

**UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA**  
**PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LETRAS-INGLÊS**

**FROM TRADITIONAL ARCHETYPAL TO FEMINIST ARCHETYPAL CRITICISM:  
WILLIAM FAULKNER'S FEMALE CHARACTERS IN AS I LAY DYING  
AND LIGHT IN AUGUST**

por

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**Dissertação submetida à Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina  
para obtenção do grau de MESTRE EM LETRAS**

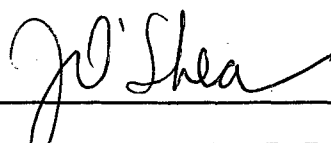
**FLORIANÓPOLIS**

**Junho/1995**

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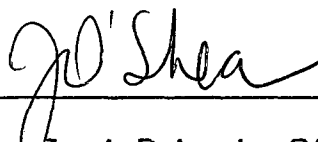
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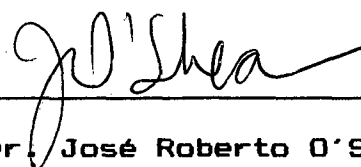
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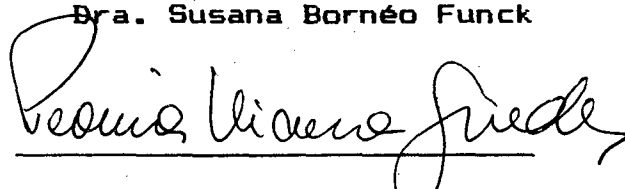
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Florianópolis, 23 de junho de 1995.

**To my parents,  
Ackiles and Malvina.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor, Professor Dr. José Roberto O'Shea, for his professionalism, helpfulness and friendship; to Professor Dr. Susana Bornéo Funck, for her valuable contribution to the second chapter of this dissertation; to Professor Dr. Dilvo I. Ristoff who once said "[a] primeira coisa a fazer é acreditar que tu podes"; and to Júnior for his encouragement and companionship.

June/95.

**ABSTRACT****FROM TRADITIONAL ARCHETYPAL TO FEMINIST ARCHETYPAL CRITICISM:  
WILLIAM FAULKNER'S FEMALE CHARACTERS IN AS I LAY DYING  
AND LIGHT IN AUGUST****SUELI COSTA****UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA****1995****Supervising Professor: Dr. José Roberto O'Shea**

Writers have often portrayed female characters as archetypes which, when analyzed in depth, may reveal a certain prejudice in the way females are seen. Analyzing female characters in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* (1930) and *Light in August* (1932) in the light of traditional archetypal theory, I have identified three main female archetypes, namely, the "sinner woman", the "naive girl", and the "dedicated wife". However, once revised according to revisionist feminist archetypal criticism, these archetypes and the characters they refer to can be interpreted as more than static archetypes, "frozen" in the novels. In fact, when analyzed in the revisionist perspective, the same female characters can be seen as able to change their condition as

victims of a world predominantly ruled by males, and to change from passive to active individuals in society.

Number of words: 24 741

Number of pages: 115

## RESUMO

DA CRÍTICA TRADICIONAL DOS ARQUÉTIPOS À CRÍTICA FEMINISTA DOS  
ARQUÉTIPOS: AS PERSONAGENS FEMININAS DE WILLIAM FAULKNER  
EM AS I LAY DYING E LIGHT IN AUGUST

Os escritores e escritoras freqüentemente retratam personagens femininas como arquétipos que, uma vez analisados, podem revelar um certo preconceito na maneira pela qual as pessoas vêem a figura feminina. Ao analisar as personagens femininas de William Faulkner em *As I Lay Dying* (1930) e *Light in August* (1932), baseada na teoria tradicional dos arquétipos, identifiquei três arquétipos femininos principais: o da "mulher pecadora"; o da "garota ingênua" e o da "esposa dedicada". No entanto, uma vez revisados de acordo com a crítica revisionista feminista, estes arquétipos e as personagens às quais eles se referem podem ser interpretadas como sendo mais que arquétipos estáticos, "congelados" nas obras literárias. Na verdade, quando analisadas na perspectiva revisionista, as mesmas personagens femininas podem ser vistas como sendo capazes de mudar sua condição de vítimas de um mundo predominantemente controlado por homens, passando de personagens passivas a indivíduos ativos na sociedade.

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## INTRODUCTION

Traditional archetypal criticism has created controversy among individuals who deal with literature on various levels because, among other aspects, it is based on the study of myths and myth criticism. According to Wilfred Guerin et al in A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature, there are professors of literature and scholars who are "skeptical" of myth criticism because it has its basis on the "cult and the occult" (164); i.e., for some critics, myths do not constitute a faithful or "ideologically correct" basis to analyze literary works. However, taking into account the developments, among other fields, of psychology, anthropology and cultural history in this century, many literary critics have studied myth and applied myth criticism to their analyses. Among the pioneers in the modern study of myth, one should cite Sir James Frazer, who, according to David Adams Leeming's "Introduction" in Mythology - The Voyage of the Hero (1973), once defined mythology as "simply an attempt to explain the natural world" (2).

Myth is a complex notion which various scholars have attempted to define. On the handbook level, C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon state that "myth in its traditional sense is an anonymous, nonliterary, essentially religious formulation of the

cosmic view of a people who approach its formulations not as representations of truth but as truth itself" (*A Handbook to Literature* 306). In relation to literature, one may say that "choosing" a certain myth in the process of writing is an unconscious result of the author's previous experiences as well as of his/her principles and ideas concerning life; thus, an author's piece of fiction may constitute a valid source to analyze the way the writer sees the world. To reinforce myth's importance in the analysis of one's way of thinking and attitudes toward a given issue, Holman & Harmon clarify that in spite of the fact that in the past people did not consider myth a faithful source, nowadays, it can be taken as the representation of an individual's unconscious: "[a]lthough there was a time when myth was a virtual synonym for error, notably in the neoclassic period, the tendency today is to see myth as dramatic or narrative embodiments of a people's perception of the deepest truths" (306).

Moving beyond the handbook level, David Adam Leeming states in "The Meaning of Myth" that "[t]o the orthodox believer what we call myth is the word of God--the metaphorical symbolical, or direct expression of the 'unknown'" (1). As one may perceive, Leeming links the concept of myth to mystery, to something which is difficult to achieve; myth, as Leeming suggests, exists only for people who believe in it or who accept its existence.

Still concerning the traditional study of myth, one must consider the contribution of Carl Gustav Jung and his theory of

archetypes. Jung believed that there is a "collective unconscious" which all people share in their psychic inheritance. To Jung's mind, "the archetype is essentially an unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived, and it takes its colour from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear" (*The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* 5). Jung's archetypes "[i]n reality belong (...) to the realm of activities of the instincts and in that sense they represent inherited forms of psychic behaviour" (qtd. in Guerin 177). According to this statement, one could say that archetypes are certain tendencies that people have to react in "similar ways to certain stimuli" (ibid). Besides, Jung defines myths as being "the projection of innate psychic phenomena" through which unconscious forms--Archetypes--manifest and come to the conscious mind. For Jung, archetypes reveal themselves in the dreams of individuals. "[D]reams are personalized myths," Jung says, whereas "[m]yths are depersonalized dreams" (qtd. in Guerin 177). Considering archetypes as images which have common meanings and to which people react in a similar way, we may cite among these images: water, sun, colors, circle, serpent, numbers, the archetypal woman, the wise old man, garden, tree, desert and so on (Guerin 157-61).

Developing the theory of archetypes, Jung proposed the concepts of anima, shadow, and persona which, according to him, are the structural components of the psyche. Anima is "a natural

archetype that satisfactorily sums up all statements of the unconscious, of the primitive mind...", (The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious 27). The shadow, in its deepest sense, is the "invisible saurian [reptilian] tail that man still drags behind him" (Psychological Reflections qtd. in Guerin 180); when this archetype is projected, it is represented by the figure of the Devil or, in Jung's own words, it is "the dangerous aspect of the unrecognized dark half of the personality" (Two Essays on Analytical Psychology qtd. in Guerin 180). Finally, the persona is the "mask of the actor" that he shows to the world; it is "the obverse of the anima in that it mediates between our ego and the external world" (Guerin 181). Jung explains that to achieve maturity (individuation), one needs to have a "flexible" persona relating it to the other components of one's psyche.

Despite the similarities, it is necessary to consider the differences between psychology and mythology. Psychology is experimental, diagnostic, a biological science, whereas mythology is speculative, philosophic, linked to religion, anthropology, and cultural history (Guerin 155). Psychology deals with individual personality while mythology is concerned with collective personality, i.e., with mind and character of a people. Psychology is a science whose main interest is in individuals' minds themselves, whereas mythology's concern is with the consequences of these individuals' minds on a certain society. In other words, primarily, mythology does not consider the individual, but the community in which the individual lives.

Because of the possibility of studying, through myth criticism, society's values as represented in literature, a revisionist current of criticism--Feminist Archetypal Theory--has advanced its own point of view concerning myth criticism and the way women are portrayed in literature, mainly by male authors. Some feminist critics, although recognizing Jungian contribution to the study of myth and archetypes, argue that Jungian psychology needs revision.

The feminist critic Maggie Humm is one who accepts the importance of myths but calls for revision: "[m]yth criticism has its problems. It undercuts its own positions." She adds, however, that "myth critics are important to any feminist analysis of the culture of the sexuality since sexual politics is the base for their analysis" (102). As feminist critics attest, since the use of certain myths in literature may reflect the thought of the author as a product of his/her society, traditional archetypal criticism may constitute a starting point for a feminist-revisionist approach to literature. As Estella Lauter and Carol Rupprecht state in their "Introduction", "myth criticism is a tool on feminists' hands" (*Feminist Archetypal Theory: Interdisciplinary Re-Visions of Jungian Thought* 16).

Elaine Showalter (*The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women Literature and Theory*) states that the intention of feminist criticism is not just to study and to think about old conceptions concerning women; instead, their real intention is "a radical rethinking of conceptual grounds of literary study, a

revision of the accepted theoretical assumptions about reading and writing that have been based entirely on male literary experiences" (8). Sharon Spencer, in "Feminist Criticism in Literature", says that much feminist criticism tends to be "prescriptive", having as its aim to achieve a literary standard where there is not bias against different sexes, classes or races (157-58). Besides, Spencer reveals the importance of traditional archetypal criticism saying that critics in general have focused their attention on stereotypes such as virgin x whore, mother (angel-devil), submissive wife x domineering wife, the bitch, the seductress, man's prey, the sex object, the old maid, the bluestocking, the castrating woman, and so on. In the same article, she tries to demonstrate the validity of the archetypal approach to literature citing Annis Pratt's words: "[t]he archetypal is an important critical approach to describe the psycho-mythological development of the female individual in literature" (163).

In fact, defending myth as a feminist critic, Mary Daly says in *Gyn/Ecology*, that "the study of myths is important not only to simply replace patriarchal myths with feminine versions but to elicit fresh cultural insights by reversing the myths" (qtd. in Humm 94). Summarizing the main purpose of feminist archetypal criticism, Humm goes on to say that to eliminate gender stereotypes it is necessary to know "the language of myths" and the different types of thought, feeling, and behavior it can

carry on (102). Furthermore, only by knowledge of culture and its myths, feminism will be able to recognize myths, study the sexual politics that go in their making, understand their meaning, and try to change gender stereotypes.

However, Lauter and Rupprecht advise that "[i]n using a Jungian or archetypal psychology, of course, feminists must separate 'wheat from chaff'", in the sense that, ultimately, it is necessary to consider the experiences of real, individual women instead of remaining on the level of generalizations (226). Lauter and Rupprecht express clearly their disagreement with Jung's theory of archetypes saying that Jung reinforced the image of man as thinker and woman as nurturer, thus creating gender stereotypes; Jung attributed the principle of relatedness--Eros--to the female, whereas to the male, he attributed the analytical principle--Logos (5-6). Still criticizing Jung, they cite Annis Pratt: "[Jung's] concept of feminine has often been just another device to 'swallow up' the experience of women" (224); in other words, to their minds, Jung contributed to the construction of the male-centered world in which we live.

As one may perceive, on the one hand, traditional archetypal criticism may reveal, especially according to the implications of Jung's theory of archetypes, the way a given society sees women; on the other, we have feminist archetypal criticism which, through a revision of literary female archetypes, tries to make women aware of their condition and thus contributes to changing

their role in society. However, it is important to remember that many feminists do not deny traditional archetypal criticism, although they argue that it needs revision. By contrasting these two literary approaches, one can analyze Modern fiction, for instance, and see how women are portrayed. A writer whose biography is fairly well known and whose literary merit is recognized all over the world is William Faulkner. From his works I have chosen two novels, *As I Lay Dying* (1930) and *Light in August* (1932) to be analyzed here. These novels, as we shall see, present similar kinds of archetypal women whose existence may be understood beyond the purpose of showing or trying to show "how women are", and contribute to provide the text with verisimilitude. Once traditional interpretations of these female characters are duly revised, women can be seen as active individuals who live and participate in society's life.

In the first chapter of this dissertation--Traditional Archetypal Criticism--, I present a general view of the concept of myth as well as its relation and importance in the study of literature. I point out that scholars such as Claude Levi-Strauss in "The Structural Study of Myth" (1955), and Roland Barthes in *Mythologies* (1956) do not consider the psychological aspects that may involve the existence and production of myth. To their minds, what is important is the myth itself, its presence or absence in life situations. On the other hand, in *The Golden Bough* (1922), Sir James Frazer defends the idea that men have a psychological need for myth, while Joseph Campbell, in *The Hero With a*



*Thousand Faces* (1949), sees myth as manifestations of the psyche. Finally, in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (1959), Jung considers myths as unconscious manifestations and, considering the unconscious as the part of the mind that "knows" what happened, what is happening, and what is going to happen to a certain individual, it is possible to analyze this individual's behavior through the myths which he adopts, and which, according to the psychologist, represent his unconscious.

Still in the first chapter and moving toward the relation between the use of myths and literature, I discuss the importance of the study of myths to the understanding of certain archetypes that appear in literary works. William Righter in *Myth and Literature* shows the relation between the meaning of a certain myth and its function within the society from which the myth comes. By establishing this relationship, one may conclude that it is possible to analyze not only the myth according to the society, but also the society in relation to how it sees and applies myths. John Vickery in "Literature and Myth" reinforces this idea and says that myths and their use may be related to the community in general and not only to the author himself. Finally, a recent literary critic, Mimi Reisel Gladstein, develops important ideas in *The Indestructible Woman in Faulkner, Hemingway, and Steinbeck*, analyzing the portrayal of female characters in the novels of the three authors cited above, demonstrating in which ways the myths created by society appear

in literature and arguing that the presence of these myths may reveal a male-centered way of thinking in relation to women.

In the second chapter--Feminist Archetypal Criticism--I discuss the importance of the traditional archetypal criticism to a criticism which proposes a revision of pre-established concepts. Feminist-archetypal criticism observes the way women are portrayed in literature and, by revising traditional archetypal criticism, tries to modify some female archetypes presented in literary works. Many times people externalize myths which are used in literature and this fact makes society, in a certain way, adopt myths and crystallize images of women which do not correspond to reality. Lillian S. Robinson, in "Dwelling in Decencies: Radical Criticism and the Feminine Perspective", demonstrates her disagreement with the portrayal of women in literature as passive individuals, stressing the idea that feminist criticism must be revolutionary in order to show how women are able to fight for their rights and to contribute to society's development. Reinforcing Robinson's point of view, Sharon Spencer in "Feminist Criticism and Literature" asserts that the presence of stereotypes of women in literature should be used to destroy the patriarchal view and to generate a way of seeing the world which is different from the previous one, which is considered male-centered. Thus, the ultimate aim of feminist criticism is not restricted to literature; in fact, it can be seen as addressing to society in general.

In chapter III I analyze the female characters in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* (Addie Bundren, Dewey Dell, and Cora Tull) and in *Light in August* (Joanna Burden, Lena Grove, and Martha Armstid), classifying them according to traditional archetypal criticism. According to my interpretation, Addie Bundren and Joanna Burden are presented as the archetype of the "sinner woman", women who do not respect moral values. Neither behaves according to the established rules of society. Addie, a selfish and bitter woman, commits adultery with the pastor, and Joanna, a spinster who has a negro lover, is involved with bootlegging and with the Negroes' quest to abolish racial prejudice. Dewey Dell and Lena Grove are portrayed as the archetype of the "naive girl". Both are tricked by their lovers, are single, young and pregnant. Cora Tull and Martha Armstid are the characters who represent the archetype of the "dedicated wife". Cora is religious, helpful and lives for her family; Martha is a charitable, good woman who also lives for her husband and children.

In Chapter IV I revise the archetypes presented in the previous chapter adopting a feminist-revisionist perspective. Thus, Addie Bundren and Joanna Burden are interpreted as courageous women who are able to fight for their happiness, and who live according to their own minds, without worrying about other people's opinion. They do not accept male repression as many women do; in fact, they fight to get rid of it. Dewey Dell and Lena Grove are now seen as obstinate women, who also fight

for what they want. Dewey Dell wants an abortion and Lena Grove wants to have a family together with her lover; both stick to their dreams and fight to make them come true. However, Cora Tull and Martha Armstid represent repressed women who cannot react against what society imposes upon them. Neither seems in charge of her own life; neither does anything to modify that life; they both accept it as it is.

To sum up, after presenting a critical review of traditional archetypal criticism and a revision of this critical approach from a feminist archetypal perspective, I apply both theories to two sets of William Faulkner's female characters. Then, after analyzing and classifying the characters according to traditional archetypal theory and to revisionist feminist archetypal criticism, I confirm the hypothesis that female characters who at first sight seem to be mere archetypes are, in truth, women who can be seen as pointing out to the beginning of a change in society's values concerning women's existence.

## CHAPTER I

### TRADITIONAL ARCHETYPAL CRITICISM

The concept of myth has been discussed by a large number of scholars and virtually all of them are aware, and make the reader aware, that to conceptualize myth is not an easy task. The difficulty arises because the study of myth involves not only sciences such as psychology and anthropology but also investigation into people's beliefs, as well as the analysis of such beliefs in the light of science.

Claude Levi-Strauss, in his essay "The Structural Study of Myth" (1955), argues that "myths do have a logic based on binary oppositions, and this logic is the myth's structure" (808). He seems to disagree with theorists who associate myth to abstractions and psychological aspects:

Myths are still widely interpreted in conflicting ways: as collective dreams, as the outcome of a kind of esthetic play, or as the basis of ritual. Mythological figures are considered as personified abstractions, divinized heroes or fallen gods. Whatever the hypothesis, the choice amounts to reducing mythology either to idle play or to a crude kind of philosophic speculation. (810)

According to Levi-Strauss, myth is "the part of language where the formula *traddutore, tradditore* [to translate is to betray] reaches its lowest truth value" (Levi-Strauss's emphasis). He explains his position saying that one cannot translate poetry without sacrificing its real content, whereas "the mythical value of the myth is preserved even through the

worst translation" (811). Levi-Strauss concludes stating that "a myth is still felt as a myth by any reader anywhere in the world" since myth's real essence "does not lie in his style, its original music, or its syntax, but in the story which it tells" (811) (Levi-Strauss's emphasis). Being so, Levi-Strauss shows the universal power of myth, i.e., myths have a strong effect upon people; when they appear in literature for instance, or are used by a community, they automatically evoke their own meaning. Writers do not need to justify myths's presence in pieces of literature; myths have meaning by themselves. However, Levi-Strauss criticizes Jung's point of view in relation to the way through which the psychologist states that archetypes possess meaning, making an analogy with sounds, arguing that if we consider his (Jung's) theory it will be the same as "considering that a sound has affinity with a meaning, for instance, the 'liquid' semi-vowels with water and so on..." (810).

Levi-Strauss relates myth to language; he says "myth is language: to be known, myth has to be told; it is a part of human speech" (811). Furthermore, Levi-Strauss discusses myth's power in terms of time; stating that "a myth always refers to events alleged to have taken place long ago. But what gives the myth an operational value is that the specific pattern described is timeless; it explains the present and the past as well as the future" (811). Besides, Levi-Strauss argues that "[t]he constituent units of a myth are not the isolated relations but bundles of such relations, and it is only as bundles that these

relations can be put to use and combined so as to produce meaning" (Levi-Strauss's emphasis) (812). Therefore, what is important is not only the myth itself, but the elements that contribute to its existence.

Roland Barthes, in *Mythologies* (1956) defines myth as "a system of communication, that is a message"; besides, Barthes adds that one cannot define myth by using the object of its message; instead, it is necessary to analyze the object that is represented by myth (109). In addition, the author points out that myth depends on history, i. e., history determines when a myth will appear and when a myth is going to die. In other words, the historical facts that may happen in a certain society eventually elicit certain myths and, in light of new facts, old myths will disappear being replaced by others. According to Barthes's mind, myth depends on the linguistic field of Semiology, and when one analyzes a certain myth, part of this analysis is based on analogy (126). Barthes thinks that too often readers do not see myth as a semiologic system; they simply accept myth as something to which there is a cause. To Barthes' mind,

myth essentially aims at causing an immediate impression - it does not matter if one is later allowed to see through the myth, its action is assumed to be stronger than the rational explanations which may later belie it. (130)

According to Barthes, readers accept a myth because they do not consider it as a semiologic system; to their minds, it is an inductive system (131) which presents a casual process; i. e.,

when the reader faces a myth he automatically associates it to a certain meaning. Barthes adds that the function of myth is to "transform a meaning into a form" (131). Myth, in Barthes's conception, has the function of purifying things, i.e., it presents things without trying to explain them, just showing them (143). In addition, Barthes says that "myth is always metalanguage" (144); in other words, myth just presents things, it does not have the function of modifying them. Besides, he refers to myth as a value, and states that by modifying the environment in which the myth is in, one may determine its power (145). In other words, one may say that in spite of being powerful, myth can be destroyed by another myth which is going to correspond to a given society's necessity to refer to a certain subject.

Hitherto, one may perceive similarities in the way these scholars see myth. Neither seems to take into account the psychological aspects that may be behind myth. In other words, adopting different perspectives to analyze myth, Levi-Strauss and Barthes do not consider the psychological mechanisms through which myth is produced and what the use of certain myths instead of others can reveal concerning the individuals who "adopt" this myth. Although both Levi-Strauss and Barthes are luminaries whose works undoubtedly contributed to this and other researches, it will be useful to the present analysis to consider the work of other scholars, who, in fact, are going to constitute this dissertation's main theoretical source. The analysis that



follows has as its main purpose the study of the production of myths considering their meaning and implications in relation to people who use them. Besides, the investigation is interested in how the use of such myths in literature can help readers understand the author's way of thinking as a result of the social environment in which he or she lives, analyzing in which ways the study of literature may contribute to a change in society's values.

Sir James Frazer, in *The Golden Bough* (1922), states that the existence of myths is a result of a psychological need. He says that being aware of his helplessness, man searches for supernatural beings to help him; man's despair "enhances his conception of their [these beings's] power" (91). Frazer analyzes people's attitudes concerning religion and superstition and comes to the conclusion that "sacrifice and prayer are the resource of the pious and enlightened portion of the community, while magic is the refuge of the superstitious and ignorant" (93). Frazer's opinion in relation to religion and superstition reveals a somewhat prejudiced mind in the sense that he does not seem to admit the existence of religion and magic in both portions of society, i.e., to Frazer's mind it is impossible to find an "enlightened" person who does not accept the existence of religion; likewise, one cannot find a person among the "ignorant" who does not believe in magic. A reader might conclude that, by saying that religion belongs to "enlightened" people whereas magic is associated with "ignorant" people, Frazer

proposes a separation of social classes based on faith. Moreover, by adopting this view, one may say that Frazer is creating a new myth, i. e., the "myth of belief". In other words, he is labeling people based on their beliefs: if one prays, he is "enlightened"; if one does not, he is condemned to be called an "ignorant". In spite of his elitist view concerning people's beliefs, Frazer brings up to his readers important aspects related to the presence of myths in society showing that an individual's life can be, in certain ways, guided by myths in which this individual believes.

The influence of myths on people is so strong that, according to Frazer, "[i]n various parts of Europe customs have prevailed both at spring and harvest which are clearly based on the same crude notion that the relation of the human sexes to each other can be so used as to quicken the growth of plants" (137). As one may see, the superstition, or belief in such myths such as the one cited above, may influence a society's life and way of thinking. Moreover, Frazer establishes a contrast between myth and custom, saying that

myth changes while custom remains constant; men continue to do what their fathers did before them, though the reasons on which their fathers acted have been long forgotten. The history of religion is a long attempt to reconcile old custom with new reason, to find a sound theory for an absurd practice. (477)

In *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1949), Joseph Campbell states that myth is the way through which man manifests his deep wishes and thoughts: "[i]t would not be too much to say that myth is the secret opening through which the inexhaustible

energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation"

(3). Campbell also refers to myths as "spontaneous productions":

the symbols of mythology are not manufactured; they cannot be ordered, invented, or permanently suppressed. They are spontaneous productions of the psyche, and each bears within it, undamaged, the germ power of its source. (4)

As one may perceive, Campbell accepts myths as manifestations of the psyche, i. e., when an individual or a certain society uses a myth as a symbol of something, it means that this myth when analyzed may reveal certain aspects of this society's psyche. In other words, there is a possibility of studying society's values through the study of the myths it adopts. Campbell, however, associates myth and dream. He clarifies that "in the dream the forms are quirked by the peculiar troubles of the dreamer whereas in myth the problems and solutions shown are directly valid for all mankind" (19). Thus, one may conclude that myth is not the result of an individual's mind. Myth may come from an individual but, certainly, it is the result of this individual's relationship with other members of the society in which he lives.

Campbell goes on to discuss the purpose of myth, i.e., why myth exists and why men create it:

The goal of myth is to dispel the need for such life ignorance by effecting a reconciliation of the individual consciousness with the universal will. And this is effected through a realization of the true relationships of the passing phenomena of the time to the imperishable life that lives and dies in all. (238)

To his mind, "[t]he modern psychologist can translate it [mythology] back to its proper denotations and thus rescue for

the contemporary world a rich and eloquent document of the profoundest depths of human character" (256). Again, Campbell reinforces the idea that myths reveal human psyche and constitute a starting point for a study in terms of "deep truths". Finally, he refers to myths as 'metaphors' : "they [myths] are telling metaphors of the destiny of man, man's hope, man's faith, and man's dark mystery" (260).

The psychologist Carl Gustav Jung, in "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious" (1954), explains that there is a "collective unconscious" that all people share in their psychic inheritance; besides, he conceptualizes "archetype" as being "essentially an unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived, and it takes its colour from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear" (5). The collective unconscious, according to Jung's "The Concept of the Collective Unconscious" (1936), "is identical in all individuals and, as it is inherited, it does not develop individually as the immediate unconscious does" (43). In "Conscious, Unconscious and Individuation" (1939), Jung points out that in spite of many individuals saying that the unconscious is "nothing", it is reality in potentia:

The thought we shall think, the deed we shall do, even the fate we shall lament tomorrow, all lie unconscious in our today. The unknown in us which the affect uncovers was always there and sooner or later would have presented itself to consciousness. (279).

Being so, one may conclude that as the unconscious is that part of the psyche which "knows" what is happening, what is going to

happen and what happened in the past, all these are in the unconscious since therein lies the deepest truths about the individual's personality. This means that if we have interest in analyzing one individual's way of thinking, we may do it by analyzing his unconscious manifestations, i.e., the myths this person adopts.

Jung, in "The Concept of the Collective Unconscious", also says that the collective unconscious is made up of "archetypes" and adds that archetypes are directly related to instincts: "they [instincts] form very close analogies to the archetypes, so close, in fact, that there is good reason for supposing that the archetypes are the unconscious images of the instincts themselves, in other words, that they are patterns of instinctual behaviour" (44); hence, archetypes become the personalization of an individual's instincts. The main source of these archetypes, following Jung's theory in the same article, is dreams, "which have the advantage of being involuntary, spontaneous products of the unconscious psyche and are therefore pure products of nature not falsified by any conscious purpose" (48). Dreams may reveal the unconscious of an individual since they are not filtered by any factor; as Jung himself stated, dreams are "pure" (48). When one is dreaming, one is not worried about others' censorship. It is the moment in which one reveals one's deepest feelings and intentions that may or may not become concrete.

To demonstrate the narrow relationship existent between archetype and instincts, Jung states in "On the Concept of the Archetype" that "the archetype in itself is empty and purely formal... a possibility of representation"; and he adds "[t]he representations themselves are not inherited, only the forms,....., and [the forms] correspond in every way to the instincts" (79). In addition, in "Conscious, Unconscious and Individuation", Jung argues that unconsciousness depends on consciousness. To his mind, "certain dreams, visions and mystical experiences ... suggest the existence of a consciousness in the unconscious" (283). As the individual is the product of the environment in which he lives, he projects his consciousness upon his dreams and, of course, upon the manifestations of his unconsciousness.

Within the study of archetypes, in "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious", Jung develops the important concept of anima which is, according to him, a "natural archetype" that satisfactorily sums up all statements of the primitive mind..." (27). Later, Jung reinforces the importance of the anima:

With the archetype of the anima we enter the realm of the god, or rather, the realm that metaphysics reserved for itself. Everything the anima touches becomes numinous--unconditional, dangerous, taboo, magical. She is the serpent in the paradise of the harmless man with good resolutions and still better intentions. (28)

Jung goes on pointing out the power of the unconsciousness in men. He believes and highlights the complexity of one's unconsciousness and makes the reader aware that one must be

careful when analyzing one's consciousness, in "Conscious, Unconscious and Individuation":

Consciousness grows out of an unconscious psyche which is older than it, and which goes on functioning together with or even in spite of it. Although there are numerous cases of conscious contents becoming unconscious again (through being repressed, for instance) the unconscious as a whole is far from being a mere remnant of consciousness. (281)

As is well known, one of the fields in which one can perceive and analyze the use of myths is literature. Writers in general use myths to portray characters or situations in the stories they create. This use, however, is not always a conscious procedure because, as we have already discussed, myth often comes from the individual's unconscious. On the other hand, we have pointed out that the unconscious represents "reality in potentia", which means that, without being aware, the writer, as well as any person, may reveal certain aspects of his/her way of thinking through the myths adopted. Knowing that it is possible to arrive at conclusions about this issue, one may analyze the myths a writer uses in a given literary piece as a reflection of the writer's own ideas concerning certain aspects of the society in which he/she lives. Indeed, it seems possible not only to know the author's ideas, but also society's ideas, since, according to Jung's theory, there is a collective unconscious which may reveal society's views on certain problems. It is no wonder that many literary critics have been working with myths that appear in literature in order to investigate what they may mean or the ideas that may be behind them.

William Righter, in *Myth and Literature* (1975), tries to define myth citing, among others, Joseph Margolis "[a] myth ... is a schema of the imagination which ... is capable of effectively organizing our way of viewing portions of the external world in accord with its distinctions" (5-6). Thus, Righter accepts that myth is produced by the unconscious and, at the same time, states that myths may reveal the way people see the "external world". Reinforcing this idea, Righter calls the attention of the reader--and of other critics--saying that it is important to study "what the myth says" and relate it to "how it is seen to function in terms of the particular human society from which it comes" (14). Righter goes on pointing out that concerning literature and the use of myths "we cannot reasonably say where the notion of 'myth' leaves off and that of 'story' begins"; and he adds: "we feel in the most modern self-conscious usage a groping for something that the 'myth' says which the 'stories' do not" (38). It is often difficult to identify in a story what is myth and what is not. There are situations in which the story itself mixes with myths, such as when the writer is constructing a character. He/she can simply develop a character's personality taking realistic, expressionistic, psychological or other approaches or use elements--generally unconsciously--which recognizedly belong to a known myth. Thus, at times, it can become very difficult for the reader to identify what is myth and what is the story created by the writer. When a writer uses a certain myth in his work, many times, he/she does



not know why he/she has used it; it is an unconscious process that can only be understood by other individual's unconscious or, perhaps, by the collective unconscious to which Jung refers. Righter tries to explain the relationship between the act of choosing a myth and the writer's unconscious:

Whatever his purpose, point of view or whatever his historical source, for any writer his myth is inevitably chosen in response to a spiritual condition of modern man, to the very fact of existence in a post-mythological age. Second, it is a characteristic feature of such an age that no particular body of myth comes to hand naturally. (38)

Moving to another critic, John Vickery, one may see that in his article "Literature and Myth" (1982) the scholar not only deals with the existence of myths in literary pieces but also presents suggestions to the readers to analyze these texts. One of the important arguments he advances is that myth may be related not only to the author, but also to the community in general:

The multiplex relation of myth and literature demonstrates that the term may refer to the author, to his work, or to the society that attends to both. Accordingly, it acquires manifold dimensions: psychological, rhetorical, semantic ideological, or sociological. (82)

Vickery states that in spite of having similarities such as "their shared traits of narrative, character, image, and theme" (67), literature and myth differ in some aspects. According to Vickery, the role of the latter is "to encourage actual worship", while that of the first is "to provide entertainment of an order that does not rule out moral reinforcement, social responsibility, and religious piety" (68-9). Besides, Vickery

attributes to myths the function of being responsible for some interpretations and, perhaps, this is the reason why some writers use them: "[l]iterature uses mythological material as direct source for events and characters in which transcription is the relation but it also draws on myth for stimulus to original conceptions and formulations" (69). Vickery refers to myth as being a device used unconsciously by writers to give a touch of difficulty in their works: "myth ... constitutes the religiosocial matrix from which literature emerges as an endlessly self-complicating phenomenon" (72). As the meaning of myths involves many psychological and sociological aspects of the author's life and of the life of the people who belong to his society, as time passes, it becomes more and more difficult to understand the meaning of myths. Consequently, it also becomes more difficult to analyze and interpret the myths that are used in literature, a task that involves research and dedication. To Vickery's mind, the difficulty in analyzing myths exists because:

Myth further bears in on the reader of literature the full and reverberant implications of both forms being a matter not only of what is said but of what is not said, a matter not only of declaration but also of interpretation. (73)

Later, Vickery explains that this difficulty comes from the fact that myths preserve and perpetuate "social and mental existence by absorbing a culture's metaphysical and cosmological contradictions into its societal convictions and customs" (74); throughout time myths assume different meanings and absorb the changes that occur in society. To understand the meaning of a

myth in a certain piece of literature, the researcher needs to investigate some aspects of the author's life as well as of the society in which the writer has lived.

Vickery calls the critics' attention to the fact that myths may assume different roles in different works. As he points out, in "Franz Kafka's work, "myth assumes the projection of the author's psychoses"; in Joyce's *Ulysses* it represents an "extrapolation of, or structural parallel to, an ancient story"; in D.H. Lawrence's works, it is related to a "satiric device offering both a contrast and a sense of continuity between the forms of life lived by ancient and contemporary humanity"; myth appears as "a new version of an old story in Robert Graves's *King Jesus*, Mann's *Joseph* series, and in Faulkner's *Light in August*" (82).

In "Myth and Archetype" (1983), William K. Wimsatt Jr. and Cleanth Brooks state that the symbolist development contributed to literature in the sense that there is "an increasing respect for the symbolism of the primitive man, and specifically for the myths and legends through which he characteristically expresses himself" (699). Besides, to strengthen their position, they state: "the symbolizations of primitive man are not necessarily childish and absurd, but have their own interest and perhaps their own contribution to 'truth'" (700). By saying that, Wimsatt and Brooks seem to agree with Jung's theory, since they state that myth contains truth, i.e., there is an unconscious reason for one to use--adopt--a certain myth. Thus, the study of

myths may constitute a faithful source to analyze a piece of literature since myths may convey the writer's deeper views in relation to a given subject, guiding readers into psychological and political approaches to literature, among others.

Moving to feminist criticism, there is a recent myth critic, Mimi Reisel Gladstein, who developed a research based on the archetypes used by male authors to portray women in literature. In *The Indestructible Woman in Faulkner, Hemingway, and Steinbeck* (1986) Gladstein analyzes how women are portrayed by these authors, drawing mainly on Jung's conceptualization of the archetype. Gladstein in the "Introduction" of her book, criticizes male authors in general and the way they portray women quoting Diane Gersoni Stavn ("Reducing the 'Miss Muffet' Syndrome: An Annotated Bibliography" 257) who says that the authors investigated are "limited in their ability to convincingly handle sexually and intellectually emancipated, real late-adolescent females" (1). Besides, Gladstein states that anyone who has been reading literary criticism at the time she was writing is aware that "American novelists have been accused, indicted, and convicted for many failures in their depiction of women" (1).

Concerning William Faulkner's portrayal of female characters, Gladstein says that "[m]ore recent studies, those that have had the benefit of some biographical materials that were not made public during Faulkner's lifetime, suggest that Faulkner's misogyny is the counterpart of his idealization of

women" (4). Later on, she cites Gaily Mortimer's Faulkner's Rethoric of Loss: A Study in Perception and Meaning (1983) in which Mortimer states that the result of Faulkner's misogyny are female characters who are "distorted or mythicized beings, the projection of a masculine consciousness at its most vulnerable" (122) (qtd. in Gladstein 4). According to Mortimer, Faulkner projects on his works his way of seeing women. Yet, if we consider Jung's theory of the existence of the "collective unconscious", we may also say that what Faulkner shows in his fiction is not only his own ideas concerning women, but a whole society's conception of the female sex.

Gladstein quotes Maxwell Geismar who, in Writers in Crisis (1961), says, "the woman, who is seen as the symbol of the southern age of chivalry which has been perverted, and the black, whose emancipation is seen as the cause of the loss of the past life, are both objects of Faulkner's enmity" (4). To Geismar's mind, Faulkner shows the "bad side" of women and blacks; most of his female characters are presented as women who do not respect society's rules, i. e., as "wrong" women according to the community's point of view.

Gladstein also cites Florida Scott-Maxwell's Women and Sometimes Men (1957) to explain this reaction of "attraction and repulsion" as Gladstein herself calls it, and which, according to her, is part of "each man's impulse toward individuation". As one may see,

[p]erhaps man's greatest need was to separate himself from the feminine, the maternal oneness. In order to

create himself he had to discriminate the masculine from the feminine, to discriminate against the feminine, knowing its formlessness to be his greatest enemy. (192) (qtd. in Gladstein 8)

In *Amor and Psyche: The Psychic Development of the Feminine* (1956), Erich Neumann already supported Gladstein's idea that women are related to nature, saying that:

In most cultures' creation of myths, the Earth is female, Mother Earth. Mother Earth and Mother Nature are two very nearly universal personifications of the Eternal Woman. Woman is matter and Man is spirit in the archetypal symbolism of things.... [T]he feminine mysteries start from the priority of the phenomenal 'material' world, from which the spiritual [man] is born. (149) (qtd. in Gladstein 7-8)

According to Gladstein, it is common knowledge that Faulkner uses, consciously and unconsciously, universal and regional myths as well as archetypes in his work. Faulkner himself admitted in an interview that "unconscious symbolism was possible" (Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner, eds. "Faulkner in the University", 1959;47) (9). In addition, Gladstein states that "Faulkner contended that a writer borrowed from everything in his experience and therefore the possibility of unconscious duplications was highly probable" (9).

Still concerning the presence of women in Faulkner's works, Gladstein reminds her readers that they are in abundance. Once, asked which he preferred to write about, men or women, Faulkner answered:

It's much more fun to write about women because I think women are marvelous, they're wonderful, and I know very little about them, and so I just--it's much more fun to try to write about women than about men--more difficult, yes. (Gwynn and Blotner, "Faulkner in the University", 1959:95) (qtd. in Gladstein 11)

Faulkner's female characters are presented in his works through characterization, theme, and plot pattern. According to Gladstein, "Faulkner's female characters are often described, either by the omniscient narrator or some other character in terms that suggest their oneness with the Eternal Feminine, particularly in her manifestation as Earth Goddess" (11).

One of the female characters that Gladstein analyzes in her book is Lena Grove from *Light in August*. Faulkner describes Lena as being almost part of nature, and the situations in which she appears in the plot are indeed linked to nature, i.e., they have nature as general or immediate setting. Gladstein observes that Faulkner uses many times the adjective "fecund" to refer to Lena's fertility as well as to characterize "Earth". Gladstein adds: "He also uses that adjective in connection with females and negroes, a linguistic linkage that corroborates to underlying a primitivistic attitude that saw negroes and women as enduring because of their affinity to the earth" (12). According to Gladstein's words, women's endurance does not transcend the level of nature; their "power" is not related to culture. Faulkner seems to reinforce the idea that Lena Grove is a character which may be connected to myth; he once explained where the "light" in the title of the book came from:

Maybe the connection was with Lena Grove, who had something of that pagan quality of being able to assume everything .... But as far as she was concerned, she didn't especially need any father for it [her expected child], any more than the women that--on whom Jupiter begot children were anxious for home and a father. It was enough to have had the child. And that was all

that I meant, just that luminous lambent quality of an older light than ours. (Gwynn and Blotner, "Faulkner in the University", 1959:45) (qtd. in Gladstein 11-12)

Another important female character in Faulkner is Addie Bundren from *As I Lay Dying*. Gladstein refers to her as "one of the most complex natural women" of Faulkner's fiction. Addie escapes from "things of man, i.e., institutions, and instead of going to a manmade retreat, home, she goes to a spring" (21). Addie Bundren as well as her daughter Dewey Dell, who duplicates Addie's experience, have their feelings related to nature; hence, in an archetypal interpretation, both can be considered Mother-Earth figures. For an explanation of this phenomenon, Gladstein cites C.G. Jung and C. Kerenyi's words in *Essays on a Science of Mythology* (1959): "every mother contains her daughter in herself and every daughter contains her mother, and ... every woman extends backwards into her mother and forward into her daughter". (28). In this statement one can perceive the "strong implications of continuity and immortality of myths" (Gladstein 28); i.e., myth is inherited from generation to generation.

The existence of myth in literature is, therefore, very important. Myths used unconsciously may reveal hidden points of view, both from a writer and from a society, and can thus become starting points for an in depth analysis of a work of literature. Besides, by studying the origins, the political, and sociological implications of myths, people can react against certain attitudes taken by a given community and thus try to change them, constructing, perhaps, a better world.



## CHAPTER II

### FEMINIST ARCHETYPAL CRITICISM

In the previous chapter, one of our main concerns was to establish the importance of Traditional Archetypal Criticism to literature. One reason to adopt Archetypal Criticism as a criterion for literary analysis is that this approach gives the reader the chance to point out certain aspects of social life which may be behind the use of myths. Bearing in mind the possibility of analyzing and criticizing the myths which are present in literature from yet a different perspective, some literary critics have proposed a new current of analysis, namely, Feminist Archetypal Criticism.<sup>1</sup>

Feminist Archetypal Criticism is a way of revising the myths which appear in literature. Feminist Archetypal critics such as Annis V. Pratt, Maggie Humm, Demaris S. Wehr, Estella Lauter, Carol Schreier Rupprecht and others analyze and revise literary myths interpreting them from their own perspective as feminists.

For centuries, female characters were portrayed in literary works both by male and female authors according to a view which was said to be universal but which revealed hegemonic perspectives. Women were described as fragile figures totally dependent on the male; besides, women, as portrayed by some authors, did not seem to belong to the "male" public world as a whole since women were most of the time presented as being

restricted to the private world of domesticity. This attitude reinforced the society's male centered mind which considered--and sometimes still considers--women as "indoor" beings, both physically and mentally.

With the emergence of a feminist consciousness women became aware of the need to create a literature as well as a literary criticism which took into account women's real experiences instead of presenting stereotypes<sup>2</sup> of women. Gerda Lerner in "Placing Women in History: a 1975 Perspective" says that "[i]n order to write a new history worthy of the name we will have to fit the complexities of the historical experience of all women" (qtd. in Ruthven 25). Feminist critics, like Annis Pratt in "The New Feminist Criticisms: Exploring the History of the New Space", for instance, point out that it is necessary to adopt new methods of literary analysis in order to avoid the influence of patriarchal methods. Pratt states that "'methodolatry' is something which feminists can very well do without, because the insistence upon a single method is not only dysfunctional but an attribute of the patriarchy" (qtd. in Ruthven 25). Addressing this issue, Mary Daly, in *Gyn/Ecology* (1978), states: "methodolatry of patriarchal disciplines kills creative thought" (23). In an early phase, as one may conclude, Daly as well as other feminists claim for the chance to disagree with traditional literary critics' point of view concerning women and their characterization in literature. Feminist critics wanted the right to face traditional literary criticism with their own ideas

placing themselves as individuals who are able to conquer their space in society and among intellectuals. In fact, to feminists' minds, the problem was not the method(s) adopted; instead, the problem was that traditional critics did not "allow" feminists to express points of view which diverged from the current models. Besides, it was difficult for traditional critics to accept that those "indoor" beings had the ability to criticize their works and, sometimes, exercise influence upon other women who were "asleep" in their housekeeping and taking care of their family without questioning their situation.

In *Feminist Literary Studies* (1984), Ruthven asserts that the prejudice which women had to face was the same as the black people and the poor were facing:

Its [Radical Feminism's] birthplace was America in the 1960s, where one of the problems faced by an educated new left was a familiar one for marxist intellectuals: to sustain interest in revolutionary action among the poor whites and poorer blacks who constitute the working classes. (27)

As such, the interest of feminists was to change society's mind in relation to the way people interpreted women's attitudes and behavior. Andrea Dworkin in *Our Blood* (1976) elucidates the purpose of the Feminist Movement: "we intend to change [the world] so totally that someday the texts of masculinist writers will be anthropological curiosities" (qtd. in Ruthven 30). Ruthven comments on Dworkin's statement saying that the study of literary texts cannot be done just for "[their] own sake", i. e., without any committed purpose; instead, it is necessary to analyze literature "as a means of transforming readers who will

then go on to transform the world" (30). This statement by Ruthven serves to demonstrate the power which literature sometimes can exercise upon readers. A literary text or a literary analysis of a text may present, whether consciously or unconsciously, a masculinist view of women and, some readers, such as those with a not so developed critical sense, may be restricted to the limited view of the author. On the other hand, if the reader is aware of the patriarchal ideas which rule our society, this individual may be capable of reacting against these ideas and of trying to change them. To Ruthven's mind,

[t]o read a canonical text in a feminist way is to force that text to reveal its hidden sexual ideology which, in so far as it happens to coincide with that of the predominantly male critics who have written about it, tends not to be mentioned in non-feminist criticism. (31)

Ruthven goes on citing Terry Eagleton's words in *Criticism and Ideology* (1976) to explain what "sexual ideology" is: "[it] determines, for example, what is deemed to be socially acceptable behaviour for men and women"; Eagleton also explains,

[t]he function of an ideology is to justify the status quo and to persuade the powerless that their powerlessness is inevitable. Fragments of a dominant ideology are sometimes identified by writers and held up for inspection. (qtd. in Ruthven 31)

Therefore, in this critical perspective, the critic should study literary texts in search of "traces of the ideologies"; besides, the critic should point out contradictions between what the text seems to propose and what it really implies after careful analysis. Ruthven is aware that the view of women according to patriarchal thought appears not only in male

author's works but also in female's. However, Ruthven points out that this happens because female authors "have internalised the myth of female inferiority to such a degree that it results in varying stages of disablement, ranging from diffidence to pathological self-hatred and manifests itself in an unjustifiable contempt for other women's achievements" (34).

Annis Pratt in "The New Feminist Criticism" cites Josephine Jessup's words in *The Faith of Our Feminists* (1950): "a feminist fiction manifests the 'moral' superiority of women over men and depicts them engaged in a battle of the sexes"; besides, Jessup suggests that this battle "must be resolved either in marriage or separatism" (16). By presenting marriage and separatism as two possibilities of resolving the "battle of sexes", she is at the same time saying that an agreement between men and women is impossible; i.e., men who constitute the "dominant class" would never admit women in an equivalent position in society. Thus, according to Jessup, women must submit themselves to live behind men's shadow in "marriage" or declare "war", separating from men. Keeping in mind Jessup's suggestions (marriage or separatism) to solve the problem, one should apply them to literary criticism: the traditional (based on male-centered thought) and the feminist which fights to change old concepts concerning women. In literature, the marriage to which Jessup is referring could be understood as the acceptance of traditional ideas what, in other words, may be translated as the adoption of mainstream criticism. On the other hand, one may understand

separatism or "war" as the maintenance of the feminist struggle against old conceptions concerning women and their value as individuals who are equal to men.

In the same article, Pratt characterizes the female figure in literature declaring that "[t]he heroine in fiction ... can be described as passing through the immanent phases of adolescent naturism, sexual initiation, marriage and childbirth"; besides, Pratt explains that these phases can be understood as a "quest for transcendence which is sometimes separatist, sometimes androgynous, and sometimes visionary" (18). To Pratt's mind, these moments which women have to face are very important since they contribute to the development of a "new feminist criticism which will describe the psychomythological development of the female individual in literature" (18).

Still concerning the purpose of feminist criticism, Lillian S. Robinson declares in "Dwelling in Decencies: Radical Criticism and the Feminine Perspective" (1971): "[f]eminist criticism, as its name implies, is criticism with a cause, engaged criticism.... To be effective, feminist criticism cannot become simply bourgeois criticism in drag. It must be ideological and moral criticism, it must be revolutionary." (21) As one may perceive, feminists want more than just a criticism that shows that they are able to criticize literature; they want their rights to be equal to those of other members of society not only in terms of having as much freedom as males have but mainly in terms of being respected for their contribution to improving

society. To Robinson's mind, feminist criticism is "revolutionary", i.e., it strives to improve women's condition which, nowadays, is belittled as the result of a patriarchal consciousness. Feminist criticism intends to change the prejudiced situation in which women are and place them in a position which must be equivalent to that of male's. When Robinson refers to feminist criticism as being a revolution, she is certainly going beyond the literary criticism level. Literary criticism is a feminists' "tool" and, at the same time, the starting point for changing, or at least for improving, a situation which was no longer satisfactory.

Sharon Spencer in "Feminist Criticism and Literature" also discusses the role of feminist criticism and presents an overview of the feminist literary movement comparing feminist literary criticism with others. Besides analyzing the portrayal of women in literature, Spencer enumerates "feminist criticism's specific tasks": "the identification of women's works that are out of print or have been neglected or misunderstood", i.e., it is necessary to know the problem--prejudice--to start combating it; "the analyses of the image of woman as she appears in the existing literature"; the "examination and reinterpretation of the existing criticism of women writers books; and, finally, "the creation of a body of new work, imaginative as well as critical", which should be "based upon the egalitarian vision of humanity that is the fundamental basis of feminist thought" (159). Spencer also points out that after analyzing many literary works written

by men, one may find a large number of stereotypes of women such as the virgin and the whore; the mother (angel or devil); the submissive wife or the domineering wife; the bitch; the seductress; man's prey and so on (159). As such, some feminist critics feel that they should fight to change people's minds in relation to women's roles in society; they claim that the exposure of those stereotypes presented in literature should serve mainly to destroy the patriarchal view and generate a new way of seeing the world. To conclude, Spencer declares that "[f]eminist literary criticism is prescriptive: that is, it attempts to set standards for a literature that is as free as possible from biased portraits of individuals because of their class, race, or sex." (158)

In *Thinking About Woman* (1968), one of the early feminist classics, Mary Ellmann, deals with female stereotypes presented in literature referring, for instance, to the problem of 'passivity'; she says that "they [women] disappear ... wrapped in sheets and wheeled on carts, like (the other) mummies. It is the doctor who emerges upright, calm, flecked with blood..." (79); the woman just waits for the birth of her child. Another stereotype shown by Ellmann refers to women whose "experience is narrow, their characters never leave the bedroom and the saloon" (92-2). As Ellmann declares, "[i]t is also customary to speak of these rooms as 'hermetically sealed'"; women are put totally outside the male world. Ellmann comments on 'piety' asserting that "to prove this stereotype, religions must work like washing



machines: men construct them and women run them", and she adds, "[t]o find a religion is inventive, but to keep its rules is pious" (93). To accept the fact that men are responsible for the construction of machines and women for their functioning is to accept the notion that men have intelligence while women are not able to create things, that females can only use the things that males construct.

The prejudice against women and the fact that male authors used to present female characters in literature by using myths adopted by a patriarchal society made feminists react to traditional myth criticism. However, many feminists, as Mary Daly in Gyn/Ecology, recognize that it is necessary to know the myths which are used in literature in order to contest them:

In order to reverse the reversals completely we must deal with the fact that patriarchal myths contain 'stolen' mythic power. They are something like distorting lenses through which we can see into the background. But it is necessary to break their codes in order to use them as viewers; that is, we must see their lie in order to see their truth. (47)

Daly emphasizes the importance of analyzing the myths which are present in literature, and, at the same time, she warns the reader not to be 'deceived' by myths. In fact, Daly advises the reader to engage in a deeper level of analysis, i.e., to understand what a given myth really means in relation to the female character to which it refers.

Adrienne Rich in "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision" (1971) explains that re-vision, for feminists, is "an act of survival". Besides, she demonstrates the importance of re-vision

by linking it to self-knowledge and saying that "it [re-vision] is part of her [woman's] refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society" (35). As one may see, re-vision appears as a weapon which is used to demonstrate that women are aware of their problems and that they know how to fight in order to achieve their purposes and face the male centered society in which they live.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic, the Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Imagination* (1979) point out that revision is necessary for feminists to assume their female condition, face the patriarchal society, and mainly "redefine the terms of her [their] socialization" (49). This means that women must revise and try to change the whole situation which led them to the "difficulties" they have to face as women in our society.

Maggie Humm in *Feminist Criticism: Women as Contemporary Critics* (1986) claims that as a consequence of the fact that women are not accepted as independent professionals, feminists need to make literary criticism "an integral part of feminist struggle"; literary criticism becomes a weapon in feminists' hands. Humm also uses Adrienne Rich's words to emphasize her statement on feminism: "[feminism] is the place where in the most natural, organic way subjectivity and politics have to come together" (qtd. in Humm 6). Humm presents her opinion about the task of feminist criticism, i. e., to redefine old concepts concerning women, adding that:

An even more important task for feminist criticism than--more important than re-evaluating women's writing, or re-evaluating the misrepresentation of women's intellect--is to re-evaluate the whole terrain of criticism itself as mapped out and colonised by men; that is, to change the language of literary criticism from one of power and possession to one of emotion and caring. (6)

According to Humm, feminist criticism addresses three major problems in literary criticism, namely: "a gendered literary history is addressed by re-examining male texts, noting their assumptions and showing the way women are presented"; feminist criticism confronts "the problem of creating a gendered reader by offering her new methods and a fresh cultural practice"; and, finally, it has to "make us act as women readers by creating new communities of writers and readers supported by a language spoken for and by women" (14-5). To Humm's mind, these are the problems faced by feminist critics and which, when solved, may change women's condition in society.

Hitherto, we have presented some feminist critics who, by using literary criticism, want to transform society's masculinist way of thinking into a way in which men and women are equal and, therefore, have the same rights. Feminists's aim, as we have seen, does not restrict itself to literature but it extends to society in general. As one may verify, the feminist critics presented in this work agree that critics should try to change, among many other things, the myths shown in literature to represent women. This happens because, according to them, literary myths may, sometimes, influence people's way of thinking concerning certain aspects of social life. Having in mind the

fact that myths may influence people's behavior, it is possible, at this point, to address Feminist Archetypal Theory per se, having as a starting point Jung's archetypal theory.

Demaris S. Wehr in "Religious and Social Dimensions of Jung's Concept of the Archetype: A Feminist Perspective" attacks Jungian theory arguing that it reinforces social roles and limits options for women (23). Furthermore, Wehr refers to the process called "internalization", i.e., the process through which "human beings come to be determined by society":

Society produces people with structures of thought that coincide with the social institutions people created in the first place. Internalization, then, implies that the objective facticity of the social world becomes a subjective facticity as well. (25)

This implies that all the prejudice that exists in a given society will be absorbed by the people who live there and will become a common way of thinking among those individuals; hence, the prejudice against women will 'proliferate' and, as time passes, men will be more and more powerful.

Tony Wolff, a member of Jung's circle, was the first to elaborate a list of feminine archetypes, namely: 'Mother', the 'Hetaira', the 'Amazon' and the 'Medium'. Wehr states that to Wolff's mind, "these four archetypal images represent the major ways in which women experience the world" (42). Jung and his followers tried to label women's behavior as if it were possible to place an individual's behavior in a rigid classification. If this were possible, it would be simple to understand women's thoughts and way of living, since each real woman should fit a

particular archetype; women, in this case, would not be human beings; instead, they would be considered as toys, objects which could be classified by size, color, model and so on. In spite of being a prejudiced attitude, nowadays we all--including women--label women with archetypes created by society. Ann Ulanov in *Receiving Woman: Studies in the Psychology and Theology of the Feminine*, to prove the point, observes:

In our everyday speech, when we describe women we know or know about, we often resort to typing them, unconsciously using archetypal imagery. Common examples are the references to a woman as "a witch", a "man--eater", and so forth. (qtd. in Wehr 42)

Annie V. Pratt in "Spinning Among Fields: Jung, Frye, Levi-Strauss and Feminist Archetypal Theory" delineates what feminist thought should be:

Feminist scholarship needs to be idealistic, capable of imagining better modes of being without solidifying them into immutable principles. It also needs to be pragmatic to observe things as they are and have been without despair. There is room in feminist thinking for both vision and realism. (95)

To Pratt's mind, in contrast with traditional criticism, feminist critics search for a criticism which is open to accept new ideas and different points of view. When she says that there is place for "vision" and "realism", Pratt is demonstrating that in feminist criticism it is possible to study literature adopting "vision", i.e., subjective analysis or "realism", a more objective way to analyze literature. After analyzing a number of literary works written by women, Pratt declares herself surprised by the "conservatism" present in the characters women create; Pratt states that they are "mindless" and "accommodated to

gender norms" (95). However, their texts show a "more fully human potential self that contradicted gender norms" (95); according to Pratt, this contradiction leads to an "ambivalence of tone, irony in characterization, and strange disjunction in plotting which indeed mirror women's social experience" (95). From this, one may conclude that in spite of having an unfair and prejudiced point of view concerning women, some authors can contribute to awakening women and society concerning women's rights. However, if male authors themselves sometimes contribute to improving women's situation, it is possible to find works of literature by females in which the author, perhaps without perceiving it, uses mythological images associated to women which, in a sense, may damage their situation eliciting female archetypes from which women want to get rid of. Pratt explains what happens:

When women heroes explored their unconscious, they came up against ancient archetypes, often encoded, frequently hieroglyphic, but nevertheless present as possibilities to be assimilated and emulated. There seems to be some kind of forgotten code or buried script underlying the normative plots which women authors in a patriarchal culture internalize. (95)

According to Pratt's mind, the archetypes present in literature "represent psychological possibilities" (96), i.e., behind the archetypes we face in a text there are many aspects to be analyzed. When one analyzes a given archetype it is necessary to investigate not only what that archetype means; one needs to study all the possibilities concerning the use of such archetype in relation to the author's intention. The study of such

intention may lead one to understand or to contest the way women are represented in a given piece of literature.

Pratt asserts that in the eighteenth century women were associated with nature and nature was linked to wisdom. However, even though women were associated with nature, wisdom was not an attribute given to women; when women were identified with nature it happened in a pejorative sense, "despite the high valuation given by the Enlightenment community to nature as a source of truth and even social contract" (123). To reinforce feminism's task, Adrienne Rich, in "Conditions for Work: The Common World of Women" (1976), defends the idea that: "[f]eminism means ... that we renounce our obedience to the fathers and recognize that the world they have described is not the whole world" (207).

When dealing with myths, feminist critics aim to analyze their structures and meanings considering the different cultures from where they come. Feminist critics, according to Maggie Humm, admit myth as "almost a genre of critical writing in itself" (91) and critics try to find a way of analyzing women's use of myth as well as its social and literary function (91). In spite of criticizing myth criticism, feminists recognize its importance, as Humm does, citing Mary Daly's words in Gyn/Ecology: "the study of myths is important not only to simply replace patriarchal myths with feminine versions but to elicit fresh cultural insights by reversing the myths" (94). Later on, Humm asserts that criticism translates or reconstitutes latent meaning in mythical stories; that is to say, through criticism one may

analyze deep meanings which are behind the use of myths in literature. Besides, Humm says that it is possible to discover female identity by "exploring the personal and mythological aspects of the intricate and inescapable mother-daughter bond" (98). Humm asserts that myth criticism has problems because, according to her, "it undercuts its own positions" (102); however, she recognizes the importance of myth critics stating that they "are important to any feminist analysis of the culture of sexuality since sexual politics is the basis for their analysis" (102). In other words, according to Humm, one must know as much as one can about one's own and other people's cultures in order to be able to analyze and eventually to contest a given way of thinking.

Two recent feminist archetypal critics, Estella Lauter and Carol Schreier Rupprecht, discuss in their "Introduction" to *Feminist Archetypal Theory : Interdisciplinary Re-Visions of Jungian Thought* (1985) the fact that Jung studied the qualities of individuals. Jung's conclusion in relation to this was that those qualities, which he named "feminine" were tending to disappear "in culture as well as in individuals"; Lauter and Rupprecht also demonstrate Jung's concern with the disappearance of "feminine qualities", stating that he "thought it especially dangerous that modern man has neglected his feminine attributes" (5); besides, they point out that "the most important implication of this line of thought is that culturally defined masculine and feminine qualities are equally available for



development by either sex." (5) Nevertheless, in spite of accepting part of Jung's theory, Lauter and Rupprecht call for revision and attribute the limitations they find in Jungian thought to "Jung's tendency ... to think in terms of rigid oppositions" (5-6). In other words, they do not agree with Jung's separatism in the sense that he may say when analyzing a certain situation: this is feminine and this is masculine. Lauter and Rupprecht cite Naomi Goldenberg's "A Feminist Critique of Jung" to validate their opinion in relation to Jung's female archetypes:

Instead of being explanations of reality experienced by females, archetypes of the feminine had become categories to contain women.... [B]ecause of their reputed origin in a transcendent and religious realm, the archetypes had acquired an irrefutable numinosity and were even called "past documents" of the soul. (7-8)

As one may conclude, if left unrevised, archetypes, in the understanding of Lauter and Rupprecht, are out of date; besides, to their mind, archetypes do not allow women to go ahead in their purposes of being free and socially equal to men. Still using Goldenberg's "A Feminist Critique of Jung", Lauter and Rupprecht go on to discuss the feminist task in relation to Jung's archetypes. According to them, Goldenberg states that there are two options for feminists if they do not change the assumptions or redefine the concept of archetype: (1) "to accept the patriarchal ideas of the feminine as ultimate and unchanging and work within those" or (2) "to indulge in a rival search to find

female archetypes, one which can support feminist conclusions" (qtd. in Lauter and Rupprecht 9).

According to Lauter and Rupprecht, James Hall in Clinical Uses of Dreams: Jungian Interpretations and Enactments says that archetype manifests itself through experience and people tend to associate images to certain individuals and "there is not an inherited image of the mother, but there is a universal tendency to form an image of the mother from the experience of the child" (12). This implies that, as images are not inherited and are created together with the maturation of the individual, it is possible to change certain images which are formed in relation to women; by changing male-centered construction of images, feminists can also modify old myths.

Moreover, Lauter and Rupprecht make an analogy between feminism and archetypal theory showing how they are related and important one to another:

Feminism offers us a system predisposed to validate women, whether women's experience is congruent with or radically different from men's. Archetypal theory offers feminism a general sanction to look at women's images, as well as their social, economic, or political behavior, and to value all kinds of material, not just those kinds currently privileged in contemporary culture... all [images], taken together, are essential to the preparation of the theoretical ground. (16)

Eventually, Lauter and Rupprecht conclude that, to their minds, the existence of archetypes is very important and refer to them as a "feminist tool" to re-examine and re-evaluate "patterns in women's experiences as they are revealed in psychotherapy, studies of the arts, myths, dreams, religion,

sociology" as well as in "other disciplines" (16). Besides, referring to archetypes as a "feminist tool", Lauter and Rupprecht attribute to archetypes a fundamental function in feminist criticism: "This use of archetype opens the way for a theoretical framework that will be complex and supple enough to illuminate the multiple phenomena we presently call "female experience" (16). In addition, Lauter and Rupprecht state that when dealing with feminist-archetypal theory, one must consider the archetype as a process. Thus, to their mind, the image is a mutable element that varies according to the context in which it is in; in other words, the archetype is "a tendency to form and reform images in relation to certain kinds of repeated experiences" (16; emphasis added).

## NOTES

1. Before discussing Feminist-Archetypal Criticism itself, it is necessary to review some points concerning Feminist Criticism in general. Likewise, it is worth calling the reader's attention to the fact that in this chapter, in contrast with the first one, in which we used the chronological method to organize and present the scholars and concepts, the organizing principle is by topic.

2. At this point, it is useful to establish working definitions of stereotype and archetype. Stereotype is generally understood as a conventional idea, i.e., the repetition of a previous model or fact. Archetype, however, according to C. G. Jung is "essentially an unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived, and it takes its colour from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear" (*The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* 5). Jung in a deeper analysis of the archetype in the same book, links archetypes to instincts stating that "they [archetypes] are patterns of instinctual behavior" (44). Thus, archetype is an original model kept in our minds which manifest in certain situations to which they apply.

## CHAPTER III

### TRADITIONAL ARCHETYPAL ANALYSIS OF AS I LAY DYING AND LIGHT IN AUGUST

The aim of chapter I--Traditional Archetypal Criticism--has been to provide the reader with the theoretical basis to back up the analyses carried out in this and in the next analytical chapter. Chapter I discusses the processes of production of myths as well as the relationship that may exist between the use of certain myths by a certain community and the community's views concerning a given issue. Besides, it presents Jung's concept of archetypes and collective unconscious which will aid the present analysis.

This chapter presents a traditional archetypal analysis of William Faulkner's female characters in As I Lay Dying (1930) and Light in August (1932). From As I Lay Dying I have taken the protagonist Addie Bundren, her daughter Dewey Dell, and their neighbor, Cora Tull. Concerning Light in August, I have chosen the female protagonist, Lena Grove; the woman who helps her while she is travelling, Martha Armstid; and a female victim of prejudice, Joanna Burden.

As was argued in Chapter I, the importance of myths is paramount, and their significance is so great that it is possible

to interpret an individual's behavior and way of thinking by analyzing the myths that underlie them. Addressing the issue of the use of myths in literature, Lee R. Edwards in "The Labors of Psyche: Toward a Theory of Female Heroism" (1979) cites Erich Neumann's words in *Amor and Psyche* to illustrate the importance that myths may have in literary works. According to Neumann's words, it is possible to conclude that one may develop a study on a certain community's behavior based on its myths:

myth is always the unconscious representations of crucial life situations and one of the reasons why myths are so significant...is that we can read the true experiences of mankind in these confessions unobscured by consciousness (63-5) (qtd. in Edwards 40).

Keeping in mind the importance of studying myths to analyze one's experiences together with the purpose of this research--changing the image of women in literature from mere archetypes to individuals who have conquered a place and who have an important role in society-- I want now to discuss Faulkner's use of archetypes, focusing on the contribution that such a use may make to those who want to investigate a given society's way of thinking.

It is well known that Faulkner uses a large number of myths and archetypes in his work. In spite of that, the writer himself once stated that he was not worried whether he was conscious or unconscious of the symbolism present in his writing; according to Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner, Faulkner declared in an interview that his primary concern was "to create flesh-and-blood human beings" (*Faulkner in the University* qtd. in Gladstein 9).

At the same time that Faulkner reveals his main concern while he is creating characters, he reinforces the idea that the myths, i.e., the symbolism used in literature, is an unconscious manifestation. Thus, Jung's theory of archetypes and collective unconscious may be applied to literature and, therefore, to Faulkner's works. As Faulkner himself stated, what firstly interested him was to "construct" his characters; thus, one may conclude that the existence of myths in a literary work is a "natural" consequence of the process of characterization. In other words, when a literary writer works on a text, he often puts his experiences into it, which include the influences that he received from the environment concerning, among other aspects, society's views in relation to certain issues.

Since the subject of the present analysis is Faulkner's female characters, it is important to mention that Faulkner presents many female characters in his work. As Gwynn and Blotner state in Faulkner in the University, Faulkner used to say that he preferred to write about women because, according to him, "they are marvelous, they are wonderful" and he did not know much about women; in addition, Faulkner pointed out that writing about women is "much more difficult" than writing about men (qtd. in Gladstein 11).

Another literary critic, Abby H. P. Werlock, in "Victims Unvanquished: Temple Drake and Women Characters in William Faulkner's Novels" (1986), states that if one analyzes Faulkner's novels chronologically, one will perceive that there is a "male

hostility toward women which is at first passive and verbal, then increasingly violent and physical" (3). However, Werlock points out that Faulkner persists in themes like violence toward women not because he is a sensationalist, a misogynist or a sadist, but because he recognizes, describes and isolates men who mistreat women (4). Werlock advises the reader not to confuse Faulkner with his narrators or the violent characters that appear in his fiction; on the contrary, it is important to know that evidence suggests that "Faulkner frequently speaks through and sympathizes with his female characters" (5).

The analysis that follows aims to point out female archetypes which appear in the two novels investigated in this dissertation. In both works, as one shall verify, Faulkner portrays archetypes of women which I have classified as the "sinner woman", the "naive girl", and the "dedicated wife". Since I am dealing with two different novels, this analytical chapter presents, firstly, the female characters in *As I Lay Dying*; secondly, the chapter presents the analysis of the female characters in *Light in August*.

### *As I Lay Dying*

#### Addie Bundren

Addie Bundren appears as the archetype of the "sinner woman" in *As I Lay Dying*. Anse, Cora Tull, and Addie, herself--in the



chapter dedicated to her monologue in the novel--characterize her as an unhappy, bitter, selfish and, sometimes, hard-hearted woman. She is the dead protagonist and is portrayed by Faulkner as having been an unhappily married woman who becomes an adulteress. Possibly as a consequence of her frustration in marriage, she has an affair with the pastor, Whitfield, with whom she has a son, Jewel. According to her husband, Anse, "[s]he was ever a private woman" (17), i.e., in his eyes, she was a selfish wife and mother who did not dedicate herself to her family. Anse, in one of his speeches, makes a commentary on himself, referring to Addie and their marriage: "I am a luckless man. I have ever been" (17-8).

Cora Tull, their neighbor, qualifies Addie as a

lonely woman, lonely with her pride, trying to make folks believe different, hiding the fact that they just suffered her, because she was not cold in the coffin before they were carting her forty miles away to bury her, flouting the will of God to do it. Refusing to let her lie in the same earth with those Bundrens. (21)

Through Cora's opinion, Addie is presented as being a proud and insensitive person who does not value people's feelings. According to Cora, Addie had asked the family to bury her in Jefferson in order to make other people think that it was the Bundren family's wish and not hers. Thus, to Cora's mind, Addie would have asked Anse to bury her in Jefferson with the purpose of making other people think that it was Anse's wish to get rid of her. Still according to Cora, if Addie went to Jefferson while she was alive, it would be obvious to everybody that she wanted to go back to her land. Following Cora's thought, Addie can be

considered a mischievous woman who tries to escape from her responsibilities and duties making innocent people suffer for her sins, such as her adultery.

For Gladstein, however, Addie is "one of Faulkner's most complex natural women" (21), and this identification with nature is perceived in many passages of the novel. To Gladstein's mind, Addie "escapes from things of men", i.e., from rules, principles and institutions created by society and goes to nature--to nature as an environment for her love affair with Whitfield as well as to "her nature", i.e., to her "self" in which there is a longing for freedom and happiness (21). Addie Bundren can be seen as one who cannot control her own instincts; she acts almost as an animal who cannot think and who wants just to satisfy her needs, without concern for love.

Still regarding Addie's connection to nature, one may think of her strong desire to be buried in "her land", i.e., in that place in which she was born and in which she grew up. Jefferson was Addie's place and it was a part of her, since after death she wanted to be in contact with her parents who were buried there. In fact, Addie can be seen as a portion of that land that she had left in the attempt to find something better; as she failed, she decided to go back to her origins, to that place which, for her, was the most natural one.

Another point to be underlined, according to Gladstein, is the fact that Addie considered her children as being only hers; she was, therefore, like the Earth Mother who, in spite of having

many children, does not have a husband or a male figure to be their father. Gladstein concludes her analysis of Addie stating that the name "Addie" is also connected to nature since it could be a "feminine derivative of Adam" which also means earth (21-2).

The facts that Addie is portrayed as an adulteress who betrays her husband with the pastor, Whitfield,--an almost "sacred" figure--and that she wishes to be buried in Jefferson, instead of being near her husband and children, are usually taken to characterize her as a selfish woman who is not able to demonstrate respect and love for other people, not even for her own children. In her monologue, she confesses that she gave Dewey Dell to her husband in order to "negative" Jewel, the son she had with the pastor (140). In a sense, Addie used her only daughter to try to be free of the sin she had committed and this has also been taken to characterize her as a selfish person who tries to manipulate people--Anse--by using an innocent child. In this view, Addie is a materialist woman who does not believe in love or in people's words.

However, if one analyzes Addie's life, one might conclude that, in spite of not believing in words, her last wish--to be buried in Jefferson near her relatives--comes true based on Anse's promise that he would take her to her homeland after death (137); thus, the man in whose words she herself declares not to trust is responsible for the accomplishment of her last wish. In addition, Addie does not believe in the words from the Bible that Cora used to cite, which characterizes Addie as an unfaithful

person. Even before her marriage with Anse, Addie confirms her disappointment in relation to life in general and to the words that people pronounce (which, in practice, never seem to fit her expectations), suggesting her own agreement with her father's words: "the reason for living is to get ready to stay dead for a long time" (134).

To corroborate the analysis of Addie as the archetype of the "sinner woman", it is important to cite Cleanth Brooks' words in *William Faulkner: First Encounters*: "[Addie is] a bitterly disappointed woman, who feels that she has been cheated by the words offered her throughout her life, and thus feels a contempt for the words" (81). As one may verify, Addie is portrayed as the archetype of the woman who is not loved and is not able to love anybody; that is the reason why she is so bitter and disappointed, as Brooks says. To Brooks' mind, "[o]ne may call her [Addie's] basic philosophy a kind of transcendental materialism, for she has simply inverted the Christian doctrine. Since the soul is nothing, the body itself must be everything..." (83). Believing that the soul is not important and that the body is what really matters, Addie becomes a person for whom feelings --such as love, tenderness, and faith--are nothing until they are shown through actions.

## Dewey Dell

The archetype of the "naive girl" in *As I Lay Dying* is recognizable in Dewey Dell, Addie's only female child. She is portrayed as a naive girl who is tricked by her lover, Lefe. She is seventeen years old and is facing an unwelcome pregnancy. As Lefe does not want to assume the paternity of the baby, he gives her some money in order to have an abortion.

In spite of the fact that by adopting traditional archetypal criticism it is possible to classify Addie Bundren as a "sinner woman" and her daughter, Dewey Dell, as "naive", interestingly enough, according to Gladstein, Dewey Dell "duplicates" Addie's experience. For instance, she has her first sexual experience in contact with nature. Her child is conceived under some promises and words of love that her lover says to her. Dewey Dell's life can be connected to nature not only because she makes love for the first time in contact with nature but also because she compares her pregnant state to a cow that is also pregnant, in a mental dialogue with the animal: "You'll just have to wait. What you got in you ain't nothing to what I got in me, even if you are a woman too" (53). Besides, she can also be considered a Mother Earth figure who is fertile and whose child has no father.

Dewey Dell is a solitary girl; her mother did not use to talk to her children, not even to Dewey Dell who was the only girl. As mentioned above, Addie is reported as saying in the

novel that she had given Dewey Dell to Anse in order to "negative" Jewel; thus, one may conclude that their relationship was far from being a positive one, because Addie used Dewey Dell to make herself feel better in relation to the adultery she had committed.

Dewey Dell's sensitiveness enables her to perceive that her mother's preferred son is Jewel. In spite of being the only girl in the family, it is clear that she is not preferred among Addie's children, since when Addie is almost dying, Dewey Dell feels that her mother wants to see Jewel: "It's Jewel she wants" (40), the girl says. Like Addie, Dewey Dell also searches for love, that word about which people talk and many of them feel, but that she herself does not know; not even the maternal love which is so common between mother and child. Thus, Dewey Dell "duplicates" Addie's experience, using Gladstein's word, in the sense that neither knew love and both were involved with men for whom love was "just a word."

As was said above, Dewey Dell is a lonely girl, and her loneliness as well as her difficulty to talk about her problems are expressed by her thoughts in relation to Dr. Peabody, as an attitude of almost despair, illustrating how alone and destitute she is: "[i]t's because I am alone. If I could just feel it, it would be different, because I would not be alone. (...) And he could do so much for me, and then I would not be alone" (49). Thus, Dewey Dell is portrayed as a person who wants to have friends, to touch other people and feel that she is also

important to them; she wants to become a member of the community.

Dewey Dell is the typically naive girl who is tricked by her lover, who, in face of a pregnancy, does not want the baby and abandons the girl. She is the inexperienced girl who accepts and follows everything that her lover wants her to do without questioning and demanding any kind of rights; especially the right to be respected and to have her own opinion. Although she is pregnant, she does not ask for his help; she just accepts the money and seeks an abortion, being, thus, portrayed as a passive whore who commits a "mistake" and is paid not to tell anybody about what has happened or who, besides herself, is responsible for the act.

#### Cora Tull

According to traditional archetypal criticism, one may classify Cora Tull, Addie Bundren's neighbor, as the archetype of the "dedicated wife". She loves her husband and her children, and she is a very helpful person. Cora is so close to her own family that she condemns Addie when she finds out that Addie wants to be buried in Jefferson, near her relatives, commenting "[a] woman's place is with her husband and children, alive or dead" (21). To Cora's mind, once a woman marries, she should not separate from her husband and children; according to her, the main task of a married woman is to serve the husband and the family.

However, in spite of thinking that women should belong only to their family, Cora keeps her religious faith above her relationship with her husband and children; she always puts religion in the first place: "It's my Christian duty'....Will you stand between me and my Christian duty?" (56). To prove the importance of religion, Cora tries to show that she knows the words of God, acting as a kind of priest when she talks to Addie. Cora is, in fact, a character whose life is guided by words; to her mind, life must be seen in terms of words like "sin", "salvation", "duty", and so on. Cora explains that God makes people suffer in order to "save" their souls. To her mind, if a person sins, God would judge the sin and send salvation through suffering: "It is our mortal lot to suffer and to raise our voices in praise of Him who judges the sin and offers the salvation through our trials and tribulations time out of mind amen" (132).

Besides, Cora considers herself a missionary whose task is to help other people, not only strangers but her own husband too. Being a woman, she thinks that she is a kind of sanctified angel sent by God to help Vernon, her husband, who believes that she is right, as he himself shows in the following passage: "I reckon Cora's right when she says that the reason the Lord had created women is because men don't know his own good when he sees it" (58).

In their society's eyes, Cora is the woman whose behavior and attitudes all women should follow. In contrast to Addie--the



"sinner woman"—Cora lives for her family, and perhaps, most importantly, she respects her husband and is faithful to him. Cora's way of thinking in relation to religion and to her self-confidence distinguishes her from Addie and Dewey Dell, who suffer internal conflicts and whose behavior society would not approve. Thus, Cora is taken by the society in which they live as the model, the religious and dedicated wife which all "respectful" women should become.

### Light in August

#### Joanna Burden

Joanna Burden, a spinster who has a Negro lover, Joe Christmas, is shown in Light in August as the female archetype of the "sinner woman". The fact that she is single and has a lover contributes directly to her characterization as a whore. Besides, she is a woman whose behavior calls other people's attention because she has been socially engaged and comes from a family which was also engaged in the fight against slavery.

Joanna's behavior can be conducive to a comparison between her and an element of nature, e.g., an animal that has, as its primary aim, the satisfaction of its instincts without being concerned with moral values. This satisfaction occurs, in a sense, in contact with nature because the house where she lives

and receives her lover is a big one situated in the woods. Like Addie Bundren in *As I Lay Dying*, Joanna Burden can also be considered to have a "shelter" in nature, where she searches for pleasure and happiness. Thus, Joanna challenges society's established values in many ways such as having a Negro lover who is involved with bootlegging, being against slavery, and so on. All these facts characterize her as a woman whose attitudes must be curtailed.

According to Gladstein, many of Faulkner's female characters follow certain aspects concerning the myth of the Negro in relation to sex. Following Calvin C. Hernton's idea in *Sex and Racism in America* (1965), "[the Negro] is endowed with irresistible sexual attraction and enjoys the sex act more than any creature on earth" (qtd. in Gladstein 21). In spite of not being a Negro, the fact that Joanna has a black lover makes society see her as a woman who cannot control her instincts or acts, a nymphomaniac, since, according to people's thoughts, she is a single woman who is not able to find a husband and have a "normal" sexual life, as society expects.

Joanna and Christmas' affair is strictly physical. Their relationship is characterized basically by sex. One cannot perceive moments of love or tenderness. It seems that between them there is only the attraction between male and female, as it happens among animals.

Christmas, being a Negro, is considered by the prejudiced society around him an inferior person in relation to white

people. In a sense, Joanna Burden, who accepts him as a lover, is also considered a kind of "Negro" in society's eyes because she permits herself to be in such a close contact with a Negro. Thus, like Negroes, Joanna becomes an inferior person because of her behavior.

Concluding, as it happens with Addie Bundren in *As I Lay Dying*, according to traditional archetypal analysis, Joanna Burden can be classified as a "sinner woman". Searching only for her self-satisfaction, Joanna does not follow established rules created by society and this is the reason why she becomes marginalized; her behavior calls attention because she is the one who does not live according to other people's principles, but only according to hers.

#### Lena Grove

Lena Grove is the female protagonist of the novel, and also the female archetype of the "naive girl" who is tricked by her lover and, like Dewey Dell in *As I Lay Dying*, is also pregnant. However, she is not in search of abortive drugs as Dewey Dell is; she wants to meet the father of her baby who has gone away, having promised her that he would come back as soon as possible. In spite of being pregnant and abandoned by her baby's father, Lena shows throughout the novel a strong desire to construct a family together with her lover. In contrast to what happens with

Dewey Dell, who wants to get rid of her baby, Lena wants to become a mother and a wife.

Glenn Meeter affirms, in "Male and Female in Light in August and The Hamlet: Faulkner's 'Mythical Method'" (1968), that many critics agree that Lena Grove is associated with the "earth-mother goddess, or with the female principle or, in Christian symbolism, with the virgin" (407) and, later, following this traditional archetypal thought, he observes that "Lena is maternal; she is pictured to us as pregnant and in childbirth, and with a child in her arms, but never as merely erotic" (411). In sharp contrast to Dewey Dell, there is no eroticism in relation to Lena's figure, and she is not described physically in the novel; instead, she is always referred to as pregnant and in search for her lover.

Lena had lived with her brother's family; she no longer had father or mother; she did all the housework and took care of her brother's children but her life was characterized by loneliness. To her mind, the fact that she was so much in contact with children contributed to her actual situation: "I reckon that's why I got one [child] so quick myself" (6). Lena was so lonely that if she disappeared suddenly, nobody would perceive her absence, and she may have been aware of that, since, according to the narrator's words: "[s]he could have departed by the door, by daylight. Nobody would have stopped her. Perhaps she knew that" (7).

The facts that she is pregnant, single, and that she is presented as having a very strong link with earth make us think of her also as an Earth-Mother figure. For Gladstein, the description of Lena Grove in *Light in August* suggests "her oneness with nature" (11). The link between Lena Grove and nature starts at the moment one analyzes her name--"Grove"--because it "invokes a sylvan imagery" (11), and becomes more evident "when he [Faulkner] describes the manner of her movements" (11), as in the following passage when Lena puts her feet in contact with earth:

Her shoes were a pair of his [her brother's] own which her brother had given to her. They were but slightly worn, since in the summer neither of them wore shoes at all. When she felt the dust of the road beneath her feet she removed the shoes and carried them in her hand. (7)

Lena Grove identifies herself so much with earth--here dust--that it seems that herself and earth are the same.

She believes in men and in her lover's loyalty; she tells Mrs. Armstid that "[h]e [her lover] had done got the word about how he might have to leave a long time before that. He just never told me sooner because he didn't want to worry me with it" (16). Lena was naive enough to believe that her lover loved her and was going to come back to her; moreover, she is convinced that he did not want to leave her: "[h]e never wanted to go, even then. But I said for him to. To just send me word when he was ready to come" (17). In addition, she thinks that their "love" was better than other people's, since she claims that their love did not need words nor promises between them (18). She dreams of being a good

wife and mother, hoping to find Lucas waiting for her "with house all furnished and all" (15); keeping her faith that a "family ought to be all together when a chap comes. Specially the first one" and, as she concludes: "the Lord will see that" (18).

Concluding, Lena Grove is the character in Light in August who represents the traditional archetype of the "naive girl". Her naivety is characterized basically by the fact that, in spite of being abandoned by her lover, she does not perceive the fact (or does not want to perceive it) and still believes that he loves her. She seems not to want to accept reality; she prefers to dream of being happy with the man who tricked her.

#### Martha Armstid

Like Cora Tull in As I Lay Dying, Martha Armstid is portrayed in Light in August as the archetype of the "dedicated wife". Besides being shown as a good woman and a good and responsible mother, she is very charitable to Lena, since she accepts the unknown pregnant young girl in her house and treats her well.

Physically, Martha is a "grey woman with a cold harsh, irascible face" (14); however, given her behavior in the novel, she is a calm and good-hearted person. She had five children and provided them with good education; all of them are adults now.

As was said above, Martha is a calm woman and her reactions in face of new facts are predictable, at least by her husband.

Her behavior is constant and this makes her husband feel very confident in relation to his wife. The narrator once says: "He [Armstid] does not need to look to know that she will be there, is there..." (14). In fact, besides confidence, this reveals a kind of dependence by Armstid in relation to his wife. Martha's dedication is the responsible for the maintenance of their marriage, since the responsibility of bringing up children and doing the housework--even those hard activities which should be performed by men such as cutting wood--are attributed to her. She is the one who takes care of the family; her husband does not help her with it. In a sense, she is what one may call "the family's father and mother", the self-sufficient woman who has learned not to need other people's help.

Concluding, a traditional archetypal analysis of these two novels shows that William Faulkner presents archetypes of the "sinner woman", the "naive girl", and the "dedicated wife" whose characterizations are constructed sometimes by action, sometimes by words. If one compares and contrasts the female characters presented in these works, one is able to conclude that the female archetypes are, as it were, repeated in both novels. Thus, one may find similarities between Addie Bundren and Joanna Burden; Dewey Dell and Lena Grove; and Cora Tull and Martha Armstid.

Concerning Addie Bundren and Joanna Burden, again in a traditional archetypal analysis, the two are portrayed as "sinner women" who give much more importance to their own instincts than to moral values. Thus, society condemns both of them because of

their aggressive sexual behavior: the one betrays her husband with the "sacred" figure of the pastor, while the other has a love affair with someone who is condemned by society because of his race.

Between Dewey Dell and Lena Grove, the similarities are even more evident since both are young, pregnant, single and characterized as "naive and destitute" girls. However, they differ in the sense that the first has a family and wants to get rid of her unborn child; on the other hand, Lena Grove is more romantic than Dewey Dell because she dreams of having her own house with husband and children. Besides, Dewey Dell is described in an erotic way; in MacGowan's view: "She looked pretty good. One of them black-eyed ones that look like she'd as soon put a knife on you as not if you two-timed her. She looked pretty good" (192). On the other hand, Lena Grove is presented in a very respectable manner; nobody judges her for being pregnant and single. Throughout the novel, she is seen as a mother in search for her husband and no man demonstrates sexual interest in her.

Finally, between Cora Tull and Martha Armstid there are also a number of similarities such as: the fact that both are portrayed as "dedicated wives". Cora and Martha are women whose husbands depend on them. The two, however, are flat characters since their behavior does not change: they are the same good wives and mothers from the beginning to the end of their respective novels. Cora Tull, however, is presented as a



religious woman, while in Martha's case the narrator emphasizes her laborious life.

Thus, a traditional archetypal analysis of *As I Lay Dying* and *Light in August* reveals that women in literature appear as archetypes who are quite easily identifiable. Readers may read pieces of literature such as the two novels analyzed here and recognizes in their plots "examples" of real women. However, if on the one hand the presence of female archetypes for some people can contribute to the verisimilitude of the literary text, on the other, the image of real women can become limited to those archetypes presented in literature. Then, for some people, women's behavior should be analyzed as trying to fit into the known archetypes and, consequently, society in general would label women according to the established archetypes. Nevertheless, as we shall see in the next chapter, the traditional archetypal view may contribute to calling society's attention to the way women are seen both in fiction and in reality and be the "first step" to change people's distorted view in relation to women and their role in society.

## CHAPTER IV

### FEMINIST ARCHETYPAL ANALYSIS OF AS I LAY DYING AND LIGHT IN AUGUST

The theoretical considerations advanced in Chapter II--Feminist Archetypal Criticism--show that the importance of traditional archetypal criticism lies greatly on the fact that, by departing from traditional views, it is possible to revise the interpretation of old myths that appear in literature. Such revision can be made by analyzing a given piece of literature and interpreting the archetypes presented in it, according to a theory different from the traditional one. For Lauter and Rupprecht "archetype is a feminist tool" and, therefore, it can be used as a starting point for those who want to challenge readings which see female characters, in a certain way, "frozen" in literary works.

Taking Lauter and Rupprecht's idea, in this chapter I revise the traditional archetypal analyses presented in Chapter III. The archetypes of women, namely, the "sinner woman", the "naive girl", and the "dedicated wife", will not be considered as mere archetypes, which, too often, bring to one's mind distorted ideas about women's experience. Instead, the purpose of the present chapter is to analyze the female characters presented in As I Lay Dying and in Light in August as active, responsible individuals. To achieve this purpose, this chapter follows the

same organizational principle found in Chapter III: firstly, it presents the analyses of the female characters in *As I Lay Dying* and secondly, the female characters in *Light in August* followed by their analyses.

### As I Lay Dying

#### Addie Bundren

As argued in Chapter III, Addie was condemned to be called a "sinner woman" because she betrayed her husband with the pastor, Whitfield. However, analyzing Addie's life and starting the analysis from her marriage to Anse, it becomes clear that she never really loved him, and that not even his physical appearance was pleasant to her, so much so that she asked him the first time they met: "[w]hy in the world don't they make you get your hair cut"; and she added "[a]nd make you hold your shoulders up" (135). Obviously, she did not care for him, but her loneliness made her accept him. Another factor that influenced Addie to get married to Anse was that the male-centered society in which Addie lived expected that all women should marry and have a family in order to be respected. Society's moral pressure and the lonely life Addie had, without parents and relatives, made of her a desperate woman whose only chance for change was Anse.

Nevertheless, she failed because Anse was not what he seemed to be, and she discovered after some time of married life that

Anse was nothing to her because, before marrying him, Addie expected to find in Anse a sweet man who would give her love and attention. Her attempt to fight the loneliness that she felt while she was single was not successful; on the contrary, after marrying, she felt that she was worse than before, as she herself concludes: "I knew that it had been, not that my aloneness had been violated until Cash came. Not even by Anse, in the nights" (136). Anse was not able to make her feel happy or to perceive that she needed love and not only sex. Addie, as she herself stated, only conquered the violation of her loneliness when Cash, her oldest son, was born. When she discovered that she was pregnant with Cash, she thought:

When I knew that I had Cash, I knew that living was terrible and that this was the answer to it. That was when I learned that words are no good; that words don't fit even what they are trying to say at. When he was born I knew that motherhood was invented by someone who had to have a word for it because the ones that had the children didn't care whether there is a word for it or not. (136)

Addie seems a very practical woman since, according to her statement, what is important is not how one decides to call a certain thing, but the thing or the fact in itself. Moreover, only experience is able to show us the significance of a fact. What Anse and everyone else had talked to her about is not enough to describe the real sensation of experimenting a fact. This divergence between words and facts, ultimately, is responsible for Addie's failure in marriage. The love that Anse promised did not correspond to the love he demonstrated to her; she was expecting something positive and the reality did not fit

her expectations. In spite of accusing Anse of being a person concerned only with words, there is a moment in which Addie recognizes that Anse is one more "victim" of a society that considers what is said more important than what is done. There is a passage in the novel in which Addie admits herself as having been tricked by words for a long time. Thus, one may conclude that those words which Addie refers to are used by people in general and not only by Anse:

He [Anse] had a word too. Love he called it. But I had been used to words for a long time. I knew that word was like the others: just a shape to fill a lack; that when the right time came, you wouldn't need a word for that any more than for pride or fear. (136)

In this passage, Addie is criticizing Anse and, at the same time, is being very critical of people who label women and other people according to the male-centered thought by which society is influenced.

Besides, one may perceive that there is a great difference between the birth of Anse's children and the birth of Jewel, in relation to Addie's feelings, since Addie demonstrates frustration when Cash and Darl were born, while in Jewel's case she declares to have found one more reason for living. When Jewel is born, Addie feels better prepared to face life than she felt before her affair with Whitfield. To demonstrate Jewel's importance in her life, it is worth quoting her words after the moment she gives birth to Jewel; since she feels better prepared to live, she declares, contradicting her father, that "the reason

for living is not just to get ready to stay dead for a long time" (139).

When referring to her affair with pastor Whitfield, Addie analyzes her situation making a comparison and, at the same time, responding to a possible critique from society, clarifying how she understands the word "sin":

I would think of sin as I would think of the clothes we both wore in the world's face, of the circumspection necessary because he was he and I was I; (...) while I waited for him in the woods, waiting for him before he saw me, I would think of me dressed also in sin, he the more beautiful since the garment which he used was sanctified. (138)

To Addie's mind, that garment was sanctified because through that sin she knew what she was looking for: love, tenderness, words that Anse used and that do not have any real meaning for her since in practice, Addie does not know them. With Whitfield, those words that Addie heard from Anse become acts, and these acts could not be put in words, because they became actual experience, and Addie feels that she is right when she says that those words were "just sounds that people who never sinned, nor loved, nor feared have for what they never had and cannot have until they forget the words" (138). After her experience with Whitfield, Addie refuses Anse, since, according to her, his time "was up" : "I did not lie to him [Anse]: I just refused, just as I refused my breast to Cash and Darl after their time was up" (139).

Then, from her moment of joy with Whitfield, Addie gets her "precious jewel", her son Jewel, who saves her dead body inside

the coffin from the water of the river and from the fire of the ranch during their journey to Jefferson, as Addie herself foresees and comments with Cora: "He is my cross and he will be my salvation. He will save me from the water and from the fire. Even though I have laid down my life, he will save me" (133). According to Addie's words, her house [life] was dirty--Anse had maculated it; however, after knowing Whitfield and having Jewel, she feels that:

A man cannot know anything about cleaning up the house afterward. And so I have cleaned my house. With Jewel-- (...)--the wild blood boiled away and calm, and I laying calm in the slow silence getting ready to clean my house. (139)

Addie demonstrates great courage to face the "world", the society in which she lived. The fact that she fights for her happiness running the risk of being discovered and being labeled adulteress is an attitude of determination and, at the same time, of despair. Addie's despair comes from the fact that she was, in practice, living without knowing some things that people talked so much about, such as love. When Addie figures out that Anse would never give her what she needs, she decides to look for another way to be happy, i.e., a man who would love her as Anse would never do.

However, even though Faulkner presents a woman who is able to face the rules of a male-centered world, Addie is not free of man's power. Whitfield uses Addie to satisfy his instincts, besides being a hypocrite in relation to his religious "conviction". Moreover, there is an ironical fact in the story

concerning Addie's attempt to get rid of Anse's false words; she involves herself with another man "of words" whose behavior Vernon Tull observes during Addie's funeral: "his [Whitfield's] voice is bigger than him. It's like they are not the same. It's like he is one, and his voice one" (73). Besides, Whitfield is not responsible for his acts; he is not sincere even in relation to his Christian faith. When Addie is dying and he goes to see her, he decides or pretends to decide to tell everything about their affair to Anse but ends up choosing the easiest way for himself: as Addie is already dead, he decides not to tell anything. Thus, Faulkner presents a female character who, in spite of being courageous enough to fight for her happiness and for the improvement of her way of living, is pursued by male-centered rules which guide society. Therefore, Addie can be a clear example of a female victim of male repression and, at the same time, a female hero who struggles for the right to be happy and who does not just accept life as it is.

#### Dewey Dell

It is possible to perceive Dewey Dell as something other than the naive girl, as classified according to traditional archetypal analysis. She is seventeen, she is tricked by her lover, she is destitute and alone, but she also knows exactly what she wants. She has a purpose in her life--to have an abortion--and she fights for it.



Dewey Dell is alone, as she herself says, but she learns through her loneliness to think and to act by herself; she is determined and she knows what she wants and how to get it, i.e., to have an abortion through the drugs she would get in Jefferson. In spite of being desperate with her situation (being pregnant, so young and single), she acts calmly, as is clear in the following passage: "Dewey Dell carries the basket on one arm, in the other hand something wrapped square in a newspaper. Her face is calm and sullen, her eyes brooding and alert" (81); thus, because of her calm face, people would not suspect what was going on with her; at the same time, she is alert, i.e., she is prepared to react if someone asks her what is happening.

Dewey Dell, like her mother, does not like words; she is a very practical girl, so practical that she does not pronounce the word pregnancy to the druggist. She does not want to put facts in words because, thus, she would keep her plight to herself. Her pregnancy would be a fact of her own world and it would not become public and "real". Then, she does not allow the druggist to know that she is pregnant, she simply says that she is in trouble.

Likewise, Dewey Dell avoids reality when she dreams of Darl and finds a way to keep her secret. It has become axiomatic in Freudian psychology that we tend to enact in our dreams what we would like to do in our everyday life. Thus, Dewey Dell kills her brother with a knife in one of her dreams because he knows about her affair with Lufe and also about her pregnancy. To Dewey

Dell's mind, if Dari does not exist, only she herself would know her secret and it would be easier to solve her problem. Dari is someone outside her "world" who knows everything about her; he is a threat against her secret, and, through her dream, she finds a way to be free of him.

Concerning Dewey Dell's search for abortive drugs, it is clear that all men who talk to her, and from whom she expects to get some help, could care less about her condition. None of them is concerned with Dewey Dell's feelings; they treat her as an object, as an animal that has copulated and now has to face the consequences. Dewey Dell's psychological state does not matter for them; she has "made a mistake" and now the problem is hers. Dewey Dell is treated without any sensitiveness, without receiving any kind of orientation; in spite of the fact that they do not want to sell her the drugs that she needs, she, as a human being, deserves to be well treated. Generally, society judges people without knowing what has really happened; if a young girl is single and pregnant, she is automatically considered a whore unless she gets married, and then everything will be all right.

There is an ironic aspect in Dewey Dell's life that is similar to one found in her mother's. Dewey Dell searches for love, for a lover in order not to be alone anymore; however, she becomes more isolated than before. Like Addie, she is also tricked by words said by the man she loved, or thought that she loved. Words, for both mother and daughter, do not work; to their minds, what is important and what can really have a meaning is

experience, as Dewey Dell thought in regard to being pregnant and to the sensation of not being alone anymore:

I listen to it saying for a long time before it can say the word and the listening part is afraid that there may not be time to say it. I feel my body, my bones and flesh beginning to part and open upon the alone, and the process of coming unalone is terrible. (51-2)

Dewey Dell, like Addie, is another victim of a male-constructed society; she is betrayed by Lefe, by the druggist who seduces her, by Dr. Peabody who does not help her, and, finally, by her father, Anse, who takes all the money she received from Lefe, to buy new teeth.

#### Cora Tull

Cora Tull is classified in Chapter III as the archetype of the "dedicated wife", a religious woman who spends her life with her family and tries to help other people. However, according to her behavior and words throughout the book, one can perceive that she is not so helpful as she seems to be. She is self-centered; in other words, her helpfulness is to herself, as it were, since she thinks that this way she will secure Heaven as a reward for her good behavior. Based on her words about suffering and salvation, one may say that, to Cora's mind, people should not want happiness because, if someone is suffering, it is because that person has sinned and needs to suffer in order to get salvation. If a person fights to be happy and to get rid of a bad situation, probably this individual will not be saved, since he

or she did not suffer. In this sense, suffering would be the only way to salvation.

Cora's obsession with being saved and her extreme preoccupation with religion do not allow her to show any kind of satisfaction, nor love, nor tenderness toward her family; it seems that she only accepts and likes them because it is the wish of God. For her, children are not the result of a moment of love or of pleasure; they are just a consequence of marriage, a sacred union, and she "loves" them because it is her function, and because God has sent them to her.

Once Cora refers to her life as an open book, implying that she does not have any sin to show; she talks as if her life were an example to be followed by everyone; however, there are no extreme experiences, no emotion to be shown. The book of her life is a book without leaves, a book with just the cover, a book which nobody who needs could look for because there is no real life inside it. She talks, however, as if the book of her life were a Bible, a book to be followed by everybody.

Concerning Addie, Cora believes that there is sin in Addie's heart, but she is not able to feel that Addie is unhappy with her situation and that the life she has lived is the cause of her "sin". Cora's helpfulness is not really aimed at Addie; it is a way to go ahead with her purpose of securing her own salvation, pretending to be a good friend. In addition, Cora considers herself superior to other people and thinks that she has the right to judge their sins; according to her, she has never needed

so much to pray for herself as she has for Addie: "I pray for that poor blind woman as I had never prayed for me and mine" (133). Cora, who pretends to be so charitable and to follow God's words, acts against what she herself claims in the name of her God.

"Living" this way, Cora does not have emotions; she does not live a life of her own, and she wants just to follow what God "said", all according to her mistaken understanding. She is overly concerned with repeating God's words. However, she draws on His words in praise of herself, as she does when she says that she has no sins. Cora is portrayed as a person without suffering; there is no conflict in the novel concerning Cora.

Cora is not really concerned with doing good to people, but with talking about good, and frequently about her own good. This makes her a woman of "words", a woman whose life was based on words, a woman who does not enjoy life and who is a slave of words which she herself cannot understand at all. Her exaggerated religiosity makes her, as it were, a caricature, someone who is almost unreal, given her context; hence, Addie comments about her: "...Cora, who could never even cook" (138). Addie uses a very practical procedure--cooking--to ridicule Cora's way of living; to Addie's mind, if Cora could not even cook, she would not be able to enjoy life, to gather experience and, consequently, to understand people's conflicts.

Thus, the figure of the "dedicated wife" represented by Cora and so respected by people in general can bring up some

considerations about Cora as an individual. In *As I Lay Dying*, Cora is the only character who does not wish the immediate satisfaction of her needs. She wishes a place in Heaven after death and, to conquer it, she abdicates some pleasures that life on Earth may give her.

Being portrayed as such a moralist woman, Cora, the "dedicated wife", can be seen as a symbol of society's oppression of women. Society's rules dictate that a woman must be married and respect her husband and family; it does not matter if she is satisfied with her life or not. What probably happens to Cora is that she does not have courage to change and face society as Addie and Dewey Dell do. Thus, being afraid of society's judgement, she concentrates her hopes in the safety of religion, a patriarchal institution respected by people in general.

### Light in August

Joanna Burden

As was possible to perceive in chapter III, Joanna Burden, besides being the archetype of the "sinner woman" in *Light in August*, is a character used by Faulkner to expose the prejudices of society. In a single character, Faulkner concentrates various forms of prejudice, namely, prejudice against outsiders, prejudice against spinsters, prejudice against women who keep a lover outside wedlock and, indirectly, prejudice against Negroes.

Joanna Burden's life is controlled by many people in the city; Byron once makes a commentary about her in which one can see the prejudice not only against Negroes but also against people who like them and try to be different from the majority of people who neglect blacks:

They say she is still mixed up with niggers. Visits them when they are sick, like they was white. Won't have a cook because it would have to be a nigger cook. Folks say she claims that niggers are the same as white folks. That's why folks dont never go there. (42)

Joanna has challenged a whole society's way of thinking and, because of this, she is marginalized; nobody likes her and nobody wants to be near her. It is in these facts that her importance as a female character lies.

People in general think that she, as a woman, should be married, should have a husband and a family. They cannot accept that she is single, lives alone and has a nigger lover. Joanna breaks the rules created by a male-minded society to guide people's life and this attitude generates society's "fury" against her. In fact, the patriarchy fears that other women might follow Joanna's example, in a way that might endanger society's control over individuals.

In addition to all this "disobedience" of established rules, Joanna also puts herself on the side of Negroes. In a sense, she, too, is minority, and she tries to join the Negroes in order to change her situation as well as theirs; Joanna fights to banish racial prejudice together with gender prejudice.

Acting like this, the "sinner woman" of the novel becomes a symbol of feminine strength. She fights not only for her own satisfaction but also for a much more universal cause: against racial prejudice. Joanna's behavior in relation to Negroes fits Sharon Spencer's idea in "Feminist Criticism and Literature" when Spencer states that the exposure of female stereotypes in literature should serve mainly to destroy the patriarchal view and generate a new way of seeing the world (158). Thus, Joanna's presence in *Light in August* is valuable also to demonstrate her strong personality which does not permit that other people's way of thinking influence her life style. She has her own convictions and nobody would change them. Besides, the fact that she places herself in favor of Negroes and against the prejudice they suffer from white people reflects her courage to challenge a prejudiced and male-controlled society which considers Negroes different and which resists being challenged by a woman.

#### Lena Grove

On the surface, Lena Grove is a naive girl, to be sure. She trusts people's words, and she is not an accommodated person. She lived with her brother's family, and she felt that she was not welcome there, except as a kind of maid. Then she decides to go away from home; in a sense it is very good for her to be pregnant and to believe in Lucas' words because this gives her courage to leave home. She was a kind of prisoner there, and she would not



be able to discover the outside world if she stayed there waiting for her baby's father. In the beginning of her journey she thinks "I am (...) further from home than I have ever been before" (5); this, of course, not only in relation to the physical space, but also in terms of the freedom that she was starting to conquer.

Besides, she demonstrates to be very determined because when she perceives that Lucas does not send her any news, she decides not to wait for him anymore; she just leaves home and starts looking for him. Finding him would mean for her the solution to the problems she was facing, i.e., she would have a father to her baby, she would have a place to live and also she would be free of other people's judgement. She comments about the fact that Lucas was not there with her trying to justify his attitude on leaving her: "...why he---we decided to make a change for money and excitement" (21). This may indicate that, deep down, she knows that he is not being loyal in relation to her; however, she needed to believe or to pretend to believe in his word in order to go ahead with her purpose of knowing the outside world and of being free from the life she was leading at her brother's house. At the end of the novel, Mr. Bunch comments about Lena's attitude of looking for Lucas:

I think she was just travelling. I don't think she had any purpose of finding whoever it was she was following. I don't think she had ever aimed to, only she hadn't told him yet. I reckon this was the first time she had ever been further away from home than she could walk back before sundown in her life. And that she had got along all right this far, with folks taking good care of her. And so I think that she had just made up her mind to travel a little further and see as much as she could, since I reckon she knew that when she

settled down this time, it would likely be for the rest of her life. (380)

Taking Mr. Bunch's point of view concerning Lena, it is possible to state that Lena was not only looking for her lover; in fact, she was looking for herself. Considering that she was a kind of maid in her brother's house and did not know anything about the outside world, she put in her mind that she should look for her lover and this would be a reason for her to leave the life she was having. Her pregnancy and the fact that her lover had gone away were her motivation, the starting point for her to become a new woman or to pass from childhood to adulthood; her pregnancy was her motivation to "move", i.e., to change both internally (psychologically) and externally (in space).

Thus, in spite of being portrayed as a "naive girl" who is pregnant and abandoned by her lover, Lena Grove demonstrates a desire to change. Her strength as a woman who--although young, alone, pregnant, without money, and inexperienced in relation to life--finds energy to leave home and to search for her own happiness challenges the traditional interpretation of her character as a "naive girl". Her attitude in face of her problem does not correspond to the idea that people in general have in relation to a girl who is said to be naive. In addition, Mr. Bunch's commentary, quoted above, about Lena, brings up the suspicion that much more than looking for her baby's father, Lena's purpose is to meet different people and to discover how life is outside her brother's place.

## Martha Armstid

In spite of being so dedicated and charitable to Lena, Martha Armstid is presented as an unhappy woman. Her conformism with the life she has been leading, in a sense, annuls her as an individual. Martha is a woman who does not have a life of her own; she lives for her family and she forgets to pay attention to herself. Whatever feminine manners she may have had were lost after marriage because of hard work and disappointment in relation to her husband; as the narrator says: "Mrs Armstid at the stove clashes the metal lids and handles the sticks of wood with the abrupt savageness of a man" (15).

Martha's disappointment with marriage can be perceived when Lena tries to help her and she refuses the girl's help saying, "I been doing this three times a day for thirty years now. The time when I needed help with it is done passed" (15). Perhaps, when she got married, Martha had in mind all those dreams that women used to have--and many still do--in relation to love and men, hoping to have a "marvelous life"; probably, the kindness that Mr. Armstid used to demonstrate to Martha was over after marriage. Locked in marriage, Martha Armstid is one more character who tries to be free of loneliness and of society's prejudice against women who are single and do not have a family. Martha fails since what seemed to be a happier life than the one she had before marrying becomes an even worse one.

The archetype of the "dedicated wife" presented through Martha Armstid can be seen as an alienated representation of what people expect that a married woman must be. Society expects so much that a woman marries and lives for her husband and family that many times the woman becomes a maid, or a slave, as in Martha's case. Like Cora Tull in *As I Lay Dying*, Martha is a symbol of oppression; society's expectations toward women do not allow Martha to live independently and to fight for her self-satisfaction without being judged by other people. Thus, Martha ends up choosing the easiest way, accommodating herself to a situation which is too often the only choice that society presents to those women who want to be respected.

Concluding, by revising the female archetypes presented in the two novels, one may verify that such archetypes are not mere devices which are there just to show that the same kinds of women who exist in real life are also present in literature; in other words, they function not only to contribute to the verisimilitude of the literary texts. Duly revised, their function in literary works such as the two analyzed in this research can be read as to demonstrate that interpretations are changing and that it is possible to recognize female characters who start to conquer their places, by challenging established principles created by a male-centered society to control a community which is not only formed by male individuals, but also by women who are able to make a definitive contribution to society.

## CONCLUSION

After studying traditional archetypal and revisionist feminist-archetypal theories and applying them in the analysis of female characters portrayed in William Faulkner's *As Lay Dying* and *Light in August*, I wish to present my concluding remarks. It is important to observe that throughout this work I have intended to argue and demonstrate through examples of passages drawn from the novels that women are often victims of a society largely ruled by males. Once made aware of this fact, women can fight against oppressive male rule--and often even against themselves--to change their situation and to have a better society to live in.

In Chapter I--Traditional Archetypal Criticism--I have pointed out some aspects concerning myth and the presence of myth in literature. One of the arguments that I have used to defend the importance of studying the presence of myths in a literary text is that, according to Carl Gustav Jung, myths express an individual's unconsciousness. Consequently, applied to literature, myth criticism can be a reliable tool to analyze hidden psychological and even sociological aspects of the author's way of thinking as well as of the society in which the author lives. As is well known, one of the problems that one can investigate in a text is the various ways by which a writer

portrays females. Faulkner in As I Lay Dying and Light in August can be seen as using traditional female archetypes which, when identified, reveal a much too simplistic, prejudiced view of women. However, one cannot blame only the author for this narrow-minded point of view concerning females because, to a great extent, an author's way of thinking is determined by a whole society. Thus, if one perceives that there is prejudice against women in Faulkner's works, it is important to consider that it is the society's way of thinking that is being exposed in the literary work and not just the author's. In addition, one should bear in mind that, if there is prejudice in the way Faulkner portrays his female characters, once the prejudice is identified and exposed, it can become a starting point in an attempt to divulge how women are seen by society.

In Chapter II--Feminist Archetypal Criticism--I have tried to illustrate how some feminist critics indeed consider traditional archetypal criticism as a starting point for their analysis. Traditional archetypal theory is important for these feminist critics because it has myth as the basis for its analysis. Since myth is seen as the representation of a whole society's way of thinking, these feminist critics can analyze the myths related to the presence of female characters in literature or in art in general and come to conclusions concerning women and society. Then, after studying the representation of female condition in literature, these feminist critics are in a position to attempt to change women's situation in literary texts as well

as in real life, by revising and reversing the myths.

In Chapter III--Traditional Archetypal Analysis of *As I Lay Dying* and *Light in August*--, after analyzing the female characters that appear in Faulkner's two novels and classifying them according to three female archetypes--"the sinner woman", the "naive girl", and the "dedicated wife"--, I have verified that, to a certain extent, the archetypes that appear in literature are "examples" of "real women". Besides the implications of the collective unconscious, the archetypes that one finds in literature seem familiar because it is easy to find in real life women whose behavior fit into those models. In fact, one may say that Faulkner's female characters appear as the three archetypes mentioned above because, according to Jung's theory of the "collective unconscious", the archetypes or the models for those women are represented in real life, i. e., are present in Faulkner's society. In a sense, the presence of such archetypes provides the text with verisimilitude because the reader finds in it "examples" of "real women". The very presence of archetypes, however, can contribute to limiting readers' views of women, since readers may tend to label real women according to the models they find in their reductionistic interpretations of literature. Yet, all in all, archetypes, once placed in the right perspective, can become an opportunity for awareness and change, since by facing and thinking about the prejudice that exists behind the archetypes presented in literature, readers can "wake up" to women's situation.

In Chapter IV--Feminist Archetypal Analysis of As I Lay Dying and Light in August--there is a confirmation that those archetypes that appear in literature are not there just to reinforce the verisimilitude of the literary text or to produce empathy between reader and character. Duly revised, archetypes can be the first step for women to conquer their places since, to revise them, feminist critics need to study the myths and, knowing the myths, they can know people's way of thinking. Female archetypes such as those that appear in Faulkner's works analyzed here, when revised, show many times that women are an active part of society, and that they can construct the world side by side with--not behind--men.

Faulkner, in spite of using archetypes of women in both novels analyzed in this work, does not present female characters concerned only with being a good wife and houseworker. Except for Martha Armstid, all characters demonstrate the desire to satisfy their own, intimate needs: Addie wants to know love and change her life; Dewey Dell wants an abortion; Cora Tull wants a place in Heaven; Joanna Burden wants to defend the Negro; and Lena Grove wants a family for her unborn child. This search for things other than housework is, in a sense, a hint that, among other literary pieces, As I Lay Dying and Light in August do present women who are different from those whose only concern is their households. The female characters presented in the novels analyzed in my dissertation indicate that women are concerned with themselves as individuals and not only with their families.



Classifying Addie Bundren and Joanna Burden as archetypes of the "sinner woman" in *As I Lay Dying* and *Light in August*, respectively, does not suffice to demonstrate their importance as female characters. As I have demonstrated in Chapter IV, Addie's and Joanna's behavior can be seen as the beginning of a fight to conquer their place in society; thus, these characters cannot be considered mere archetypes of sinner women. They are more than that; their behavior, in spite of being disapproved of by society in general, can be seen as an attempt to conquer a position which belongs to them and which is equal to men's. They try to change a situation which is not satisfactory for them, without much concern for the opinion of other people.

Looking closely at female characters in the two novels, I have verified that, according to the traditional view, the archetypes found in *As I Lay Dying* are repeated in *Light in August*. However, once analyzed in the light of the revisionist perspective, the female archetypes in *Light in August* present a kind of "development" in terms of self-confidence and courage to face the world, in relation to the female characters in *As I Lay Dying*. In *As I Lay Dying*, characters such as Addie Bundren and Dewey Dell isolate themselves in order to try to solve their problems, and Cora Tull, who is not satisfied with her life as a mother and wife, concentrates her hopes on the life she expects to have after death. On the other hand, in *Light in August*, except for Martha Armstid, female characters are portrayed as more courageous and self-confident. Joanna Burden faces the world

to defend her right to act according to her own will; she shows herself as she is, without being afraid of society's prejudice; likewise, Lena Grove does not isolate herself; differently from Dewey Dell, she tells people what is going on, and, as a consequence, besides being accepted, she also obtains people's help and friendship.

Addie Bundren isolates herself from the outside world to protest against the life she was leading. Faulkner portrays her as an introspective woman whose inner (and also outer) life nobody knows, not even her husband. Addie keeps her feelings, ideas and, mainly, her sin with her. Joanna Burden, on the other hand, in a novel published two years later, seems a "new version" of Addie Bundren. Addie has a pastor, a "sacred figure", as her lover, while Joanna has a "Negro"--who is marginalized. Besides, Joanna's family has been involved with Negroes' fight against prejudice, a public cause which demonstrates her family's courage to face the world; in fact, she, herself, becomes a kind of "leader" of the Black community. Joanna's cause is universal--Racism--while Addie's is individual--self-realization. Joanna faces her own condition as an unmarried woman while Addie is not able to separate from Anse. In the eyes of their society, both are "sinner women", but Addie isolates herself for her "sins" while Joanna acts explicitly and is condemned by society.

With Dewey Dell and Lena Grove, as we have seen, there is also a progression in the sense that while Dewey Dell sees the problem--pregnancy--as being only hers and tries to solve it

without her lover's sentimental help, Lena Grove tries to find her lover to accept her baby's paternity and to share responsibilities with her. Dewey Dell, like her mother, Addie, keeps a secret and is afraid of other people's judgement; thus, nobody, except Darl and Lefe, knows that she is pregnant. In Lena's case, everybody she meets knows that she is going to have a baby and that she is in search of her husband. Lena is aware that if she tells people that she has a husband, everybody will accept her.

The development in relation to Dewey Dell and Lena Grove goes beyond the fact that the first one wants to get rid of a problem--abortion--while the second faces the problem. As I have already said, like her mother, Dewey Dell isolates herself and is isolated from the world as if she were not part of it. Lena Grove, on the other hand, is accepted and adopted by people as a part of the world in which people live. In the beginning of their respective novels, Dewey Dell has a family and Lena Grove is alone. In the end of the novels, however, their situations are inverted. Dewey Dell knows her parents and brothers but her strongest feeling is loneliness, since her experience within her family is not a positive one. Dewey Dell's failure appears in the end of the novel when she is presented alone and still pregnant. Lena, on the other hand, does not have parents, dreams of having a family and succeeds. The friends she makes during her journey become her "family" and she finds a man whom she marries. Thus, the development happens in the sense that while Dewey Dell is

closed to the world and centered in her "self" Lena Grove opens up to the world and acts as an individual who is part of it.

As to the presence of Cora Tull and Martha Armstid in the novels analyzed in my work, it is possible to verify that in spite of the fact that both are considered "dedicated wives", Cora Tull is much more concerned with religion than with being a good wife. Everything that Cora does, including being a good and dedicated wife, has as its aim the securing of a "place in Heaven" after death. Martha Armstid, the only character whose performance in *Light in August* does not transcend the level of the traditional archetype, is the one whose life seems already ended and who can be seen as a character who goes backwards in the process of women's liberation. She dedicates her entire life to housework and, contrary to all the other female characters analyzed here, seems not to have any kind of hope. Martha Armstid's life is centered only in her house and family. She, as a houseworker, demonstrates conformism with her life, since her five children have grown up and she has been a good wife and mother. Thus, she seems to be already dead, in a sense, because there are no more hopes or purposes for her. Cora Tull, in spite of being a "dedicated wife" and a caricature because of her exaggerated faith, has found something outside home--religion--to think about. Faulkner destroys the image of the woman as just a houseworker, demonstrating in Martha Armstid that when there is no other purpose in life, life ends. Women, thus, should have other purposes and interests besides those concerning housework,

children and husband; they need to think of themselves as active, professional individuals of a community.

Finally, considering the analysis of female characters made here, it is possible to conclude that there is a reversal in the ways that traditional archetypal and feminist archetypal theories interpret female characters in literature. When the analysis is done based on the first approach, female characters seem to be "static", and their images can serve as models, or labels which are detrimental to women in real life. Feminist revisionist theory, however, sees female characters as restless, active individuals most of whom grow and become able to contribute to the improvement of society as a whole.

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