, the
intellectual riot and the lacerating wounds on the
emotional firmament, Herzog undergoes a process of
death and rebirth. He also commands his conscious
resources in a more meaningful and expensive gesture
of commitment to life—to God's unknowable will. After
the dissolution of parental images, numinous encounters
send Huck on a picaresque journey enabling him to make
many kinds of realization which culminate in a commit-
ment to a new orientation. Thus Huck also ends on a
point from where he will advance with this conscious
commitment which expands, alters and illumines his
ego consciousness.

In alchemical terms, the quest moves through
three stages: Nigredo, Albedo and Rubedo, i.e.,
darkness, clarity and power. A quester is very likely
to regress again to the Nigredo stage after having
once got into the Albedo. Isabel Archer is partially
such a quester. Her encounter with Gilbert Osmond
pushes her back to the Nigredo stage. From the
plane of will-power and noble aspirations, she
retrogrades to the steel-jacketed morality in terms
of husband-wife relationship. Thus, instead of the armour of power, she remains at the second stage and has yet to live out the inferno. Jake Barnes also remained stuck up in the physical and the vital needs, and did not explore the possibilities of a platonic relationship with Brett, which could possibly give him power and clarity to live out his existentiality.

Jay Gatsby also regresses in his onward quest, as he tries to reach the dream, that exuded the shine and the splendour, through the mean world of materialism. But, Bok, Herzog, Franzly, Tom Joad, Invisible Man, etc. end at a note of clarity, which is also suggestive of the power that these protagonists will command in their life. Buck's growth also takes this very course. Adie's regression into the hovels is total and the whole Bundren family is lacerated by the buffetings of Adie's failure. Daul, however, survives partially because of his sheer psychic tenacity. No doubt he does not steer clear of the impenetrable fog of the Adie syndrome, he has made some gains though he is also a corpse on the road to self. To hazard a statement, to this author it seems, there is a 'method in his madness'.

The descent of a Model, of an Ideal, a pattern of ideas or an immaculate personification of certain
lofty values affects the ego with a dazzling impact. It destabilises the ego, its capacity and weakens its calibre and charisma to absorb and assimilate the experience in its depth-charge. As a result, a state of panic, neurosis or nervous breakdown sets in. At this juncture, what the person needs is a blood transfusion that can add new vitality and vigour to his psychic frame. This transfusion comes in the shape of helpers, not Reality Instructors but persons who offer sun-glasses to the quater to look at the solar eclipse, or act as the heavy downpour to clear the film and scum from the psychic lanes and by-lanes. The stage is set for the entry of a Guru, a psychopomp, a Brahma-like thrust which destroys, maintains and creates, and in the process, the person concerned achieves an upper grade in psychic progress. The Russian pilgrim disrupted Franny's routinised discipline at the college and with unsure grasp, she tries to cling on to a mending of the prayer, denying the vital and the physical in her, anaesthetising the mental verbalisations in her psyche. Soory, with vigour and persuasion, helps her through verbal communication, using the power of contact and putting his own soul at the service of influencing her. He recognises and deals with the individual nature of Franny and attends to her needs and dumb doubts. In
Bok’s case, Bilibov transmutes an awareness of necessity and freedom. Like Poeey, he to does it by example, influence and instruction, the three tools with which, according to Aurobindo, a divine teacher works. Jim Casey also speaks and acts, thus affecting Tom Joad through example and instruction.

The point which is being made is that any quester worth his salt must integrate the physical, the vital, the mental, the equipment of his instrumental personality — which is the job of the ego and which done, it must holocausst the ego into the psychic personality, into what Sri Aurobindo calls Shaiman Dvash in order for him to enter the higher regions, dominas, of the unfoldment of the spirit with which the Self is synonymous. So one can say that a triple consumation must come to pass in the course of the journey; first the loosening of the physical and the vital, as for example in the case of Jim Casey who frees himself from his christian puritanism and his compensatory sexual hinges. Even while this is going on, the mind must become Huuk to discriminate between Shaima and Asaiya, illusion and reality. Rev Gatsby at the mental level is a moron. Isabel Archer is strapped on the cross of inherited ideas and conditionings of virtue and vice.

The second transformation is psychic. It is the opening of the Atman which comes forward from behind
the veil or the curtain, from its position of being a random prompter hidden behind the stage, it has to come forward and take charge of the play as a powerful dictator. So it brings to bear on one's festivity and contingency tremendous powers of will and discrimination. It infuses the play of one's life with its own sweetness and light, cuts through the railings and the chicken wire of the ego with its diamond laser-ring point. It is a well-known fact in Indian tradition that the soul is not able to take charge though that early and that soon because the ego remains so involved in its slumors, allurements and seductions, lapsedidedness, down-high myopia, blind spots; it is so busy in laughing and grieving. As a result of suffering and buffeting and blows, the ego recoils, contracts and dissolves. But if it recoils prematurely without doing the job of securing and integrating the lower triad (physical, vital and mental), the entry into the psyche has not come about through experience. The soul witnesses, catches and hides its time. As a result of ego suffering the perspective changes, one lets go and the soul takes charge. Some such things happened to Nick Firm, Tom Joad, Ma Joad, Jim Casey, Yalow Pok, Pruny, Horsag at the end of the quest.
The next transformation and the final transformation in the quest process is that of the Spirit. It is gnostic, it is pneumatic and so it is difficult to convey this transformation in words, but without this transformation, the Self cannot be reached. In reality only in gnostic transformation, quest as quest ceases because one has arrived. One has reached home after one’s wanderings for forty years in the desert. With the arrival, the quester will now 'become' the adept, the Siddha, the grand illuminate, can now enter life and fall upon it with a shattering impact. This author likes to believe that Ruck Fim, Invisible Man, Yabl, Tom Joad, Frenzy and Herzog have achieved a great measure of psychic transformation and, to use the words of T.S. Eliot, they will be moving “into another intensity/ For a further union, a deeper communion! They indeed have been thrown into the borders of spiritual transformation, the artifice of eternity.