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**Exploring Objectivity and Subjectivity in
William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* (1930)
through The Analysis of Multiple
Narration and Stream of Consciousness**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Master Degree in Literature and Civilization

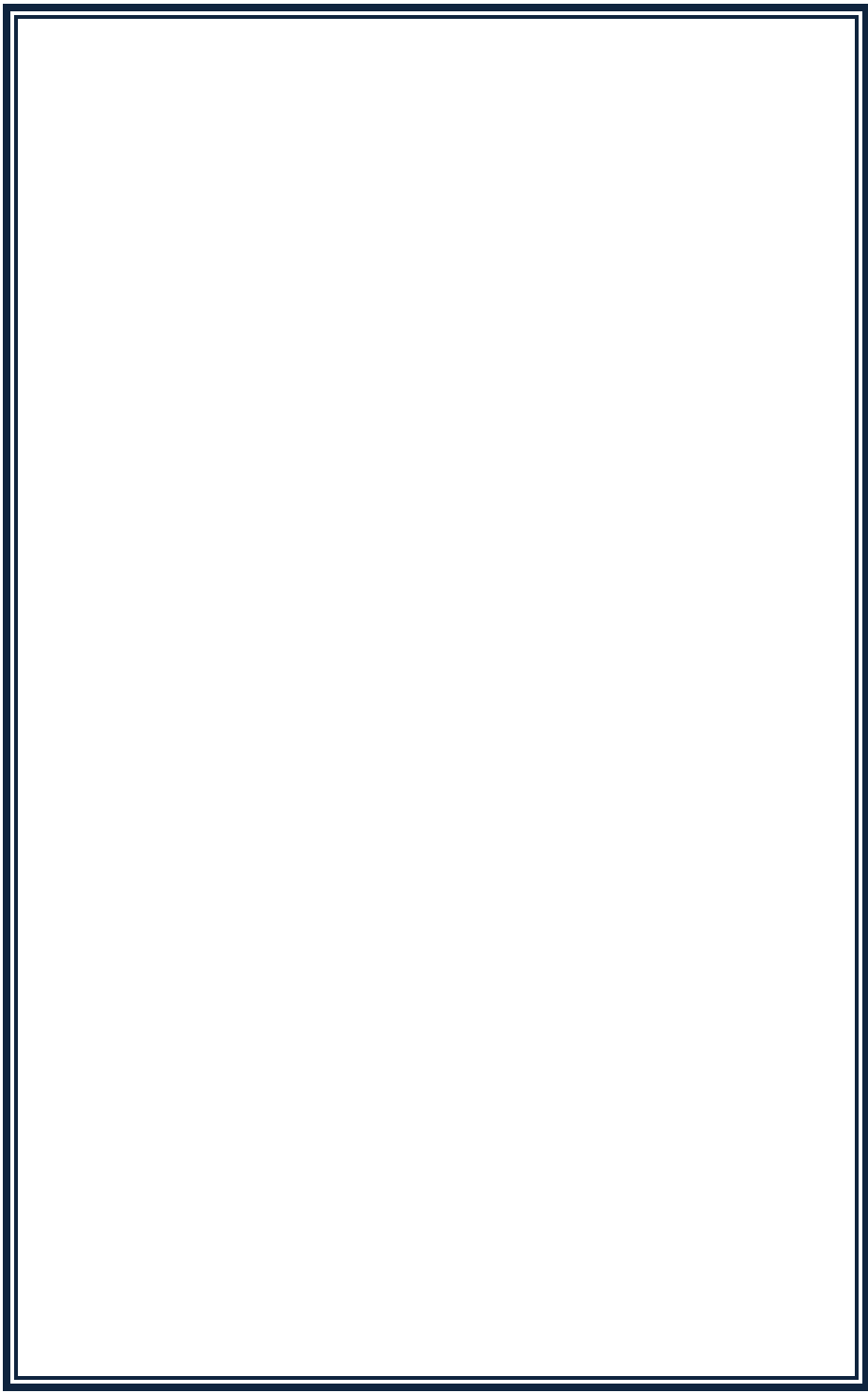
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Dedication

To my mother.

Acknowledgements

I thank Allah the Almighty for providing me with the adequate strength and will to study all along my academic career.

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Abstract

William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* (1930) is a Modernist novel which is characterized by the use of several narrative voices that tell the events of the story. It is also characterized by the use of stream-of-consciousness writing style to depict the character's minds at work, the fact which raises the question of whether *As I Lay Dying* is considered objective or subjective, or perhaps both. Based on research on the notions of objectivity and subjectivity on a hand, and the literary techniques used in *As I Lay Dying* on the other hand, this dissertation will explore the passages and sentences where objectivity and subjectivity take a place in the novel. In order to achieve this purpose, the Qualitative Approach is relevant. In order to fulfill the aim of this dissertation which is exploring and contrasting Objectivity and Subjectivity in *As I Lay Dying* through the analysis of the elements and techniques used in the novel, the Exploratory and Analytical methods will be used to explore and analyze terms like Objectivity and Subjectivity.

Résumé

Tandis que j'agonise (1930) de l'écrivain William Faulkner est un roman moderniste caractérisé par l'utilisation de multiples voix narratives qui racontent les événements de l'histoire à côté de l'utilisation de la technique du courant de conscience dans l'écriture pour décrire l'esprit des caractères au cours de travail, la question qui se pose sur l'objectivité ou bien la subjectivité de cet roman, ou alors si le roman est objectif et subjectif en même temps. Basé sur la recherche de ces notions d'objectivité et de subjectivité d'une part, et la recherche des techniques littéraires utilisées dans le roman d'autre part, cette dissertation va explorer des passages et des phrases où l'objectivité et la subjectivité prendront une place dans le roman. Pour que cela se réalise, l'approche qualitative aura une relation avec cette recherche, et pour réaliser le but de cette dissertation qui est l'exploration et le contraste de l'objectivité et la subjectivité dans le roman *Tandis que j'agonise* par William Faulkner à travers l'analyse des éléments et des techniques utilisés dans le roman, les méthodes exploratoire et analytique seront utilisées pour explorer et analyser des termes comme objectivité et subjectivité.

ملخص

كأي عمل أدبيّ حديثي، رواية بينما أرقده محتضرة للكاتب ويليام فوكنر تتميز بتعدد الأصوات السردية التي تحكي وقائع القصة إلى جانب استخدام تقنية تيار الوعي في الكتابة لوصف عقول الشخصيات أثناء العمل. الأمر الذي يطرح تساؤلا حول موضوعية أو ذاتية الرواية، أو ما إذا كانت الرواية موضوعية و ذاتية في آن واحد. بناءً على البحث عن مفهوم الموضوعية و الذاتية من جهة، و البحث حول التقنيات الأدبية المستخدمة في رواية بينما أرقده محتضرة من جهة أخرى، هذه الأطروحة ستقوم باستكشاف المقاطع و الجمل حيث الموضوعية و الذاتية تأخذان حيّزا في الرواية. من أجل تحقيق ذلك، النهج النوعي سيكون ذا صلة بهذا البحث. و لكي نحقق الهدف المرجو من هذه الأطروحة و الذي هو استكشاف و مباينة الموضوعية و الذاتية في رواية بينما أرقده محتضرة للروائي ويليام فوكنر من خلال تحليل العناصر و التقنيات المستخدمة في الرواية، الأسلوبين الاستكشافي و التحليلي سيكونان بمثابة أداة لاستكشاف و تحليل مصطلحات كالموضوعية و الذاتية

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General Introduction

Objectivity and Subjectivity are terms that have appeared since early 1800's in Classical Philosophy. They have been adopted later on by many fields of study such as Science, Anthropology, and Psychology. Studying objectivity and subjectivity helped in the development of research on the human mind and how it functions, and the psychology behind thinking and perceiving the external world. The dichotomy of objectivity and subjectivity has raised a number of questions concerning science, religion, morality and perception. It questions reality, how we realize it, and to what extent we are able to develop an objective understanding of the world.

After the First World War, people mainly in Europe and North America developed a traumatic attitude towards the norms they used to follow. The ugly experience they passed through has made them angry with all types of traditions and beliefs, which paved the way for artists to express that anger and mixed feelings through their art that reflected later on Literature. Twentieth century literature has begun as a new type of literature that depicts the reality of post world war societies and their struggles. This new, modernist literature has included the mind in its fictional works. Modernist writers such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner have projected the mind and how it questions everything in the world through their literary works. Questions about the real nature of the human being and the existence of an objective world started to take a large place in Modernist Literature, where writers went from simple to complex to show how a plain human being can explore the deepest bottoms of consciousness. Techniques such as Multiple Narration and Psychological Narration which is also known as Stream of Consciousness were applied by Modernist writers to question things such as objective reality and the subjectivity of human beings. William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* is one of the examples of these literary works.

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As I Lay Dying is a novel where truth and meaning are questioned notions. The story sounds simple and boring on the surface: a family of American Southerners, the Bundrens, taking their dead mother to bury her next to her people in Jefferson. But the intelligence of William Faulkner turned the story from a plain journey to Jefferson into a bizarre complex journey to the secrets of the human mind and the way it thinks and perceives the external world. The story happens most of the time inside the mind of the characters, and it is characterized by the use of multiple narrative voices. The events are being narrated through ninety-five narrative sections by fifteen characters in the novel including the Bundrens themselves, Addie, their dead mother, and some other neighbors and acquaintances for each of which has their own point of view about other characters and events. The fictional literary work projects a set of conscious experiences each narrator tells in his or her own way. This collection of perspectives put altogether provides another dimension to the reader to see the story and explore where objectivity or subjectivity takes place in it.

The major aim of this study is to explore objectivity and subjectivity as two opposing perspectives in Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. This paper will illustrate both of the objective and the subjective angles in the novel, and analyze the notions of objectivity and subjectivity on philosophical and literary levels. It also aims to show the ability of Faulkner to combine between both objectivity and subjectivity in his *As I Lay Dying*. The ambiguous nature of the novel caused by the use of multiple narrative viewpoints opens the door to several interpretations that differ from objective to subjective; furthermore, this research aims to clarify the ambiguity created in the mind of the reader when it comes to identifying the nature of the novel as objective or subjective. In addition, it tends to show the relation between objectivity, Subjectivity and Stream of Consciousness in the novel.

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The problematic of this research is Exploring and contrasting objectivity and subjectivity in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, through analyzing the elements and techniques used in the narrative of the novel. In order to solve this problem, the research questions that are intended to ask are: To what extent has Faulkner managed to associate objectivity and subjectivity in his *As I Lay Dying*? How does the presence of multiple points of view in the narrative of the novel construct an objective or a subjective vision in the mind of the reader? How does the use of stream-of-consciousness writing play a role to convey objectivity or subjectivity in the novel?

It is hypothesized that Faulkner intended to use Multiple Narration to contrast several points of view about the events of the story, and stream of consciousness writing to make these points of view original and unfiltered, all of that to create a kind of opposition in the novel in terms of objectivity and subjectivity. In each chapter, a different character is narrating the events from its own subjective standpoint. The sum of all the characters viewpoints creates a unique and objective telling of the story within the mind of the reader.

This topic has been chosen in particular because the researches that have been conducted on it are really rare if not non-existent. Nobody has actually spoken about objectivity and subjectivity in Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* in terms of the techniques used, and nobody tried to explore objectivity and subjectivity in the novel through analyzing the narrative sentences and the psyche of the characters. All research on this topic has been shallow and superficial. Furthermore, the reason behind choosing this topic for research is the will to analyze the novel on philosophical and literary levels, and dive deeper into its characters' minds. Another reason is to scan the text and narrative passages of the novel to explore where objectivity and subjectivity take place,

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and examine the different element in the novel in order to reflect them on the notions of objectivity and subjectivity.

Objectivity and subjectivity are themes that have been tackled in several books, articles and research papers. In his book *The View From Nowhere*, Thomas Nagel discusses how subjectivity is highly related to our senses, and how our perception limits the way we realize reality. He states that in order to construct an objective vision to the world and reach objective reality, one should transcend his senses and see the world from an angle that is not related to the characteristics of the human being. In an article entitled “Objectivist by default: why information management needs a new foundation”, Ard Huizing claims that object in the external world are characterized by owning a set of “inherent properties”, and thinking of these objects as independent entities that are detached from our perception is the only way to obtain objective knowledge. In a follow-up article entitled “The Value of a Rose: Rising above Objectivism and Subjectivism”, Huizing argues that subjectivity is constructed through perception and conscious experience, and that a conscious being deals with objects through interacting with their inherent properties then defines them on that basis.

On objectivity and subjectivity in the narrative, John B. Black *et al* explain that objective expressions in the narrative are characterized by being constant and unchangeable, whereas subjective expressions own the qualities of changing dependently. They also argue that analyzing literary passages in terms of objectivity and subjectivity is done through identifying the nature of the narrator and his or her relation to the action. Furthermore, Janyce M. Wiebe tackles in her article “Identifying Subjective Characters in Narrative” the nature of objective and subjective narrative sentences. She claims that objective sentences in the narrative contain a neutral observation of the events without adding the narrator’s comments, while subjective

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sentences include an interference of the emotions, impressions and comments of the narrator.

Objectivity and Subjectivity in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* has been discussed in a three-page essay where the novel was proven subjective because of the multiple points of view that narrate the story. The essay tackles the fact that what the narrators tell in the novel is a collection of half truths and it does not serve an objective view to the events. In a presentation on Prezi.com entitled "Bias and Subjectivity in *As I Lay Dying*", Zach Lewis (2015) discusses the subjective nature of the novel because of it being narrated by different narrators that own human characteristics, and because the latter are innately subjective, then the novel cannot in any way be considered subjective. He also justifies subjectivity in the novel by the narrative style used by Faulkner that depicts only what the narrators perceive and think is true; therefore, truth in the story is in the eyes of the beholder and nothing in the novel can be determined true or objective.

The previously mentioned pair of works is obviously not adequate to examine complicated terms such as objectivity and Subjectivity in a highly profound novel such as *As I Lay Dying*, for they discussed the terms from a very superficial level. They only explained the narrative in general and gave common knowledge information concerning objectivity and subjectivity. Among all the elements that exist in the novel, these works have chosen only one which tackles multiple viewpoints in the narrative. They haven't analyzed each passage of the novel alone and they haven't talked about objectivity and subjectivity in relation to the different narrative techniques used by Faulkner. They have not also tackled the meaning of objectivity and subjectivity from a philosophical level and have not examined the terms in relation to the psyche of the narrators. The amount of knowledge about the topic provided by these works is really

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limited, for that, it cannot determine the result that objectivity does not have a place next to subjectivity in *As I Lay Dying*.

This research is exploratory. It's a trial to find out where both objectivity and subjectivity take a place in *As I Lay Dying*. Furthermore, data will be collected from books and websites to verify the arguments cited above. An analytical method would help to identify the narrative techniques and styles adopted in the novel, and the types of passages it contains, plus, to analyze and examine the different elements in the novel in order to uncover the existence of the two opposing notions in the story. In addition, the qualitative approach would help to fulfill the objectives set in this research paper.

This dissertation consists of three chapters. The first chapter covers the theoretical background related to the topic area of research. It provides an insight on the terms objectivity and subjectivity and sheds light on the philosophy behind them. It also defines narrative techniques such as Multiple Narrative and Stream of consciousness. Moreover, it speaks of objectivity and subjectivity in relation to narrative points of view and stream of consciousness. The second chapter explores objectivity and subjectivity in the novel. It also identifies the notions of objectivity and subjectivity in terms of the narrative style and points of view used by the author. The third chapter analyzes and relates objectivity and subjectivity to stream of consciousness technique in the novel, and reflects them on the psyche of the characters through the use of stream of consciousness.

Introduction

The question about objectivity and subjectivity represents a very old conflict that begun with the appearance of Classical Philosophy, then was tackled by philosophers such as René Descartes and Immanuel Kant. The terms “objectivity” and “subjectivity” have started being adopted afterwards by many sources in almost every field of study such as Psychology, Sociology, Culture and Science.

In early Twentieth Century, individuals and societies, mainly in Europe and North America, started questioning the nature of reality even more than before. Questions such as “What is reality?”, and “Does objective reality exist?”, Took a large place in a Post- world war society. With the rise of Modernist Literature at that time, modernist writers such as Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and William Faulkner brought new literary writing styles such as stream of consciousness, and played with the norms of the narrative. It was an era that disconnected the world from its traditional customs and beliefs leaving an enormous ambiguity around the nature of subjects and the way they perceive the external world.

It is difficult to discuss the notion of objectivity and subjectivity in any given context, but modern literature has absolutely taken the two opposing terms to a whole new level, which makes the discussion even more challenging. This chapter will discuss objectivity and subjectivity from philosophical and literary perspectives. It will define each of the two terms, and then theorize them in terms of philosophical and narrative use, after that, it will relate them to the most common narrative technique applied in Modern Literature, stream of consciousness.

I.1 Common Definitions of Objectivity and Subjectivity

During the process of reading and/or writing, many of us come across the issue of identifying the nature of the text in terms of subjectivity and objectivity, for that, we are required to make a clear understanding to the definition of each and the difference between them. According to Oxford Dictionary, Objectivity refers to the “quality of being objective”, and it is coined with synonyms like “impartiality”, “fairness”, “justice”, “disinterest”, “detachment”, and “neutrality”. Objectivity is also defined by Cambridge English Dictionary as “the fact of being based on facts and not influenced by personal beliefs or feelings. It is the quality of being able to make a decision or judgment in a fair way that is not influenced by personal feelings or beliefs”. According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, objectivity is “the quality or character of being objective, lack of favoritism toward one side or another: freedom from bias.”

Subjectivity, on the other hand, according to Oxford Dictionary, is “the quality of being subjective, based on or influenced by personal feelings, tastes, or opinions”. It is also “the quality of existing in someone’s mind rather than the external world”. Vocabulary.com states that “subjectivity refers to how someone’s judgment is shaped by personal opinions and feelings instead of outside influence. Subjectivity is partially responsible for why one person loves an abstract painting while another person hated it. It refers to how a person’s own uniqueness influences their perceptions. Subjectivity is a form of bias and also individuality”.

April Klazema (2014) mentions in her article “Objective Vs. Subjective Writing: Understanding the Difference”, that when a statement is considered objective, the person who has written or said it does not mention their personal opinions about it. It is presented in a way

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that does not show its writer or speaker's relation, unlike subjective statements that oppositely emphasize on the writer or speaker's own feelings towards them no matter what topic they tackle. Therefore, objectivity and subjectivity are distinguished by how statements are being exhibited.

Klazema also argued that objective passages are distinctive by owning the quality of being static, descriptive and constant, whereas subjective ones are known as personally-referred and changeable. Furthermore, she explains that the reader can recognize objective and subjective statements through the type of language used by the writer or speaker.

Objective language includes phrases such as: 'I saw,' or 'I counted,' or 'I observed.' Detailing what a person 'did' is another clue that writing is objective rather than subjective. If something has actually happened and the writer or speaker is simply relaying that information, they are making simple statements of fact. In subjective writing, words are often added to these phrases to make them more than just fact – and in doing so, they become inferences. By starting a sentence with 'she did not want to,' you suppose the feelings of the person. The same goes for 'she thought,' 'he feels,' or 'they were trying to'. (Klazema)

Those statements present a subjective observation because they only express an opinion about the action without contemplating why or how something happened or was done in contrast of portraying the action as it is, she claims: "If a person has relayed how they felt, remember that relaying this information as a statement they made will make it clear they are the source of that information and will help it to be more objective" (Klazema).

I.2 Perception in Relation to Objectivity and Subjectivity

The Encyclopedia of Philosophy states that the modern usage of the words “Objectivity” and “Subjectivity” refers to a “perceiving subject” and a “perceived or unperceived object”. The object¹ is there whether or not the subject² could perceive it. Its existence is independent of the perception of the subject. Therefore, concepts such as reality, truth and reliability are typically found together with objectivity. “The perceiving subject can either perceive accurately or seem to perceive features of the object that are not in the object. For example, a perceiving subject suffering from jaundice could seem to perceive an object as yellow when the object is not actually yellow. Hence, the term ‘subjective’ typically indicates the possibility of error” (Mulder).

In Philosophy, Objectivity generally means the condition or situation of being true regardless the individual biases, interpretations, feelings and imaginings of a subject. “A proposition is generally considered objectively true (to have objective truth) when its truth conditions are met without biases caused by feelings, ideas, opinions, etc., of a sentient subject” (Marmor 2019). The term has a second broader definition which is the skill of being able, without partiality or external influence, to make a fair judgment in any context. Neutrality³ is a term that could be sometimes associated with this second definition of objectivity (Marmor 2019).

¹ According to the Oxford Dictionary, an object is “a material thing that can be seen and touched”.

² According to the Oxford Dictionary, a subject is “a person or thing that is being discussed, described, or dealt with”.

³ According to the Oxford Dictionary, neutrality is “the state of not supporting or helping either side in a conflict, disagreement, etc.; impartiality”.

On the other hand, “subjectivity characterizes the subject or is derived from the subject and his activity” (“subjectivitydefinition”). Classical philosophy saw the subjective as “a special inner world of consciousness”, not open to questions and independent to which the subject has the ability to approach. “the subjective was opposed to the objective world of physical things and events (including the body of the subject) as existing outside the subjective and as not authentic” (“subjectivitydefinition”). The antipathy of the two terms “subjective” and “objective” has raised a number of question marks that classical philosophy found difficult to answer: what is the evidence that the external world exists and how you become able to realize it?; How can one have knowledge of both other subjects and their subjective world? (“subjectivitydefinition”). Subjectivity therefore is nothing but a perception of the objects that exist in the external world inside the subject’s mind;

We largely influence our perception ourselves as to whether we find the weather ‘good’ or ‘bad’. No one forces us for example to feel that hot summer weather is ‘bad’. We are free to choose whether this is good or bad in our own eyes (perceptive reality). Each of us has certain individual claims on the weather today or tomorrow. According to what the weather is really like will we be more or less satisfied. (Rohrer)

I.2.1 The Paradoxical Structure of Objective Reality

Since we have mentioned that terms like “Objectivity” and “Subjectivity” are highly related to concepts like “reality”, we should first know what the latter means in order to dive deeper in the sense of objectivity and subjectivity. Reality is defined as an existent fact ever since the beginning of the universe and it does not change its nature in the present and the future since it tells us about the exact real nature of a particular thing, experience or existence

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(Aron 2011). Objective reality therefore, is a reality that exists independently of any subject's perception. Many philosophers would use the term "objective reality" to refer to anything that exists as it is independent of any conscious awareness of it. Common mid-sized physical objects presumably apply, as do persons having subjective states. "Subjective reality would then include anything depending upon some (broadly construed) conscious awareness of it to exist" (Mulder). One can conclude from this quote that subjective reality on the other hand is everything else that is connected with and acknowledged by a conscious perception.

The concept has been discussed by many philosophers and theorists since the beginning of the nineteenth century. René Descartes' "Cogito, ergo sum" which is the usual translation of his famous saying "I think, therefore I am" describes objective reality as the existence of the subject as a non-physical thinking thing, thus, for Descartes, knowing the objective reality of the subject's existence as a non-physical thinking thing is similar to knowing the subjective reality of the subject's thinking itself. Hence, one can say that a subject as a non-physical thinking thing exists objectively, and any other knowledge rather than the knowledge of one's own existence is considered as objective knowledge (Mulder).

In order to further understand the notion of objective reality, Allan Megill, in *Rethinking Objectivity*, suggests that there are four principal senses to the terms "objective" and "objectivity". First, an absolute sense of objectivity which keeps things the way they really are and it goes hand in hand with objective reality. Second, a disciplinary sense that includes objectivity in a collection of subjective agreements. Third, a dialectical sense which associates objectivity and subjectivity altogether, and a final procedural sense that requires evidence in order to pursue objectivity (1).

In his book *The View from Nowhere*, Thomas Nagel states that objective knowledge has a paradoxical nature, since when one tries to perceive the physical world he naturally ought to use his senses, for that, Nagel argues that even while seeing objective reality itself, one should look at it from a perspective that is not only far from his own point of view, but also far from the general point of view of the human as a perceiver being (13). In other words, in order to achieve an absolute objective knowledge of the physical world, we should obtain a “vision from nowhere” that Nagel explains in three simple stages; the first stage is knowing that our perceptions are a result of our interactions with objects from the external world through their reactions with our organs that are also considered as part of the external world. The second stage is coming to the realization that the same objects which influence our organs have also different influences on other objects and they might not have any influences at all, in other words, we must realize that objects in the external world are independent and detached from our perceptions of them. The final stage is to construct an origination of those objects that is not related to the way we and other subjects perceive them. It is a vision outside of the human perceptive qualities (14). Therefore, objectivity to Nagel is just a matter of process that needs to be repeated each time in order to gain a more objective perception (4), or just as simply as Barry Stroud put it in his book *The Quest for Reality*, “We want to understand not only what gives rise to our perceivings and believings but also whether what we perceive or believe or come to think about the world represents it as it really is” (27).

I.2.2 The School of Thought of Objectivism versus the School of Thought of Subjectivism

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Defining and determining the true nature of the external world is with no doubt one of the most difficult and challenging tasks to fulfill⁴, especially when it comes to what is right and what is wrong. Philosophy in this context provides many answers to questions about the nature of the world and the existence of objective reality through Objectivism and Subjectivism.

Starting with Objectivism, Lakoff and Johnson claim that it is a philosophy that “is associated with ‘scientific truth, rationality, precision, fairness and impartiality’” (qtd. in Huizing, Objectivist 3). Using an intertextuality of Gertrude Stein’s *Sacred Emily* through the line “Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose”, Huizing, in his essay *Objectivist by Default*, explains that objects which construct our external world should possess “inherent properties” as those objects are real and distinct; they seem to be totally detached from our perception and use of them. He further explains;

[A] rose is a rose is a rose, regardless of how someone perceives it, if at all. Objects live on their own, immune to our subjective thoughts, feelings and emotions. They have fixed meanings that can be known by investigating their inherent properties. Roses have thorns, distinctive smells and other fixed properties that together define our interactions with and understandings of this flower category. Once these properties are fully understood, true and lasting knowledge has been gained. (Objectivist 3)

Therefore, Objectivism is where one should see the world as a set of distinct objects that are independent from outside interactions in order to develop an objective knowledge. This objective knowledge, claims Huizing, is “the only real knowledge”. He adds that science allows

⁴ In his article, *An Evolutionary Theory of Right and Wrong*, Nicholas Wade (2006) claims that right and wrong are notions that get taught in schools or by religious or legal institutions, and their definitions depend on the origin they come from. Therefore, there is no absolute definition of right and wrong.

us to gain objective knowledge by conducting experiments that ultimately result in constant, unchangeable, and absolutely objective facts (Objectivist 4).

In a follow-up research, Huizing speaks of Subjectivism “as a philosophical tradition opposing objectivism” (The Value 7). He explains it on behalf of Lakoff and Johnson as the notion that refers to “supplying an alternative account in which human experience and understanding instead of objective truth’ occupies central stage” (qtd. in The Value 7). Huizing then says that Subjectivism supports the state in which consciousness develops knowledge of the world through perception and experience, which makes it dependent on the results of each individual experience and each individual mental conditions, in this case of “extreme subjectivity”, objective knowledge finds no place (The Value 8). To contrast objectivism and subjectivism, Huizing turns back to his example from *Sacred Emily* that was mentioned previously and claims that a rose is objectively entitled to its inherent properties- that include thorns for instance- that exist independently out of the human perception of them. Nevertheless, one gives roses to the person they love because there is a mutual conception and agreement that roses are considered as a symbol of love regardless the fact that they have thorns. Although it has been agreed by Objectivist that objects exist whether they are perceived or not, the interactions of perceptual beings with those objects is what makes the difference (The Value 9).

I.3 Objective and Subjective Narrative Viewpoints

When it comes to Literature, Objectivity and Subjectivity are features that must be present in the story in order to give it perspective and make the readers excited to read more and construct a clear vision of the literary work. Narration differs from objective to subjective, and sometimes it can be both, but in order to determine whether what you are reading is

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objective or subjective, you need to take some aspects into consideration. Starting with the first characteristic in a literary work, settings. When settings are being described just the way they look like, that shows the story is going to be objective, while when the reader feels like his senses are involved in the description, like telling how the place feels like, the story is consequently going to be subjective (“Objective” 2013).

In terms of characters, when a character is being portrayed as he or she is seen without adding further details, the narration then is of an objective type, whereas in the case of providing more information about the characters that go beyond what the narrator is able to see or hear, that makes the narration of a subjective type. Objective narration depicts the characters through observation without attempting to add other details and justify why the characters do what they are doing. Subjective narration on the other hand, narrates not only what the characters are like or what they are simply doing, but goes deeper to explaining why they are the way they are and giving answers to why they do what they are doing. It is knowing everything about the characters and stating things that do not appear unless you get inside the character’s mind. Objective narration, then, is considered more reliable than subjective narration (“Objective” 2013).

Since every piece of literature is narrated from a viewpoint or several viewpoints, it is necessary to identify the types of viewpoints in the narration in order to decide whether it is objective or subjective, or decide which passages of the novel are objective and which ones are subjective. Point of view has become a prominent mode in Modern Literature after the works of Henry James. It “signifies the way a story gets told—the mode (or modes) established by an author by means of which the reader is presented with the characters, dialogue, actions, setting,

and events which constitute the narrative in a work of fiction” (Abrams 231). Brook and Warren claim that scholars of rhetoric noted that there are two main elements concerning literary point of view:

“(1) Who is the narrator?”

“(2) What is the narrator's relation to the action?” (qtd. in Black et al 187)

“The first question concerns such issues as ‘Is the narrator omniscient or does he possess only limited knowledge?’, ‘Is the narrator reliable or untrust-worthy?’ etc. The second concerns such issues as ‘Is the narrator the main character?’, ‘Is the narrator an involved or a detached observer?’ etc” (Black et al 188). The following classification exhibits the different types of narrative viewpoints:

I.3.1 First-person Points of View

This mode uses the pronoun “I” in narrating events. It only exhibits what is seen and heard without getting into details. The readers receive through first-person points of view only what the narrator knows, witnesses and says to other characters (Abrams 233). Janet Burroway writes: “Although the narrator may certainly interpret actions, deliver dictums, and predict the future, these remain the fallible opinions of a human being. We are not bound to accept them as we are bound to accept the interpretations, truths, and predictions of the omniscient author” (qtd. in Hartt1). First-person narrator can be a major or a minor character, and is generally considered subjective and unreliable, for he or she narrates the story from their own experience and expresses its event from their own point of view (S. Wiebe).

I.3.2 Second-person Points of View

This mode tells a story through addressing a person in the story by the second-person

pronoun “you”. The latter could be the narrator himself, a character in the story or the reader of the story. “This second person may turn out to be a specific fictional character, or the reader of the story, or even the narrator himself or herself, or not clearly or consistently the one or the other; and the story may unfold by shifting between telling the narratee what he or she is now doing, has done in the past, or will or is commanded to do in the future” (Abrams 234). It is used as a comic form of narration or a serious form either, and sometimes it is used as both (Abrams 234). Although the second-person points of view mode has been sustainably used only in the late twentieth century, but it is still rarely used and uncommon (Abrams 234).

I.3.3 Third-person points of view

This mode consists of two sub-modes. First, the omniscient point of view, where the narrator seems to know everything about the characters, has access to their thoughts and feelings, and is free to shift from one character to the other through time and space (Abrams 232). Abrams States that this omniscient narrator could be intrusive “Within this mode, the intrusive narrator is one who not only reports, but also comments on and evaluates the actions and motives of the characters, and sometimes expresses personal views about human life in general” (232), or unintrusive “On the other hand, the omniscient narrator may choose to be unintrusive (alternative terms are impersonal or objective)” (Abrams 232) where he or she does only a description of the events without adding comments, opinions or judgments (Abrams 232). Second, the limited point of view, in which the narrator still uses the third-person pronoun “he”, “she”, “it” and “they”, but tells the story from one or a few characters’ perspective. “Henry James, who refined this narrative mode, described such a selected character as his ‘focus,’ or ‘mirror,’ or ‘center of consciousness’” (Abrams 233).

"Third person narrative is characterized by shifts in point of view: a single text can have objective sentences as well as subjective sentences attributed to different characters" (Wiebe 401). Wiebe explains through this quotation that the reader can confront both objective and subjective narrative sentences told by several characters. Therefore, each type of point of view should be considered depending on its features and relation to other sentences. She further goes: "Objective sentences are those that objectively narrate events. Subjective sentences are those that present the consciousness of an experiencing character within the story. They express character's evaluations, emotions, judgments, uncertainties, beliefs, and other attitudes and affects" (Wiebe 402).

I.4 Objectivity and Subjectivity in Relation to Stream of Consciousness

"Stream of consciousness" is an expression that took place in fields such as Psychology and Literature. A definition is required in order to understand the statement. Cambridge Dictionary defines stream of consciousness as "a style in literature that is used to represent a character's feelings and thoughts as they experience them, using long, continuous pieces of text without obvious organization or structure". Dictionary.com states that stream of consciousness is "a literary technique that reveals the flow of thoughts and feelings of characters through long passages of soliloquy". According to *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, "Stream of Consciousness was a phrase used by William James in his *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) to describe the unbroken flow of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings in the waking mind; it has since been adopted to describe a narrative method in modern fiction"(319).

From the definitions stated above. It is concluded that Stream of Consciousness is a literary device that refers to the flow of the character's thoughts. It's the depiction of the mind

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at work. It captures the moment to moment of the mind while passing through conscious experiences, usually referred to as Qualia⁵. Consciousness, in this vein, is defined as follows: “Consciousness is everything you experience. It is the tune stuck in your head, the sweetness of chocolate mousse, the throbbing pain of a toothache, the fierce love for your child and the bitter knowledge that eventually all feelings will end” (Koch 2018).

“According to critics, a series of terms is used to refer to Stream of Consciousness, such as ‘Stream of Consciousness’, ‘Stream of Thought’, ‘Monologue Interieur’, ‘Interior Monologue’, ‘Internal Monologue’, ‘Interior Monologue’, ‘Soliloquy’ and ‘Silent Soliloquy’” (Noor et al). Regardless, it is important to mention that there is a difference between those previously mentioned terms. According to *A glossary of Literary Terms*, “Soliloquy is the act of talking to oneself, whether silently or aloud” (289). In Cuddon’s dictionary, “internal monologue is the technique of recording the continuum of impressions, thoughts and impulses either prompted by conscious experience or arising from the well of the subconscious”(422).

Before it had been coined by American philosopher and psychologist, William James, the term was tackled earlier in Buddhist philosophy where it was referred to as “citta-santāna”, which equivalently means the “Mindstream”. After announced by William James in his *The Principles of Psychology*, stream of consciousness became a widely present research in Psychology and Neuroscience, as it was used in Modern Literature by famous authors such as James Joice, Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner. “Today, consciousness is often viewed as an individual’s awareness of their own internal state as well as the events going on around

⁵ According to the dictionary of Oxford, Qualia is the plural noun for quale, which means “a quality or property as perceived or experienced by a person”.

them. If you can describe something you are experiencing right now in words, then it is part of your consciousness” (Cherry 2019).

I.4.1 Stream of Consciousness as a Narrative Technique

Stream of Consciousness’ first use after the publication of *The Principles* was by English novelist Dorothy Richardson in her novel sequence *Pilgrimage* (1915). Two years later, Stream of consciousness technique was tackled for the first time in literary criticism in *"The Egoist"* journal (1918), in which it was described as "just life going on and on" with no particular dramatic shape and situation. The term was more profoundly described by Cuddon as “that technique which seeks to depict the thoughts and feelings which pass through the mind. Consciousness has no beginning and no end because the thoughts flit quite randomly from one thing to another, from the present to past and vice versa” (866). Therefore, Modernist writers began to transmit the meaning of stream of consciousness on their novels’ papers, and we started reading not dialogues of people sitting around tables filtering their words so they can sound nice and perfect, but random thoughts of people who sound crazy but it is just the way we all think inside our heads. It is “consciousness”. Kendra Cherry (2019) explains consciousness in her article “Consciousness is the Psychology of Awareness” as the persons’ realization of his own thinking and all other parts of perception, and that conscious experiences keep moving and changing smoothly and effortlessly from being aware of what is happening right now to recalling a past event that happened a long time ago.

James explains the notion of stream of consciousness in chapter IX, *The Stream of Thought*, where he provides the following five characteristics of thought. First, he claims that thoughts are referred personally to consciousness. Second, he says that thought is changeable

inside personal consciousness. Third, he argues that thought flows continuously within personal consciousness through senses. Fourth, he declares that thought is detached from objects it interacts with. In the end, he discusses how thought picks up parts of these objects and includes them in its circle of interest as it does also exclude other parts (140). James portrays through this chapter the idea that stream of consciousness is an endless stage of changing conscious experiences, which is the thing that stream of consciousness writers have tried to illustrate in their literary works; furthermore, James provides a description for consciousness itself as follows;

Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as "chain" or "train" do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A "river" or a "stream" is the metaphor by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life. (155)

Modern writers such as Woolf and her contemporaries used stream of consciousness to innovate modern styles of writing by depicting the thoughts of the characters while they conduct a monologue that is not heard by anyone but themselves. Those modern writers move their stories from and to different directions by portraying characters' reactions to the plot and events. Stream of Consciousness therefore studies the character while he or she plays the role of the narrator (Noor et al 8).

I.4.2 The Shift from the Unconscious Objective to the Conscious Subjective

We have previously seen the definition and meaning to each of "Objectivity", "Subjectivity" and "Stream of Consciousness". Now it is time to ask a number of questions concerning these three terms: What is the relation between Objectivity, Subjectivity, and

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Stream of Consciousness?; Does putting them altogether in the same context make sense?; Should we consider Stream of Consciousness technique as objective or subjective?

In their article *Exploring Stream of Consciousness as a Narrative Technique in Modern Novels*, Noor *et al* discuss the modern writers such as Woolf use of “omniscient narration”, they claim: “[w]hile Woolf includes some quoted monologue, she tends like James, and like Joyce in *A Portrait*, to prefer to employ omniscient narration and narrated monologue to render her characters’ thoughts, thus allowing the narrator to maintain direct control over the narration” (117,118). The omniscient narration is explained by Abrams in *A Glossary* as an “objective narration”. “The limitation of point of view represented both by James’ ‘center of consciousness’ narration and by the ‘stream-of-consciousness’ narration sometimes used by James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, and others, is often said to exemplify the ‘self-effacing author,’ or ‘objective narration,’ more effectively than does the use of an unintrusive but omniscient narrator” (244). This explanation states that the narration used in stream of consciousness novels can be described as objective because it depicts the very raw material of the character’s “interior monologue” without filtering or adding any further details to it. It is in other words, so faithful and transparent that it doesn’t mind if the reader does not understand what is being written because of its weirdness and lack of syntax as long as it transmits the real product of the mind just the way it is. Just like objective reality which also states things the way they are.

Omniscient narration is one of the four techniques that Humphrey suggested for identifying stream of consciousness which are : “(1) the direct interior monologue; (2) the indirect interior monologue; (3) description by an omniscient author; (4) dramatized

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unconscious” (qtd. in Dobie 409) . The direct interior monologue quotes directly from the mind of the narrator, while the indirect monologue requires the author’s intrusion. It briefly is dipping in and out of the narrator’s thoughts through time and place (Noor et al 110). Then comes the dramatized unconscious in which the narrator dramatizes his or her thoughts, memories, flashbacks and flash-forwards (Dobie 410). There is no doubt, then, that the unconscious mind is involved in processing the stream of consciousness technique, Sigmund Freud describes the unconscious in his *The Interpretation of Dreams* as;

[...] the unconscious is the larger circle which includes the smaller circle of the conscious; everything conscious has a preliminary unconscious stage, whereas the unconscious can stop at this stage, and yet claim to be considered a full psychic function. The unconscious is the true psychic reality; in its inner nature it is as much unknown to use as the reality of the external world, and it is just as imperfectly communicated to use by the data of consciousness as is the external world by the reports of our sense-organs. (542)

Here, Freud indirectly says that the unconscious is an objective entity by resembling it with other entities that have been previously defined as objective, such as “the true psychic reality”, and “the reality of the external world”, and since he claims also that “everything conscious has a preliminary unconscious stage”, and this unconscious stage is included in the conduction of stream of consciousness writing, one can confidently confirm that Stream Of Consciousness is objective. In the same current discussion, Dobie explains in her article “Early Stream-of-Consciousness Writing: Great Expectations” that surreal writing style and stream of consciousness writing style share several points together, for they both provide the reader with the raw material of the thought that always seems to be bizarre and difficult to be understood. Therefore, it belongs to the subconscious of the characters (407).

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As Freud put it in his previous quote, the unconscious is the larger circle, the absolute source of thought, the objective reality, and it is used by stream of consciousness writers to show the originality of the human mind. “The larger circle”, however, still includes “the smaller circle” which Freud used as a metaphor for the conscious mind that grasps the unconscious just as a subject grasps the reality of the external world, the thing that makes us wonder whether Stream of Consciousness is subjective as well, and if there, in the first place, exists an escape from subjectivity.

It is agreed that stream of consciousness does undoubtedly depict the consciousness of a subject. Robert Humphrey gives it the definition of “a type of fiction in which the basic emphasis is placed on exploration of the prespeech [sic] levels of consciousness for the purpose, primarily, of revealing the psychic being of the characters” (qtd. in Dobie 408). He further explains it as the concern with a character’s mental and spiritual experiences which include sensations, memories, imaginations, conceptions, intuitions, symbolizations, feelings, and processes of association (Dobie 408). Those conscious experiences (Qualia) go hand in hand and are highly connected with subjectivity. They are represented in Modern Literature through Stream of Consciousness. Therefore, we can conclude that there is a second relation that links Stream of Consciousness with Subjectivity. Returning back to the first definitions stated in this research which claim that stream of consciousness is “the flow of thoughts” during “a conscious experience”. It is authorial to come up with a final result that the expressions “flow of thoughts” and “conscious experience” are two sides of the same coin. “the flow of thoughts” is objective, while “conscious experience” is subjective, and the coin in this case is Stream of Consciousness.

Conclusion

To sum up what has been discussed in this chapter, both of Objectivity and Subjectivity has their places beneath the lines of Modern fiction. Starting from the philosophical discussion that shows the existence of an objective reality that the conscious being cannot fully grasp but can construct a vision from the outside about, to the way the author makes his narrators tell the events of a story, to the stream of consciousness writing that appeared to contain both of the objective and the subjective entities.

The bizarre, ambiguous style that Modern writers use in their literary works is with no doubt one of the hardest codes in the world of writing to decipher; however, it could allow the reader to uncover the layers of this wonderful frame narrative, and get surprised with the amount of knowledge hidden behind each layer, which is the thing that makes readers investigate and explore its nature by analyzing it on several levels in order to discover the objective and the subjective areas in the novel.

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Introduction

As I Lay Dying is a multiple narrative¹ where fifteen narrators tell the events in fifty-nine chapters. The narrative of the novel contains a lot of philosophical questions about life, love, morality, religion and existence. Some characters like Darl, who narrates most of the story (nineteen narrative sections), raises many questions about the nature of the world, and other characters such as Addie, question life, death, and the concept of language. These questions lead the characters to transcend above the normal human thinking level, the thing which suggests the existence of an objective reality somewhere in the novel.

The text of the novel also reveals a lot about its nature. The words and their arrangement together give the impression of a subjective talk in some parts of the story, and an objective one in some others. Being told by many voices and narrative points of view, the novel constructs a set of small stories that differ from objective to subjective ones depending on the narrator of the section and his relation to the action, combined together to make understanding of a bigger story, the story of Addie as she lies dying and her family taking her to Jefferson. This chapter seeks to explore the places where objectivity and subjectivity take place in the novel, and contrast them through analyzing the philosophy behind it, the text that gathers its angles and the narrative viewpoints that link its events.

II.1 Contrasting Objectivity and Subjectivity in *As I Lay Dying*

Like every narrative text of literary fiction, *As I Lay Dying* tells a story. The story of Addie Bundren, a mother of five children: Cash, Jewel, Darl, Dewey Dell, and Vardaman, lying in her deathbed watching her firstborn Cash building her coffin. The family members, Anse,

¹ In her article *What is a Multiple Narrative?* Maria Magher states that “multiple narratives employ tactics such as multiple narrators, telling a story within a story or bringing together multiple story arcs”.

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Addie's husband and his children prepare to go to Jefferson to bury Addie next to her family as she requested. Meanwhile, Jewel and Darl decide to go out of town to earn three dollars, and Dewey Dell slips into a relationship with Lefe in the cotton field. Addie dies and her two children Jewel and Darl do not manage to see her, Dewey Dell then discovers she is pregnant and tries to ask Peabody, the doctor, for help. The family places Addie in the wagon and in the road to Jefferson they lose her twice, once when the bridge vanishes after the water rises, then when a fire was set in the place her coffin was put at. The family after that recovers the coffin and reaches the town with Addie's smelly, rotten dead body. Anse borrows shovels in order to bury her, Cash has had a broken leg covered with cement, Jewel decides to leave because Anse sold his most precious property, his horse, Darl is sent to an asylum in Jackson, and Vardaman wants to get a toy train from the town, Dewey Dell fails to get an abortion and her father takes the ten dollars she was given by Lefe to buy the new set of teeth he always dreamed of, then marries the woman who lent him the shovels. The story takes place in fictional Yoknapatawpha county, Mississippi, and is narrated by fifteen narrators including Addie and her family members, plus some neighbors and acquaintances, along fifty-nine narrative sections (Faulkner).

What is special about Faulkner's novel particularly and that makes it distinguishable among the other literary works, is the use of different styles and different monologues. The diversity of the ways of telling one event and the unusual manner of writing noticed by the readers of this novel is what makes everyone wonder whether it is possible to analyze this masterpiece on more than one level. Whether it is possible to dive as deeper as we can in one word, one sentence said by a random character, and see where will it take us. Modernist writers in general and William Faulkner in his novel *AS I Lay Dying* in particular, did not want us, the

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readers, to understand literature a certain way. They did not tell us what they meant by their stories. They did not explain or clarify or correct anything about their works. They just wrote.

William Faulkner says on *As I Lay Dying* that he “took this family and subjected them to the two greatest catastrophes which man can suffer – flood and fire, that’s all” (qtd. in Gleeson). In an interview at Virginia’s Department of Psychiatry, Faulkner said about the ways he writes his novels: “I doubt if—if I know whether I select these people or they select me. I think that the writer is—is trying to—to take some comic or tragic moment of man in his struggle inside the human condition and tell it in some form which other people would find comic or tragic” (Faulkner). That tells how Faulkner simply wanted to put the conditions of the external world (flood and fire) as a perceived object, and juxtapose them on the conditions of the human being as a perceiving subject, which is a way to contrast objectivity and subjectivity in the novel from the surface without even starting to go through details.

Subjectivity, as previously defined, is the state of acting based on feelings and emotions. It is including what you feel and sense in your speech and decisions in life. Readers of *As I Lay Dying* must all have noticed a weirdness in its lines, a weirdness coming from the characters not being really involved in the happenings around them. They all sound cold, stony and unfeeling. They do not even narrate events, but they only “describe” things that happened, are happening or will happen in the future. They do not only don’t care, but also don’t belong. Family relationships and the warm feelings between the mother and her children and the brother with his sister we are used to are absent in this novel. While describing how Cash was sawing the boards to make Addie’s coffin, Darl says that “Addie Bundren could not want a better one, better box to lie in” (1). First, he calls her by her name. Second, he does not express his sorrow about his mother dying, or he does not feel sorrow in the first place.

Cash, Addie's eldest son, starts the talk by explaining how he builds the coffin with extreme detailing of the process, as his mother lays dying, he goes;

I made it on the bevel.

1. There is more surface for the nails to grip.
2. There is twice the gripping-surface to each seam. . . .
12. So I made it on the bevel.
13. It makes a neater job. (24)

Cash made the discussion here more of scientific than emotional. He explained scientifically why he put the boards a certain way and how his mother's body after her death will interact with the coffin, as if his mother is a lab rat that he will use in his next experiment. Feelings, again, do not appear in the story. Addie's husband as well, Anse, does not sound really sad for the his wife's death as he sounds excited for getting a new set of teeth, as stated in Darl's monologue "[p]a breathes with a quiet, rasping sound, mouthing the snuff against his gums. 'God's will be done,' he says. 'Now I can get them teeth'" (15).

The members of the Bundren family were not involved in the death of Mrs. Addie Bundren. They just wanted to accomplish their own goals even when taking her to Jefferson. Cash wanted to buy a graph phone, Dewey Dell wanted to get an abortion, Vardaman wanted a toy train, Jewel wanted to prove that his mother was right when she preferred him over her other children, Darl wanted to prove him wrong, and their father, Anse, wanted to buy a new set of false teeth, and also, he married the first woman he met there. By not showing sadness usually people confront when losing a loved one, we can say that the family members were "objective" towards the incident. We are not talking about a good sense or a bad sense of objectivity here. We are talking about a neutral objectivity towards a personal happening.

Subjectivity, on the other hand, is shown in several places in the novel through portraying the conscious experiences of the characters and how they perceive life, such as the moment when Darl went back with his memory and remembered how water tastes, “[w]hen I was a boy I first learned how much better water tastes when it has set a while in a cedar bucket. Warmish-cool, with a faint taste like the hot July wind in cedar trees smells. It has to set at least six hours, and be drunk from a gourd. Water should never be drunk from metal” (3). The experience of tasting water lasted with Darl and he still recalls it and thinks of its details. That was his own response to tasting water as a perceiving subject. Darl says that “[he] could see maybe a star or two in the bucket. and maybe in the dipper a star or two before [he] drank. After that [he] was bigger, older. . . . and wondering if Cash was yonder in the darkness doing it too, had been doing it perhaps for the last two years before [he] could have wanted to or could” (3). Darl remembers how things used to be when he was little and then how things changed after he got older. He recalls the changes in his perception of the world through age, after that, he wonders whether his brother, Cash, has the same perception and suggests that his brother had it even before he does since Cash is older. Darl then linked conscious experience with age.

Judgment is another important element when considering Subjectivity. Each subject has his or her own judgment about what is seen and heard. The way people judge themselves as well is different from the way others judge them. It is agreed that Anse Bundren is an evil, selfish, weak person that thinks only about his own good and does not treat his wife and children in a nice way. But what Anse thinks of himself sometimes does not reflect what is thought of him, “I have heard men cuss their luck, and right, for they were sinful men. But I do not say it's a curse on me, because I have done no wrong to be cussed by. I am not religious, I

reckon. But peace is my heart: I know it is. I have done things but neither better nor worse than them that pretend otherlike” (11). If we contemplate this quote we can change our judgment about Anse. He might be just a man who needs new teeth so that he will be able to eat properly, or maybe it’s his wife’s fault because she never loves him nor their children. Changing in perception and judgment means an interference of feelings, which is pure Subjective.

II.1.1 Objectivity and Subjectivity in the Discourse of the Novel

One of the many ways to explore Objectivity and Subjectivity in Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying* is through the text. How the words are settled in the novel and what do they refer to. As previously illustrated in this research, Objectivity and Subjectivity are depicted in terms of text through the words and expressions selected. When a passage is objective, it contains a description of the events as they happen. In the novel, Darl describes the cotton house, “[t]he cottonhouse is of rough logs, from between which the chinking has long fallen. Square, with a broken roof set at a single pitch, it leans in empty and shimmering dilapidation in the sunlight, a single broad window in two opposite walls giving onto the approaches of the path” (1). Darl here gives a faithful description to the setting without adding any details which makes him objective in this passage. One of the other neutral descriptions is that of Cora Tull, the pious neighbor, she explains the entry of Darl, “Someone comes through the hall. It is Darl. He does not look in as he passes the door. Eula watches him as he goes on and passes from sight again toward the back. Her hand rises and touches her beads lightly, and then her hair. When she finds me watching her, her eyes go blank” (2). One can notice from this quote that Eula has a crush on Darl, but Cora does not mention anything about crushes. She just transmits what she sees happening in front of her without any judgments.

We have seen before in this paper that talking about someone else might drive you towards subjectivity; however, stating facts that you saw and could grasp impartially sounds objective. Darl, when he talks about Vernon Tull, the family's neighbor, he says: "Vernon has been to town. I have never seen him go to town in overalls. His wife, they say. She taught school too. once" (3). Here Darl only states the fact that Vernon has been out of town, and when he mentions that his wife taught school he noted that the source is not him but "they say". The novel begins with Darl describing his walk and Jewel's through the fields, "Jewel and I come up from the field, following the path in single file. Although I am fifteen feet ahead of him, anyone watching us from the cottonhouse can see Jewel's frayed and broken straw hat a full head above my own" (1). The quote begins with Darl's monologue saying he is with Jewel. All is fine until he mentions that people can see Jewel's hat from the cotton house although he is ahead of him. How did he manage to know this information? He talks about everyone from the cottonhouse and what they can see which is just a guess or prediction from the speaker, not an objective fact; therefore, it is considered as a subjective statement. Darl keeps on narrating the details as he says;

Jewel, fifteen feet behind me, looking straight ahead, steps in a single stride through the window. Still staring straight ahead, his pale eyes like wood set into his wooden face, he crosses the floor in four strides with the rigid gravity of a cigar store Indian dressed in patched overalls and endued with life from the hips down, and steps in a single stride through the opposite window and into the path again just as I come around the corner. (1)

He describes Jewel in this quote with details although he says he was behind him and he did not stop walking. Darl was walking around the corner of the cotton house while Jewel was walking straight, so it is impossible for Darl to recount all those points about Jewel because he cannot see him. Saying things about something you did not witness is considered subjective. In

narrating about his mother, Addie, Darl says she cried the day she cheated on her husband, Anse, he says: “That night I found ma sitting beside the bed where he was sleeping, in the dark. She cried hard, maybe because she had to cry so quiet; maybe because she felt the same way about tears she did about deceit, hating herself for doing it, hating him because she had to” (40). He said what she was doing but he assumed the reasons why she did it and assumed her feelings as well. Subjectivity is characterized by expressions such as “she felt”, and “he wants to”.

Another example of assuming what certain people should do and what others should not is the categorization of people based on their social class, race and religion. In Cora’s monologue, Kate says to her after she could not sell the cakes because Mrs. Lawington changed her mind and did not buy them, ““But those rich town ladies can change their minds. Poor folks cant””(2). Kate judged Mrs. Lawington and all the rich ladies in the town although she does not know all of them. Her judgment was based on some experiences she passed through and some people she knew. She assumed the behavior of a large group of people standing on a few experiences and feelings. This is one more place to show Subjectivity from in the novel in terms of the arrangements of words and settlement of expressions.

II.1.2 Exploring Objective Reality and Objectivism in *As I Lay Dying* Through the Passages of Addie and Darl

It is agreed that *As I Lay Dying* is one of the difficult works of Modern fiction to understand due to its fragmented² style of narration and unorganized form and structure, since it was written by Faulkner in 1930 during his night shift while he worked in a power plant

² In her article *Elements of Modernism in American Literature*, Audrey Farley states that “William Faulkner's novels, such as “The Sound and the Fury” are also fragmented in form, consisting of disjointed and nonlinear narratives”.

stoker. He wrote it in less than three months and claimed he did not correct anything from it (Napierkowski 4). The jumping from one narrative section to another and the direct unfiltered projection of the characters' thoughts made the novel one of the most simple-complicated literary works, and Faulkner one of the pioneers of Modern Literature. All these complications and details make the reader of the novel wonder whether there exists something else other than thoughts and events being stated randomly. Something that is deeper than the surface; for instance, objective reality.

Objective reality has been defined before as an existent fact since the beginning of the universe, does not change with time, and is independent of conscious awareness. There are such things in our novel, such as Death. The concept of death is dominant in the whole story from its beginning to its end. Starting from the title "as I lay dying" that reflects the idea that life is just a slow process of death, and that Addie Bundren was not dying only when she got laid in her deathbed, but years before that, as she says in her monologue: "I could just remember how my father used to say that the reason for living was to get ready to stay dead a long time" (51), as if "as I lay dying" here means "as I live" or "as I spend my life". The whole life of Addie is a deathbed for her, not just her bed itself. Death is something that no one can deny. It is a universal truth since the beginning of creation. It is explained by science as the failure of vital organs: brain, heart, lungs, etc. followed by the failure of the whole system of the body. It is recognized by signs such as "no heart beat, stop in breathing regulation, no movement of eye lids when focused light and the body losing [sic] its natural warmth" (Kasivi). However, there is no real conscious awareness and total grasping of the concept of death. It is independent of conscious awareness. Death, then, is an objective reality.

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Addie owns a whole section that she narrates after her death, but can a dead person tell a story? Dr. Sam Parnia, the director of critical care and resuscitation research at NYU Langone Medical Center in her research on Death, comes up with the realization that people stay conscious a while after they die, “due to brainwaves firing in the cerebral cortex—the conscious, thinking part of the brain—for roughly 20 seconds after clinical death” (Dickinson). So apparently, Addie’s section happened in those twenty seconds after her death, where consciousness is at its best. Although many critics see Darl’s section as the most important, informative, and profound one, but Addie’s constructs a deeper version than Darl’s, because of the way she reveals a set of realizations and truths about the world. Addie exceeds the limits of normal conversations, then runs over the ceilings of Language, that one used in interior monologue itself. She once says;

That was when I learned that words are no good; that words dont ever fit even what they are trying to say at. When he was born I knew that motherhood was invented by someone who had to have a word for it because the ones that had the children didn't care whether there was a word for it or not. I knew that fear was invented by someone that had never had the fear; pride, who never had the pride. (51)

Addie discusses here her realization that words are just subjective tools used to convey what they are trying to express, and they do not anyway. She claims that words like motherhood, pride and fear are purely subjective, and that the objective reality that she came to realize after her death, lies behind those words, because having a baby is independent from one’s perception. It is there when it happens and the “mother” should act accordingly. It is the naming “motherhood” that makes it sound poetic and personal. Hence, death within the story is an objective reality. It is the final stage where the person realizes the pure truths about the world.

Turning back to Nagel's "view from nowhere", there is no better passage to reflect on the four stages of obtaining an objective vision than Darl's monologue when he says;

I used to lie on the pallet in the hall, waiting until I could hear them all asleep, so I could get up and go back to the bucket. It would be black, the shelf black, the still surface of the water a round orifice in nothingness, where before I stirred it awake with the dipper I could see maybe a star or two in the bucket, and maybe in the dipper a star or two before I drank. After that I was bigger, older. Then I would wait until they all went to sleep so I could lie with my shirt-tail up, hearing them asleep, feeling myself without touching myself, feeling the cool silence blowing upon my parts ... (3)

The first stage is knowing that our perception is the result of our interaction with things from the external world, which is the case with Darl's experience with cold water. The second stage is that the true nature of things should detach from how they appear to be perceived, which reflects Darl's resemblance of water with "a round orifice in nothingness", and that he can see a star or two inside it. He took the water from its perceptual appearance level to a stellar level. Thirdly, he constructs a new conception of water as a powerful entity that makes his mind grow older and bigger after he drunk from it. Finally, he transcends his senses by "feeling himself without touching himself". Darl here brings a whole new conception to "feeling" which is feeling without using your sensory organs. It is a vision that leads to exploring objective reality.

It has been mentioned that Descartes defines Objectivity by knowing that you exist as a non-physical thinking thing. Darl, again, says;

In a strange room you must empty yourself for sleep. And before you are emptied for sleep, what are you. And when you are emptied for sleep, you are not. And when you are filled with sleep, you never were. I dont know what I am. I dont know if I am or not. Jewel knows he is, because he does not know that he does not know whether he

is or not. He cannot empty himself for sleep because he is not what he is and he is what he is not. (24)

This quote depicts the thinking of Darl from two levels: common knowledge, i.e. what he tells people he knows, and private knowledge, i.e. what he knows and does not come out of the limits of his mind. He first questions the existence of the human being before being “emptied for sleep”, when your thinking is still processing. Questioning one’s existence means he exists as a non-physical thinking thing. Then he says that the human being does not exist when he is emptied for sleep, i.e. there is no existence of the human being without the existence of his thoughts. Men only exists as a non-physical thinking thing. Then he questions the nature of his thought by saying “I don’t know who I am. I don’t know if I am or not”, which means, in our Cartesian context, “I don’t know what my thinking is. I don’t know if I think or not”. After that, he moves to the common knowledge that Jewel “thinks” he knows who he is, then speaks about Jewel’s unknown unknowns, and the fact that he does not know he doesn’t know whether he exist. If Darl wants to tell one thing through this super complicated quote, it must be the fact that subject exist only objectively as non-physical thinking things.

II.1.3 Exploring Subjectivism on *As I Lay Dying* through the Passages of Vardaman and Darl

A rose is a rose. It is our interactions with it that change. Also a fish is a fish, and a horse is a horse. Things we perceive have inherent characteristics that made them the way they are. We perceive those things, and we call them by name. *As I Lay Dying* has a whole narrative section that is composed of one sentence “my mother is a fish” (25). It’s Vardaman’s section. Vardaman is the youngest of Addie’s children. He happens to catch a big fish then shows it to his father, Anse. Vardaman then get shocked with the fact that his fish is being cuts into pieces

and cooked for dinner as it bleeds on the pan, as his mother dies. By calling his mother “a fish”, Vardaman gives the characteristics of a fish to his mother. Addie fell with her coffin off the wagon in the road to Jefferson. She drowned in the water. Then she was set on fire afterwards. A fire that was sat by her son Darl. Vardaman refers to his mother as a fish because the fish he saw and developed close knowledge about also, like his mother, has been in the water than burnt in fire. However, Vardaman says in one of his monologues that his “mother is a fish. Darl says that when we come to the water again” (60).

It is commonly known that a few days after death, dead bodies start smelling like a rotten fish. Addie Bundren’s dead body did that too. Vardaman says and confirms that his mother is a fish; however, she does not smell bad. Vardaman states only the things he perceived about the fish, and related them to his mother. He constructed a subjective knowledge based purely on experience, which is the notion of Subjectivism.

Darl, on the other hand, says that Jewel’s mother is a horse (64). Jewel is his mother’s favorite, and he loves horses, and Darl knows both of these pieces of information. Darl also knows that Jewel is not Anse’s son, and that Addie considers herself Jewel’s mother only, not the rest. Darl in one of his monologues describes the wildness of Jewel’s horse: “When Jewel can almost touch him, the horse stands on his hind legs and slashes down at Jewel . . . with the other patting the horse's neck in short strokes myriad and caressing, cursing the horse with obscene ferocity” (3). Darl says Jewel’s mother is a horse because she knew she was just as wild as Jewel’s horse back in the day, when she cheated on Anse. He compares the old Addie with the new one. His mother, the actual Addie, is not a horse, but Jewel’s mother, the old Addie, is a horse. Darl transmits how experience changed Addie and how it slowly turned her

from a “horse” to a sad ill being. The characterization of Darl to Addie based on personal perception and experience is another way to depict Subjectivism in the novel.

II.2 Objective and Subjective Narrative Viewpoints in the Novel

As I Lay Dying is a novel that narrates a story about a family in South America. The surface of the narrative in the story diverges from a narrator to the other. However, looking into the narration itself can provide the reader with either an objective or a subjective vision. The narration starts with describing setting. Darl observes the place and tells details about it, “[t]he path runs straight as a plumb-line, worn smooth by feet and baked brick-hard by July, between the green rows of laid-by cotton, to the cottonhouse in the center of the field, where it turns and circles the cottonhouse at four soft right angles and goes on across the field again, worn so by feet in fading precision” (1). Darl here describes the place with details without mentioning what it is like or how does it feel. Therefore, his description is objective. Describing characters can be objective too, as what has been mentioned in the first chapter of this research. Tull, describing Anse, says: “Anse keeps on rubbing his knees. His overalls are faded; on one knee a serge patch cut out of a pair of Sunday pants, wore iron-slick. ‘No man dislikes it more than me,’ he says” (8). In another description by Samson, “It was just before sundown. We were sitting on the porch when the wagon came up the road with the five of them in it and the other one on the horse behind. One of them raised his hand, but they was going on past the store without stopping” (32). Here the narrators Tull and Samson provide neutral description of the characters. They mention only what they see and hear without getting into justifications of the characters’ deeds, and without mentioning how they feel about those characters. These are some examples of objective passages in the narrative of *As I Lay Dying*.

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As I Lay Dying is a Multiple Narrative. It consists of several narrative sections where a single event is being told by different narrators with each narrator owning a different relation to the event, “The story of the journey is presented by a variety of narrators: family members, friends, acquaintances, and objective onlookers. Each narrator provides a different perspective on individuals and events” (Napierkowski 3). Every narrator in the novel narrates the story in first-person from his or her own point of view and perspective of seeing things. Cora, for example, sees Darl as a good soul sent by God, “I always said Darl was different from those others. I always said he was the only one of them that had his mother's nature, had any natural affection” (6). While Addie sees Jewel as the best one of his siblings. She thinks it is him that will save her, “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” (50).

Because of his weird nature and intuitive personality, Darl is thought to be crazy by many, although Faulkner himself had two opposing comments on the character of Darl. In a meeting at the University of Virginia, Faulkner claims;

Darl was mad from the first. He got progressively madder because he didn't have the capacity not so much of sanity but of inertness to resist all the catastrophes that happened to the family. Jewel resisted because he was sane and he was the toughest. The others resisted through probably inertia, but Darl couldn't resist it and and so he went completely off his rocker. But he was mad all the time. (Gwynn110)

then in the same meeting he says: “the character in the book *As I Lay Dying*, Darl, one of the sons, was mad, as society would call him mad. To me, he wasn't—wasn't mad” (Railton). There are many opinions about Darl among the narrators of the story and even by Faulkner, the author of the story. Anse is another narrator with a different point of view. He sees himself as someone who does no wrong although his neighbors consider him as a selfish weak person.

Cora perceives the story and narrates it from a narrow-minded, purely religious perspective. She mentions God a lot of times in her monologue and always decides who is good and who is bad, as when she describes Addie in her deathbed, “[h]er eyes are like two candles when you watch them gutter down into the sockets of iron candlesticks. But the eternal and the everlasting salvation and grace is not upon her” (2). Cora judges Addie and determines her destiny as sinful and not accepted by the lord, but Addie has another point of view about Cora, “[o]ne day I was talking to Cora. She prayed for me because she believed I was blind to sin, wanting me to kneel and pray too, because people to whom sin is just a matter of words, to them salvation is just words too” (53). From Addie’s point of view, Cora and people like her, who pretend to be pious and perfect, are in fact just hypocrites who use religion to whiten their picture among people.

Each one of the narrators reflect his or her own point of view and perception of the events, which makes *As I Lay Dying* a set of declarations of people who are sometimes very close to the story, like the Bundren family, and others are from it, Like Samson and Whitfield. Nevertheless, the combination of all those viewpoints from all those types of narrators created a complete version to the events that makes the reader construct a full understanding to the story once the narrative sections are over. After reading all the points of view of the novel, it becomes difficult for the reader to judge or take part of any of the narrators, because he learns from the story that it all depends on the speaker and the way he sees it, which is the thing that make him choose to be objective and neutral towards the events and characters.

Conclusion

As has been shown above, *As I Lay Dying* is a work that holds both objective and subjective passages, sentences and concepts among its lines. The way the text is constructed

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shows where objectivity lies in some places, and where subjectivity lies in others. The philosophical atmosphere in the narration shows the existence of objective and subjective levels of thinking, and the multiple voices used to narrate the story can create a subjective as well as an objective vision to the story in the mind of the reader.

William Faulkner manages in the passages and quotes analyzed above to depict the notions of objectivity and subjectivity in a story of a struggling American family. He could turn through his odd style of writing and choice of expressions and voices to turn a journey of a group of desperate people to a complex multilayered piece of literature that can be interpreted on so many levels among them objectivity and subjectivity.

Introduction

Stream of consciousness is a narrative technique that is noticeably used in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. The use of this technique is essential in the novel since it shows the flow of the characters' thoughts and how they interact with different conscious experiences. Thus, objectivity and subjectivity might be present in the passages of the novel in relation to stream of consciousness use. Faulkner tends to show through stream-of-consciousness writing the originality and individuality of his works that fall under the umbrella of Modern Literature.

The passages from the novel that are narrated through stream of consciousness project a direct exhibition of the characters' minds at work. However, as it has been previously mentioned, stream of consciousness is considered as a set of steps the author follows in order to achieve that bizarre, unearthly, surreal style of writing. It dives deeper into the bottom of the characters' consciousness and shows how they think about other characters and event. It turns thinking from local to global, and interaction from central to extreme. This chapter explores and identifies the notion of Objectivity and Subjectivity through the use of Faulkner of the stream of consciousness narrative technique. It depicts the terms through scanning the passages of the narrative, analyzing the quotes of the characters, then diving into the psyche of a number of narrators.

III.1 Juxtaposing Objectivity and Subjectivity on Stream of Consciousness in *As I Lay Dying*

Stream of consciousness is a technique used by William Faulkner in a number of passages in the novel in order to show the process of the character's unedited thoughts. It depicts the mind of the characters at work and provides a psychological narration to the story. As has been stated previously. Writing through stream of consciousness reflects a

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sense of objectivity on some parts of the narrative, and a sense of subjectivity on others. It explores the inner worlds of each mind and the secrets it hides from the other minds. It also depicts the way the characters perceive the external world.

Characters move through stream of consciousness from the usual plain nature of American southerners who struggle only to put food on their tables and survive the obstacles life put them through, to complex subjects that are considered as a tiny drop in the deep sea of everythingness. Sometimes they just go blank and could not think of saying anything, which leads them afterwards to ask the maximum amount of questions that could ever come to a philosopher's mind. They question such things as values, love, fear and honesty, and they go beyond the ordinary use of words and expressions till their mouths cease to speak and their insides start producing thoughts with a language that language cannot serve¹. "It was then, and then I saw Darl and he knew. He said he knew without the words like he told me that ma is going to die without words, and I knew he knew because if he had said he knew with the words I would not have believed that he had been there and saw us" (7). That was Dewe Dell saying that she communicates with Darl "without the words". Characters in *As I Lay Dying* have developed another level of communication which is beyond our regular language which they refer to as "words".

Stream of consciousness technique, as stated by Hymphry, is characterized by quoting directly from the narrator's mind, which exhibits the original raw material of the thoughts. This direct interior monologue is present in many places in *As I Lay Dying*, for example when Jewel talks about Cash and how he saws the coffin in front of his mother, "And now them others sitting there, like buzzards. Waiting, fanning themselves. Because I said If you wouldn't keep on sawing and nailing at it until a man cant sleep even and her

¹ Meaning another type of language. A special language they created because the every-day language could not transmit the message they wanted to send.

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hands laying on the quilt like two of them roots dug up and tried to wash and you couldn't get them clean" (4). This direct quote from the mind of Jewel contains shifts in the speech. Darl talks about how his family is sitting and recalls some childhood memories then comes back to blaming Cash for his deeds. This phase of stream of consciousness writing shows the thoughts just as the way they are without trying to add them in order to make them understood for the reader.

Another characteristic of stream of consciousness is the use of description by an omniscient narrator, which appears the most in Darl's monologues. Darl appears to be an abnormal character in the story. He seems to know everything about the other narrators, and he narrates the death of Addie while he did not attend it. He knew that Dewey Dell was pregnant with Lefe;

You want her to die so you can get to town: is that it?' She wouldn't say what we both knew. The reason you will not say it is, when you say it, even to yourself, you will know it is true: is that it? But you know it is true now. I can almost tell you the day when you knew it is true. (11)

Also when he knew that their mother is going to die and told the event with details, "'She is going to die,' he says. And old turkey-buzzard Tull coming to watch her die but I can fool them" (8). And when Darl's name was mentioned in one of his monologues, "*I am I and you are you and I know it and you dont know it and you could do so much for me if you just would and if you just would then I could tell you and then nobody would have to know it except you and me and Darl*" (15). This section written in Italics inside Darl's monologue shows that either Darl suffers from a mental illness that made him have two split personalities where one of them talks about the other, or there is another omniscient narrator that Faulkner used to show that it was not Darl who was talking all along the story, but an objective observer from the outside.

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Narrators become in a position of control of the events through stream of consciousness, since they analyze the events from many perspectives. Stream of consciousness gives a deeper insight to the reader, since they become able to know about stories written in stream of consciousness technique more than what they know about stories written in a simple plain narrative style. In *As I Lay Dying*, the reader becomes the decision makers of what the nature of both the events and the characters that take place in the novel is, because he manages to see things in the mind of each character. It is like a “don’t tell” action. The reader is the only one who is able to hear what the narrator is saying, which makes the narrator the freedom to express his attitudes towards people and actions in the story. The reader, then, owns knowledge of the events and characters more than the characters of the story do. He hears about Jewel, for example, from Jewel himself, then from his family members, then from his neighbors. Each one of this provides information about Jewel only the reader has access into, eventually; the reader becomes able to decide neutrally without taking any particular side.

The last phase suggested by Humphry to the stream of consciousness writing process is the dramatized unconscious, where the thoughts of the characters become surreal and dreamlike. This phase provides the reader with a bonus journey into the deepest points in the character’s mind and enables him to see what the characters are thinking of. A good example of that is when Darl starts describing events, he says: “We go on, with a motion so soporific, so dreamlike as to be uninferant of progress, as though time and not space were decreasing between us and it” (31). Here Darl goes beyond the normal notion of space and time and express them as dreamlike motions that transcend reality. Another example is when he narrates how Addie falls off the wagon, “It is as though the space between us were time: an irrevocable quality. It is as though time, no

longer running straight before us in a diminishing line, now runs parallel between us like a looping string, the distance being the doubling accretion of the thread and not the interval between” (43), he makes it sound like something that happened beyond reality.

III.1.1 Juxtaposing Objectivity on Stream of Consciousness through the Monologues of Cash, Addie, and Darl

The characters in *As I Lay Dying* express their thoughts and ways of thinking through stream of consciousness technique, which is the thing that gives space to the reader to analyze and explore the notions of objectivity and subjectivity in those passages. One of the stream-of-consciousness passages that show the existence of an objective thinking is that of Cash’s monologue, where he says:

Sometimes I aint so sho who's got ere a right to say when a man is crazy and when he aint. Sometimes I think it aint none of us pure crazy and aint none of us pure sane until the balance of us talks him that-a-way. It's like it aint so much what a fellow does, but it's the way the majority of folks is looking at him when he does it (71).

Cash here performs a neutral attitude. He claims that no one has the right to judge people, and that craziness is just a social construction. When society has a consensus about something it becomes a fact, while in fact, as Cash claims, it is not. It is just a subjective perception towards the external world that has been created by both individuals and society.

Addie, on the other hand, shows objectivity through her claims about language. She performs an impartial opinion about what people say to each other. She argues that words are unreliable, and that she does not count on them, but instead, she wants to overpass the limits of words and treat people and events from a broader, objective perspective that breaks the regular rules and use of language. She says;

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He had a word, too. Love, he called it. But I had been used to words for a long time. I knew that 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....One day I was talking to Cora. She prayed for me because she believed I was blind to sin, wanting me to kneel and pray too, because people to whom sin is just a matter of words, to them salvation is just words too. (52)

Addie says here that people are subjective because they might change their minds at any moment, and the proof is “words”. Addie talks about the fact that the changing of words means a changing of the mentality and perception of human beings, that is why for her, language is subjective and the best way to obtain an objective vision about the world is by going beyond words and language. She clarifies that in one of her monologues when she says that she no longer believe in the notion of names and their meaning, and decides to think of her family members without reconsidering or remembering their names (52). This part shows how Addie turns names into shapes, then figures out how they are subjective and changing so they just disappear with time. She believes that names are nothing but labels and badges which define the name’s owner. For that, she decides to deal with Anse, Darl and Jewel apart of their names. She wanted to conduct an objective interaction with people and events and see the world around her with a purely objective eye.

Objectivity takes place in *As I Lay Dying* also in Peabody’s monologue. The doctor witnesses the struggles of the family and gives objective comments about them. “[Peabody] comments on the family' s behavior from an objective perspective. He views the family as proud, but slovenly and ignorant” (Napierkowski 6). Peabody blames Anse for not taking care of Cash and covering his leg with cement instead of taking him to the hospital. He also blames Cash for not standing for his rights and letting his leg get worse (75). Peabody provides an objective, fair judgment to the characters without including his

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feelings and emotion. As a doctor who graduated from a medical college, Peabody represents a scientific opinion. Peabody's descriptions are neutral too. An example of that is when he described the scene when he gets summoned to Addie's house too late to rescue her, "I leave the room. Beyond the porch Cash's saw snores steadily into the board. A minute later she calls his name, her voice harsh and strong. 'Cash,' she says; 'you, Cash!'" (13). Peabody narrates the events from an outsider point, the point of a doctor that is just doing his job and have seen many cases like Addie and Cash and even worse, the thing which makes his narration considered as neutral and objective.

Objectivity appears also in some parts of Darl's monologues, for example, the passage where he describes his walk with Jewel into the cotton house;

Tull's wagon stands beside the spring, hitched to the rail, the reins wrapped about the seat stanchion. In the wagon bed are two chairs. Jewel stops at the spring and takes the gourd from the willow branch and drinks. I pass him and mount the path, beginning to hear Cash's saw (1).

Darl here describes the settings and events neutrally without providing his feelings and dramatized imagination. He plays in this passage the role of the unintrusive omniscient narrator that takes place in the process of stream of consciousness writing. He describes the story and knows everything but does not intrude.

III.1.2 Juxtaposing Subjectivity on Stream of Consciousness through the Monologues of Addie, Cash and Darl

Subjectivity appears in *As I Lay Dying* in stream of consciousness passages through the projection of conscious experiences that the characters pass through. Like the experience of Darl with cold water that he recalls from his childhood, "When I was a boy I first learned how much better water tastes when it has set a while in a cedar bucket.

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Warmish-cool, with a faint taste like the hot July wind in Cedar trees smells” (3). The presence of senses is a proof of perception and consciousness the thing which automatically proves the subjectivity in this quote. Another example of subjectivity in the novel through the use of stream of consciousness technique is what happened to Addie when she narrates her story with Whitefield;

While I waited for him in the woods, waiting for him before he saw me, I would think of him as dressed in sin. I would think of him as thinking of me as dressed also in sin, he the more beautiful since the garment which he had exchanged for sin was sanctified. I would think of the sin as garments which we would remove in order to shape and coerce the terrible blood to the forlorn echo o the dead word high in the air. Then I would lay with Anse again - I did not lie to him: I just refused, just as I refused my breast to Cash and Darl after their time was up--hearing the dark land talking the voiceless speech. (53)

Addie expresses in the quote above his experience with Whitefield and how she cheated on her husband, Anse. She projects her opinion about what happened and narrates it with a pure subjective voice.

There is another passage that reflects subjectivity through stream of consciousness in the novel which is Addie’s monologue when she talks about her experience with death and how she used to think of it, how her perception to the concept of death changed through time, and how does it change in relation to each person and their backgrounds and beliefs;

I can remember how when I was young I believed death to be a phenomenon of the body; now I know it to be merely a function of the mind - and that of the minds of the ones who suffer the bereavement. The nihilists say it is the end; the fundamentalists, the beginning; when in reality it is no more than a single tenant or family moving out of a tenement or a town. (12)

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This quote is the depiction of how perceptions towards elements from the external world are out of our conscious and are not constant. It is changing over time depending on age, beliefs, and background of the subject. In one of the passages, Cash explains what he thinks about new experiences and their impact on the subject's consciousness;

When something is new and hard and bright, there ought to be something a little better for it than just being safe, since the safe things are just the things that folks have been doing so long they have worn the edges off and there's nothing to the doing of them that leaves a man to say, That was not done before and it cannot be done again. (38)

Cash here talks about the repetition of an experience turn it into a habit and then it moves to the unconscious mind; therefore, your consciousness will not perceive it properly. However, fresh, brand new conscious experience provides the mind with energy and ecstasy that makes the subject feel the moment and sense the notion of the new experience. What Cash tries to explain here is purely subjective.

In one of the passages of the novel, where Darl describes again the family's reactions to Addie's death. He describes Vardaman's reaction, he says: "From behind pa's leg Vardaman peers, his mouth full open and all color draining from his face into his mouth, as though he has by some means fleshed his own teeth in himself, sucking. He begins to move slowly backward from the bed, his eyes round, his pale face fading into the dusk like a piece of paper pasted on a failing wall, and so out of the door" (14). Darl here does not only describe the events as they are, but adds what he thinks of those events and how they felt for him. Unlike his previous ones, this description of Darl is not objective, because he added up to the original events and commented on the things he witnessed, which makes his observation subjective.

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The story narrates another conscious experience through stream of consciousness, which is Cash's experience with the broken leg;

'Maybe if you could get a little sand', he says. 'It aint but one more day,' he says. 'It dont bother me none.' Vardaman goes back down the road to where we crossed the branch and returns with sand. He pours it slowly into the thick coiling in the can. I go to the wagon again.

'Does that look all right?'

'Yes,' Cash says. 'I could have lasted. It dont bother me none'. (63)

Cash responds to the breaking of his leg in a weird way, since he claims that it does not bother him, and that he is okay with putting some sand or cement on it. Although his physical body shows an opposite reaction, since he sweats a lot and gets tired so fast, but he always denies that he is feeling pain and says that the situation is totally fine. Cash's perception to his health state is different from other perceptions, and it shows a subjective interaction of the happening which reveals special, individual, subjective qualities that characterize Cash in particular among the rest of the characters in *As I Lay Dying*.

III.2 Objectivity and Subjectivity in the Psyche of Darl, Addie, Dewey Dell, Vardaman and Cora through the use of Stream of Consciousness

The use of Stream of Consciousness technique reveals a lot of things about the psyche of the characters. It shows how they perceive things and deal with events. It also shows how they think of each other and how they see the world around them. As a family that is about to lose its Matriarch, the Bundrens confront many stages of angst and despair. Faulkner transmits their psychological instability through stream of consciousness, sometimes with adding black humor² to the speech, and sometimes by planting deep

² According to Encyclopedia Britannica, Black Humor is the "writing that juxtaposes morbid or ghastly elements with comical ones that underscore the senselessness or futility of life".

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philosophical questions inside the narrative sentences. “The stream-of-consciousness passages reveal character and allow for complicated philosophical questioning. They also imply a character's confusion or distress” (Napierkowski 9).

As we have stated in the first chapter, the unconscious takes part in the processing of stream of consciousness. The unconscious mind was described By Sigmund Freud as the bigger circle and the objective reality that resembles the external world. The characters during the process of the unconscious obtain an objective opinion about the events. Unconscious narration is similar to surreal narration, because they both contain elements that are dreamlike and unusual. They do not speak about reality that we know it, but about what is beyond that reality and that is out of the perception of our sensory organs. A key example of that in the novel is the character of Darl when he tried to perceive the world out of his sensory organs. In a description that sounds really surreal and abnormal, he says;

And at night it is better still. I used to lie on the pallet in the hall, waiting until I could hear them all asleep, so I could get up and go back to the bucket. . . . Then I would wait until they all went to sleep so I could lie with my shirt-tail up, hearing them asleep, feeling myself without touching myself, feeling the cool silence blowing upon my parts and wondering if Cash was yonder in the darkness doing it too, had been doing it perhaps for the last two years before I could have wanted to or could have. (3)

He describes the place that he remembers from his childhood and it sounds like a dream because the description is so surreal. Furthermore, he wanted to perceive the world without his senses, Darl simply wanted to construct an objective understanding about himself and the world around him through exploring his unconscious mind.

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Darl has a lot of stream of consciousness passages in the novel that reflect his unconscious mind, like the passage where he uses a weird structure of grammar to talk about himself, Addie and Jewel;

And since sleep is is-not and rain and wind are *was*, it is not. Yet the wagon *is*, because when the wagon is *was*, Addie Bundren will not be. And Jewel *is*, so Addie Bundren must be. And then I must be, or I could not empty myself for sleep in a strange room. And so if I am not emptied yet, I am *is*. (42)

Faulkner wrote the verb to be in Italics everywhere in Darl's monologue above, in order to show that Darl does not mean the normal sense of "to be". He does not mean by "to be", "to exist" only, but he means what is beyond this existence. He discusses the very core reason behind the existence of human beings through the use of another type of syntax and grammar. He is thinking now in an unconscious level of thought where language and structure do not convey what the narrator wants to show and what he is thinking of in the very bottom of his consciousness. This passage reflects the raw thoughts of the narrators that did not confront any editors or filter.

Addie is another character in the novel that shows objectivity through her passages about language. She shows how language in our life is subjective and that in order to be objective, one should go beyond the limits of language, because in the end, language is inadequate when people try to express their thoughts, she says: "He had a word, too. Love, he called it. But I had been used to words for a long time. I knew that 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 anymore than for pride or fear" (52). She reveals through this passage that she does not trust words because they do not fulfill the purpose of the speech and are created only to strive for better ways of telling reality, to lie so that you will look nice and good even when you are not. Addie claims through this passage

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that language is used subjectively by people and they use it subjectively and control it purposefully to fulfill their own needs and goals. This part of Addie's monologue uncovers the objective reality behind words and how people use them without knowing what they actually mean. She further supports her claim;

I would think how words go straight up in a thin line, quick and harmless, and how terribly doing goes along the earth, clinging to it, so that after a while the two lines are too far apart for the same person to straddle from one to the other; and that sin and love and fear are 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. (52)

Dewey Dell's character's also depicts a surreal talk that appears to be brought from the unconscious. She describes the road to Jefferson not as a normal trip but as an unearthly entity, she says in her monologue: "That's what they mean by the womb of time: the agony and the despair of spreading bones, the hard girdle in which lie the outraged entrails of events" (34). Dewey Dell provides a bizarre, unusual description of time and how things happen in a way that sounds unreal and dream like, the thing which proves that this quote is coming from Dewey Dell's unconscious. Dewey Dell, however, shows subjectivity in some passages where she depicts a response to trauma. She was confronted with difficult times when her mother dies and she finds out she is pregnant and does not know how to deal with the situation, she declares: "I can't worry. I try to but I can't think long enough to worry" (17). Another passage that shows her subjective response to trauma is when she tries to ask for help from Peabody, "It's because I am alone. If I could just feel it, it would be different, because I would not be alone. But if I were not alone, everybody would know it. And he could do so much for me, and then I would not be alone. Then I could be all right alone" (17). This quote depicts the instable

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mental situation of the character Dewey Dell which came as a response to the trauma she has been put into.

Vardaman is one of the character that shows the subjective perception of events from a little child perspective. This is shown in the passage where his mother's coffin falls off the wagon into the river, Vardaman shows a hysterical response to the happening, "I ran down into the water to help and I couldn't stop hollering because Oarl was strong and steady holding her under the water even if she did fight he would not let her go he was seeing me and he would hold her and it was all right now it was all right now it was all right" (45). The repetition used through stream of consciousness in the passage of Vardaman reflects how much he is traumatized about his mother's death. It also portrays the fact that, as a child, Vardaman does not fully perceive the concept of death and thinks that his mother is just like the fish he caught the other day, and that she can be brought to life again after she fell into the water. This quote is a projection of Vardaman's subjective perception of his mother's death.

Another key example of subjectivity in *As I Lay Dying* stream of consciousness passages is the monologues of Cora. Cora represents a very narrow-minded mentality that sees things from a pure religious perspective and judges people and decides whether they are going to heaven or hell. She judges Addie for being a sinful wife as she claims: "Just because you have been a faithful wife is no sign that there is no sin in your heart, and just because your Me is hard is no sign that the Lord's grace is absolving you" (50). Cora is a judgmental character for she always determines people's intentions, "[o]ne day we were talking. She had never been pure religious, not even after that summer at the camp meeting when Brother Whitfield wrestled with her spirit, singled her out and strove with the vanity in her mortal heart" (50). Here Cora judges Addie for her past and the fact that

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she cheated on her husband, and she claims that what happened to Addie is God's punishment to her. Cora also subjectively judges Darl and Jewel and decides who is better than whom, she says in her monologue: "I always said Darl was different from those others. I always said he was the only one of them that had his mother's nature, had any natural affection. Not that Jewel, the one she labored so to bear and coddled and petted so and him flinging into tantrums or sulking spells, inventing devilment to devil her until I would have trailed him time and time" (6).

Conclusion

William Faulkner adopted the technique of Stream of Consciousness in *As I Lay Dying* in which he gave the narrators space to set their thoughts free and express things they could not express through other techniques other than stream of consciousness. Furthermore, this technique allows the reader as well to interpret and analyze *As I Lay Dying* from different angles such as the objectivity and the subjectivity in the novel

Objectivity and Subjectivity are found in many passages that use stream of consciousness as their narrative technique. They are found upon passages that describe events in different ways, passages that project the presence of conscious experiences, parts of the novel that show the bottom of the characters' consciousness, and parts that reveal mental illnesses and traumas characters confronted in the story. In brief, Stream of Consciousness in *As I Lay Dying* enables the readers to explore the notions of objectivity and subjectivity and where they are located among the events of the novel.

General Conclusion

This research aimed to explore the notions of Objectivity and Subjectivity in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* through analyzing the narrative of the novel. It first started by theorizing terms related to Objectivity and Subjectivity, such as perception and objective reality, as well as terms related to the narrative such as Multiple Narration and Stream of consciousness. It also showed the relation between Objectivity, Subjectivity, Narrative Viewpoints and Stream of Consciousness. This theoretical part was held in the first chapter.

To show the ability of William Faulkner of presenting both objective and subjective narration in his work, the second chapter of this dissertation contained the analytical part in which previously discussed themes were analyzed and reflected on the novel. It particularly analyzed Objectivity and Subjectivity in the narrative of *As I Lay Dying*, in which it related the notions of objective reality and elements of subjectivism to passages from the novel and identified objective and subjective narrative points of view that narrate the events of the story.

Furthermore, the second chapter discussed the use of multiple narrative voices in the novel and how they serve an objective as well as subjective view to the story, through analyzing some characters' monologues in which narrators such as Darl, Addie and Vardaman observe and describe settings, characters and events. The interpretations of each narrative section prove objectivity over subjectivity in some cases and subjectivity over objectivity in others, which opens the mind of the reader to choosing the perspective they see the novel through.

The third chapter dealt with the analysis and juxtaposition of Objectivity and Subjectivity on *As I Lay Dying* through Faulkner's use of Stream of Consciousness technique, in which elements of stream of consciousness writing were reflected on passages from the novel. Moreover, this chapter provided an analysis in terms of the psyche of the characters through stream of consciousness, where it was proved that some passages are objective due to

General Conclusion

the presence of the unconscious mind, while others were proved subjective by the depiction of conscious experiences in the minds of the narrators.

William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* is a novel that depicts the life of a family that lives in South America, and its members' everyday struggle to put food on the table or to realize the simplest of dreams one could have. Flood, fire, illness and death are essential elements in the narrative, since they play a main role in controlling the storyline of the story and directing its events. Therefore, a full Naturalistic reading of *As I Lay Dying* that has to include the analysis and detailed examination of the elements, features, characteristics and techniques of the Naturalist literary movement is recommended for future research.

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Appendix A

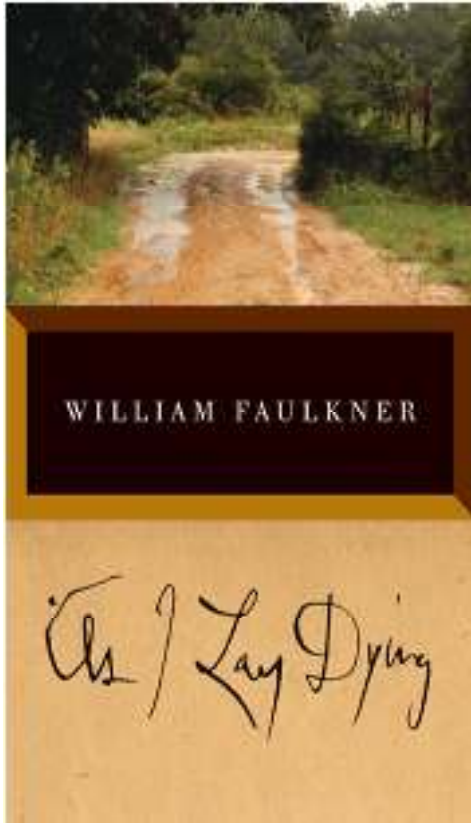
Biography of William Faulkner :



American writer William Faulkner was born in New Albany, Mississippi, in 1897. He started first by writing poetry, but his novels that usually take place in fictinal Yoknapatawpha County in American South, Mississippi paved the way for him to become one of the poineers of Modernist American Literature. Faulkner wrote several novels such as *The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying* and *Absalom, Absalom !* Some of his novels were turned into films such as *As I Lay Dying* and *Sanctuary*. Faulkner was awarded Nobel Prize in Literature in 1949. He also won two Pulitser and two National Book Awards. He died on July 6, 1962.

Appendix B

Synopsis of *As I Lay Dying*:



As I Lay Dying is the fifth novel of the American Writer William Faulkner. It is about the story of Addie Bundren, a mother of five children: Cash, Jewel, Darl, Dewey Dell, and Vardaman, lying in her deathbed watching her firstborn Cash building her coffin. The family members. Anse, Addie's husband and his children prepare to go to Jefferson to bury Addie next to her family as she requested. Meanwhile, Jewel and Darl decide to go out of town to earn three dollars, and Dewey Dell slips into a relationship with Lefe in the cotton field. Addie dies and her two children Jewel and Darl do not manage to see her, Dewey Dell then discovers she is pregnant and tries to ask Peabody, the doctor, for help. The family places Addie in the wagon and in the road to Jefferson they lose her twice, once when the bridge vanishes after the water rises, then when a fire was sat in the place her coffin was put

at. The family after that recovers the coffin and reaches the town with Addie's smelly, rotten dead body. Anse borrows shovels in order to bury her, Cash has had a broken leg covered with cement, Jewel decides to leave because Anse sold his most precious property, his horse, Darl is sent to an asylum in Jackson, and Vardaman wants to get a toy train from the town, Dewey Dell fails to get an abortion and her father takes the ten dollars she was given by Lave to buy the new set of teeth he always dreamed of, then marries the woman who lent him the shovels. The story takes place in fictional Yoknapatawpha county, Mississippi, and is narrated by fifteen narrators including Addie and her family members, plus some neighbors and acquaintances, along fifty-nine narrative sections.

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Philosophy, Narration and Stream of Consciousness**

**II. Chapter Two: Exploring Objectivity and Subjectivity in
the Narrative of As I Lay Dying**

III. Chapter Three: The Projection of Objectivity and Subjectivity in As I Lay Dying Through Stream of Consciousness

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