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**Speaking the image: The representation of women in culture**

**Esposito, Dawn G., Ph.D.**

**City University of New York, 1991**

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**SPEAKING THE IMAGE: THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN CULTURE**

**by**

**DAWN ESPOSITO**

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.**

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## Abstract

SPEAKING THE IMAGE: THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN CULTURE

by

Dawn Esposito

Advisor: Professor Michael Brown

This work investigates the inscription of women subjects into hegemonic ideology through the discourses of literary criticism and 20 century realist fiction. A feminist, post-structural theoretical framework is developed and then applied in a critical reading of Sanctuary and Requiem for a Nun by William Faulkner. The construction of the theoretical framework is accomplished through a series of reversals: that of literary criticism by sociology, of sociology by feminism, of feminist cultural analysis by a women's reading that is ideologically critical, and by the reversal of heterosexual, deconstructive difference through the insertion of the lesbian continuum. The method of reading formulated and applied exposes the power of the patriarchal narrative's influence on consciousness through the delineation of the phallogentric gaze as its framing device. The woman reader is encouraged to catch herself looking in order to resist the text's intention to instill terror of Her-Self.

Dedicated to -

my daughter, Mariah

my mother, Helene

and to the memory of

my grandmother, Josephine

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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My life has been enriched beyond measure through the nurturing presence of good women -

Joan Kelly's seminar and our brief contact before her death changed my life. Flavia Rando, Gail Satler, Barbara Sholler and Julie Thompson have challenged me with their ideas and encouraged me to pursue my own. Kimberley Flynn has been generous with her genius and spirit and will always be an inspiration and beloved friend. The women in my family have lent their continuing support and have lovingly cared for my daughter throughout my graduate studies.

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## CHAPTER I: CONSTRUCTING A POST-STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK

The intention of this work is to articulate a theoretical framework that would enable me to establish the representations of women as sexual beings in our culture and to reveal the ways in which these representations are created/ recreated in the ordinary practices of people, through our acts of discourse, that is, our speaking and writing. Representations are ideas or images that are constituted in language; some of these have more centrality, stability and diversity of use. It is these dominant representations of culture that I am interested in because they have a direct effect on our consciousness, on our ways of thinking about the social world. These representations can be said to be ideological, and they must be seen as products of a relation between the high culture of texts and critical tracts and the oral culture of daily life and public affairs.

The object of my analysis will be the literary works of William Faulkner. The representations of women contained in his fiction will be analyzed for their images and as accomplishments of language. I will argue that these images, these meta-descriptions of women, are given privilege in our culture, permeate our consciousness, and are repeated again and again by people in the course of their daily lives, and that they retain their meaning in large part because of this

privilege and capacity to permeate consciousness.

This is both a feminist and sociological project. Consciousness, ideology and culture have long been topics of inquiry for sociology; everyday life, representation, discourse and language have joined them as important areas of investigation. The theoretical framework for my analysis is influenced by marxism, ethnomethodology, the analytic theorizing formulated by alan blum and peter mchugh, and aspects of structuralism, post-structuralism and literary theory. It is predicated on a metatheory of language that I believe is found in wittgenstein and is consistent with certain recent developments in feminist theory and practice. The main finding of these otherwise different frames of reference is that the relationships among ideology, culture and consciousness are mediated by language in use; that this presupposes forms of social solidarity related to the dialectic of social labor, and that social labor, language in use, is the frame of reproduction of patriarchal, late capitalist society.

Feminism has made an important, significant intervention in all existing paradigms of knowledge. Feminist theory, and its concomitant epistemological presuppositions have challenged all academic disciplines, making it impossible for one to work within one's field without taking the critique developed by feminism seriously. My relationship to the body of knowledge I rely on as "sociological theory" is determined by my encounter with feminism as is the intention of my analytic pursuit at hand. I don't intend my descriptions of

faulkner's representations of women as simply another one of the multiplicities of interpretation that prevail in traditional literary discourse: that is I do not offer it as just one other interpretation, but rather, as one formulated and to be used within an explicitly political framework. The self reflection I bring to the grounds of my interpretation is not intended to fuel the fire behind deconstructionist notions that texts are not readable because no one interpretation is possible. Rather, I will argue that the methods of my interpretation and the results are part of a praxis. As Judith Fetterley, echoing one of the dictums of feminism, has written, "...feminist criticism is a political act whose aim is not simply to interpret the world but to change it by changing the consciousness of those who read and their relation to what they read" (1987, p.viii).

I wish to offer an insight into one of the ways in which we use language in our culture since this use has a direct bearing on the ways in which our culture thinks about women. I intend to formulate a method of reading that can be used as a pedagogical tool. My intention is to provide an alternative way of being with specific kinds of texts, those that barthes has described as "texts of pleasure, those that come from culture and don't break with it" (1975, p.14). This alternative way of being can empower women in our activity of reading. My work is located within the ongoing cultural project of feminism, which attempts, on one hand, to provide ways for women to rescue ourselves and appropriate positive

images within patriarchal culture (e.g. Fetterley, 1978, Kennard, 1986, Kolodny, 1980, Schweickart, 1986, in literary criticism and Modleski, 1986 and Mulvey, 1975, in film criticism) and on the other hand, to create alternative moments and visions (e.g. Stimpson, 1982, Showalter, 1985).

Feminist theory has developed both in and out of the academy, and while there are three "frameworks" organized around differences, a common epistemological basis is shared by liberal, radical and marxist-socialist feminism (Jagger and Rothenberg eds., 1984). These epistemological assumptions inform my work.

The notion of value-free, objective social science and the knowledge it has produced has been seriously challenged. Feminist analysis asserts that the objective claim to knowledge has hidden the fact that what has been described is male experience and the social world form the location of the male subject (Harding, 1986 - Smith, 1987). This has caused the specificity of gender to be overlooked; thus the task feminist scholarship has set for itself is the delineation of the experience of women as a group and the differences within that group due to the variables of race, class and sexual identity, as well as the differences in the experience of women from that of men.

An understanding of the mode of production has been expanded to include the persistence of patriarchal structures. Sociologists such as Jean Lipman-Blumen (1984) and Natalie Sokoloff (1980) have developed institutional analyses that

have pointed to the interest of one gendered group, men, as being a primary organizing principal of all social institutions. Based on this important finding, other feminists have begun examining particular institutions in detail.

The work that has directly examined culture as an institution has assumed that patriarchal ideology is inscribed within the various practices that make up the institution and the products that are produced. While contradictions do exist, the images of women are, by and large, misogynist (e.g. Dworkin, 1986, Griffin, 1981, Stimpson, 1982). It is further assumed that culture has a profound effect on consciousness. Women are socialized into looking at ourselves from the point of vision of the male observer, and thus self concepts are formed from the point of view of the other. This has been discussed by Mulvey (1975), Kaplan (1983) and others in film theory as "the gaze" and by Fetterley (1977) in literary theory as "immasculation".

Scholarship in diverse fields has indicated that the construction of woman as a social category results in the devaluation of all that is female and the elevation of all that is male (Ortner, 1974). As Simone deBeauvoir (1953) pointed out in her still timely work, she is the other to his one. These presuppositions, applied to the study of culture, result in the conclusion that the images of women that emerge are crucial to the maintenance of the images of men; they are perpetuated through ideological representations that have profound effects on consciousness, and are crucial to the

reproduction of a patriarchal social order. This is the idea behind Sheila Rowbatham's (1973) early explication of "women's consciousness, man's world" and the motivating idea behind all feminist investigation into culture.

My intention is to construct a feminist framework, inspired by insights from sociology that can be used to examine, not only the texts of william faulkner and everyday speech, but the discourse of literary criticism as well. I will show the necessity and presence of sociological categories of analysis within this body of knowledge.

My grounding in sociology begins with ethnomethodology because its object of investigation is everyday life and speech. This attention to language requires that the theoretical developments in structural linguistics, prompted by the work of saussure, be incorporated. Structuralism raises, without consistently addressing, notions of consciousness and subjectivity. These concerns are given more attention in blum and mchugh who presuppose a post-wittgenstein analysis. However, subjectivity is directly addressed by lacanian and other post-structuralist theories. Ideology is not adequately discussed in any of the above theories though it is a concern; therefore, marxist theories of ideology must be used as a way of connecting language, consciousness and subjectivity to the social world.

Ethnomethodology addresses itself to the creation of a world in common by members of society in their everyday activity by social practices that we engage in reproducing the

social conditions of those very practices. Ethnomethodology assumes that social reality is produced and reproduced through ceaseless interaction. It studies moments of interaction in order to uncover members' interpretations and understandings which are displayed in the work we do in accomplishing the conditions of interaction. Ethnomethodology posits an intrinsic connection between members' understanding of a situation and the activities they do to produce and manage the interaction that embodies that understanding. This implies that all social knowledge is in some sense, common sense knowledge. Common sense knowledge is created and expressed through directly usable language, conversation. However, ethnomethodology has treated language, and thus consciousness, as existing outside of historical contexts and thus begs the question of production for the sake of that of reproduction. On the contrary, language, as all social practices, takes place within a particular social formation, characterized by a particular form, or forms, of domination. Language has an ideological element to it and so does consciousness.

garfinkel (1967) provides the theoretical foundation for ethnomethodological studies, and it's possible to see the work of the conversation analysts as displaying how members accomplish the tasks garfinkel says they do. he argues that a reliable common sense world is possible due to the activity of members calling upon shared knowledge and then collectively enacting this knowledge, without making any reference to its origins or mediations, unselfconsciously. The world known in

common is comprised of background expectancies, common sense knowledge, is institutional knowledge of the real world.

garfinkel draws attention to the usefulness of the documentary method of interpretation, a search for underlying patterns of communication that members unreflectively engage in when interpreting reality. garfinkel's emphasis on the documentary method implies that the essential feature of being a member is to participate in a collectively acting out of the underlying patterns. This emphasizes process, the on-going accomplishment of a reliable view of reality. It reinforces the idea that everyday reality is the result of sustained activity by members doing what that reality requires.

Conversation analysis treats ordinary speech as the primary phenomenon for analysis because social activity is displayed in it. Talk/speech is understood as activity in which members display their social knowledge. The studies are interested in uncovering the structural arrangements of conversation itself (e.g. sacks, 1974). Because I'm asserting that a representation is both an image/idea and an activity that accomplishes this image/idea through the use of language, it should be possible to uncover a particular structural pattern that underlies both its appearance in the texts of high culture and the communicative events of daily life; though these events will not be investigated in this work. The model for this investigation is conversation as defined by the ethnomethodologists.

While ethnomethodology focuses on language in use, the

studies make little or no reference to the development of language theory that has taken place in structuralist, semiotic, and post-structuralist thought. This development, however, is crucial to feminist cultural analysis and has a direct bearing, not only on my analysis of literary texts, but on the treatment of these texts as instances of discourse as well.

The theory of language articulated by saussure is the starting point for this theoretical work. he conceptualized language as a "system of signs that express ideas" (1959, p.16), a system of differences with no positive terms. A sign consists of a signifier, the "sound-image", or written shape of letters, and a signified, a concept or meaning which that sound-image generates.

"Language can ...be compared to a sheet of paper: thought is the front and the sound the back; one cannot cut the front without cutting the back at the same time, likewise in language, one can neither divide sounds from thought nor thought from sounds" (p.113).

This formulation assumes a relationship between language and thought. The sign itself is a relational entity, a composite of two parts that signify, not only through the special features of each individual part, but through the association with each other. This association comprises the concept signification.

saussure argued that language preceded the existence of independent phenomenon and makes the world intelligible by

differentiating between concepts. This system of differences is experienced as natural and given despite the fact that it is constructed by the use of language. saussure stresses the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign and understands the connection between its parts as unmotivated i.e. not dependent on a natural bond.

"The bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary. Since I mean by the sign the whole that results from the associating of the signifier with the signified, I can simply say: the linguistic sign is arbitrary.

The idea of sister is not linked by any inner relationship to the succession of sounds s-o-r which serves as its signifier in French; that it could be represented equally by just any other sequence is proved by differences among languages and by the very existence of different languages: the signified "ox" has as its signifier b-o-f on one side of the border and o-k-s (ochs) on the other" (pp.67-68).

The relationship between the signifier and the signified is conventional and exists within a particular linguistic system. This emphasizes saussure's understanding that language is a social phenomenon; a linguistic community agrees to attach a meaning to a specific signifier. This agreement is manifested in the fact that certain linguistic units are used and understood. What enables members of a linguistic community to communicate are shared features held in common at the level of the signified.

The identity of a given signifier or given signified is

established through the ways in which it differs from all other signifiers or signifieds within the same system. saussure illustrates this point through an analogy to chess.

"a state of the set of chessmen corresponds closely to a state of language. The respective value of the pieces depends on their position on the chessboard just as each linguistic term derives its value from its opposition to all the other terms" (p.88).

Signs are defined then by their difference from each other within the entire network of signs that exists. This network is referred to as the signifying system. "Signs function then not through their intrinsic value but through their relative position" (p.118).

Meaning emerges as the play of differences within a closed system. Since this meaning is shared by members of the linguistic community, it is possible to understand meaning as public and conventional, the result of "inter-individual intelligibility i.e. meaning is socially constructed and the social construction of the signifying system is intimately related to the social formation itself" (Belsey, 1980, p.41).

saussure's theory is suggestive of a relationship existing between language and ideology. If language is a way of articulating shared understandings and meanings and the way members of society have for representing to themselves their relationship to the conditions of existence, then it is possible to understand ideology being inscribed in language. Ideology would intervene in the connection between the sign

and its referent. However, this is not a connection saussure explicitly discusses. his insistence on the arbitrary nature of the sign keeps him grounded in the domain of signification.

saussure is concerned with three types of systemic relations: that between a signifier and its signified, those between a sign and all the other elements of its system, and those between a sign and the elements which surround it within a concrete signifying instance. The relationship which one sign shares with all the other signs in the same system was discussed by saussure as "associative" but has come to be known as paradigmatic. Paradigmatic relationships can be predicted on a similarity between two signs at the level of the signifier, the signified or both. Linguistic examples of similarity at the level of the signifier would include words with the same prefix or suffix, and homonyms; synonyms and antonyms are examples of similarity at the level of the signified, and while examples of similarity at the level both of the signifier and the signified are more difficult to find, saussure cites the French words education and instruction which share the same suffix and mean schooling. Paradigmatic relationships find their support in the human memory system. "Their seat is in the brain; they are part of the inner storehouse that makes up the language of each speaker" (p.123).

The relations one sign shares with the other signs that surround it within a concrete signifying instance are referred to as 'syntagmatic'. These relations can only be realized in

discourse; an example would be the words in a sentence. saussure uses the image of a chain to illustrate this type of relationship (p.124).

Paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships determine a sign's value. michael brown elaborates on what saussure means by value in the following manner

"He (Saussure) means by this what Marx meant: the character of something such that its connection with an deafferentation for other things is both apparent and due to the activity of its production. And this can only be so if connection and differentiation are contradictory such that the character of the things is always being settled in a way that points to the unsettling work on which its ostensible settlement depends. "Value" refers to a contradiction that constitutes for action an essential ambiguity of the circulating thing or instance, a contradiction of use and exchange that can, with elaboration, be represented as contradictions of 1. production and circulation and 2. concrete and abstract productive activity" (1988, p.32).

The inclusion of human memory and discourse in saussure's discussion of value connects it to the crucial distinction he makes between langue and parole. Langue or language refers to the abstract linguistic system which preexists any individual use of it. Parole or speech refers to the manipulation of that system in order to produce concrete utterances. The locus of language is to be found in the memory of a culture. As saussure points out, "language is not complete in any speaker; it exists perfectly only within a collectivity" (p.14). The locus of speech is within the individual.

While I would not wish to hold onto such a sharp distinction between language and speech but would rather think of them as a relation and on some level inseparable, saussure does and privileges language as the proper object of study because it can be investigated along synchronic rather than diachronic lines.

saussure distinguishes synchronic from diachronic linguistics in the following manner.

"synchronic linguistics will be concerned with the logical and psychological relations that bind together coexisting terms and form a system in the collective minds of the speakers.

Diachronic linguistics, on the contrary, will study relations that bind together successive terms not perceived by the collective mind but substituted for each other without forming a system" (pp.99-100).

Synchronic investigation treats language as a transhistorical system, a related set of structures and diachronic as a succession of structures in its historical development. Silverman has suggested that saussure's emphasis on synchronic linguistics was, in part, due to his attempt at distinguishing his linguistics from that which was current during his lifetime, "to distinguish that is, between a linguistics predicated on relational terms and one predicated on historical terms" (1983, p.12). She understands saussure's work as intending to disengage linguistics from comparative studies of words from different historical moments in order to move

towards an analysis of words in the context of their language system.

saussure's emphasis on synchronic study has influenced theorists working within his model. jakobsen and others of the Czech school investigated deep structures of language formulating general laws with a universal character (jakobsen, 1956). chomsky's (1966) study of transformational, generative grammar is a search for the systems of rules of a language and an uncovering of deep structures that reveal a universal grammar common to all languages. This work suggests the existence of an innate capacity, shared by all humans, to generate these universal grammatical forms.

This turn however, is not inevitable in saussure. Silverman's identification of a symmetry between the terms synchrony and language and diachrony and speech captures the dynamic interconnections that permeate the theory saussure outlines. As Silverman notes, "we can only arrive at the second of these concepts (language) through the first (synchrony), since the language system consists precisely of synchronous elements. Diachrony and speech lend themselves to a similar linkage, both because speech unfolds in time, syntagmatically and because changes are introduced into language through speech" (p.12).

"...everything diachronic in language is diachronic only by virtue of speaking. It is in speaking that the germ of all change is found. Each change is launched by a certain number of individuals before it is accepted for general use" (saussure, 1966, p.98).

Silverman suggests conceptualizing diachrony within saussure's theory, "...as a series of successive synchronies, with speech functioning both as the agency of change from one synchrony to another, and as a relay between language and pressures external to it" (p.13).

Preserving the presence of speech in saussure is crucial to my theoretical project because it maintains the existence of discourse, communication between individuals who experience themselves, on some level, as subjects. The concept of subjectivity is embedded in various forms of literary criticism as will be shown in a subsequent chapter. It is crucial to the discussion of ideology within marxist theory and is an important element in feminist criticism. The concept subjectivity is problematized in marxist and feminist criticism, and this too, has a direct bearing on my work as will be shown.

peirce makes an important contribution to the presence of the subject within semiotics. What initially distinguishes peirce's work from that of saussure's is the attention paid to the referent, and the interconnection peirce explicitly makes between the sign, the interpretant, and the object.

"a sign...is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called

the ground" (Vol.II, p.135).

The sign sets off the play of meaning; it elicits a concept. The interpretant is the thought generated by the relation between the sign and the object and can be seen as being synonymous with the signified. peirce attributes the quality of endless commutability to the signified; the interpretant can become a sign which then produces a new interpretant with the process continually renewing itself.

"The meaning of a representation can be nothing but a representation. In fact, it is nothing but the representation itself conceived as stripped of irrelevant clothing. But this clothing never can be completely stripped off; it is only changed for something more diaphanous. So there is an infinite regression here. Finally, the interpretant is nothing but another representation to which the torch of truth is handed along; and as representation it has its interpretant again. Lo, another infinite series" (I,p.171).

This quote seems to indicate what eco (1976) has called a closed semiotics, one in which signifiers and signified, or signs and interpretants, in peirce's scheme become locked in self-containment, precluding any dependence of the interpretant/signified on the object. This tendency is contradicted however, by the connection peirce makes between signification and reality.

"...we have direct experience of things in themselves. Nothing can be more completely false than that we can experience

only our own ideas...Our knowledge of things in themselves is entirely relative, it is true, but all experience and all knowledge is knowledge of that which is, independently of being represented...- .At the same time, no proposition can relate, or even thoroughly pretend to relate, to any object otherwise than as that object is represented" (VI, p.73).

peirce seems to be arguing that we have direct experience but indirect knowledge of reality, and that while reality exists outside of thought, we have no way of understanding it until we have a way of representing it to ourselves. People have access to reality because people are themselves signs.

"...the word or sign which man uses is the man himself... the fact that every thought is a sign, taken in conjunction with the fact that life is a train of thought, proves that man is a sign...the man and the sign are identical...thus my language is the sum total of myself, for the man is the thought" (V, p.89).

What peirce is suggesting here is that "man", the generic signifier for the human subject, knows the world through language while at the same time being the product of language. he is further suggesting that we know ourselves and are knowable to others as signifiers. These ideas suggest an affinity, not only with a social theory of language I believe to be present in wittgenstein and in feminist work of representation, but with lacan's explanation of the constitution of the subject in and through language, as well.

The relationship between language and subjectivity is

addressed by the linguistic theorist beneviste. he draws attention to the fact that language, discourse, and subjectivity are inseparable. In his formulation, language and discourse correspond to saussure's distinction between langue and parole (language and speech), and subjectivity refers to both a speaker and a grammatical entity (1971).

Through an analysis of linguistic elements that have an indexical quality, particular pronouns and verb tenses, beneviste argues that language cannot be isolated from discourse which in turn cannot be isolated from subjectivity.

"There is no concept "I" that incorporates all the I's that are uttered at every moment in the mouths of all speakers, in the sense that there is a concept "tree" to which all the individual uses of tree refer. The "I", then, does not denominate any lexical entity. ...We are in the presence of a class of words, the "personal pronouns" that escape the status of all the other signs of language. Then, what does I refer to ? To something very peculiar which is elusively linguistic: I refers to the act of individual discourse in which it is pronounced, and by this it designates the speaker. It is a term that cannot be identified except in what we have called elsewhere an instance of discourse that has only a momentary reference. The reality to which it refers is the reality of the discourse...And so it is literally true that the basis of subjectivity is in the exercise of language" (p.226).

The "I" that beneviste is referring to always implies a speaker. This can be extended to an understanding of "you" as referring to a listener whom the speaker addresses. beneviste concludes from this that "I" and "you" signify only within

instances of discourse and lose their value outside the discursive moment.

Verbs, as well, take on meaning only in relation to a speaker. "Here" and "there" infer distance relative to the place occupied by a speaker, and other verbs, such as "now" and "then" imply a similar conceptualization of time.

"the verb form is an inextricable part of the individual instance of discourse: it is always and necessarily actualized by the act of discourse and in dependence on that act" (p.220).

beneviste's analysis of pronouns and verbs makes it impossible to separate langue from parole. he demonstrates that these elements of language become active as signs only within discourse.

In a similar fashion, beneviste argues that language and subjectivity are interrelated and interdependent. he insists that individuals find their cultural identity only within discourse, by means of the pronouns "I" and "you". An individual identifies with "I" and is defined in opposition to "you".

"Language is ...the possibility of subjectivity because it always contains the linguistic forms appropriate to the expression of subjectivity, and discourse provokes the emergence of subjectivity because it consists of discrete instances. In some way language puts forth "empty" forms which each speaker, in the exercise of discourse, appropriates to himself and which he relates to his "person", at the same time defining himself

as I and a partner to you. The instance of discourse is thus constitutive of all the coordinates that define the subject and of which we have briefly pointed out only the most obvious (i.e. pronouns, verb forms etc.)" (p.227).

Silverman has emphasized that beneviste grasps subjectivity in the relational terms saussure used to explain the operations of language. As with the linguistic sign, "the subject relies upon another term within the same paradigm - here the personal pronoun "you" - for its meaning and value" (p.45). This paradigm can only be activated through discourse; thus for beneviste, subjectivity loses meaning between discursive moments.

beneviste makes a distinction between two types of subjects involved in any instance of discourse. One is the speaking subject or "referent" and the other is the subject of speech or the "referee". The referent is the subject who participates in discourse, either a speaker or a writer. The referee is the discursive element with which the individual identifies. In language the discursive element is the personal pronoun "I" which enables the discoursing individual to find her/his subjectivity.

"What then is the reality to which I or you refers? It is solely a reality of discourse; and this is a very strange thing. I cannot be defined except in terms of "locution", not in terms of objects as a nominal sign is. I signifies "The person who is uttering the present instance of the discourse containing I". This instance is unique by definition and has validity only in its

uniqueness...I can only be identified by the instance of discourse that contains it and by that alone. It has no value except...in the act of speaking in which it is uttered. There is thus a combined double instance in this process: the instance of I as referent and the instance of discourse containing I as the referee. The definition can now be stated precisely as: I is "the individual who utters the present instance of discourse containing the linguistic instance I" (p.218).

beneviste extends the label discourse to "every utterance assuming a speaker and a hearer, and in the speaker, the intention of influencing the other in some way" (pp.208-209). This applies to an utterance whether it is verbal or written. This can be seen as a directive for the treatment of literary texts as instances of discourse that contain cultural representations of gender that have effects on consciousness. This aspect of beneviste's work has influenced investigation into another branch of culture as well, the cinema. Films are treated as instances of discourse involving the delineation of the subject (e.g. mccabe, 1987, 1981).

While the work of garfinkel and the conversation analysts does not explicitly engage itself with the developments in linguistics just outlined, it is clear that alan blum and peter mchugh begin within this theoretical framework. Self Reflection in the Arts and Sciences (1984), is concerned with the relationship between consciousness, language and the social world. They assume that "the limits of language are the limits of the world" (p.33). All meaning, that is

consciousness, depends on linguistic conventions; thus consciousness is an accomplishment, a social product, actualized through language. It's clear that they are following saussure and are thus conceptualizing language as an instance of society. Consciousness and the world are linked; both are produced in language.

"There can be no dualism between consciousness and the life world; consciousness is consciousness of and in the life world" (p.47).

They are interested in investigating language in the form of discourse, that is speaking, and by extension, writing. Speaking, for blum and mchugh, is a wilful and intelligent act. Speech requires choice on the part of the speaker. They are interested in making these choices visible and apparent, through what they call "self reflection". They treat all signification as arbitrary. Speaking is possible only because the speaker imposes and limits the multiplicity of possibilities for speaking as she/he does.

"Self reflection is practical action but practical action that is grounded by an interest in relaying the grounds of a practice" (p.62). It is "reflection upon the language that we share" (p. 46). Self reflection is an attempt at uncovering the grounds of our signification. It is an investigation into the ways in which we know the world. The praxis of self reflection takes language as its object. I intend a self reflection of the art of william faulkner in my treatment of

his writing as instances of speech that can reveal the materialization and presence of ideology.

I have demonstrated that saussure, peirce, beneviste and blum and mchugh share the assumption that language is a social phenomenon through which we know the social world. This assumption is consistent with the social theory of language formulated by wittgenstein in which he argues that thought/activity, language, and the world go together. They share what he calls "grammatical criteria". Grammar is the agreed upon relations in language that establish its usability. It is a precondition for language being meaningful. Criteria are identifiable cues whose presence can be taken to justify the use of a word. david bloor suggests that the "best way to understand criteria is to see them as social institutions" (1983, pp.42-43). Criteria have a taken-for-granted character about them. They are taken, by users of the language, to convey certainty. They operate as conventions in what wittgenstein has called "language-games". wittgenstein's linking of grammar and criteria determine that language is a social phenomenon. It is shared by a group of people and is understandable only in its use, which brings about meaning. As wittgenstein states at the beginning of The Blue and Brown Notebooks (1969), "...if we had to name anything which is the life of the sign, we should have to say that it was its use" (p.4.).

"Language-games" is the unit of analysis wittgenstein uses in order to grasp patterns of usage. they are "the forms

of language with which a child begins to make use of words" (1969, p.17). he emphasizes that they can only be understood if we see how they are integrated into patterns of activity. "Only in the stream of thought and life do words have meaning" (1967, I,p.23). wittgenstein's emphasis is on the speaking of language; language as purposeful and shared activity. This purposeful and shared activity connects words to the world. Language doesn't have an essence, but rather, is made up of a number of language-games, and users are trained in these conventionalized practices.

Language-games are developed within a culture. This is addressed by wittgenstein's concept "forms of life". Forms of life are possibilities of meaning analogous to language-games but occurring in the realm of human social action. Forms of life are established patterns of action shared by members of society. They provide the setting in which language is intelligible. What this suggests for my treatment of literature as discourse, and my particular reading of faulkner, is that the representations of gender are language-games that take place within a particular form of life and are thus taken for granted in the multiplicity of their manifestations, two of which being the texts of high culture and everyday speech.

Roslyn Bologh (1979) has linked wittgenstein's concept form of life to the mode of production/mode of domination of a particular society. This elaboration stresses the degree to which the needs of the group that maintains institutional power and exercises ideological hegemony set the possible

limits of activity and meaning for the social world; thus, the use of language will be contained by these possibilities. This suggests that the thinking and speaking about gender and other social phenomenon that occurs within any social formation, is conditioned by the particular power structures that prevail.

This is consistent with wittgenstein's insistence that there is an indissoluble link between the public world and the mental life of the individual. This is emphasized both in his critique of private languages and in his discussion of needs. david bloor argues, based on his reading of wittgenstein's Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, that the connection between the implicit skills members of a culture have for language use and the explicit language-games they use, is mediated by "needs" that are understandable only as "social interests". These social interests give language-games their point and are what wittgenstein meant by "the complex nature and variety of human contingencies that provide the natural foundation for our concepts" (bloor, pp.132-137).

The attention wittgenstein's theory of language brings to the relationship between culture and language use is empirically supported by a study conducted by jacques leenhardt (1980). This study entailed the reading of two novels, one French and the other Hungarian, by five hundred readers from different social backgrounds in both countries, and was interested in examining the process of appropriation of the texts by the readers. Two different reading schemes were

identified. In France, the reading scheme entailed a search for coherent readings and an emphasis on the logic of the novels. leenhardt reports that in France there were "constant attempts at causal explanation; determinism is one of the essential principles." In Hungary however, "the French analytic approach is replaced by a judgmental code in which a hierarchy of values is predominate, good and evil are the criteria for a moralizing approach to the novel." (pp.214-216).

This leads leenhardt to conclude that the opposition between analytic and moralizing codes accounts for the different national reading schemes and points to the existence of "ideological tendencies evident in the approach to a literary text" (p.214). This suggests that systems of reading are relatively structured ideological frameworks that take form within particular social formations, and that processes of meaning are created within particular social realities.

The social theories of language just discussed assume, either implicitly or explicitly, some connection to the existence of ideology, and a relationship between ideology and language. The theoretical work of althusser specifies this relationship, setting the stage for the lacanian discussion of the constitution of the gendered subject, inscribed through language, into the symbolic order.

althusser defines ideology as a system of representations concerning the real relations in which people live.

"...all ideology represents in its neces-

sary imaginary distortion not the existing relations of production (and the other relations that derive from them) but above all the (imaginary) relationships of individuals to the relations of production and the relations that derive from them. What is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live" (1971, pp.164-65).

Ideology is both a real and an imaginary relation to the world. Real in the sense that it is the way in which people live in relation to the social conditions of their existence, and imaginary in that ideology prevents a full understanding of these conditions of existence. Ideology obfuscates the ways in which people are socially constituted.

Ideology is directed towards individuals in society, and it is the role of ideology to construct people as subjects.

"ideology "acts" or "functions" in such a way that it "recruits" subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all, or transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most common everyday police (or other) hailing: "Hey you there!"

Assuming that the theoretical scene I have imagined takes place in the street, the hailed individual will turn around. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a subject. Why? Because he has recognized that the hail was "really" addressed to him, and that it was really him who was hailed.

...Naturally for the convenience and

clarity of my little theoretical theatre I have had to present things in the form of a temporal succession...But in reality these things happen without any succession. The existence of ideology and the hailing or interpellation of individuals as subjects are one and the same thing" (1971, pp.174-175).

Within the existing ideology, it appears obvious that people are autonomous subjects, unique, distinguishable, irreplaceable, who then act believing at they possess "subjectivity". This is what althusser has in mind when he talks about ideology as a material practice, that is, it exists in the behavior of people acting according to their beliefs.

The obviousness of subjectivity has been challenged by post-saussurean linguistics, particularly beneviste, as has already been noted. he argued that it is language that provides the possibility of subjectivity because it is language which enables the speaker to identify as "I", as the subject of a sentence. Thus, it is though language that people constitute themselves as subjects, and this consciousness of self is possible only by differentiation from others. Since "I" designates the subject of a specific utterance, the basis of subjectivity can be seen as being located in the exercise of language, that which wittgenstein refers to as use.

Ideology suppresses the role of language in the constitution of subjects, and as a result, people recognize themselves in the ways in which ideology interpellates them as subjects; they recognize themselves as autonomous. This results,

according to althusser, in people adopting the subject-positions necessary to their participation in the social formation.

...the individual is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e. in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection" (1971, p.169)

The subject is not only a grammatical subject but a subjected being as well. It is impossible to step outside of ideology because it is inscribed in the language we must speak.

The theoretical formulations of althusser make it necessary to understand ideology as being inscribed in discourse in the sense that it is written or spoken in it. Ideology is way of thinking and speaking. Since literature represents the myths and imaginary versions of real social relations, it can be seen as one of the many discourses in which ideology is inscribed. As feminist critic Catherine Belsey has noted, "...classic realist fiction interpellates the reader i.e. addresses itself to him or her directly, offering the reader as the position from which the text is most obviously intelligible, the position of the subject in (and of) ideology" (1980, p.57). Her use of "him or her" is significant; it implies that the experience of the subject is related to gender, as is the position of the reader. Feminist literary criticism elaborates and emphasizes what this gender difference means.

"Sexuality and textuality both depend on differences. Deconstructive criticism has made us attend to notions of textual difference, but the complexities of sexual difference, more pervasively ingrained in our culture, have largely been confined to the edges of critical debate. In the last decade, however, feminist critics have demonstrated that gender informs and complicates both the writing and the reading of texts" (Abel, 1982, p.1).

jacques lacan provides, in his reading of freud, a theory of the gendered subject as constructed in language. It is possible to understand his theory as the inscription of subjects into patriarchal ideology which has different consequences for male and female subjects. As Kaja Silverman has put it, reiterating the position of other feminists in regard to psychoanalytic theory, "...subjectivity is by no means an ideologically innocent condition but one which reflects dominant cultural values. Those values are first and foremost patriarchal, and they organize subjectivity, like signification along lines of sexual difference" (p.125). The oedipal complex plays a central role in this process. It creates sexual differences that are culturally induced, preventing subjects from determining their own desires.

The theory of the subject developed by lacan begins with birth, moves through the territorialization of the body, the mirror stage, access to language, and entrance into the symbolic. Each of the stages identified is conceptualized in terms of some kind of self loss or lack; thus the lacanian subject must be understood as being defined almost entirely by

lack.

lacan assumes that the human subject originates from a whole which becomes divided in half, causing the subject's existence to be dominated by the desire to recover its missing part. This division is sexual in nature. The subject loses the sexual androgyny it once had and becomes reduced to the biological dimensions of either a male or female. lacan understands this biological dimension as absolutely determining the subjects' social identity. The resolution of this initial loss, the recovery or the missing half, is accomplished through heterosexual union. This first loss occurs at the moment of sexual differentiation which takes place within the womb, but it is not realized until birth, when the child becomes separated from the mother. This lack, sexual in nature, has to do then, with the impossibility of being physiologically both male and female. lacan refers to this lack as real, meaning that it occurs outside of signification; though it does anticipate other divisions the subject will experience within signification.

"Two lacks overlap here. The first emerges from the central defect around which the dialectic of the advent of the subject to his own being in relation to the Other turns - by the fact that the subject depends on the signifier and that the signifier is first of all in the field of the Other. This lack, takes up the other lack which is the real, earlier lack to be situated at the advent of the living being, that is to say, at sexed reproduction. The real lack is what the living being loses, that part of himself qua living being, in reproducing himself through the way of sex. This lack is

real because it relates to something real, namely, that the human being, by being subject to sex has fallen under the blow of individual death" (1978, pp.204-205).

lacan emphasizes that the culture provides the subject with sexually-differentiating scenarios that show the way to sexual fulfillment; the oedipus complex plays an important role in this.

"Only this division (the sexual division)...makes necessary what was first revealed by analytic experience, namely, that the ways of what one must do as man or as woman are entirely abandoned to the drama, to the scenario, which is placed in the field of the Oedipus complex.

I stressed this last time, when I told you that the human being has always to learn from scratch from the Other what he has to do, as man or as woman. I referred to the old woman in the story of Daphnis and Chloe, which shows us that there is an intimate field, the field of sexual fulfillment, in which, in the last resort, the innocent does not know the way" (p.204).

It seems clear that lacan understands human nature as finding its logical expression and complement in the cultural definitions of male and female. These definitions are perceived by him to be coercive.

The second loss sustained by the lacanian subject is brought about by the preparation of the body for the sexually differentiated scenarios she/he will be accommodated into. For a time after its birth, a child doesn't differentiate

between itself its mother or other objects that give it pleasure. Rather, its libidinal flow is directed toward the complete assimilation of everything that's experienced as pleasurable. However, the child's body undergoes a process of differentiation in which erotogenic zones are inscribed and libido is encouraged to follow certain established routes. Specific somatic areas are designated as the appropriate sites of pleasure, and these areas are the ones which open onto the external world, the mouth, the anus, the penis and the vagina. The mother tends to be the one who enacts this inscription, defining the erotic zones through the care she gives them. This territorialization of the infant's body channels and directs the outpouring of libido. What is initially experienced as energy becomes converted into drives which can then be culturally organized. The regulation of libido and the organization of drives are accomplished around sexual difference. Drives become attached to bodily zones; thus lacan understands drives as providing an indirect mediated expression of the original libidinal flow and attaches an element of deprivation to them.

"...the libido, qua pure life instinct, that is to say, immortal life, or irrepressible life, life that has need of no organ, simplified, indestructible life is precisely what it subtracted from the living being by virtue of the fact that it is subject to the cycle of sexed reproduction" (p.198).

The child takes into itself, through the erotogenic zones

those things which give it pleasure though the child does not distinguish these things from itself. The breast is the first such object which the child perceives as its missing half, the loss of which has resulted in a lack. The gaze and the voice of another are other such objects.

"The breast - as equivocal, as an element characteristic of the mammiferous organ, the placenta, for example - certainly represents that part of himself that the individual loses at birth, and which may serve to symbolize the most profound lost object" (p.198).

The subject will have other objects like this during her/his lifetime. lacan refers to these as "objets petite autre". They are objects, not clearly distinguished from the self, yet not fully grasped as the other. These objects derive their value from identification with some missing component of the subject's self. Objets petit autre acquire their privileged status and are sustained within what lacan calls the imaginary.

The imaginary corresponds to the pre-oedipal period when the child believes itself to be a part of the mother and perceives no separation between itself and the external world. While it precedes the symbolic order, which introduces the child into language and the oedipal configuration, it continues to coexist with it afterward.

In the imaginary, the child, between the ages of six and eighteen months sees its reflection in a mirror. The result is that the child apprehends itself as the other. The

reflection in the mirror is an ideal image, possessing a coherence which the subject itself lacks due to its initial loss. Yet at the same time, the subject identifies itself in relation to the image. It loves it because of its coherence; yet hates it because it is external to it.

"This form would have to be called the Ideal-I, if we wished to incorporate it into our usual register, in the sense that it will also be the source of secondary identifications, under which term I would place the functions of libidinal normalization. But the important point is that this form situates the agency of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction, which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone" (1977, "The Mirror Stage", p.2).

The child's identity during the mirror stage should be understood as culturally mediated. As Silverman has noted, lacan's use of the word ideal suggests this because ideal is a term which has meaning only within a system of values (1983, p.160). lacan also points out that the mirror stage can only be retroactively realized from a position within language and thus within the symbolic order. Cultural norms and values concerning gender are transmitted at a very early stage in the subject's development.

The child's full entrance into the patriarchal order begins at the moment of language acquisition. This is discussed by lacan as the entrance into the symbolic; it entails the subject entering the level of signification. This development is precipitated by the oedipal crisis and results

in another significant loss for the subject.

The discussion of signification in lacan is reminiscent of saussure.

"A psychoanalysis should find it easy enough to grasp the fundamental distinction between signifier and signified, and to begin to use the two nonoverlapping networks of relations that they organize.

The first structure, that of the signifier, is the synchronic structure of the language material in so far as in that structure each element assumes its precise function by being different from the others; this is the principle of distribution that alone governs the function of the elements of the language (langue) at its different levels, from the phonematic pair of oppositions to the compound expressions to disengage the stable forms of which is the task of the most modern research.

The second network, that of the signified, is the diachronic set of the concretely pronounced discourses, which reacts historically on the first, just as the structure of the first governs the pathways of the second. The dominant factor here is the unity of signification which proves never to be resolved into a pure indication of the real, but always refers back to another signification. That is to say, the signification is realized only on the basis of a grasp of things in their totality" (1977, p.26).

lacan is insisting that meaning emerges out of a play of differences within a closed system, and that it emerges through the unfolding of a signifying chain; thus, meaning emerges within a system of ideology. Language is privileged by lacan because it mediates all signifiers; linguistic signifiers provide access to all others.

he argues that the entrance into language isolates the subject from the real, that is, from its own being and libidinal needs, and its identification of unity with the mother. Entrance into the symbolic requires that all experience be mediated; thus all experience is indirect. The subject becomes a signifier in the field of the other, language, and social relations. It is at this point that the unconscious comes into existence. lacan defines the unconscious as the "discourse of the Other". This indicates that the content of the unconscious, its desires, are those of an already established social and cultural order. The subject learns, not only to desire, but what to desire within this order.

" - if desire is an effect in the subject of the condition that is imposed on him by the existence of the discourse, to make his need pass through the defiles of the signifiers;

- if, on the other hand...we must establish the notion of the Other...as being the locus of the deployment of speech...

- it must be posited that, produced as it is by an animal at the mercy of language, man's desire is the desire of the Other" (1977, p.264).

The oedipus complex, which is enacted within the confines of the family, and language play a determining role in the constitution of the unconscious, subjectivity and the symbolic order.

"...the Oedipus complex - in so far as we

continue to recognize it as covering the whole field of our experience with its signification - may be said ...to mark the limits that our discipline assigns to subjectivity: namely, what the subject can know of his unconscious participation in the movement of the complex structure of marriage ties, by verifying the symbolic effects in this individual existence of the tangential movement towards incest that has manifested itself ever since the coming of a universal community.

The primordial Law is therefore that which in regulating marriage ties superimposes the kingdom of culture on that of a nature abandoned to the law of mating. The prohibition of incest is merely its subjective pivot, revealed by the modern tendency to reduce to the mother and the sister the objects forbidden to the subject's choice, although full license outside of these is not yet entirely open.

This law, then, is revealed clearly enough as identical with an order of language. For without kinship nominations, no power is capable of instituting the order of preferences and taboos that bind and weave the yarn of lineage through succeeding generations" (1977, p.66).

This passage seems to indicate that the oedipus complex and language can be seen as being identical. The incest taboo takes place among family members who are differentiated from each other by means of linguistic categories. And further along, in the same passage as that already quoted, he points to the paternal signifier, the "Name of the Father", the "Phallic Being", as the all important one in the history of the subject and the organization of the symbolic order.

"Even when...it is represented by a single person, the paternal function concentrates in itself both imaginary and real relations" (1977, p.67).

Subjects are produced in what can now be called the discourse of the family. The mother functions as the initial object of desire for both the male and female child, but when the child enters the realm of the symbolic, the father replaces the mother as the central object of desire. This is facilitated by the child's internalization of the image of the same-sex parent at the end of the oedipus stage.

According to lacan, the child's intimal desire for the mother is displaced onto what the mother desires. The child desires the mother's desire. The mother, however, desires the phallus, that which she lacks; both the male and the female child come to desire the phallus. This has different consequences for both the male and female subject, and the representation of male and female sexuality on the level of culture as well.

Silverman has pointed out that the term "phallus" has two different meanings for lacan, neither of which maintains its autonomy from the penis. On one hand, the phallus is a signifier for the organic reality and needs the subject is forced to give up when he enters into the symbolic. On the other hand, the phallus is a signifier for the cultural privileges and positive values which define male subjectivity

within patriarchal society (1983, p.183). Silverman insists that lacan links this term with the penis when he suggests that the male subject pays for this symbolic privileges with a currency not available to the female subject. The result is castration, that is, the male child assumes his privilege in the symbolic through loss. Since the male child desires the mother's desire, she becomes the instrument of castration on the level of the unconscious. She signifies castration on the level of the unconscious. She signifies castration and this signification is amplified by her anatomy. Since this takes place within discourse, it is possible to assume that castration and its effects will be a theme in other representational discourses as well.

The theory proposed by lacan suggests that male subjectivity and sexuality can be knowable only in relation to female subjectivity and sexuality. This means, then, that whatever the representations of women in culture may be, they are understandable only within the context of the representation of men. Perhaps the most concrete manifestation of this interconnection is the fact that the primacy of the phallus is dependent on the mother's/woman's desire for it because it has been designated as that which she lacks. It is crucial for the maintenance of the patriarchal order that this desire, on the part of women, be maintained.

Post-structural theory draws attention to the various cultural discourses that effect women's consciousness as they work at socializing us into this socially constructed and

socially structured desire.

Realist fiction is one of these discourses; so too is literary criticism. The relationship between literature and ideology has been self consciously explicated by feminist critics. Literary texts have been interrogated for their complicity in hegemonic ideology. Literary criticism must itself be looked at the same way. Both literature and criticism work at inscribing readers into subject positions and thus desire.

I will demonstrate this through an analysis of texts by william faulkner and the existing criticism of his work. I have chosen faulkner because he wrote realist fiction, and is a member of the Canon; thus his influence on culture is unquestionable. he is also a writer who very much influenced my consciousness as I was growing into womanhood. It is now necessary to interrogate the ideological character and intention of that influence.

The theoretical framework outlined above makes it possible to comprehend the social world in terms of a broad system of representation into which individuals are born and from which they initially derive their sense of sexual/gender identity. This system of representations reflects the hegemony of a patriarchal order. It is predicated on a series of oppositions, key distinctions that structure the created and sustained reality ethnomethodologists call daily life, and our organized knowledge of it.

The representations are created and sustained through

language, a process of signification that appears to be arbitrary yet is none the less meaningful because shared by ongoing groups of speakers. The theoretical shift to language emphasizes that language is a material practice that determines what raymond williams (1977) has called human sociality. It is an activity that brings human community into existence through the articulation of its sense of self. I have used the term consciousness to refer to this sense of self intending to highlight the awareness that consciousness can be nothing other than the understandings and possibilities of social existence. Consciousness is knowledge created and conveyed by language in order to sustain a patriarchal form of life.

Consciousness is also an imagination that moves beyond this form of life. I have called this feminist praxis emphasizing that it is activity created and shared among women. It is a consciousness that, in the first instance, is aware of the articulation of the patriarchal system of representations in the deepest sense possible; this entails identifying what the term "woman" means and how that meaning is sustained by our use of language. In the second instance, it means disrupting the patriarchal representations in order to break the hold they have on us in their posing as "truth". This clears the way for what Mary Daly has referred to as the process of naming in which women speak a new reality.

To say that representations pose as truth is to draw attention to the complicity of ideology in the system of

representations and in language itself. Ideology cannot be separated from either and can only be apprehended in its "substance and methods" (williams, 1977, p.173) of signification; that is in its modes of expression and the content of that expression. The studying of ideology reveals the organizing distinctions of a patriarchal hegemonic order.

The starting place for this study is culture, traditionally understood within sociology as the totality of existence shared by members of a society. This investigation has entailed the breaking down of this totality into separate domains or institutions that then tend to be regarded in isolation from each other. This prevents the delineation and investigation of the distinctions that characterize a form of life. The study of culture as lived experience however, rectifies this problem. The study of lived experience draws attention to the individual as she/he acquires a social identity. This entails an investigation of subjectivity inscribed within ideology.

An individual's subjectivity is achieved through entrance into the symbolic, the totality of cultural representations which are predicated on the specific organization of society. The symbolic manifests the most fundamental oppositions of these representations, the gender categories of women and men. This and the other oppositions that stem from it are constitutive of and necessary to the patriarchal order as Gail Rubin (1975) has cogently argued.

Rubin appropriates the theoretical work of levi-strauss

and lacan in order to explicate the sex-gender system, defined as "that part of social life which is the locus of the oppression of women" (p.159). The sex-gender system produces the social organization of sex which in turn rests upon gender, obligatory heterosexuality and the constraint of female sexuality. It consists of "systematic social apparatuses which take up females as raw materials and fashions domesticated women as products" (p.158).

Rubin identifies the kinship system as that which produces concrete forms of socially organized sexuality. This takes place around the exchange of women between men within the rules of marriage, determined by the incest taboo. The taboo insures that the gift of women is exchanged between families and groups. It imposes the social practices of exogamy and group alliance upon the biological activities of sex and procreation, dividing the possibilities of sexual choice into "categories of permitted and prohibited sexual partners" (p.172). This social organization consolidates the power of men. The exchange of women takes place within a set of social relations that specify that men have certain rights to their female kin that women don't have to either ourselves or our male kin. Rubin's discussion brings attention to a social system in which women don't have full autonomy over our own bodies.

The social practice of marriage structures the kinship system. Marriage transforms males and females into the gender categories of men and women with each being an incomplete half

that requires union with the other in order to attain wholeness. The marriage unit functions around a gendered division of labor which guarantees that the smallest viable economic unit is that containing one man and one woman. This in turn leads to the division of the social world into two overlapping, yet relatively distinct spheres, the public domain of work and the private domain of the family.

This analysis makes it possible to conceptualize the sex-gender system as a socio-cultural construct. The theory of representation indicates that is a semeiotic apparatus as well. The sex-gender system must then be understood as a set of social relations as well as a system of representations which assign meaning to individuals within society. The "heterosexual contract" (De Lauretis, 1987, p.18) is the site in which the social relations of gender are reproduced in everyday life. Psychoanalytic theory, as we have seen, explains the process by which individuals acquire their proper gender identity; thereby assuming their correct location in and their commitment to the cultural order.

The fundamental distinction of gender difference is expressed in other forms as well. Nature/culture, irrational/rational, private/public, mother/father are popular accompaniments to woman/man. They establish the characteristics of gendered personalities and establish the domains in which these personalities are thought to exist. They serve to reinforce the gendered division of the social world which by necessity, is reproduced in all aspects of social life.

It is the task of sociology to delineate the methods of this reproduction since they create the form and content of consciousness. The theoretical framework I've outlined suggests an investigation into all social practices since inscription into ideology takes place with every use of language. Sociology however, has tended to study particular institution (for ex. the family) and collections of products (for ex. literature and films). This has resulted in the separation of individuals from culture, here formulated as high or low art. Attention to the common thread of speech, language in use, offers a corrective to this tendency. It becomes possible to conceptualize all social interaction, including interaction with institutional discourses such as literature, as an instance of the pedagogy of culture, with culture understood as a representation of the very foundations of social existence.

## CHAPTER II: LITERARY CRITICISM FROM A SOCIOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW

A theory that insists that language is constitutive of reality rather than a reflection of it concerns itself with the relationship between discourse and power. This relationship is materialized in the socializing effects of literary texts as they impact on the consciousness of members of society. Literary texts can be seen as being continuous with reality rather than superior objects somehow removed from or above it. The evolution of the discourse of literary criticism has, with some important exceptions, sought the removal of literary texts from reality insulating them for scrutiny at the level of power. A schematic overview of the developments that have taken place within literary criticism reveals how texts have come to be isolated and the challenge to this practice.

The process of isolating the literary text, and a concomitant turn in criticism away from the social and moral effects of literature toward the psychology of reading, and the apprehension of meaning, began during the second half of the 18 century. This marked a break in the way in which texts had been conceived of since Antiquity. Jane Tomkins (1980, p.203-204) understands this shift as reflecting a movement away from a conceptualization of language as action. She argues that the ancient Greeks understood language as "a force acting on the world", and thus developed a criticism con-

cerned, not with the nature of literature's impact on individual consciousness, since this impact was taken for granted, but rather with the degree of this impact, the "vividness of impression" and "concentrated effect" (p.203) she understands aristotle concerning himself with.

An understanding that language has an important influence on human behavior generated concern with the uses and control of language. This is reflected in the attention paid within criticism in Antiquity, to technique and the research for morality in literary production. Plato's decision to banish lyric and epic poets from his republic can be seen as evidence of the understanding of language as a site of contested power as well as the integration of the aesthetic literary realm into the political realm of Greek life. Tompkins argues that literature, as well as its producers and consumers, were seen in relation to the needs of the polity as a whole. This can be seen to be reflected in an assertion by aristophanes that tragedians "must provide wise counsel for the making of better citizens" (p.204).

Since literary texts were assumed to exist in order to produce results, and not as ends in themselves, criticism did not concern itself with the contemplation of these texts as it has since the middle of the 18 century. Texts were not thought of as objects but rather as units of force which lost their potential impact when reified in their written form. Plato anticipated the inevitable shift in criticism to interpretation and the ascending importance of the critic once

texts lost the power to speak for themselves.

"I cannot help feeling, Phaedrus, that writing is unfortunately like painting, for the creations of the painter have the attitude of life,, and yet if you ask them a question they preserve a solemn silence. And the same may be said of speeches. You would imagine that they had intelligence, but if you want to know anything and put a question to one of them, the speaker always gives on unvarying answer. And when they have been written down they are tumbled about anywhere among those who do and among those who do not understand them. And they have no reticences or properties toward different classes of persons; and it they are not unjustly assailed or abuses, their parent is needed to protect his offspring, for they cannot defend themselves" (Tomkins, p.205 The Dialogues of Plato, 875).

Important schools of contemporary criticism - New Criticism, myth, psychoanalytic, structuralist - all isolate texts as objects of contemplation requiring the interpretive skills of the critic; thus removing the texts from their integration in the ongoing continuity of social life and their materialization as instances of power. Feminist reader response criticism poses a disruption in this practice by its explicit attention to power.

Literature continued to be seen as continuous with the rest of social life during the Renaissance as well. Bernard Weinberg has pointed out that "poetry was by its nature an imitation or representation of reality made to conform as nearly as possible to that reality in order to produce moral effects desirable both for the individual and the state"

(1961, p.801). Because of this, criticism was also concerned with response. "The qualities of a poem were to be sought through the study of its effects upon an audience" (p.806). Despite this similarity, there are two significant differences between the Renaissance and Greek periods. The audience in the Renaissance consisted of a group of influential people, members of the court and aristocracy, who were known to the poet rather than an orator and his audience. And the poet and his audience were involved in the social reaction of patronage. Tompkins notes that this extends the power of poetry to "public relations" (p.208), but I think this can be seen more clearly as the recognition of the ideological character of literary texts. Poetry is valued for what it can do for the aristocracy it serves. It follows that a strong sense of audience is developed within this period, and both poetry and criticism are intended to have preconceived effects on this audience.

Satire became the dominant form of poetry in the late 17 and 18 centuries. This is a genre that very specifically and self consciously addresses itself to a person, group of people, or a situation. In this period poetry was valued because of its power to both influence behavior and address political issues. This recognition of the impact of literary texts on daily life has been lost in most contemporary criticism. The work is no longer seen as an intervention in social situation or a model of human behavior, but a work of art meant for exegesis, an object constructed out of formal

properties that lie hidden within it, awaiting discovery by the critic. Literature is understood as existing above politics with no relationship to power.

Certain changes occurred in society in the mid 18 century which brought about a separation between literature and political life. These were the breakdown of the patronage system, the increase in commercial printing and the growth of a large reading public. Authors became dependent on the sale of their work to an anonymous public; literature became impersonal and privatized. Sentimental and gothic novels and "poetry of sensibility" became the dominant literary forms. These were intended to provide readers with emotional experiences and were aimed at the psychic life of individuals rather than guiding behavior and effecting judgments on public issues. A corresponding development in the criticism of this period occurs and attention is shifted away from the social and moral effects of literature to the psychology of reading. The responses to literature are seen as personal and psychological rather than social and political. This change need not have been seen as a separation between literature and power, but it was. Critics such as Edmund Burke and Joshua Reynolds began to discuss emotional responses to literature as evidence of universal laws of the mind, elevating criticism to a science. Emotional responses were considered to be of interest in their own right, occupying what R.S. Crane has called "the republic of letters" (1952, p.376).

Poets themselves continued to discuss the merits of

poetry at the beginning of the 19 century. Poetry was considered to have power over the feelings of men because of its appeal to deep human sympathies. wordsworth emphasized the moral benefits of poetry as a force for human brotherhood and as a civilizing agent. he understood the need for poetry arising from the "increasing accumulation of men in cities" which has "blunted the discriminatory powers of the mind" (smith and parks, p.502) wordsworth thought of his own poetry as countering this trend because it "strengthens and purifies the affections, enlarges the imagination and adds spirit to the senses" (p.502). he did not feel that poetry should effect behavior or stir a particular feeling in people but rather should effect their minds. Poetry was not intended to have a direct impact on social conditions; its uses were more general than that.

shelley continued to formulate the goals of poetry in general rather than concrete terms. he considered poetry to be the most potent and lasting form of influence on human life, and thus discouraged its use for shaping particular human action. shelley separated poetry from its traditional function as a regulator of social behavior and elevated it to transhistorical, superior realm. "A poet would do ill to embody his own conceptions of right and wrong, which are usually those of his place and time for...poetical creations participate in neither. Eternal poets affect a moral aim" (smith and parks, p.563-564).

shelley's assertion that poetry transcends the limits of

its historical moment of production, while at the same time being responsible for all that is true and morally right, signals the beginning of a movement that's still going on in non-feminist literary criticism. Poetry has been separated from ordinary daily life, stripped of its immediate power and ability to impact on the social world, and elevated as a repository of eternal values. Poetry becomes safely removed from investigation into its ideological function. John Stuart Mills aptly described this separation of poetry from public life emphasizing the proper area of poetic response to be a "culture of feelings divorced from struggle and imperfection" (Tompkins, p.218).

Criticism was likewise removed and was intended, in the words of Matthew Arnold, to promote "the free play of minds on all subjects, steadily refusing to lend itself to any...ulterior political practical considerations" (p.219). Poetry was elevated to a discourse unlike any other, and literary criticism was constituted as a discourse on the privileged one. Literary criticism, due to this association, became stripped of any political and ideological purpose.

20 century literary criticism begins, assuming this separation of poetry/literature and literary criticism, from on-going social life. Challenges to this position appear in the United States in the 1930's, the 1960's and in feminist literary criticism from the 1970's to the present. It is important to trace this history because it sets the parameters for the discussion of William Faulkner's work within literary

criticisms, reveals the challenge that sociology represents to this discourse and provides part of the analytic framework for my interaction with literary texts.

The first stage in the development of New Criticism occurs in England in the early 1920's most specifically in the work of i.a. richards and t.s. eliot. richards begins from a Greek and Renaissance conceptualization of poetry as having the mission of civilizing humans, making them better citizens. But following wordsworth, shelley and arnold, this had come to mean, for richards, creating a sense of balance, order and control within them. The function of poetry "consists in bringing in of the opposite, the complementary impulses." The job of poetry was the neutralization of feelings. The proper aesthetic experience was characterized by richards as "this balanced poise, stable through its power of inclusion, not through the force of its exclusion", and this becomes "...a general characteristic of all the most valuable experiences of the arts (1924, p.248).

richards contributed to the removal of poetry from the rest of social life by his discussion of language near the end of Principles of Literary Criticism. he distinguished between the reverential, or naming function of language, used in science, and the emotive function of language used in poetry. he argued, that while poetry referred to verifiable things in the word, there was no direct correspondence between these things and the words since that was not the nature of poetic language. richards understood the language of literature to

consist of pseudo-statements requiring interpretation. Poems became complex objects that present difficulties to readers. Interpretation and evaluation became tasks better left to the critics, who would in their writing and pedagogy, establish an aesthetic purity for both literature and criticism.

While richards began the practice of separating poetic language from other discourses, t.s. eliot began to separate the poet from the ordinary man. In eliot's view, the poet's mind was "constantly amalgamating new wholes", the source of which "was the poem which continued the objective correlative of the poet's experience" (Tomkins, p.220). The ordinary man however, was capable of having only chaotic and irregular experience. The objectification of emotion in poems was understood as an attempt at eliminating the chaotic and irregular. It was an attempt at controlling emotions. eliot argued that there was not direct correspondence between the emotions of the poet and the emotions of the poem he created. What the poet produces is "a new thing resulting from the concentration of a very great number of experiences. Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality but an escape from personality" (p.210).

eliot brought about two major changes in literary/poetic theory. he severed the tie between the poem and its origins, and he shifted attention away from response (present in richards) to the poem itself. eliot converted the poem into "a simulacrum of eternity". he considered it to be superior

to human life and existing social conditions. The poem was no longer seen as having impact on social action, but rather, was treated as a model of perfection, a goal for people to strive for. Poetry became an end in itself, and New Criticism abandoned investigation into response in order to contemplate the intrinsic nature of poems themselves.

The second stage of New Criticism concentrated on the institutionalization of formalist concepts and methods in both the writing and teaching of its practitioners. While the New Critics disavowed any connection between criticism and politics, their work betrayed a conservative social, moral, religious, and political assessment of society. As t.s. eliot noted "it is impossible to fence off literary criticism from criticism on other grounds and that moral, religious, and social judgments cannot be wholly excluded" (1965, p.25). This relationship to conservative politics was evident in the Southern Agrarians, the American New Critics, who were prominent during this second stage. The Agrarians advocated for a traditional, stable, religious and rural social order in which family kinship and custom were important bonds of community. They were self-consciously reactive against industrial capitalism and its side effects of alienation, loss of community and the commodification of work and leisure. Though they sought to remove politics from poetics, and were successful in isolating texts in realms of social purity, their conservative vision permeates their critical interpretations, as will be demonstrated in their criticism of william

faulkner. This occurrence seriously undermines their formalist treatment of texts as specific instances of discourse removed from the stream of social life and supports the claim that literature, as well as criticism, are connected to all social discourses.

cleanth brooks was a prominent force in the New Criticism from the 1930's on and was responsible for the dissemination of New Criticism in the university. In The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, he succinctly laid out some important characteristic of this school.

"New Criticism separates literary criticism from the study of sources, social backgrounds, history of ideas, politics and social effects seeking both to purify criticism from such extrinsic concerns and to focus attention on the literary object itself. New Criticism explores the nature of a work, not the minds of authors or the reactions of reader. New Criticism champions an "organic" theory of literature rather than a dualistic conception of form and matter; it focuses on the words of the text in relation to the full content of each word: each word contributes to a unique context and derives its precise meaning from its place in the poetic context. New Criticism practices close reading of individual works, attending scrupulously to nuances of words, rhetorical figures and shades of meaning as it attempts to specify the contextual unity and meaning of the work in hand. New Criticism distinguishes literature from both religion and morality because many of its adherents have definite religious views and seeks no substitutes for religion, morality or literature" (1974, p.567-68).

brooks and his fellow New Critics pursued a relentless

form of explication de texte; close reading characterized New Criticism from the 1930's on. A panoply of protocols for this explication were developed and incorporated into the academic curricula. Source and background studies played as little a role as possible in interpretation, making the distancing and objectification of the text possible. The personal response of the critic was diminished in importance, and the reception by readers was discounted as distracting to critical analysis.

The formalist argument and its difference from other types of interpretation were stated by w.k. wimsatt and monroe c. beardsley in "The Intentional Fallacy" (1946) and "The Affective Fallacy" (1949). The components of this discussion frame the debate still going on in literary criticism concerning the role of the author and the role of the reader in the interpretive exercise and in the generation of meaning.

"Judging a poem is like judging a pudding or a machine. One demands that it works. It is only because an artifact works that we infer an intention of an artificer. "A poem should not mean but be." A poem can be only through its meaning - since its medium is words - yet it is, simply is - in the sense that we have no excuse for inquiring what part is intended or meant. Poetry is a feat of style by which a complex of meaning is handled all at once. Poetry succeeds because all or most of what is said or implied is relevant; what is irrelevant has been excluded, like lumps from pudding and "bugs" from machinery. In this respect poetry differs from practical messages which are successful if and only if we correctly infer the intention" (wimsatt, 1954, pp.4-5).

wimsatt clearly separated literature from its producers and consumers; literature simply is. The job of the critic was not so much to determine meaning, but to assess whether or not the text worked, and this depended on all the parts of the text working together. The text is converted into a "verbal icon", a spatial complex of meaning where all words and implications become relevant. This made it possible for wimsatt to distinguish poetic language from practical language both ontologically and stylistically. "The all-at-oneness of meanings, its spatial configuration, meant interpretation came about following multiple retrospective analyses, which conferred a certain feeling of objectivity and omniscience upon New Critical close readings" (leitch, 1988, p.30).

The readings of New Criticism were considered to be complete when structural unity had been demonstrated. Meaning was considered to be, both a subordinate category and an inseparable element of structure. It is possible, in fact, to understand New Criticism's theory and practice of reading as presupposing a unified structure that constituted both the goal of analysis and the nature of literature itself.

"The common goodness which the poems share will have to be stated, not in terms of "content" or "subject matter" in the usual sense in which we use these terms, but rather in terms of structure.

The conclusion of the poem is the working out of various tensions - set up by whatever means - by propositions, metaphors, symbols. This unity is achieved by a dramatic precess, not a logical one; it represents and equilibrium of forces" (brooks, 1947, p.177, 189).

This distancing of the poem into a linguistic structure was accompanied by a distancing from real readers.

"The formalist critic assumes an ideal reader; that is, instead of focusing on the varying spectrum of possible readings, he attempts to find a central point of reference from which he can focus upon the structure of the poem or novel. There is no ideal reader of course, and I suppose the practicing critic can never be too often reminded of the gap between his reading and the "true" reading of the poem" (brooks, 1951, p.75).

Despite the fact that there is no ideal reader, the desire for one is evidence of the separation of literature from the social community of everyday readers. This sets the grounds for the implicit assumption that literature has no political or ideological impact on the people. In fact, The Canon, those works assessed to be great, could not be understood when confronted in an unmediated fashion. The population had to be taught great works, and criticism would provide the means of doing this. As john crowe ransom put it,

"It is from the professor of literature, in this country the professors of English for the most part, that I should hope eventually for the erection of intelligent standards of criticism. It is their business.

Criticism must become more scientific, or precise and systematic, and this means that it must be developed by the collective and sustained effort of learned persons - which means that its proper seat is in the universities.

Rather than occasional criticism by ama-

teurs, I should think that the whole enterprise might be seriously taken in hand by professionals. Perhaps I use a distasteful figure, but I have the idea that what we need is Criticism, Inc. or Criticism, Ltd." (brooks and warren, 1939, 1969, pp.328-329).

With the exception of kenneth burke who clearly went beyond the practice of other new Critics, ordinary readers, people in daily life apart from professional critics, are not seen as intrinsic to the study of literature until the reader-response movement of the 1960's.

marxist literary criticism of the 1930's presented an alternative conceptualization of the function of literature to that of new Criticism. v.f. calverton, in The Liberation of American Literature (1932), analyzed literature from within a base-superstructure model, focusing on the historical role of social contradictions in the production of literature. In direct opposition to "The Intentional Fallacy", he treated the author as a member of her/his culture, understanding that the author played a determining role in the construction of the literary text, and understanding the literary text as itself impacting back on the culture.

"The literary artist is not, therefore as many people think, a hopeless victim of his environment, but is a creative part of it, able to help shape and rebuild it. Although he drives his ideas and direction from the social environment, he in turn, by virtue of those same ideas and direction, is able to assist in the transformation of that environment" (p.468).

We see in his formulation an understanding of ideology influencing the production of literature, and the possibility of literature transforming the ideology.

The marxist critics applied a sociological analysis to American literary culture focusing on the role of economic, political, and class struggle. Criticism was engaged in as political activity in direct opposition to the New Critics. Far from understanding literature's purpose to be a distancing from emotion, the marxists viewed literature as having a revolutionary impact, precipitating social action. granville hicks outlined three criteria of literary value for marxist criticism in "The Crisis in American Criticism": a work had to concern itself with the central issues of social life; a work had to involve the reader in the world created /portrayed in the literary work; and author had to express the point of view of the proletariat. hicks argued in a later work that revolutionary praxis was, in fact, the authentic outcome of the great tradition of American literature. As he argued in The Great Tradition (1933)

"The best of American writers have always affirmed values that were not being realized under capitalism...This is the great tradition of American literature. Ours has been a critical literature, critical of greed, cowardice, and meanness. It has been a hopeful literature, touched again and again with passion for brotherhood, justice and intelligent honest...It involves not merely criticism but destruction of capitalism and its whole way of life" (p.329).

A main point of disagreement with hicks' work is that his

assumption that literature has an antagonistic relationship to the dominant ideology makes him blind to the many ways in which it reaffirms it. he points to the difficulty in maintaining a dialectical understanding when the critic's politics informs the critic's analysis. hicks was criticized in his day, not only by critics of a different persuasion, but by marxists as well. Critics around the "Partisan Review" criticized hicks' sentimentality for the proletariat and his vulgar materialist practice. The critics around this journal were interested in preserving political involvement while at the same time developing a theory of aesthetics linking form with content. These critics, known as The New York Intellectuals/New York Critics became the dominant force in marxist criticism from the late 1930's through the 1950's. they were in irving howe's words,

"a circle of writers who think of themselves as deeply cut off from the society in which they live while nevertheless tied to it by bonds of criticism, a circle of writers, drawn from or desiring to attach itself to plebian segments of society and thereby tending to see culture and politics as all but inseparable" (1968, p.2).

The circle of writers included howe, edmund wilson, lionel trilling, alfred kazin, and phillip rahv among others.

The New York Critics considered literary texts to be cultural phenomena that needed to be subjected to analysis from many points of view. The complexity of assumptions and conventions that existed in any culture were thought to be

embedded in the literary work; thus no one type of analysis could ever be adequate or complete. Members of the school engaged in sociological, historical, psychological, aesthetic and dialectical criticism. However no matter what type of criticism engaged in, criticism was considered by nature, to be political, and so was literature. Lionel Trilling defined politics as "the organization of human life toward some end or other, toward the modification of sentiments, which is to say, the quality of human life." Literature shared with politics a vision of social life and the power to shape feelings; thus there was an "inevitable intimate, if not always obvious connection between literature and politics." (1950, p.ix). The political nature of criticism and literature implied an activism that was obvious in the work of Howe and Kazin. Kazin understood the tradition of criticism to be "part of the general criticism of established values which must go on in every age. Its greatest single attribute is its force, its passionate declaration of the true nature of man and what his proper destiny must be" (1962, p.496).

The emphasis on politics and activism and the assumption that literature was related to the culture it was produced within, distinguished the New York Intellectual School from the formalism of the New Critics who avoided sociopolitical themes and methods. Another distinguishing feature was the type of text preferred by the New York Critics. Unlike the New Critics who favored poetry, the New York Critics preferred realistic and modern texts because of their connection with

the "sources of life" (howe, 1970, p.31). they believed that autonomous literature closed off from the world and life was unacceptable. As vincent leitch has noted, "the ideal literature propounded by wilson, trilling and howe constituted an aesthetic, moral and sociological formulation. The linkage of mimetic, expressive and didactic functions of art, in self-conscious opposition to autonomous textual poetics, insured the ethical interaction of literature with life and society" (1988, p.103). All of the major New York Intellectuals wrote critical texts on American literature and made important contributions to American Studies.

alfred kazin, in On Native Grounds: An Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature,, expounded an historical account of the development of American literature in relation to both the triumph of western industrial capitalism and its decline. he argued that the United States, in the 1880's, stood,

"between one society and another, one moral order and another...It was rooted in the drift to the new world of factories and cities, with their dissolution of old standards and faiths"

and by the beginning of World War I had

"reached a definite climax in literature as in so much of our modern liberal culture" (1942, p.x).

American fiction writers within this period (1880's-1930's), were understood by kazin, as responding to the deleterious

effects of industrial capitalism and science and engaging in realistic examination of social life, expressing alienation and disappointment. This reflects a strong departure from the New Critics' conceptualization of literature as expressing an ideal model for reality. For Kazin and other New York Critics, American literature was,

"at bottom, only the expression of our modern life...rooted in nothing less than the transformation of our society...rooted in that moving and perhaps inexpressible moral transformation of American life, thought and manners under the impact of industrial capitalism and science...above all it was rooted in the need to learn what the reality of life was in the modern era" (1942, p.viii-ix).

Kazin viewed criticism as being one element of culture, and using Edmund Wilson as his model, argued that the exemplary critic had a dual commitment to reality and literary craft, and was alienated from capitalism and committed to democratic values.

There is no doubt that the New York Critics were very much involved in delineating the place of ideology in both literature and criticism. However, an important limitation in their conceptualization of ideology is that they ignored the existence of patriarchal ideology, and thus never confronted the sexual and gender divisions of the social world.

The New York Critics were aware of the danger of culture playing too determining a role in their work and attempted to insert flexibility in two different ways. Lionel Trilling (1955) relied on Freud's ambivalence concerning the relation-

ship between humans and culture, arguing that men/women were formed by culture and, at the same time, set against it; thus "it was possible to stand beyond the reach of culture" (1955, p.115). Freud's reliance on biology, in particular his articulation of the death instinct, indicated to Trilling, that man could not simply be reduced to a product of culture. There was a core in humans "that culture cannot reach" and that reserves the right "...to judge the culture and resist and revise it" (p.115).

While Trilling pointed to the resistance of humans to hegemonic culture and their ability to generate alternatives, Richard Chase argued against a monolithic conceptualization of cultural representations as mirroring social reality. In The American Novel and Its Tradition (1957), Chase distinguished 19 and 20 century American fiction from English literature, characterizing the great English novels as realist novels and the American ones as romance novels. He considered American fiction to be an adaptation and modification of traditional realism, privileging symbolic action and relative freedom from actuality, being more concerned with universal moral problems rather than truth, and treating experience as being disconnected and uncontrolled, asocial and individual,

"Romance is as we see, a kind of "border" fiction, whether the field of action is in the neutral territory between civilization and the wilderness, as in the adventures of Cooper and Simms, or whether, as in Hawthorne and later romancers, the field of action is conceived not so much as a place as a state of mind - the borderland of the human mind where the

actual and imaginary intermingle. Romance does not plant itself, like the novel, solidly in the midst of the actual. Nor when it is memorable, does it escape into the purely imaginary" (p.19).

chase understood romance emerging out of existing contradictions that existed in American culture due to the geographical and political isolation of the early American experience, the existence of the puritanical dichotomy of good and evil and the allegiance Americans felt to the intellectual ways of both the Old and the New World. The romance novel was considered to be more abstract than concrete, pertaining to the mind and imagination rather than reality and social existence. The romance novel was seen as giving expression to the "dark and complex truths unavailable to realism" (p.xi), emphasizing the subconscious as opposed to consciousness. chase's theory suggested not only the complex nature of texts as instances of representation, but also the existence of multiple levels of reception on the part of the reader. In opposition to New Criticism, chase preserved the relationship between literature and culture and the impact both had on real readers. This is the most significant contribution and intervention of the New York Intellectuals to the discourse of literary criticism that was being put forth by the New Critics and the myth critics, northrop frye being the most notable example. However, before turning to an explication of myth criticism, the divergence of kenneth burke from the practices of New Criticism should be noted.

burke shared, but expanded, the New Critical belief that literature is knowledge and that metaphorical language is inherently religious. he stressed the value of close reading, bringing the concerns of sociology, psychology, philosophy, aesthetics, ethics and biography into literary criticism. By the mid 1940's, burke had articulated a complex model of interpretation that linked poetics with grammar, rhetoric and ethics. Grammar concentrated on content, on literature as information and knowledge; rhetoric concentrated on response, on literature as power; poetics concentrated on beauty, on literature as aesthetic form; and ethics concentrated on moral values, on literature as personal and social explication of reality. burke added, to formalist explication, psychological analysis of the poet's and reader's involvement, in direct opposition to the intentional and affective fallacies, sociological investigation into cultural norms, and historical investigation into the meaning of terms. For burke, close reading

"at its best...sustains the intense contemplation of an object to the point where one begins to see not only more deeply into the object but beyond it, in the direction of generalizations about the kinds of criticism and artistic excellence, and even the principles of human thought and experience universally" (1946, pp.278-279).

burke moved from textual analysis to human experience, and saw this as the responsibility of the critic.

"The greater the range and depth of considerations about which a critic can be explicit, the more he is fulfilling his task as a critic" (p.272).

In both "Literature as Equipment for Living" and *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (1941, 1973), burke conceptualized literature as "equipment for living", understanding it as a form of self expression that arose out of specific conditions in response to a specific situation that in turn, offered solutions. he clearly understood literary texts as being involved with the flow of social life and having an impact on members of society. Because of this, burke focused on the symbolic value of ordinary language, again diverging from New Criticism's glorification of metaphor as the essence of poetic language, and that which separated it from ordinary, everyday language. burke's difference from New Criticism did not go unnoticed by practitioners of the school. As murray kriegler put it in a footnote in The New Apologists for Poetry (1956),

"Kenneth Burke has very different assumptions from which to attempt the definition of poetry. Although he is popularly referred to as a new critic and his is an unusual attempt, one which has not been without its influence, he is not being treated in this essay by very reason of his assumptions...In the work which is to satisfy the psychology of the poet and the psychology of the audience, there is insufficient provision made for the dislocations of stereotyped expressions...T-his framework leads to burke's "dramatistic" theory, which ends by denying any barrier between art and life" (p.216 n18)

The alternative conceptualization of literature and critical practice offered by new Criticism and the New York Critics turned on the location of the text, whether outside and above the material practices of social life, as in the case of the New Critics, or connected to those very practices, as in the case of the New York Critics. This difference runs throughout the history of literary criticism and can be traced in the ways in which language is conceptualized in the various schools. A criticism that assumes that literature is one of many social practices will treat literary language as ordinary discourse having representational functions. A criticism that isolates literature as something unique will work at formulating the difference of poetic language. This was certainly the case in New Criticism as has already been pointed out. It was also an important aim of Russian formalism.

The Russian formalists, as the American New Critics, "concentrated on the close scrutiny of autonomous, verbal constructs, conceived as highly structured and unified patterns of miraculous poetic language" (leitch, p.53). they engaged in scientific, structuralist analysis which achieved its fullest expression in the work of jakobson, who searched for formal linguistic properties that distinguished literature from other types of discourse. Textual structure became the ground of literary analysis and factors extrinsic to the text were not given any consideration.

Russian formalism was seriously attacked by baktin, who argued that its treatment of the literary work divorced

literature from the subjectivity of its producers and consumers, and, "estranged it from the whole ideological environment and from objective social intercourse. The work is cut off from both real and social realization and from the entire ideological world." (bakhtin, 1978, p.145). Not only did formalism separate literature from the material base of society, but it isolated it from the cultural superstructure as well. The poems they studied were not regarded as having any ideological element attached to them. bakhtin developed an alternative language-centered analysis which is very suggestive of the analysis I am proposing. he argued that "every concrete utterance is a social act. At the same time that it is an individual material complex, a phonetic, articulatory, visual complex, the utterance is also a part of social reality" (p.120.). Language, both spoken and written discourse, was seen as occurring under certain social conditions, and it was communicative, dialogical.

Language was linguistic and sociological, always involved in social reality because every utterance was dependent on the context of social interaction and exchange. bakhtin conceptualized language as discourse; thus meaning was inherent and inescapable.

"It is impossible to understand the concrete utterance without accustoming oneself to its values, without understanding the orientation of its evaluation in the ideological environment" (p.121).

And meaning could only be understood from within a social and

ideological context.

bakhtin's model of literary criticism did not present a crucial threat to the dominance of New Criticism in American literary criticism; nor did it influence the critical work of william faulkner's texts. The most serious challenge to this hegemony came from myth criticism, which based itself in the theories of carl jung who articulated a relationship between myth and the unconscious.

jung treated myths as ahistorical messages for the unconscious that revealed human needs, desires and problems. Myths were set in opposition to ordinary knowledge, reason and consciousness, and instead linked to the imagination, the unconscious and the primitive mind. jung felt that literature produced rapturous effects on both its creators and readers, and he attributed a didactic function to it. Literature was both autonomous "...perhaps art has no meaning ...perhaps it is like nature which simply is and means nothing beyond that", and socially significant; "it is constantly at work educating the spirit of the age" (1966, p.82).

jung expounded the expressive theory of literature that was advanced by t.s. eliot and others. jung understood poems as giving expression to the soul and genius of the race. But unlike New Criticism, which tended to ground poems in the personal experience and feelings of the individual author, he grounded them in the collective unconscious. Literature was still seen as superior to and removed from ordinary social life. It spoke to the mysterious, rather than the actual, and

the paradoxical rather than the known. jung's formulation of literature's representational qualities did not concern itself with the mimesis of everyday social life. This became characteristic of all myth criticism.

northrop frye succeeded in dismissing mimetic poetics from myth criticism altogether. In his essay "The Archetypes of Literature" (1963), frye asserted that

"art deals not with the real but with the conceivable; and criticism ...can never be justified in trying to develop, much less assume any theory of actuality ... The criticism of literature is much more hampered by the representational fallacy than even the criticism of painting" (p.14).

frye began from the assumption that literature constituted a coherent and closed system, and saw the task of criticism to be the articulation of all the elements of this system. he undertook the task of scientifically systematizing literature, delineating its epistemological base. In the first essay in The Anatomy of Criticism (1957), he identified five literary modes that were present in classical and postclassical literature: myth, romance, high mimetic, low mimetic and irony. The romantic, high mimetic and low mimetic modes were seen as forming a series of displaced myths, and irony represented a cyclical return back toward myth. Myth replaced mimesis in frye's system of poetics.

"Our survey of fictional modes has also shown us that the mimetic tendency itself, the tendency to verisimilitude and

accuracy of description, is one of two poles of literature. At the other pole is something that seems to be connected both with Aristotle's word *mythos* and with the usual meaning of myth. That is, it is a tendency to tell a story which is in origin a story about characters who can do anything, and only gradually becomes attracted towards a tendency to tell a plausible or credible story" (1957, p.51).

Like other myth critics, frye believed that there were two distinct ways of knowing within western civilization that reflected two distinct domains, the "mythological universe" and the "scientific universe". It was the task of the intellectual to reconcile this separation. frye argued that all literature was written within the mythological universe,

"because literature continues the mythological habit of mind. The latter being an imaginative habit, is quite as profound, and in touch with "reality" among Australian aborigines as among 20 century poets" (1976, p.ix).

The mythological universe was seen to be the site of origin of human consciousness and culture.

frye's theory assumed a division between ordinary discourse and poetic discourse.

"In literature, questions of fact or truth are subordinated to the primary literary aim of producing a structure of words for its own sake, and the sign-values of symbols are subordinated to their importance as a structure of interconnected motifs. Whenever this autonomous structure is lacking, we have language, words used instrumentally to help consciousness do or understand something

else. Literature is a specialized form of language" (1957, p.74).

Literary language had a potential, variable and subordinate relation to reality. frye asserted that literary language tended to favor the pleasure principle, delight, emotion and wonder. The reality principle, instruction, truth and understanding were present in scientific and ordinary discourse.

Myth criticism, as developed by frye, stressed the social and communal aspects of literature but not as products of particular cultures. frye did not work within a model of social history. he saw the ground of a literary text to be the literary system itself, and understood a text emerging from this backdrop of other texts, all leading back to myth, "the most abstract and conventional of all literary modes." (1957, p.134). History became the expression of "eternal myths" and literary texts were increasingly removed from social life and treated as objects of concern in their own right.

frye considered literature to constitute a realm of "autonomous culture", defined as "the total body of imaginative hypothesis in a society and its tradition" (1957, p.127). Literature was formal and not a discourse about the world. frye argued that realism was more a matter of the familiarity of the form of representation than of content. he denied any socializing effect or ideological component to literature.

Literature imitates "the total dream of man" (p.119),

which is understood by frye, as the goal of civilizing nature; thus literature transcends nature while at the same time containing it.

"Nature is now inside the mind of an infinite man who builds his cities out of the Milky Way. This is not reality, but is the conceivable or imaginative limit of desire, which is infinite, eternal and hence apocalyptic" (p.119).

frye points to the recurrence of archetypes as evidence of the constancy of human nature and its desire. frye is in agreement with New Criticism in his assumption that literature transcends history and ideology giving expression to the timeless aspirations of an essentially unchanging human nature.

frye's theory of language is similar to that of New Critical theory. Words are regarded as symbols for "things" or "thoughts" (p.73), and he seems to understand that response is rooted in the words of the text. But then, at other points, frye argues that thought takes place independently of language, in the mind, and meaning precedes its expression in words.

"For it is clear that all verbal structures with meaning are verbal imitations of that elusive psychological and physiological process known as thought, a process stumbling through emotional entanglements, sudden irrational convictions, involuntary gleams of insight, rationalized prejudices and blocks of panic and inertia; finally to reach a completely incommunicable intuition. Anyone who imagines that philosophy is not a verbal

imitation of this process itself, has clearly not done much thinking" (p.83).

frye's reliance on experience with regard to the thought process aligns him with New Criticism. In the end, he concludes that meaning inheres in verbal structures intuitively available to readers because the structures reflect their wishes and anxieties. The problem that "readers" pose in the formulation of a single meaning of a text is one that neither frye nor New Critical theory resolves except to appeal to a transcendental, transhistorical conceptualization of literature.

The meaning of a text, and its dependence on the author or the reader became an increasingly important concern for literary criticism as it became more and more entrenched in the university. Interpretation became the primary task of criticism though what this entailed and the procedures for doing interpretation varied.

Phenomenological criticism tended to treat literature as a form of consciousness disconnected from the collective unconscious, personal unconscious, any objective structure, or representational qualities of material social life. Following the work of husserl, phenomenological criticism attempted to return to an understanding of objects as they were experienced by subjects. husserl argued that phenomenon didn't exist independently of subjects, but rather that subjects constituted phenomenon through the process of bestowing meaning. This directed attention to the consciousness of authors as exempli-

fied in the work of j. hillis miller.

"For Geneva Critics, then, criticism is primordially consciousness of the consciousness of another, the transportation of the mental universe of an author into the interior space of the critic's mind. Therefore these critics are relatively without interest in the external form of individual works of literature" (1966, pp.305-306).

miller and the other Geneva Critics conceived of literature as a form of consciousness which could be revealed through the consciousness of the critic as she/he entered the world of the writer in order to relive and share that reality from within; thus literary criticism became "literature at a second degree" (p.305). miller was not concerned with the purpose of an individual author but rather with "intention" which was "construed phenomenologically as that which resulted from the encounter by the critic" (leitch, p.159). Intention was something eternal. It directed attention to subjectivity outside of a social context. Phenomenological criticism aimed at an understanding of eternal consciousness, pure mind formed outside the parameters of existing society.

Phenomenological criticism centered on the question of aesthetic perception and was concerned with the experience whereby the individual reader appropriates the text. The act of reading was defined as a sense making process that consisted of a number of activities performed by the reader in the course of reading. An important implication of this is that any text was considered to be richer than any of its individu-

al interpretations. This implication is the starting point for various reader response theories as well as semiology and deconstruction criticism as will be discussed. In general however, the reading subject is neither concretized nor grounded in ideology within phenomenological criticism.

European philosophy impacted again on American literary criticism in the late 1960"s particularly the work of gadamer and heidigger. This has come to be known as hermeneutic criticism, and while it didn't motivate scholarship on william faulkner, it did represent an important challenge to existing literary criticism and set the stage for the emergence of critical practices that inform my own work.

heidigger articulated a process aimed at uncovering being which meant to interpret it. his theory of interpretation assumed an "intimacy of text and reader called fore-having and understanding. Understanding included acts of fore-sight in which the reader's concerns and point of view found or produced relevant textual elements" (leitch, p.188). heidigger called this work interpretation which could be presented as assertions i.e. objective, propositional thought. heidigger drew attention to the constructed nature of meaning by refusing to bracket context or personal interest.

richard palmer delineated key components of phenomenological hermeneutic criticism in "A Hermeneutic Manifesto to American Literary Interpretation" (1969), and made clear its disagreement with New Criticism and myth criticism. According to palmer, these schools had their basis in philosophical

realism which posited a fundamental separation of subject/reader and object/text, thus separating the text from its historical context as well as its reader.

"We have forgotten that the literary work is not a manipulable object completely at our disposal; it is a human voice out of the past, a voice which somehow must be brought to life. Dialogue, not dissection, opens up the world of the literary work. Disinterested objectivity is not appropriate to the understanding of a literary work" (1969, p.7).

Hermeneutic reading represented an "historical encounter that called forth personal experience of being in the world" (p.8). Understanding rather than impersonal knowledge was the goal of criticism.

Palmer distinguished interpretation, which involved the ontological, historical and linguistic worlds of the work and the reader; and explanation, analysis, reflection and methodology, which distanced the reader, making it impossible for "the language event to seize and overpower and transform the interpreter himself" (p.226). Any attempt at trying to understand a text in terms of itself and its time was to exclude the world of the interpreter and her/his present interests.

Hermeneutic interpretation had "to relate to the world or die" (p.251). This motivated Palmer to formulate significance as "a relationship to the listener's own projects and intentions" (p.24); thus the significance of a work was a function of the relationship between it and the reader.

Nonhistorical interpretation was impossible for hermeneutic criticism. History was understood as linguistic and epistemological. Phenomenological hermeneutics, as developed by palmer, moved from textual to oral poetics. Literary works had the power to transform the world of its consumers, and this power was maximized when it was spoken and heard. Written language was thought to be weak but "the saying done by a literary work is a disclosure of being" (p.248). Oral poetics seriously undermines formalist criticism by its deemphasis on the affective potential of literature. palmer emphasized the discursive nature of language.

There was an important division in hermeneutic criticism. palmer represented the "new hermeneutics" and e.d. hirsch the "old hermeneutics" associated with the 19 century philological tradition in Germany exemplified by schleiermacher and dilthey. The old hermeneutics sought a correct method of obtaining objective truth for all textual interpretation, and this involved recognition of the author's meaning. hirsch defined the basic issues of the disagreement and popularized the central principles of the old hermeneutics.

hirsch set out to establish a set of authoritative and consistent principles that could generate "correct" interpretations. he sought to maintain the stable determinacy of meaning understood as auctorial in nature. hirsch regarded an author's meaning as an unchanging and reproducible object; thus arguing against the text-centered concept of meaning advocated by new Criticism and myth criticism. he distin-

guished between the "public stance" and "private attitude" of an author i.e. between what an author actually said on the page and what she/he might have possibly or unconsciously intended (1967, pp.209-121). his elimination of the nontextual, private was reminiscent of New Criticism's attack on the intentional fallacy. This enabled hirsch to posit a public author when doing interpretation. The insight that an author is a member of culture is present but remains undeveloped in hirsch's work.

hirsch made an important distinction between meaning and the significance of meaning. Significance exceeded meaning and involved factors that built onto determinate auctorial meaning such as the context in which a reading occurred and the critics concerns. hirsch argued that the meaning of a text could have different significance over time but meaning itself was stable. The significance of a text however was unlimited. hirsch used this formulated difference between meaning and significance to distinguish between interpretation and criticism. Interpretation involved the pursuit of meaning, criticism sought significance; interpretation was primary. hirsch wanted to base all humanistic studies on the science of interpretation and sought to establish normative principles of valid interpretation. he opposed "historicism, psychologism, and autonomism" since they fostered "solipsism, anarchy and disciplinary disorder"

"The wider implications of such hermeneutical skepticism are usually overlooked by its adherents. At stake ultimately is

the right of any humanistic discipline to claim genuine knowledge. Since all humane studies, as Dilthey observed, are founded upon interpretation of texts, valid interpretation is crucial to the validity of all subsequent inferences in those studies" (p.viii).

hirsch identified two phases in the act of interpretation, an "intuitive" phase of divination and an intellectual phase of interpretation proper.

"To understand a poem by Keats, a reader must imaginatively reenact the doubts, glories and mysteries which inform Keats' sense of life, but afterwards the reader can subject his imaginative construction to a severe discipline" (p.x).

hirsch consistently brought up the personal, the emotional but only in regard to the author of the text. These were factors the reader had to disassociate herself/himself from. Readers and their personal and social histories, as well as their emotions were extraneous to the pursuit of meaning.

Hermeneutic criticism took another turn in the mid 1970's with its emphasis on "destructive hermeneutics". The most influential literary critic working within this tradition is william spanos who conceived of destruction as interpretation intended to overturn traditional philosophy in order to reveal hidden possibilities of truth within that discourse. The basis of the critique made of traditional philosophy was that it allowed man to assume an objective stance vis a vis history, understood as lived social existence and being.

"(1) a flattened out, static, and homogeneous Euclidean space - a totalized and ontologically depthless system of referents (a map) - if the objectifying consciousness is positivistic or realistic; or  
 (2) a self-bounded or sealed off and inclusive image (icon or myth), if the objectifying consciousness is idealistic or symbolistic. In either case, this transformation allows Dasein (human being) to see existence from the beginning i.e. all at once. In so doing it distances him i.e. disengages his Care, observer of the ultimately familiar or autonomous picture in which temporality - its threat and its possibilities have been annulled" (1977, p.427).

The criticism spanos made of other forms of criticism was that they began their inquiry of a text with a predetermined sense of the "whole picture" or with a commitment to "overall form"; their expectations were understood as converting the text into an object frozen in its possibilities.

"It is, in other words, a strategy that is subject to a vicious circularity that closes off the phenomenonological/existential understanding of the temporal being - the sequence of words - of the literary text" (1976, p.116).

A fundamental component of spanos' hermeneutics was his opening of the text to the being of the reader i.e. her/his creative activities and discoveries. A text came to life in a dialogue between itself and a reader. he argued that a reader did not experience the form or structure of a text, but the temporal being of the text, the flow of words. Meaning and interpretation were regarded as retrospective construc-

tions. Destructive hermeneutics understood the text and reader being involved in an ongoing, continuous activity; texts denied closure. This is an idea shared by barthes and derridean deconstruction.

spanos considered language to be primordial speech, "the essential existential structure of human life is language as human speech" (1976, p.138). Being, thinking and discourse were understood as the founding moment of existence. he clearly is operating from the idea that language is constitutive of the world.

spanos was aware of a "continuum of being" that involved the domains of consciousness and ideology. he attempted to incorporate ideological analysis into his project of phenomenological hermeneutics. his work brings together important elements of the analytic framework I intend to apply to the texts of william faulkner, and it reflects a significant turn in contemporary literacy criticism toward reader-response theory and marxist criticism, both of which inform feminist literary criticism.

barthes introduces the concept ideology through an analysis of myths. Myths are forms of representation that preserve the interest of the ruling class. Myths are treated as social practices which naturalize meanings. barthes argues that myths are the outcome of the process of signification. Ideology enters into the very constitution of the sign through the processes of denotation and connotation. In S/Z (1974), barthes argues that ideology is expressed through a multiplic-

ity of cultural codes present in the text in the form of signifiers. Each of these signifiers points to an established way of thinking that exists outside the text in society.

barthes assumes that modes of writing are social in nature, forms of signification that have ideological intentions.

"the utterances of the cultural codes are implicit proverbs: they are written in that obligative mode of which the discourse states a general will, the law of society, making the proposition concerned ineluctable or indelible. It is because an utterance can be transformed into a proverb, a maxim, a postulate that the supporting cultural code is discoverable: stylistic transformation "proves" the code, bares its structure, reveals its ideological perspective" (1974, p.100).

Realism is understood by barthes to be the dominant mode of writing in bourgeois society. The realist novel is "a symbol of the particular real" (Coward and ellis, 1977, p.35) which a society constructs for itself. The realist novel acts as a mirror of the world. Its aim is to cover up contradictions that permeate culture. The practice of reading barthes advocated in S/Z attempts to break up the coherent system the realist novel initially presents. he wishes to make the readable text unreadable thereby pointing to the ways, the points at which, hegemonic ideology is resisted and contradicted.

"(to) ...want a text without the "dominant ideology"...is to want a text without fecundity, without productivity,

a sterile text. The text needs its shadow: this shadow is a bit of ideology, a bit of representation, a bit of subject" (1975, p.32).

frederic jameson outlined a twofold marxist hermeneutic in The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act (1981)

"a Marxist negative hermeneutic, a Marxist practice of ideological analysis proper, must, in the practical work of reading and interpretation, be exercised simultaneously with a marxist positive hermeneutic, or a decipherment of the Utopian impulses of these same still ideological, cultural texts" (p.20).

he also argued that texts made history accessible, reasserting their relationship to culture. This form of dialectical criticism shifted analysis away from the individual work of art, as a product of individual consciousness, to the realm of the public, the social.

frank lentricchia argued against the severing of literature from life in After New Criticism (1980). he situated literature and criticism amidst social history, demonstrating how both respond to real conditions and events in society. This assertion was in direct opposition to schools of literary criticism that treated the text as superior to and removed from other forms of social discourse.

In Criticism and Social Change (1983), lentricchia outlined a project of "marxist rhetoric" which assumed that ideology was revealed to us textually and therefore had to be

"grasped (read) and attacked (re-read, rewritten) in that dimension" (p.24). his stress on the importance of language as power renewed the conceptualization of literature that had existed prior to the 18 century. his equating of literature with social discourse connected the literary with social reality and power, emphasizing its ideological and counterideological elements.

"The literary is never only the elite canon of great books; it is also what we call "minor" literature and "popular" literature. But it is more even than what this expanded definition would allow. It is all writing considered as social practice...the literary is all around us, and it is always doing its work upon us" (1983, p.157).

Contemporary marxist criticism incorporates the poststructuralist theoretical framework outlined in the previous chapter and is consistent with feminist criticism.

The reader-response movement represents a turn away from formalist criticism with its veneration of the text. The movement goes directly against the New Criticism dictum stated in "The Affective Fallacy" and argues that a literary work can not be understood separate from its effects on readers. This shift in emphasis to readers effectively undermines the notion of the objective text at least in principle. However, reader-response criticism continues to pursue interpretation and the search for meaning and is thereby implicated in the goals of criticism that were laid out by formalism. The incorporation of reader-response practice within feminist criticism offers

a way out of this dilemma as will be demonstrated further on. It is first necessary to sketch the analytic framework developed by leading reader-response critics.

Certain tenets characterize reader-response criticism: an argument is made against text centered criticism in favor of a reader-oriented criticism; the temporality of reading is stressed and textual discontinuity rather than textual unity is sought; the question of aesthetic value is not considered; the role of history is ignored; epistemological, linguistic, psychological and sociological constraints on the activity of reading and the work of readers are investigated and an emphasis is placed on pedagogy that locates the text and the reader in the classroom.

stanley fish is one of the most well known and influential reader-response critics. he argued that literature was a process, not a product, and that a work of literature became real only through the act of reading. Reading occurred through time; thus the experience of literature involved a continuous play of perceptions, ideas and evaluation on the part of the reader. The meaning of a text was embodied in the experience of the reader, not in the text itself.

"meaning is an event, something that happens not on the page, where we are accustomed to look for it, but in the interaction between the flow of print (or sound) and the actively mediating consciousness of a reader-hearer" (1967, p.x).

fish's conceptualization of meaning led to an alternative

conceptualization of the literary text. The text was no longer conceived of as an object but rather as a sequence of events that take place in the mind of the reader.

"I am courting the "affective fallacy". Indeed I am embracing it and going beyond it. That is, making the work disappear into the reader's experience of it is precisely what should happen in our criticism, because it is what happens when we read. The lines of plot and argument, the beginnings, middles, and ends, the clusters of imagery, all the formal features that are observable when we step back from the reading experience, are, during that experience, components of a response; and the ...structure of response" (pp. ix-x).

Since meaning is now defined as a product of the reader's activity, fish necessarily investigates the ways in which readers make this meaning. he begins the investigation into readers' cognitive activities in "Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics" (1970, 1980). fish assumes that meaning is created in the reader by the author of the text, and that the reader enacts the author's will. This is possible because a reader's cognitive processes operate according to the same set of rules the author uses to generate the words on the page. Thus, the experiences that literature make possible are determined by linguistic and literary competencies that are somewhat shared by members of a community. The implications of this line of thinking are not developed by fish however until 1976 in "Interpreting the Variorum".

Reader-response theory, because of the role it afforded

the reader in general, generated various types of readers in its pursuit of understanding the construction of meaning. fish articulated an account of the "informed reader", a construct modeled on himself. The informed reader was,

"neither an abstraction nor an actual living reader, but a hybrid - a real reader (me) who does everything within his power to make himself informed" (19-70, p.87).

According to fish, the informed reader is a competent speaker of the language out of which the text is built; is in full possession of the "semantic" knowledge that a mature listener brings to her/his task of comprehension and has literary competence. The informed reader is able to engage in a response relationship to the deep structure of the text. This is the point at which fish reveals his positing of an auctorial consciousness that creates the deep structure the reader responds to. fish nonetheless understands that there are a multiplicity of readings possible, and he attempts to account for this variety as well as the stability of reader responses. Since all meanings were created through particular reading acts and interpretive strategies during the reader's moment to moment experience of the text, fish came to understand the informed reader as a member of a community of interpreters, a reader who sprang from a community predisposed to create certain particular meanings.

"interpretive communities are made up of those who share interpretive strategies

not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions. In other words, these strategies exist prior to the act of reading, and therefore determine the shape of what is read rather than, as is usually assumed, the other way around" (1976, p.182).

The interpretive strategies a reader brought to bear acted as a check to authorial intention; thus fish moved from the earlier implications of his theorizing.

fish assumed continuity between the language of texts and the language of everyday life. he denied the possibility of disinterested critical inquiry and interpretation. his notion of interpretive communities assumed that communal interests, beliefs, and values shaped knowledge; yet his theorizing does not consider the degree to which artistic production is also similarly determined. Ideology comes to be incorporated in the reader-response model with feminist literary critics as will be discussed in the following chapter. Non feminist reader-response critics tended, in general, to pursue investigation into the ways in which readers make meaning. This is exemplified in the work of jonathan culler.

culler conceptualized a literary text/poem as an "utterance that has meaning only in respect to a system of conventions which the reader has assimilated" (1975, p. 104). The meaning and structure, latent in the text, are actualized by an internalized grammar that the reader brings to the "act of communication" (p.102)., i.e. to the reading. culler discuss-

es this internalized grammar of literature as literary competence, a set of conventions that directs the reader to pick out certain features of the work corresponding to public notions of what constitutes acceptable, appropriate interpretation. Literary meaning is a function of conventions that people publicly agree upon.

"...in order to read a text as literature one must bring to it an implicit understanding of the operations of literary discourse which tells one what to look for...conventions are the constituents of the institution of literature" (pp. 103-104).

The question for Culler is not what actual readers do but rather what an ideal reader must know implicitly in order to read and interpret works in acceptable ways.

"The ideal reader is a theoretical construct best thought of as a representation of the central notion of acceptability. The meaning of a poem within the institution of literature, is not, one might say the immediate and spontaneous reaction of individual readers, but the meanings which they are willing to accept as both plausible and justifiable when they are explained" (p.111).

Reading is a rule-governed process of producing meanings, and Culler uses structuralist methods to point to the operations members do when producing these meanings. Unfortunately, Culler does not adequately interrogate the place of ideology in the conventions that are agreed upon and thus meanings that are produced by them.

wolfgang iser understands the activity readers do when reading as a fulfillment of what is already implicit in the structure of the literary work. he understands a reader to be actively involved in the production of textual meaning by supplying what is implied by the text itself.

"...reading sets in motion a chain of activities that depend on the text and on the exercise of certain basic human faculties,. The text represents a potential effect that is realized in the reading process" (1978, p.2).

he is not concerned with real empirical readers but rather with an implied reader, one who is constructed by the text in the sense that she/he "embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect...predispositions laid down, not by an empirical outside reality, but by the text itself" (p.34).

iser describes a reading process in which a reader produces meaning that is neither entirely deterministic, because of textual indeterminacies created by the juxtaposition of different perspectives in the text, nor entirely subjective because the formal properties of the text construct a role for the reader. iser is thus able to explain variations in reading as being due to variations in the activities of selection and organization performed by readers within the possible limits set by the "gaps" in the text.

"the overdetermination of a text produces indeterminacy, and this sets in motion a whole process of comprehension whereby

the reader tries to assemble the world of the text - a world that has been removed from the everyday world by this very overdetermination. The process of assembling the meaning of the text is not a private one, for although it does mobilize the subjective disposition of the reader, it does not lead to day-dreaming but to the fulfillment of conditions that have already been structured in the text. Herein lies the significance of the overdetermination of the text: it is not merely a given textual quality, but a structure that enables the reader to break out of his accustomed framework of conventions, so allowing him to formulate that which has been unleashed by the text" (pp. 49-50).

iser presumes that the literary work is a form of communication, and though he suggests that it is ultimately the text which directs the reader's realization of it, he, at the same time, implies that only a limited number of patterns are realizable for a given text. his own readings leave no doubt that he thinks some of these realization to be more correct and true to the intentions of the text than others.

"And, indeed, herein lies the key to the meaning of this novel: through the continual cancellation of the mental images provoked by the blanks, the senselessness of life- which Faulkner indicates through the "Macbeth" quotation that forms his title (The Sound and the Fury) - becomes a living experience for the reader. The negation of his (Quentin's) own mental images guarantees that this experience will be real for him" (p.220).

iser presumes that literature impinges on the social world and on individual readers. he argues that the words of the text

stimulate mental images that are translated into the reader's consciousness. he understands texts as, in general,

"constitut(ing) a reaction to contemporary situations, bringing attention to problems that are conditioned though not resolved by contemporary norms" (p.3),

While at the same time,

"not always refer(ring) directly to the prevailing thought systems of the day" (p.78).

This ambivalence is replicated in izer's insistence that literary texts enable readers to transcend the limits of their own real life situations while at the same time not being a reflection of any given reality. izer is silent on the relationship between texts and ideology, though when he insists that a text, "...as work and as art...represent reality and so indivisibly and simultaneously forms reality" (p.78), it is clear that his theory implies that ideology is inscribed in the literary work.

Reader-response criticism incorporates insights from sociology in its analysis of literature. Its assumption that meaning emerges from a relationship between text and reader, in which the reader's activity is fundamental, is consistent with ethnomethodology. It implies a consideration of consciousness, and while it doesn't formally address the question of language, as other schools of criticism have, there is a clear understanding of language as discourse, though the social power of this discourse is not an analytic concern.

A shift in criticism away from meaning and back to language is brought about by the influence of deconstruction. Language was conceptualized as the very ground of consciousness and was understood as mediating all phenomena. paul deman asserted that,

"unmediated expression is a philosophical impossibility, thus (literature's) separation from empirical reality, its divergence, as a sign, from a meaning that depends for its existence on the constitutive activity of this sign, characterized the work of literature in its essence" (1971, p.12).

Literature was mediated by language, and language is understood as being inherently differential "...a signifying system which exceed all the bounds of individual "presence" and speech" (norris, 1982, p.27).

derrida, in deconstructing saussure's theory of language, argued that writing was the precondition of language and has to be conceived as prior to speech. What he meant by writing was any practice of differentiation. This formulation closely approximates saussure's understanding of language working as a system of signifying difference.

"the system of language associated with phonetic-alphabet writing is that within which logocentric metaphysics, determining the sense of being as presence, has been produced. This logocentrism, this epoch of the full speech, has always placed in parenthesis, suspended, and suppressed for essential reasons, all free reflection on the origin and status of writing" (norris, p.29).

Writing for derrida, is the "free play" or element of undecidability that exists within systems of communication. Writing escapes the self-consciousness of speech and "its deluded sense of the mastery of concept over language". Writing entails the endless displacement of meaning, and according to deman, is both the most "rigorous" and the most "unreliable" source of knowledge.

"literature as well as criticism - the difference between them being delusive - is condemned (or privileged) to be forever the most rigorous and, consequently, the most unreliable language in terms of which man names and transforms himself" (1979, p.19).

All forms of writing were considered to contain perplexities of meaning and intention; therefore no one type of writing was privileged over another; literature and criticism both possess what deman called the "dialectic of blindness and insight", the dialectic between conceptual limits and discoveries. deman broke down the boundaries of discourse, and he called for a shift in the ways of reading criticism.

"since they are not scientific, critical texts have to be read with the same awareness of ambivalence that is brought to the study of non-critical literary texts, and since the rhetoric of their discourse depends on non-critical literary texts, and since the rhetoric of their discourse depends on categorical statements, the discrepancy between meaning and assertion is a constitutive part of their logic" (1971, p.110).

deman emphasized the rhetorical nature of literature. his readings were attempts at delineating the innermost logic of a text in order to display an inherent discrepancy between reason and rhetoric which he thought to be endemic to all literary texts. deman argued that all texts made a claim to truth, while at the same time arguing against it, that is, he assumed that texts contained the seeds of their own destruction.

This brief history was intended to display the conceptual limits of criticism from the standpoint of sociology. The failure to consistently address the relationship between literature, consciousness, and ideology has turned discussion away from literary discourse as a site of power that stems from its ability to effect individuals and the social world. The ability of literature to act as a socializing agent into hegemonic ideology hasn't been a focus of attention nor has literature's complicity in that ideology. A close examination of the critical work pertaining to one author reveals this connection.

### CHAPTER III: HEGEMONIC TALKERS

Major literary critics of william faulkner, no matter what school of criticism they locate themselves within, treat faulkner as a member of culture and attribute a great deal of intentionality to his work. alfred kazin characterized, "American writing as personal" (1984, p.355) and understood faulkner as "still living the heroic and defiant past of the South" (p.347). george marion o'donnell defined faulkner as a "traditional moralist" (1939, p.83), one who represented "the southern social-economic-ethical tradition" (p.83) with its emphasis on vital morality and humanism. An understanding of faulkner's work as representing the south he lived in, is reflected in robert penn warren's classification of faulkner as a "relist" who also, in arguing that he was a "symbolist", emphasized that the world faulkner lived in provided material for the world he created i.e. the fictitious Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi (1958, p.96). This sentiment is echoed by cleanth brooks who points out that, "the world faulkner creates is convincingly lifelike. It is easy to forget that it is an imaginary world. It is a world however created from faulkner's experience in a particular cultural environment" (1987. p. 66). And, he goes on to add that since literature is not "a mere shadow play with other words" but refers to something outside itself, faulkner is "rendering experiences though imagined situations...he is allowing us to see human beings in interaction" (p. 67. Unfortunately, these human

beings in interaction tend to be described by myth critics in archetypal, transhistorical terms, despite the articulation of faulkner as a southerner writing about his time, teaching us, in brooks words, "about ourselves" (p.66). Nonetheless, the "signature of the artist" is traced alongside "the sacramental property of the art" in david williams' exploration of the incarnation of "the archetype of the feminine" (1977, p.59) in faulkner' work. And this is the case in other myth criticism studies of faulkner as well (adams, 1968).

faulkner then is understood by his critics as existing within patriarchal culture. he thus articulates that culture's beliefs, as do the critics. This can be demonstrated in the discussion of faulkner's representation of women in the critical literature. Before turning to that literature, it is necessary to delineate what a woman is in patriarchy. This is best summed up by Judith Fetterley's (1978) succinct interpretation of two stanzas of a poem by Emily Dickinson that describes the beginning of patriarchy and the consequences for women.

A loss of something ever felt I --  
 The first that I could recollect  
 Bereft I was - of what I knew not  
 Too young that any should suspect

A mourner walked among the children  
 I notwithstanding went about  
 As one bemoaning a Dominion  
 Itself the only Prince cast out --

Fetterley emphasizes the sense of loss as fundamental to women's consciousness. "Bereft, disinherited, cast out, woman

is the Other, the Outsider...Her condition is isolation... and her self image is monstrous because that is the consequence of isolation". The woman in the poem is not sure what the loss entails or what it may mean. She is simply aware of herself as the prince cast out. But Fetterley understands that "forced in every way to identify with men, yet incessantly reminded of being woman, she undergoes a transformation into an "it", the dominion of personhood lost indeed" (p.ix).

Fetterley's observation is supported by the discussion within traditional criticism of faulkner's representation of women. The women characters are not understood as cultural images of women in our own right; faulkner's characters are not understood as embodying gender images experienced by women in everyday life and consciousness. Rather, the representations of women are treated as metaphors, symbols and vehicles, for the expression of some greater, more important truth that usually refers back to the domain of men; not as metaphors for women involved in daily living. faulkner's fictitious women are regarded as symbols of the Great Goddess (williams, 1977, adams, 1968), the struggle between tradition and modernity (o'donnell, 1939, warren, 1958), symbols of a moral philosophy (brooks, 1967), or the transcendent human consciousness (kazin, 1984). They are treated as metaphors for faulkner's beliefs about community (millgate, 1967, brooks, 1987), man's relationship to the land (Kolodny, 1975) and faulkner's personal value system (brooks, 1987). The presentation and discussion of women as something other than ourselves is to

make us anonymous, insignificant objects, the "prince cast out" and ignored. This erasure of women's presence is an operation crucial to patriarchal ideology, and the perpetuation of this in literary criticism must be seen as the non-reflective manifestation of this ideology.

One of the more salient and repeated discussions of women in faulkner's work revolves around the representations of the archetypes and the feminine principle. This tendency can be traced in the work of richard adams (1968), david williams (1977) and Annette Kolodny (1975). adams sets the stage for a discussion of women in terms of life force, creative energy and fertility in relation to the male principle which is static and anti-life. adams argues that faulkner creates women who "are so much in harmony with the motion of life that they themselves could hardly show it" (p.13), and thus faulkner necessarily has to "construct artificial barriers to this motion" (p.86). These barriers are materialized in men, as well as in other women. The identification of a group of women characters who are outside the archetype or beyond the good is repeated by other critics as well. They tend to be referred to as faulkner's "masculinized women" (brooks, 1987, p.87) and pay a price for being anti-nature.

adams understands the motion and power of life to be embodied in the "natural settings" (p.70) faulkner creates in his novels, and in women influenced by "biological clocks" which generally represent the "motion of fertility" (p.215). adams emphasizes the importance of Lena in Light in August

(faulkner, 1932), who is pregnant and insists that in The Wild Palms (faulkner, 1939), "the motion of life is more simply and consistently embodied in the pregnant woman than in Charlotte" (p.112). In The Wild Palms the pregnant woman, who has no name, goes into labor and delivers in a row boat, aided by a convict, during a flood, and Charlotte abandons her children to run off with her lover, has her lover abort the pregnancy that results from their union, and eventually dies from the abortion, despite that fact that her lover was a doctor.

"Charlotte is hardly the pure embodiment of motion that the river is. Unlike Lena Grove, she thinks too much, and she talks even more than she thinks. The river only moves" (p.111).

Women lose their status as representatives of the feminine archetype when they talk. It seems clear that adams is at pains to eliminate any reference to women in everyday life. Eula Varner, who first appears in The Hamlet (faulkner, 1931), has been described as a "fertility goddess" (brooks, 1987, p.83). adams points out that,

Eula, as an embodiment of sexual power and attractiveness, is obviously meant to represent some of the more important and creative energies of life. But these qualities are less convincing in The Town than in The Hamlet, because she talks too much and because she is less concretely described" (p.160).

Women, as silent objects, are the proper incarnation of the archetype.

adams' admiration of silence is reflected in his own silence on the violence experienced by women characters. he discusses a rape scene in Sanctuary (faulkner, 1931) to be representative of the ancient Persephone myth; myths, of course, are understood as portraying the motion of life.

"Temple Drake is a savagely humorous caricature of the classical Persephone, and she undergoes a horribly uncouth rite amongst the Mississippi corn before her abduction by Popeye who, as a king of the Memphis, Tennessee underworld, is an equally savage caricature of the Greco-Roman Pluto. ...in the published version she is described as "living a life of serene vegetation like perpetual corn or wheat in a sheltered garden instead of a field. ...The associations with corn provide the most outrageously ironic humorous situation. Temple is bedded at the Old Frenchman place on a corn-shuck mattress; then she is taken by Ruby to the crib where the corn and cottonseed have been stored; and there Popeye makes his ingenious use of the corncob, which if Temple is an embodiment of corn, would seem to be appropriately placed" (pp.60-61).

This tendency to ignore violence or to see it as representative of something more important or meaningful in faulkner's overall design is present in other critics as well. david williams (1977) understands Temple's rape as an experience that moves her out of patriarchal consciousness into "the forces of the matriarchate" (p.146). She is brought into her archetypal powers and,

"from this moment grow(s) into final dominance, until the male world is held totally in thrall. And Temple is in fact given justifiable sway over

that masculine element beyond even her natural proclivities as a destroying goddess. Tommy is her earliest victim..." (p.146).

williams reminds us that men die in the wake of temple's empowerment. Of course, these men are killed by other men. tommy, from williams' example is killed by popeye, Temple's rapist, because tommy has established himself as temple's protector. Yet williams does not take this into account. he is committed to emphasizing "the violent sexual force of the feminine" (p.140) resulting in male death as embodied in Temple, and "the rape of horace's consciousness when embodied by Little Belle" (p.141), his pre-adolescent stepdaughter who horace fantasizes raping.

williams understands his project as the construction of an iconography in order to reveal the essence contained within faulkner's symbolic treatment of women. he is describing faulkner's "worship of the Great Goddess,...the feminine which contains the ceaseless beginning and the end of human life" (p.29). He, like adams, is interested in delineating the movement of the archetype which "can be accounted for in jungian terms as a psychic factor which exists as a structural potentiality in the collective unconscious" (p.17). But, unlike adams, williams discusses the archetype in two distinct manifestations: as the feminine principle in women, and the feminine presence in men, the anima, "a direct experience of the feminine" (p.9).

williams understands Addie, the central female character

in As I Lay Dying (faulkner, 1930), to,

"configure the totality of the archetypal feminine in human form...While she is alive, she is accented negatively in her "hatred" of life, but she is also empowered to bear life; after she is dead, she is projected as Demeter - Styx, the terrible goddess of death, but also the life-giving mother by the process of her death. This ambivalence is the life of the myth" (pp.109-110).

The feminine contains both life and death, and both are linked in the representation of female sexuality. williams describes female sexuality as being "natural and beyond morality" (p.43), a force that leaves male death in its wake.

"sex...is central to the myth of the feminine, in copulation, in pregnancy, most mysteriously in death, it constitutes the underlying force of woman" (p.39).

What williams means by this is best exemplified in his interpretation of a central event in Light in August. joe christmas, described as a "tortured, agonized man resistant...to the forces of life" (p.243), slits the throat of his mistress Joanna and then is himself caught and killed.

"(Joanna has) a premonition when full womanhood is about to pass from her ...- she appears as the appointed nemesis to Christmas; she herself is overtaken; then she "reappears" as the mother in the grove....Christmas recognizes that Joanna will destroy him so he kills her...in psychic and mythic terms, she makes of him a victim-felon, just as she makes of herself a ritual sacrifice, the precondi-

tion of rebirth in the natural world"  
(p.176).

williams insists that Joanna is not a representative of women in the social world of daily life so her "death" is temporary; the archetype is self generating. However, williams thinks that in the work produced by faulkner after Light in August the tendency in the representation of women is toward "socializing, toward ever patriarchal usurpation" (p.185). What he means is that the male world comes to dominate women, to "humanize" (p.152) them.

"with the development of a psychic patriarchate, the Great Goddess is transformed into the goddess of love and the full numinous power of the feminine diminishes into mere sexuality. As a consequence, conquest is a male occupation...The dark powers have been stripped from the feminine: her nakedness now no threat but threatened" (p.201).

williams assumes a highly unproblematic distinction between the world of archetypal representation and the social world. The social world williams imagines in faulkner's work is one in which men are victorious over what were once the suprahuman powers of women. he thus does away with any basis for misogyny based on fear of female power since men are now dominant. Yet the social world is one created by the anima expressed in its transcendence over nature and its concretization in cultural creations.

Annette Kolodny (1975) is another critic who understands

faulkner in terms of archetypal representation. She understands him to be writing out of the American pastoral tradition which is characterized by the old and cherished fantasy of harmony between man and nature/the landscape, based on an experience of the land as essentially feminine. Her discussion of faulkner draws attention to the possibility of understanding his work within an ideological context.

"The imagery of the land as the total female principle of gratification, enclosing individuals in an environment of receptivity, repose and painless and integral satisfaction, such imagery is archetypal, and stems from desires and tensions that arise when patterns within the human mind confront an external reality of physical phenomena" (p.5).

In the course of man's encounter with nature, nature has become a helpless victim. This has denied man his desired intimacy and has thwarted the pastoral possibility. The American south has a history of protesting against the tendency towards mastery, and faulkner has been understood as speaking for this Southern protest. Kolodny however, understands faulkner as commenting on the course of an entire nation's pastoral impulse. Basing her position on an analysis of his short story, "The Bear", Kolodny understands faulkner as attempting to divest the pastoral movement of those destructive tendencies that led to both the destruction and resentment of the landscape. faulkner reveals, according to Kolodny, that these tendencies stem from the very understanding and experience of the land "as feminine that is not simply

the land as mother but the land as woman, the total female principle of gratification" (p.4). The moral truth Kolodny understands faulkner to be revealing is that "the feminine is always both vulnerable and victimized before the masculine", and that "it is difficult for the masculine to act morally with regard to the feminine" (p.144). She understands faulkner as attempting to provide a new vocabulary that will do away with the notion of the land as something to be possessed or preyed upon "like a sex object" (p.150), and suggests intimacy based on reciprocity and communality.

Kolodny understands faulkner as engaging in discourse/speech about an archetype. The only difference here from my proposal to understand him as engaging in discourse/speech about the ideological representations of women that permeate everyday life is the privilege given by me to practices, for example the capacity of the images, representations to serve multiple purposes at the level of consciousness. I wish to extend Kolodny's notion of "woman as land" as metaphor for the expression of the unconscious archetype, to "woman as land" as metaphor for the representations of gender that prevail in our culture, the real human women williams mentions then forgets.

There is a tendency within the traditional literary criticism of faulkner to consider him as being concerned with the mind of the south, meaning the values, institutions and practices of the pre and post civil war periods. What is interesting about this strand of criticism is that women are not a topic of analytic interest. This is evident in an early

piece by robert penn warren (1958), who understands faulkner as attempting to deal with issues common to the modern world; gender not being one of them, and a more recent work by alfred kazin (1984). kazin's work revolves around the notion of the Self, understood as the transcendental ego, as well as the more specific sense of the Self in America, that is, the liberal individual. faulkner's work is understood as representing a notion of subjectivity that is male to the core.

eric sundquist (1983) continuing in this vein, begins to discuss the feminine presence in faulkner's work, but he does so only in terms of what he identifies as faulkner's greatest concern, miscegenation and the crisis of blood, "the containing of black within white and white within black" (p.94), that occupies the mind of the South. faulkner's major women characters are treated by sundquist as different aspects of the ideology of "Southern Womanhood" which is itself faulkner's metaphor for the fear of miscegenation.

"Miscegenation promised the slow but eventual extinction of the white race (few bothered to notice that the contrary might be true); like incest, its exact opposite in the operation of prohibitions, it meant the lasting extinction of a memory, a dream in which half the South lived in an illusion, the other half in the long shadow it cast. This complex situation...Faulkner came to see as the heart of the South's damnation.

The transferal of threatened sexual violence to emancipated blacks revealed the idolatry of Southern Womanhood, in part, as a feverish sublimation of the lust of white masters for their slave women. A lust that could only be condoned by the insistence that it had no moral or emo-

tional content but, because it inevitably did, thereby insured the ostentatiously proclaimed sanctity of white women and white marriage...that sublimation...in sexual terms as in others, created the specter of terrifying blood" (pp.24-45).

Women characters are regarded as vehicles for the expression of an ideology that is sexual in its very formulation, and sundquist, in fact, discusses the women characters in terms of their sexual activity.

"Temple is made to experience the most horrible of rapes - an experience that releases in her the nymphomania that, Faulkner forces us to assume, the pretentious conventions of Southern Womanhood have created...She takes her place among Faulkner's many heroines, from Caddy Compson to Eula Varner, whose distinctive characteristic is the aura of tragically - often comically - violated sexuality at the heart of Faulkner's Gothicism. In the cases of Joanna Burden and Rosa Coldfield, he would make painfully explicit the convulsive passions of radical fantasy that lie behind the peculiar premium placed on the purity of Southern Womanhood" (p.52).

The women characters are persistently reduced to objects in his criticism, but he suggests that this is a function of the novels themselves. sundquist gives expression to the operation of what Laura Mulvey (1975) has termed the gaze though he doesn't himself acknowledge this.

"The extreme masculinity of the realist stance depends on reducing or denying the emotion and on mastering every detail that is brought into view - including women, who are therefore, exceptionally

on view" (p.54).

sundquist, by not being critical, as Mulvey is, participates in the misogyny of the form. he uses adjectives that trivialize the violence directed at women characters, for example "tragically - often comically - violated sexuality" (p.52). In the end, sundquist holds them responsible for this violence by placing them on the same level as the men characters, who, not only are the perpetrators of this violence, but, in the case of white male characters, representative of the group that created the ideology of Southern Womanhood in the first place.

"Joe insists to lovers and whores alike that he is a Negro through which the twisted passion of Joanna Burden will be released and for which he will in the end be killed and castrated" (p.81).

"Joanna's correlative breathless exertions engulf and internalize him as the alien other - the invisible seed of black blood that should be, that must be mixed with her own...by entering into Joanna's desire, Christmas enters the actualization of a fantasy that creates his life and leads to his death" (p.85).

It should be noted that sundquist fails to mention that Joanna is herself killed. What makes this possible is the reduction of all women characters to objects.

"Joanna becomes more than anything else a white woman", archetypically embodying Southern gynealotry and its concomitant

"rape complex" (p.82).

She got what she, as a male created idea of woman, was made to want. Joanna appropriately enacted male created, female desire.

Other faulkner critics, cleanth brooks being the most eminent among them, discuss the women characters in terms of faulkner's overall view of human nature, human community, and his emphasis on the family. This discussion attributes a sexual nature to women that permeates patriarchal society and stresses the social role of motherhood. The women characters are understood in oppositional terms to men, and the women are ultimately held responsible for what happens to men.

brooks characterizes faulkner's view of women as being,

"radically old-fashioned - even medieval. Woman is the source and sustainer of virtue and also a prime source of evil. She can be either because she is, as man is not, always a little beyond good and evil...Women are close to nature; the feminine principle is closely related to the instinctive and natural; woman typically manifests pathos rather than ethos" (1963, p.121).

he argued that faulkner valued the feminine, seeing it as a principle of strength and "necessary for human society", though what he means, as he himself points out, is that "men in particular, need it as a counterforce to their own reckless energies" (1987, p.91). Woman afterall, "undergirds society, upholding the family and community mores, sending her men into battle, including the ethical battle" (1963, p.126). Women's

role is fostering and sustaining.

Good women are successes in this role; bad women are, as millgate put it, "incapacitated females, symbolizing the weaknesses and failures of the person and the family" (1967, p.214), and as brooks defines them, "masculinized women" those in whom the "feminine principle has been badly distorted" (1987, p.89). Good women, typified by Lena in Light in August, represent "the way of life rather than death" (hirschleifer, 1949, p.247), a passive presence who begins to pull others back to life. A good woman trusts her "natural instincts to carry her to a complete sexual fulfillment in the birth of her child" (brooks, 1987, p.82). Bad women, typified by Joanna in Light in August, are "repressed, lonely and needing love, whether (they) know it or not" (p.87). They are cut off from their sex drive, as carl benson has noted about Joanna.

"when life is offered to her in the form of a passionate union with Christmas, she responds unnaturally and slips into a prolonged and aberrant sexual frenzy. When this fails, she attempts to bludgeon Joe into praying with her whereupon he kills her" (1954, p.268).

Joanna fails at transcending her distorted self; repressed women run the risk of being killed. As brooks has noted,

"he (Faulkner) has provided a brilliant psychological study of intense repression and what may happen to such a person. Joanna is thus the complete foil and counterpart to Lena who remains close to nature and to her feminine instinctual

life" (1987, pp.90-91).

One gives birth; the other is murdered.

Critics assume a connection between children, love and women that is actualized or more often thwarted in the family. bowling (1963) and millgate (1967) both indicate that the absence of love in families leads to disintegration and human failure, and attribute the cause of this to mothers, a sentiment shared by brooks, who thinks that, "Faulkner seems to be preoccupied with men and women who have lost their mothers at early ages or who have living mothers who have in effect abandoned them" (1987, p.67).

brooks reveals his own ideological blindness in his article "Faulkner's Motherless Children" (1987), when he notes the absence of exemplary fathers in faulkner's fiction but doesn't feel the need to elaborate on this theme because he was "considering the roles of the mother and the motherless child" (p.74). Fathers are not held accountable for damage to their children in a patriarchal writing such an article is inconceivable to brooks. Not only does the article he write focus on the culpability of mothers, but it emphasizes the deleterious effects on sons compared to daughters. I am not suggesting that brooks does not think that daughters/women suffer but rather, that sons/men suffer more. This conclusion is supported by the different discussion brooks has of joe christmas, one of faulkner's "Christ figures" (kazin p.355), from the Light in August, and Judith Sutphen from Absalom,

Absalom! (Faulkner, 1936).

joe, whose racial identify is never known with certainty, is not connected to either the white or black communities, and brooks thinks this is responsible for "his suspicion of the feminine principle" (1987, p.77). As a result, joe is "an incarnation of the masculine principle ...at odds with the human community, with womankind, and with nature itself" (p.77). joe "looks upon womankind with suspicion and fear and comes (to) regard all women as his enemies" (p.75). This is due to the lack of nurturing by women he received while growing up. As brooks emphasizes, "one encounter after another with women confirmed the child's early sense of women as enemies" (p.75). joe learns that "women don't keep the rules, are inconsistent, can't be trusted, play upon one's emotions to get their way" (p.75). The result is Joanna's death. "when he killed her, all his pent up rage at woman's nature burst forth" (p.75). In an article entitled "Faulkner's Women: Light in August and The Hamlet" (1987), brooks, refers to the "the tragedy of Joe Christmas" and identifies it as "his alienation from womankind" (p.91) his article on motherless children locates the blame on women themselves, especially in his characterization of Joanna as being unnatural, masculinized.

Judith Sutphen is also a motherless child; brooks considers her to be "one of Faulkner's most admirable characters" (p.79). And why not, - she took care of her father after he fell on hard times, she revered the memory of her

dead fiance, she brought the common-law wife of her fiance to see his grave; when this woman died, she took in her son, the son of her dead fiance, and reared him despite her poverty. When this boy grew into manhood, Judith nursed him through an attack of scarlet fever, contracted it through her caretaking and died as a result. (brooks, 1987, p.79). She does have her failings however. brooks thinks that the "little boy perhaps suffered most of all from his orphaned state...living in the company of two strange, taciturn women" (p.79); though he does insist that "we remember that Judith gave him the best she had" (p.79). What she had was compassion, love and "the ability to endure all of fate's buffetings" (p.25). Despite her own motherlessness, she is able to act in a life-affirming, rather than life-taking manner. It is a characteristic Judith is born with. brooks notes that joe christmas' inability to affirm life "does not come from his birth but from his nurture" (p.77); evidently women don't need nurturing.

Linda Wagner (1977) understands faulkner as depicting women with accuracy and sympathy. She points to a dichotomy of male and female attributes and modes of existence, recognizing that few women characters ever become self determining, understanding that they will always be judged by male standards. She describes most of the women characters as recognizing their ineffectualness and bearing this as their cross. Women, after all, "act as tutors so that truly great male characters" can grow beyond them" (p.146). Wagner is not

troubled by what she describes which is nothing less than a model for the reality of women's lives within patriarchy, but I am very troubled. My reading of this criticism compels me to join with other women critics in what Adrienne Rich has described as an act of survival.

#### CHAPTER IV: THE FEMINIST ALTERNATIVE

The absence of women theorists from the history of literary criticism, the absence of women writers from the Canon, and the absence of a feminist perspective in the criticism of William Faulkner is not an accident but rather the result of the very constitution of the field itself. As Jane Marcus (1988) has pointed out, "literary history is a branch of philosophy. It's most vigorous practitioners in the United States have been male. Women are excluded from their discourse since theorizing is a male activity" (p.183, 185). Women critics in the late 1960's began, very self-consciously, to rebel against their training and to look critically at the field. Inspired by their involvement in the women's movement, they began to articulate an alternative theory and practice. The feminist work in literary theory and criticism has been prolific and has resulted for the women practitioners in "changing the subject" (Marcus, p.xiii).

It is necessary to explore what "changing the subject" has meant since my own work is part of this ongoing activity. At the very least, it is possible to say that changing the subject is a dialogue that feminists are having with ourselves, our students, and our friends. It is not however, a dialogue that male theorists, on the whole, are having with us. Evidence of this can be found in the lack of attention to feminist work in critical texts written by men (see for instance Gerald Graff, 1979, Frank Lentriccia, 1980) and the

avoidance of gender as a category of analysis in texts that have intended to disrupt hegemonic discourse (see for instance frederic jameson, 1981).

Perhaps a more insidious manifestation of this negation is male critics identifying themselves as feminists and attempting to "read as women". As Elaine Showalter (1983) has made clear in her discussion of terry eagleton and jonathan culler, the attempt at imitating a woman's reading practice reduces that practice to an essentialist activity avoiding the realizations that feminists have come to concerning this very practice; that is, the recognition that not all reading by women are feminist, and readings are conditioned by gender, race, class and history. The result of this activity on the part of men is "a phallic feminist criticism that competes with women instead of breaking out of patriarchal bounds" (p.143).

Showalter recommends that these would be male feminists investigate what reading as a man entails and give up "paternal privileges" (p.144). This is not an easy task however, and her suggestion has not been taken seriously. Jane Marcus has pointed to the "deadlock in criticism" that has resulted in the "separate but equal free speech...where feminist critics are excluded from discourse with male critics" (p.187). This is not to suggest that male theorists have not had an impact on feminist critical practice; in fact, the effects of this impact have, in part, lead to the need to change the subject.

One of the basic assumptions feminist theory makes is that hierarchical gender differences are insidious in a patriarchal culture, and because they are necessary, these differences are obfuscated, denied or ignored. We are socialized into not recognizing them; education and knowledge itself are crucial in this process. Students trained in English and Literature programs were inculcated into a tradition that was predominated by male authors, critics and scholars. The field was presented to students as "objective knowledge", truth that was gender-blind; certainly above sexual/gender politics. The Canon was taught as the collection of truly great works; that it contained few women authors was beside the point. But the lesson from feminism, as Sandra Gilbert noted is that "what appears to be the theoretical can not easily be disengaged or abstracted from the practical" (1980, p.31). Women began to question what they had been taught. They began to investigate the causes of "cultural alienation, the silence, the marginality, the secondary status of women" (p.34). Investigation into the nature and composition of the Canon was an early component of the feminist challenge.

Dale Spender, speaking from her own experience, which can be seen as typical of all students enrolled in the university during the same time period, recognized that the "university cultivated the impression that men had created the novel, and that there were no women novelists of note before Jane Austin" (1986, p.23). She cites definitive texts of the day, such as

ian watts's, The Rise of the Novel (1957) as sources the student could turn to for verification of these facts. However, Spender, doing some historical investigation of her own discovered "100 good women novelists of the 18 century who together were responsible for almost 600 novels" (p.24)., which constituted one-half the production for the period. These women were recognized and known as were women writers of the 19 century as well; yet by the 20 century, this is "no longer part of knowledge" (p.25). Early women novelists had been edited out of the literary record and removed from consciousness.

Spender understands this as intentional. "In a male dominated society, women are denied the right to their own creative resources and these resources are taken by men to augment their own. This suggests that men of letters are not blind to the achievements of women, but instead of according them validity on their own, men take from women what they want and leave the rest, which they determine to be of no value, to fade from view." (p.28). The result is the persistence of the belief in women's inferiority. The exclusion of women takes on ideological proportions and has a negative impact on the consciousness of all members of society. Feminist scholarship investigates this impact on male writers and scholars in terms of the creation and perpetuation of misogynist images in their work, and on female writers and scholars in terms of their internalization of these images and the consequences for their work as well as their resistance and creation of alternatives.

The explanation Spender offers for the exclusion of women is suggestive though incomplete. Lillian Robinson (1983), in her characterization of the Canon as "an entirely gentlemanly artifact" (p.106) helps explain why the existence and work of women writers was edited out of the literary record. Robinson argues that the critics who first established and then perpetuated the Canon were males who have elevated their taste and their experience to the level of high art. They were white and middle-class and chose authors who shared their status. The result is that a very specific experience and world view has been elevated to a general world view.

Since Robinson assumes a relationship between the experience of the author in everyday life and his literary production, it follows that the work of women writers will reflect, in some fashion, an experience and view of the world that is somewhat different from their male counterparts. It is this different experience that is overlooked by male critics when establishing the criteria of the aesthetic. She notes that "the feminist critic has begun to examine an entire literature that was previously dismissed solely because it was popular with women and affirmed standards and values associated with femininity" (p.116).

Attacks on the male tradition and the reclamation of women writers have been most successful in American literature; since Faulkner is clearly within this tradition, I will elaborate the feminist critique that pertains to this field. Nina Baym (1981) has argued that theories controlling our

reading have led to the exclusion of women authors from the Canon. From its historical beginnings, American literary criticism has assumed that literature produced in this country had to be completely original and "equal to the challenge of the new nation" (p.65); thus the early critic established a standard of "Americanness", and this standard constituted literary excellence for American authors. There should be no doubt concerning the level of subjectivity involved in the articulation of the idea of Americanness.

Baym points out that critics had a qualitative essence of Americanness in mind and understands their work as providing "an explanation of this idea rather than a description and evaluation of selected authors". For f.o. matthiesen, Americanness meant "devotion to the possibilities of democracy"; for joel porte it was "a conscious adherence to a tradition of non-realistic romance sharply at variance with the broadly novelistic mainstream of English writing"; for sacvan bercovitch it was "American identity" (p.66). It was inevitable then that a critic had to insist that some works were more American than others. The end result was the conclusion that "only a handful of American works are really American" (p.67).

Despite the room for an infinite number of definitions of Americanness, Baym points out that critics have generally agreed on it.

"America as a nation must be the subject of the work. The author must be writing about aspects of experience and character

that are American only, setting Americans off from other people and the country from other nations. The author must be writing his story specifically to display these aspects, to meditate on them, and to derive from them some generalizations and conclusions about "the" American experience" (p.67).

This definition tended to exclude universal themes such as family and love and detailed portrayals of one particular aspect of American life. This definition was used by Richard Poirier to exclude Edith Wharton, who he thought of "as the memorialist of a dying aristocracy" (p.67).

Lionel Trilling (1950) was a very influential exponent of an exclusive Americanness. It is clear that he equals Americanness with culture.

"A culture is not a flow, nor even a confluence. The form of its existence is struggle - or at least debate - it is nothing if not a dialectic. And in any culture there are likely to be certain artists who contain a large part of the dialectic within themselves, their meaning and their power lying in their contradiction. They contain within themselves, it may be said, the very essence of the culture".

Their work provides,

"the most suggestive testimony to what America was and is" (pp.7-9).

Trilling's choice of authors is still dominant today. They are white, middle class males of Anglo-Saxon descent. Their decision to become professional authors alienated them slightly from their group, "permitting them to belong, and yet

not to belong, to the so-called mainstream" (Baym p.69). This fulfilled trilling's sense of the essence of culture; the work they produced reflected the contradictions they embodied in their own lives. Baym calls the literature they produced, which trilling so highly regarded, "a consensus criticism of the consensus" (p.67).

She points out that this idea doesn't necessarily excluded 19 century women authors who were themselves overwhelmingly white, middle class and Anglo-Saxon. Yet these women were excluded. They were seen by the critics as representing the consensus and not able to do a criticism of it. Their gender was seen as preventing them from achieving the alienation from the group that was thought necessary to produce American fiction. leslie fiedler (1960) described women authors as "creators of the flagrantly bad best-seller" against which "our best fictionalists (all males) have had to struggle for their integrity and their livelihoods". sydney krause and s.w. reid disparagingly labeled women's texts, "the ubiquitous melodramas of beset womanhood, "tales of truth" (p.69). Baym notes that the choice on the part of the critics to place quotes around "tales of truth" is intended to cast doubt on the idea that this work could be either true or important. She concludes that "the certainty here that stories about women could not contain the essence of American culture means that the matter of American experience is inherently male. And this makes it highly unlikely that American women would write fiction encompassing such experi-

ence" (p.70).

The American New Critics challenged trilling's notion of Americanness. While trilling opposed the nonrealistic character of American fiction, the New Critics favored it, and they used their close-reading techniques to identify "a myth of America which had nothing to do with the classical fictionists' tasks of chronicling probable people in recognized social situations" (p.70).

The narrative of the myth of Americanness involves a confrontation of an American self, removed from specific social circumstances, with the promise offered by the "idea" of American. This promise, deeply romantic, entails the belief that an individual can achieve complete self-definition in a society where individuals come before the collectivity. While society may constantly assert a degree of destructive pressure on the individual in his struggle for autonomy, the myth offers the undeveloped frontier as the site of escape from this untoward pressure. Within this narrative, the wilderness represents the medium on which the individual inscribes his own nature and destiny. The struggle of the individual against society is central to this myth.

Since the subject of this myth is supposed to stand for human nature, it doesn't necessarily exclude the possibility of women being outside its reach. Women, at least in theory, could attain the status of the atomized individual struggling against society and over the landscape. However, within this narrative, both society and the promising landscape are

depicted in feminine terms; this gives the myth an unmistakable sexual character, and sets the stage for the entrance of the struggling male protagonist. The fantasies of the protagonist are concerned with power, mastery and total self gratification. he must escape the threat of the castrating evil woman (society) and seek shelter in the landscape which, "has the attributes simultaneously of a virginal bride and a non threatening mother" (p.75).

Baym correctly identifies this myth as "a man's story" (p.75) and argues that women are neither likely to cast ourselves as antagonists within it nor to portray ourselves as virgin land. Her reason for this conclusion is very straight forward. Women's experience in the social world does not in any way fit the fictional role assigned to us in the myth's narrative. Since this narrative is equated with Americanness and is the standard for admission into the Canon, women writers will consistently be overlooked by the male critics.

Baym operates from within the basic feminist assumption that sex/gender is a crucial organizing principle for culture. This fact is disguised in traditional criticism through the assumption that literature and criticism are above and beyond everyday social reality and serve as standards of truth and imagination. What Baym and other feminists emphasize is that this domain is also organized around sex/gender; primacy is given to men and their fantasies. eric sundquist offers strong evidence for the feminist argument concerning the construction of the Canon and women's inevitable exclusion.

"Writing a narrative about oneself may represent an extremity of Oedipal usurpation or identification, a bizarre act of self fathering...American authors have been particularly obsessed with fathering a tradition of their own, with becoming their "own sires" ...The struggle...is central to the crisis of representation, and hence of style, that allows American authors to find in their fantasies those of a nation and to make of those fantasies a compelling and instructive literature" (Baym, p.77).

The fantasies in question are male ones. They comprise interpretations of reality and descriptions of human nature that pass themselves off as universal. These fantasies form the core of our literary tradition, a tradition that is androcentric in its inception and promulgation.

Androcentric literature not only contains distinct gender representations, but differently structures the reading experience depending on the gender of the reader. As Patrocínio Schweickart (1986) has noted, "...for the male reader the text serves as the meeting ground of the personal and the universal. Whether or not the text approximates the reality of his own experience, he is invited to validate the equation of maleness with humanity. The male reader feels his affinity with the universal precisely because he is male" (p.41). The woman reader's encounter with androcentric literature is a very different one, as Judith Fetterley (1977) has pointed out. "The cultural reality is not the emasculation of men by women, but the immasculation of women by men. Women are taught to think like men, to identify with a male point of

view and to accept as normal and legitimate a male system of values, one of whose central principles is misogyny" (p.xx).

Feminist criticism problematizes the domain of literature. It seeks to uncover the place and the attributes of women within the male fantasies of fiction. It investigates the experience of women as readers and rescues the importance of women as writers. This feminist project can be broken down into two separate stages, with each emphasizing a mode of analysis that overlaps with, and is yet distinct from the other. Both of these intersect however in the domain of post-structuralist and deconstructionist thought. The encounter of earlier feminist analysis with this body of knowledge has been predominantly fruitful. I intend to outline the development of feminist analysis to this point of intersection because my treatment of Faulkner is informed and grounded in this moment. However, as I will argue, a noncritical embracing of post-structuralist, deconstructionist thought poses a danger for feminist theory and practice. It is necessary to explore the degree to which the desire to be beyond binary oppositions as suggested by Derrida, has resulted in the exploration of the feminine in men to the neglect of the differences among women; thereby retaining, in a disguised form, the habit of thinking of women, of thinking of the feminine, only in relation to men and the masculine, which has always meant the diminishment, if not the loss, of women. This relational set-up is a basic binary opposition at the heart of patriarchal culture.

Elaine Showalter (1981) was the first critic to give

expression to what she saw as two distinct modes of feminist criticism; since other critics have consistently engaged in dialogue with her characterization, I too will begin with it. The first mode is "ideological" and is concerned with "the images and stereotypes of women in literature, the omissions and misconceptions about women in criticism and woman-as-sign in semeiotic systems" (p.9). This mode, which she calls "feminist critique" involves the role of women as reader of texts written by both men and women.

The early readings of texts by men, best exemplified by Kate Millet's Sexual Politics (1970), focus on uncovering misogynist representations. Showalter (1979) characterizes this type of work as "male oriented" and regards it as an "angry fixation on male literature" (p.130). She prefers a switch to the analysis of women's literature, recommending the study of women writers in terms of the connections between them in order to uncover "patterns and phases in the evolution of a female tradition" (p.135). Her criticism is a polemical one. She is advocating for the second mode, that which she calls "gynocritics". I will elaborate on this shortly but must emphasize at this point that there is nothing in Showalter's writing that indicates a necessity within feminist criticism to do away with ideology critique, as practiced, in any of its forms. She concludes her article on feminist poetics with the reassertion that "the task of feminist criticism is to find a new language, a new way of reading that can integrate our intelligence and our experience" (p.143).

This doesn't exclude the reading of male texts. The question feminism takes up, in fact, is how to read them.

Feminist reader-response theory proceeds from the assumption that literature acts on the world by acting on its readers. Reading is understood as a process of interaction between text and reader, and the gender of the reader is a crucial determinant of this interaction. As Schweickart (1986) has indicated, there are three distinctive features of a feminist theory of reading.

"First of all, it would attend to the issue of gender. But beyond this, a feminist theory would accord a privileged status to the experience and interest of women readers...in theories that overlook the issue of gender, the appearance of universality is almost always achieved through a concerted obliviousness to the female perspective. Finally a feminist theory of reading would be conscious of the political dimensions of reading and writing and of the political implications of the issue of gender...The gender inscribed in the text is as crucial as the gender of the reader" (p.xiii).

Within the study of gender and reading, the text is constructed in terms of the reaction of the reader, and the reaction of the reader is realized and articulated with reference to a particular text. Attention is given to the subject-object relation that is established between reader and text during the process of reading.

Feminists have investigated what male texts do to the woman reader. Fetterley has indicated that they immasculate us. Her theory insists that the androcentricity of the text

and its damaging effects are real. However, her recognition of the role played by the subjectivity of the woman reader leads to the understanding that despite the process of immasculation latent in the text, it finds its actualization only through the activity of the reader. The woman reader can either be the agent of her own immasculation or she can, through her reading, choose to resist.

"Intellectually male, sexually female, one is in effect no one, nowhere, immasculated. Clearly, then, the first act of the feminist critic must be to become a resisting rather than an assenting reader and, by this refusal to assent, to begin the process of exorcising the male mind that has been implanted in us. The consequence of this exorcism is the capacity for...re-vision... and the consequence, in turn, of this re-vision is that books will no longer be read as they have been read and thus will lose their power to bind us unknowingly to their designs" (p.xxii-xxiii).

The woman reader, assumed to be a feminist, undertakes a critical analysis of the reading process, realizes that the text has the power to structure her experience, and then meets this power of the text by her awareness of her essential role in the reading process. As Schweickart has noted, "the advent of feminist consciousness and the accompanying commitment to emancipatory praxis reconstitutes the subject-object relationship within a dialectical rather than a dualistic framework" (p.49).

This model of reading assumes that the reader, having a choice between submitting to the power of the text, or taking

control of her reading process, will choose to take the necessary control. This means reading the text as it was not meant to be read, reading it against itself. It entails identifying the choices offered by the text and those that the text precludes. It means "the possibility of reading as a woman without putting one's self in the position of the other, of reading so as to affirm womanhood as another equally valid paradigm of human existence" (Schweikart, p.50).

Judith Fetterley's reading of Faulkner's "A Rose for Miss Emily" (1977, pp.34-45) is a prototypical example of this theory of reading put into practice. The story centers around a woman of the Old South who poisons her only male lover because he is about to leave her. Emily keeps the corpse in a bedroom prepared for a wedding night. Forty years later, after Emily has died, the corpse is discovered along with strands of Emily's gray hair on the pillow beside it. The ending hints at necrophilia. Fetterly emphasizes that this ending is shocking because the woman has done the killing; thus reversing the gender positions in the depiction of the occurrence of this practice.

Fetterley's reading doesn't consider the association of female sexuality and death as other critics of Faulkner have identified as a recurrent theme of his work. I assume that she has resisted this patriarchal construct despite the fact that she does not tell the reader this herself. Rather, she notes the reversal of the "natural" pattern of the "conventions of sexual politics" that prepare us to accept the death

of the wife "at her husband's hand" (p.34). Why one image is regarded as a manifestation of patriarchal ideology by Fetterley and not the other is never made clear. This failure is the result, I think, of the tendency of the model to understand feminist appropriation as positive readings to the exclusion of negative ones. Her focus is to uncover the backfiring of ideology rather than the operation of it.

"A Rose for Emily" is a story...of a woman victimized and betrayed by the system of sexual politics, who nevertheless has discovered, within the structures that victimize her, sources of power for herself...(It) is a story of how to murder your gentleman caller and get away with it. Faulkner's story is an analysis of how men's attitudes toward women turn back upon themselves; it is a demonstration of the thesis that it is impossible to oppress without in turn being oppressed..."A Rose for Emily" is the story of a lady and of her revenge for that grotesque identity. Not only is (it) a supreme analysis of what men do to women by making them ladies; it is also an exposure of how this act in turn defines and recoils upon men" (pp.35, 42).

The stance she takes in reading continues to overlook the misogynist ideology at work in the text. The last line quoted above alludes to the idea that Emily is a mirror in which we see the grotesqueness of patriarchal categories as they backfire on men. As Fetterley makes clear, "...Emily is metaphor and mirror for the town of Jefferson; and when at the end, the town folk finally discover who and what she is, they have in fact encountered who and what they are" (p.43). She doesn't reflect on the consequences exposing patriarchal

ideology might have on women because she wants to highlight the fact that Emily "prefers to murder rather than to die" (p.44), though no danger to Emily's life is suggested in the story itself.

This type of reading is very important to consciousness, but it need not lose sight of the dialectic feminist theories of reading so appropriately advocate. Toril Moi (1985), found fault with the type of analysis done by Kate Millett because of its "...all-encompassing monolithic nature of sexual power politics" (p.6). She criticizes Millett for not grasping ideology as a contradictory construct; arguing that this "renders her impervious to nuances, inconsistencies and ambiguities in the texts" (pp.26-27). In other words, Millett isn't dialectical. This error should not and need not be replicated in readings that want to appropriate the text.

I think it is helpful to think of these alternative modes of reading as representing the double-edge of living within feminist consciousness and praxis. While it is crucial that feminism imagine and create an alternative to patriarchal culture from within the culture itself; it is also crucial to remain aware of the fact that the misogynist elements of that culture reproduce themselves and impact on daily life.

The development of post-structuralist theory outlined in the first chapter of this work emphasizes that literature is a discursive practice whose conventions encode social practices and are ideologically complicit. In fact literature creates ideology because of its invocation of these social

codes. Literature is a mediating force that structures our sense of the world. Within this theoretical framework, the task of feminist criticism is to "attend to the collusion between literature and ideology focusing on the ways ideology is inscribed within literary forms, styles, conventions, genres, and institutions of literary production (Greene and Kahn, 1985, p.5). Critical analysis must remain focused on the way the text works as a signifying process which inscribes ideology. Ideology necessarily must be grasped as contradictory, the location of resistances as well as oppression. The privileging of resistance within feminist criticism has been at the expense of delineating oppression. This can be traced in the shift to gynocritics, and in some of the work of the French and deconstructionist feminists. The risk feminist theory makes in a noncritical embracing of this shift is to forget that oppression has a material reality that bears on women's lives, and to forget, as Catherine Belsey has noted that "language doesn't simply name male superiority, it produces it" (1989, p.8). This shift is neither monolithic nor impenetrable. It has contributed to enhancing a feminist liberatory consciousness. But it has also, despite claims to the contrary, compromised this effort by its implicit reliance on theoretical models which reproduce the analytic privilege of heterosexuality and within that masculinity. I intend to trace this shift and will suggest a way out of the privileging of heterosexuality; thereby restoring primacy to the differences among women as the crucial step necessary for our

imagining ourselves beyond the bipolarity of gender.

Gynocritics, as defined by Elaine Showalter, "is the study of women as writers...Its subjects are the history, styles, themes, genres and structures of writing by women; the psychodynamics of female creativity, the trajectory of the individual or collective female career and the evolution and laws of a female literary tradition" (1981, p.15). She sees the study of gynocritics as providing "a way of talking about women's writing which reasserts the value of the feminine and identifies the theoretical project of feminist criticism as the analysis of difference" (p.16), with difference primarily understood in relationship to men's writing. Difference in American feminist criticism has been theorized in biological, linguistic, and cultural terms.

Feminist criticism written from within the biological perspective emphasizes the metaphorical implications of female biological difference in writing. Gilbert and Gubar (1979) in Madwoman in the Attic, structure their analysis of women's writing around metaphors of literary paternity. "In patriarchal, western culture the text's author is a father, a progenitor, a procreator, an aesthetic patriarch whose pen is an instrument of generative power like his penis." They ask, "if the pen is a metaphorical penis, from what organ can females generate texts?" (pp.6-7). They themselves don't answer this question, but other feminists have argued that women's writing proceeds from the body, emphasizing that our sexual differentiation is also our source. This position has

been taken up by some of the French feminists as will be discussed shortly. However, Adrienne Rich (1977) has also given expression to this notion,

"female biology...has far more radical implications than we have yet come to appreciate. Patriarchal thought has limited female biology to its own narrow specifications. The feminist vision has recoiled from female biology for these reasons; it will, I believe, come to view our physicality as a resource rather than a destiny. In order to live a fully human life, we require not only control of our bodies...we must touch the unity and resonance of our physicality, the corporeal ground of our intelligence" (p.62).

This type of theorizing runs the risk of overlooking the fact that there can be no expression of the body that is not mediated by linguistic, social and literary structures. Nancy Miller (1981), with this in mind, has suggested that the difference of woman's literary practice be sought in "the body of her writing and not the writing of her body" (p.342). This has, in fact, been the project most pursued by feminist critics. As Lillian Robinson (1983) has summed up

"It is an undeniable fact that most feminist criticism focuses on women writers, so that the feminist efforts to humanize the Canon have usually meant bringing a woman's point of view to bear by incorporating works by women into the established Canon. The least threatening way to do so is to follow the accustomed pattern of making the case for individual writers one by one. ...More often than not, such work involves showing that a woman already established in the Canon belongs in the first rather than the second

rank...no challenge is presented to the particular notions of literary quality, timelessness, universality and other qualities that constitute the rationale for canonicity...obviously, this approach does not call the notion of the Canon itself into question"

She continues, noting that another approach critics have taken is to argue,

"...that true equity can be attained only by opening up the Canon to a much larger number of female voices. This...endeavor eventually brings basic aesthetic questions to the fore...In addition to constituting a feminist alternative to the male-dominated tradition, these authors also have a claim to representation in "the" Canon" (p.109).

Linguistic explanations for women's difference have explored whether speaking, reading, and writing are gender marked. The assumption made, as Nelly Furman (1985) points out is that, "it is through the medium of language that we define and categorize areas of difference and similarity, which in turn allow us to comprehend the world around us. Male-centered categorizations predominate in American English and subtly shape our understanding and perception of reality; this is why attention is increasingly directed to the inherently oppressive aspects for women of a male-constructed language system" (p.85). The consensus among linguists as expressed by mcconnell-ginet is that "there is not evidence to suggest that the sexes are preprogrammed to develop structurally different linguistic systems (Showalter, 1981, p.23). All evidence

seems to suggest rather that language and writing style are products of many factors such as genre, tradition, memory and context. This has motivated Showalter to argue that the "appropriate task for feminist criticism...is to concentrate on women's access to language, on the available lexical range from which words can be selected, on the ideological and cultural determinants of expression. The problem is not that language is insufficient to express women's consciousness but that women have been denied the full resources of language and have been forced into silence, euphemism or circumlocution" (p.23).

Psychoanalytic explanations locate the difference of women's writing in the development of the female psyche shaped by the body, the development of language and by sex-role socialization. Relying on freudian and lacanian psychoanalytic theory, these explanations revolve around the oedipus complex and the identification of women as lack. Gilbert and Gubar (1979) attempt such an analytic reading in Madwoman in the Attic. They understand the difference of women's writing to be the result of a troubled relationship to their female identity. They posit that the woman writer experiences her own gender as a "painful obstacle or even a debilitating inadequacy", and they understand her as inscribing this condition into her text.

"Thus the loneliness of the female artist, her feelings of alienation from male predecessors coupled with her need for sisterly precursors and successors, her urgent sense of her need for a female

audience together with her fear of the antagonism of male readers, her culturally conditioned timidity about self-dramatization, her dread of the patriarchal authority of art, her anxiety about the impropriety of female invention - all these phenomena of "inferiorization" mark the woman writer's struggle for artistic self definition and differentiate her efforts at self-creation from those of her male counterpart" (p.50).

It seems that this type of analysis assumes the accuracy of the identification of woman as lack within psychoanalytic theory. It accepts the patriarchal construct and thus begins from a position of inferiority. Other American feminists have attempted to demonstrate how criticism of women's texts has been unfair because based in freudian expectations. Nancy Miller (1981) has argued, based on her gynocritic reading of George Sand, that novels which inscribe a fantasy of power imagine a world for women outside of love and are thus not intelligible within a phallogocentric model. This model assumes that plots of women's fiction are shaped by unsatisfied dreams and desires which, freud maintained in his essay, "The Relation of the Poet to Daydreaming", are chiefly erotic.

Showalter correctly, I think, points out that the ways of discussing difference as outlined above tend to overlook the importance of context and the cultural environment in its impact on individual women writers. Attention to context enables the theorist to consider differences among women, differences of race, class, sexuality. At the moment she emphasizes difference however, Showalter insists that "women's

culture forms a collective experience within the cultural whole, an experience that binds women writers to each other over time and space" (1981, p.27). She relies on the work of cultural anthropologists Shirley and Edwin Ardener who have argued "that women constitute a muted group, the boundaries of whose culture and reality overlap, but are not wholly contained by, the dominant male discourse" (p.29). This idea has been articulated as well by Gerda Lerner (1981) in history.

"It is important to understand that "woman's culture" is not and should not be seen as a subculture. It is hardly possible for the majority to live in a subculture...Women live their social existence within the general culture and whenever they are confined by patriarchal restraint or segregation into separateness (which always has subordination as its purpose), they transform this restraint into complementarity (asserting the importance of women's function, even its "superiority" and redefine it. Thus women live a duality as members of the general culture and as partakers of women's culture" (p.52).

The conclusion Showalter draws for feminist literary criticism is that "women's writing is a double-voiced discourse that always embodies the social, literary, and cultural heritages of both the muted and the dominant" (1981, p.31). It follows that she would advocate for a dialectical reading, one that uncovers the manifestation as well as the contradiction and resistance to hegemonic ideology, but she does not. Rather, Showalter encourages the search for the "tumultuous and intriguing wilderness of difference itself" (p.35). She

directs the critic to the alternative vision in women's texts, omitting the possibility of the inscription of hegemonic ideology within them. The shift to women's writing has thus entailed "...a shift in emphasis from the negative hermeneutic of ideological unmasking to a positive hermeneutic whose aim is the recovery and cultivation of women's culture" (Schweickart, 1986, p.51).

This shift necessitated an alternative approach to reading. As Schweickart has noted, the question that reader-response critics took up is "what does it mean for a woman, reading as a woman, to read literature written by a woman, writing as a woman" (p.51)? This question entails two assumptions: how we read is inextricable linked to what we read, and the reading of women's texts is a different experience from the reading of texts by men. When a woman reads a woman's text she does not have to condemn herself to the position of other.

Schweickart puts forth a theory of women reading women based on her own reading of an essay by Adrienne Rich (1975), "Vesuvius at Home: The Power of Emily Dickinson". She focuses on the rhetoric of the essay believing that it "represents an implicit commentary on the process of reading women's writing" (p.45). Schweickart quotes the following three metaphors and uses them as important steps in the reading process.

"The methods, the exclusions, of Emily Dickinson's existence could not have been my own; yet more and more, as a woman poet finding my own methods, I have come to understand her necessities could have

served as witness in her defense."

For Schweickart, this is a "judicial metaphor"; the feminist reader speaks as a witness in defense of the writer. She "takes the part of the woman writer against patriarchal misreadings that trivialize or distort her work" (p.46).

"I am traveling at the speed of time, along the Massachusetts Turnpike..."Home is not where the heart is," she wrote in a letter, "but the house and adjacent buildings"...I am traveling at the speed of time, in the direction of the house and buildings...For years, I have been not so much envisioning Emily Dickinson as trying to visit, to enter her mind through her poems and letters, and through my own intimations of what it could have meant to be one of the two mid-nineteenth century American geniuses, and a woman, living in Amherst, Massachusetts" (pp.47-48).

This metaphor draws attention to a "principle tenet of feminist criticism: a literary work can not be understood apart from the social, historical and cultural context within which it was written."

"For months, for most of my life, I have been hovering like an insect against the screen of an existence which inhabited Amherst, Massachusetts between 1830 and 1886....Here (in Dickinson's bedroom) I become again, an insect, vibrating at the frames of windows, clinging to the panes of glass, trying to connect" (pp.57-48).

This metaphor reveals the tendency to construe the text as the manifestation of the subjectivity of the author - the "voice"

of another woman. But Schweickart points out that the reader can only encounter a text, and because of this, only the "trail of the absent author" (p.46-47). We can conclude from this that feminist readings of female texts are subjective but nonetheless respectful of the autonomy of the text.

"Reading is at once an intersubjective encounter and something less than that....(The text's) subjectivity is only a projection of the subjectivity of the reader" (p.48).

Schweickart asserts that the motivation for reading female texts is to formulate the context and tradition that links women writers to one another, to women readers and critics, and to the larger community of women. Since she contrasts this with the need to disrupt the process of immanulation as the motivation for reading male texts, she runs the risk of the conclusion that the subject/author and the subject/reader share commonalities of identity to the exclusion of differences. This violates that important feminist tenet that differences of race, class and sexuality among women matter. Her desire to give expression to "women's culture" runs the risk of portraying a culture that is white and middle class.

Schweickart stresses the idea that the woman author and woman reader are involved in an intimate conversation, and she understands this dialogic relationship to be the bedrock for a model of reading that is centered on a female paradigm. The paradigm begins from "a dialectic of communication." Reading

is a matter of trying to connect with the existence behind the text. Schweickart identifies three moments of this dialectic.

The first moment "involves the recognition that genuine intersubjective communication demands the equality of reader and author (the subject of the work)" (p.53). This division must take place within the reader since the barrier between subject and object does not exist as it does in relationship to the male text. Reading induces a doubling of the reader's subjectivity. This leads to her conclusion that "the subjectivity roused to life by reading, while it may be attributed to the author, is nevertheless not a separate subjectivity but a projection of the subjectivity of the reader" (p.53).

The second moment involves the recognition that reading is necessarily subjective; that there are no built-in safeguards to prevent a complete appropriation of the text by the reader due to the absence of the author. However Schweickart assumes that a need exists to prevent reading from becoming totally subjective, and this need brings about the third moment of the dialectic. The need is the awareness of the double context of reading and writing. The dialectic begins with "...the recognition of the necessary duality of subjects" and refers this duality to the "duality of contexts" (p.54).

Within this paradigm, reading "becomes a mediation between the context of writing and the context of reading." The perspective of the author and the perspective of the reader are mediated by the use of the personal voice. This emphasizes that interpretation is just that. Any claim to

validity must of necessity rest with the argument made by the reader not with the authority of the text. It is important to note how this reader-response theory differs from mainstream reader-response theories discussed earlier in this work. They tend to be preoccupied with determining and distinguishing the contribution of the author/text from that of the reader. "In the dialectic of communication informing the relationship between the feminist reader and the female author/text, the central issue is not of control or participation, but of managing the contradictory implications of the desire for relationship and the desire for intimacy, up to and including a symbiotic merger with the other" (p.55).

Schweickart understands reading as a step in feminist community building. She formulates it as an activity that has impact on the everyday world, and is thus suspicious of the deconstructionist notion that reading and interpretation are impossible. For the feminist, her reading is part of her praxis, her struggle against patriarchy. There is no doubt that Schweickart understands this struggle taking place within one woman at a time. It is a struggle located in the individual as subject not a struggle taking place within ideology and its inscription in language which then acts on individuals.

The discussion of women's literature within American criticism as presented so far, is haunted by a theory of mimesis, an underlying notion that a woman author uses language in order to convey her experience that can be known and in part shared by a woman reader. The assumption that

language unproblematically reflects social existence, that language is a medium of truth, permeates this work. An alternative to this manner of conceptualization can be found in post-structuralist and deconstructionist language theory that emphasizes the quality of representation which sustains a distance between experience and the formulation of that experience. This mode of theorizing, best exemplified by the work of the French feminists and Gayatri Spivak, focuses on language as the site in which oppression and resistance are played out and the site in which difference itself is inscribed. Women's writing is seen as both re-inscribing the structures of our oppression and working within male discourse to deconstruct it; though emphasis is placed on the freeing of repressed female desire and the movement beyond phallogentric discourse. The undoing of binary oppositions is crucial to this project. As Nelly Furman has noted, "...the feminist endeavor can't be conceived in terms of male or female, feminine or masculine; it can only be thought of beyond such polarities as a kind of sexual plurality" (p.75).

Differences do exist among the French feminists that are important, but what they share is a general belief that western thought has been based on a systematic repression of women's experience. This in turn has led them to formulate a foundational female nature as the point from which to deconstruct language, philosophical and psychoanalytic knowledge, and the social practices of a patriarchal culture. They understand writing as making possible an escape from the

patriarchal symbolic order and thus believe that texts can be produced that challenge and move beyond it.

"Everything turns on the Word: everything is the Word and only the Word...we must take culture at its word, as it takes us into its word, into its tongue...No political reflection can dispense with reflection on language, with work on language. For as soon as we exist, we are born into language and language speaks (to) us, dictates its law...; even at the moment of uttering a sentence...we are already seized by a certain kind of masculine desire" (Cixous, 1976, pp.44-45).

"I shall speak about women's writing: about what it will do. Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies....Women must put herself into the text - as into the world and into history - by her own movement...Her libido is cosmic, just as her unconscious is worldwide. Her writing can only keep going, without ever inscribing or discerning limits. ...She lets the other language speak - the language of 1,000 tongues which knows neither enclosure nor death" (Cixous, 1975, pp.2-45, 259-260).

Ann Rosalind Jones (1981) has noted that the "French agree that resistance to the institutions and signifying practices of patriarchal culture takes place in the form of *jouissance* i.e. in the direct reexperience of the physical pleasures of infancy and of later sexuality, repressed but not obliterated by the Law of the Father" (p.362). They disagree however over the expression of *jouissance*.

Irigaray and Cixous assume that women, because they have

been constrained within patriarchy into being sex objects for men, have been prevented from expressing our sexuality in and of itself. Their writing is an attempt at giving expression to this sexuality; they both create texts that exemplify women's bodily impulses.

"Woman's desire most likely does not speak the same language as men's desire and it probably has been covered over by the logic that has dominated the West since the Greeks....Woman has sex organs just about everywhere....The geography of her pleasure is much more diversified, more multiple in its differences, more complex, more subtle, than is imagined - in an imaginary centered a bit too much on one and the same.

"She" is indefinitely other in herself. That is undoubtedly the reason she is called temperamental, incomprehensible, perturbed, capricious - not to mention her language in which "she" goes off in all directions and in which "he" is unable to discern the coherence of any meaning. Contradictory words seem a little crazy to the logic of reason, and inaudible for him who listens with ready-made grids, a code prepared in advance" (Irigaray, 1977, pp.1010-103).

Irigaray (1985) begins from the assumption that the feminine, and thus the women's jouissance, are outside representation in a patriarchal culture. She bases this on Freud's theory of sexual difference which she argues is based on the visibility of difference. The female difference is perceived as an absence or negation of the male norm. "The feminine has consequently had to be deciphered as forbidden, in between signs, between the realized meanings, between the

lines" (p.20). Patriarchal representation is incapable of conceiving femininity other than as the negative of its own reflection.

Irigaray argues, that Freud, in his discussion of the oedipal stage, conceives of the little girl as being, fundamentally, "a little man". Freud assumes that she perceives her clitoris as an inferior penis and thus suppresses any conceptualization of female specificity within his theory. Irigaray argues that this perception of deficiency on the part of the little girl is the fundamental assumption behind Freud's theory of penis envy. She argues that Freud's conclusion that the little girl's clitoris represents her castration is in fact, a projection of the male fear of castration. Freud's conclusion that women want the penis acts to reassure men that they do indeed have it. Female penis envy acts to bolster the male psyche. "To castrate the woman is to inscribe her in the laws of the same desire, or desire of the same" (p.64). Thus, in patriarchal culture, what is presented as the feminine is man's secularized other, woman as mirror for masculinity. It is the only form the culture recognizes as acceptable.

Irigaray concludes that patriarchal representations and thus patriarchal social and cultural structures are products of a fundamental "hom(m)osexualite, male desire for the same" (p.53). The pleasure of woman's desire for our same is denied. Women are cut off from pleasure specific to us. Irigaray concludes that, given our cultural circumstances,

women can do two things. We can either enact the specular representation of ourselves as lesser males; or we can attempt utterance outside the logic of the same. The first option is conceived by Irigaray to be a form of hysteria; the second option entails being perceived as being silent, but really to be engaged in babble, that which is incomprehensible because outside the parameters of understanding. Her conclusion then is that women can have no language specifically our own within patriarchy. We must write femininity within male discourse. This can be found in the mimicry of that discourse and in the blanks and silences of women's writing.

Despite this conclusion, Irigaray does suggest a starting point for female self-consciousness: women's bodies and women's sexual pleasure because they have been either absent or misrepresented in male discourse. She argues that women have a diffuse sexuality that arises from our anatomy. The result is a multiplicity of libidinal energies that can not be expressed within the logic of phallogentric discourse that asserts, "I am a unified, coherent being, and what is significant in the world reflects my male image" (p.88). She argues, as well, that female sexuality explains our problematic relationship to logic and language.

"In her statements - at least when she dares to speak out - woman retouches herself constantly. She just barely separates from herself some chatter, and exclamation, a half-secret, a sentence left in suspense - when she returns to it, it is only to set out again from another point of pleasure or pain. One must listen to her differently in order

to hear an "other meaning" which is constantly in the process of weaving itself, at the same time ceaselessly embracing words and yet casting them off to avoid becoming fixed, immobilized. For when "she" says something, it is already no longer identical to what she means. Moreover, her statements are never identical to anything. Their distinguishing feature is one of contiguity. They touch (upon). And when they wander too far from this nearness, she stops and begins again from "zero": her body-sex organ.

It is therefore useless to trap women into giving an exact definition of what they mean, to make them repeat (themselves) so that the meaning will be clear. They are already elsewhere than in the discursive machinery where you claim to take them by surprise. They have turned back within themselves, which does not mean the same thing as "within yourself". They do not experience the same interiority that you do and which perhaps you mistakenly presume they share. "Within themselves" means in the privacy of this silent, multiple, diffuse tact. If you ask them insistently what they are thinking about, they can only reply: nothing. Everything." (pp.28-29).

While Irigaray argues that women must recognize and assert our jouissance in order to subvert phallogentric oppression, she does not get lost in the illusion that women writing our desire is enough to bring this about. She maintains awareness that intervention in social institutions is also important and thus maintains a social praxis, a relationship between language and daily life. "For a woman to arrive at the point where she can enjoy her pleasure as a woman, a long detour by the analysis of various systems that oppress her is certainly necessary" (1985).

The thrust of Irigaray's theoretical endeavor remains firmly grounded in women and our bodies, she doesn't theorize beyond patriarchy in a way that links the masculine and feminine in a play of polymorphous sexuality. She resists the impulse from deconstruction that characterizes the work of Kristeva. As I will argue, this type of theorizing, in reconsidering the masculine tends to reinscribe a privileged position to it. This indicates the danger to feminist theory of moving too quickly to a theoretical construct that suggests a moment beyond patriarchy.

Kristeva conceptualizes language as a heterogeneous, signifying process that takes place between "speaking subjects" understood as "a place, not only of structure and its repeated transformation but especially of its loss, its outlay" (Moi, 1985, p.152). This leads to an understanding of language as discourse, and an emphasis on meaning as contextually situated. Kristeva's post-saussurean framework enables her to formulate the sign as a site of contradiction and struggle. She is interested in identifying the "disruptive" alternative within language, to the representations of the symbolic, that which she calls "semeiotic discourse".

Her model for semeiotic discourse is based on male avante-garde writers - joyce, mallarme and artaud. She identifies their language as gestural, rhythmic and prereferential, seeing it as the site for the expression of bodily drives that culture encourages sublimation of. These male writers have resisted however, and their writing offers

evidence of this.

Kristeva's theory is obviously based on a reading of lacan. She reformulates his distinction between the imaginary and the symbolic into that of the semeiotic and the symbolic. The semeiotic is linked to the processes of the pre-oedipal stage in which identification with the mother is primary. Kristeva agrees that the mother, in this stage, encompasses both masculinity and femininity; thus the semeiotic knows no sexual differentiation. It consists rather of "basic pulsions...predominantly anal and oral" and is "simultaneously dichotomous and heterogeneous" (p.161). This endless flow is contained within the chora which she defines as "a wholly provisional articulation that is essentially mobile and constituted of movements and their ephemeral states....Neither model nor copy, it is anterior to and underlies figuration and therefore also specularization, and only admits analogy with vocal or kinetic rhythm" (Moi, p.24).

This semeiotic continuum must be split in order for signification to occur. This occurs at the "thetic" phase which is equivalent to lacan's mirror stage. This phase "opens the way for the constitution of all objects which from now on will be detached from the semeiotic chora" (p.24). Kristeva argues that the oedipal stage, with its fear of castration, is the moment at which this splitting process is fully achieved. The jouissance of blissful infantile fusion with the mother is replaced by the signifying processes of the symbolic. It is precisely the expression of this jouissance

however which Kristeva recognizes as the semiotic discourse in avante-garde writing.

Ann Rosalind Jones contends that "Kristeva sees semiotic discourse as an incestuous challenge to the symbolic order, asserting as it does the writer's return to the pleasures of his preverbal identification with his mother and his refusal to identify with his father and the logic of paternal discourse" (p.363). Her use of the male pronoun is quite appropriate, for unlike Irigaray, Kristeva does not locate this jouissance specifically with women. In fact, "woman" to Kristeva represents not so much a sex or gender category but a resistant attitude to conventional culture and language.

"By "woman" I mean that which cannot be represented, what is not said, what remains above and beyond nomenclatures and ideologies. There are certain "men" who are familiar with this phenomenon" (p.1-63).

Toril Moi understands Kristeva's above definition of woman to be "entirely relational and strategic. It is an attempt to locate the negativity and refusal pertaining to the marginal in "woman", in order to undermine the phallogentric order that defines woman as marginal in the first place" (p.163).

Kristeva has expressed a deep suspicion of identity, "what can identity, even sexual identity, mean in a new theoretical and scientific space where the very notion of identity is challenged" (p.34). This necessarily leads her to a rejection of a style or form of writing that is inherently

female. It is more accurate, I think, to understand Kristeva's theory, not as one specifically grounded in women, femininity or the feminine, but rather one of marginality and subversion as Moi has suggested. This keeps her theory safe from anti-essentialist charges, which can obviously be made regarding Irigaray's; while at the same time leaving it open to claims that it avoids articulating the specificity of gender difference. As we have seen she predicates her work on a theory that assumes and explains sexual/gender differentiation at the moment of entry into the symbolic. Since this is the realm of the father, entry is into a patriarchal culture that devalues women. Kristeva's theory of non-differentiated marginality loses sight of this precisely because it relies too heavily on the categories that sustain a patriarchal order. This is demonstrated by the role afforded to women in her theory.

Kristeva closely follows lacan in her discussion of differentiated entrance into the symbolic. The semiotic chora, being pre-oedipal is linked with the mother; the symbolic with the law of the father. The little girl has to make a choice; "either she identifies with her mother, or she raises herself to the symbolic stature of her father. In the first case, the pre-oedipal phases (oral and anal eroticism) are intensified". If the girl identifies with her father, "the access she gains to the symbolic dominance will censor the pre-oedipal phase and wipe out the last traces of dependence on the body of the mother" (1986, p.149). She thus

delineated two different options for women; mother identification which intensifies the pre-oedipal aspect of the psyche rendering the woman marginal to the symbolic order, or father identification which results in the woman deriving her identity from that order. Femininity, identification with the mother is an option presented to women and men.

Kristeva's theory, because it presents identification as a choice women make, does not consider all women to be occupying positions that challenge the phallogentric order. Her theory tends to ignore the material differences between women and men that are essential to the patriarchal structure in order to emphasize a position that some men and some women have in common. This linking of men and women keeps in tact the compulsion toward heterosexuality and the patriarchal control of women's bodies that motivates the psychoanalytic discussion of entrance into the symbolic in the first place. While Kristeva valorizes the relationship to the mother as the source of disruption, it is important to note that this is expressed through men. Kristeva offers no example of a woman writing the semiotic. The mother remains a passive, instinctual force that does not either speak itself or speak through her daughters. Kristeva reproduces the patriarchal condition of silence for women and reasserts the importance of the activity of men who are involved in incestuous, but nonetheless heterosexual desire.

The refusal to theorize outside a male-female relationship characterizes some deconstructionist criticism as well.

As Jane Marcus has noted concerning Gayatri Spivak's reading of To the Lighthouse by Virginia Woolf, "by reading Woolf through derrida, Spivak serves patriarchy by insisting on a heterosexuality which the novel attacks by privileging chastity in the woman artist. The critic takes a position which is daughter to the father, not daughter to the mother" (p.229). And as Spivak notes of her own enterprise, she was "attempting to articulate by using a man as an instrument, a woman's vision of a woman" (Spivak, 1988, p.45). Why is this mediation necessary? Why does the deconstructionist enterprise turn on male-female relationships if it is a conscious attempt at disrupting binary oppositions? Feminism is not well served by the continuing project of thinking of women through men. The failure of the deconstructionist project to think outside the primary opposition of patriarchy indicates the inscription of this ideology within its discourse. It is constrained by the same limitation as Kristeva's appropriation of lacan. As Domna Stanton (1986) has indicated "any inscription of difference is (over) determined by the dominant discourse" (p.175). The psychological work of Chodorow and Benjamin indicate that difference from the mother is, in fact, a male concern. This as Stanton points out "reinforces the possibility that difference as teleology is part of the phallogentric design" (p.177). The difference that is of heterosexuality.

colin mccabe has written that within the deconstructive project, "woman, like any other term can only find its meaning

in a complex series of differentiations, of which the most important, or at least the most immediate, is man" (Spivak, 1988, p.xiii). This does not have to be the model for feminism and is in fact inconsistent with the long-standing commitment to articulating the differentiations women experience from each other.

An alternative model for exploring difference and thinking beyond polarities, one more consistent with the long standing feminist assumption that to not begin with women is to already have participated in marginalizing us, is Adrienne Rich's formulation of the "lesbian continuum" (1980). This concept is meant to broach the multiplicity of women's experience without needing to capture that experience by its differentiation from "man".

"I mean the term lesbian continuum to include a range - through each woman's life and throughout history - of woman-identified experience; not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman. If we expand it to embrace many more forms of primary intensity between and among women...we begin to grasp breadths of female history and psychology that have lain out of reach.

If we consider the possibility that all women - from the infant suckling her mother's breast, to the grown woman experiencing orgasmic sensations while suckling her own child... - exist on a lesbian continuum, we can see ourselves as moving in and out of this continuum, whether we identify ourselves as lesbians or not" (pp.192, 194).

This last paragraph, when contrasted with Kristeva's

focus on the male experience in the semiotic, indicates the shift in emphasis I feel is necessary for feminist analysis. It avoids what Rich has called a "double-life" (p.197), an apparent acquiescence to an institution founded on male interest and prerogative.

The lesbian continuum also suggests a way to begin imagining an alteration in the social relations between the sexes, and in that sense is grounded in the material conditions of everyday life. It breaks with the patriarchal insistence on the connection between women and men in all existing institutions. Neither psychoanalytic nor deconstructionist theories of disruption offer a way of sustaining a social movement. They both end in the realm of ideas and language. They both divert attention from the persistence of ideology informing culture and daily life. The lesbian continuum, as the model for formulating difference, consistently points to everyday existence and the structuration of that existence around the connection of men and women. It reminds us that "women's choice of women...the forcing of such relationships into dissimulation and their disintegration under intense pressure have meant an incalculable loss to the power of all women...to liberate ourselves and each other" (p.195).

Feminist literary theory understands literature as being one of the many "technologies of gender" (de Lauretis, 1987, p.12) that serves to reproduce the socio-cultural formation. Literature has thus been unmasked. It's organization around

sex/gender has become the focus for a critical attention which has revealed that literary works by men give expression to male fantasies, fears and interpretations of reality. In this way, they serve to reproduce a hegemonic order that has presented the masculine as the universal and a definition of femininity that has served the needs of this order.

Gender is, by necessity then, a category of analysis, not only regarding the texts themselves, but in regard to the process of reading. Androcentric literature differently structures the reading experience depending on the gender of the reader. Women readers have been encouraged to identify with representations of gender that stem from and thus serve a male point of view. The potential to disrupt this damaging process of immasculation stems from the ability of women readers to take control of our reading experiences. The act of reading differently is a way of breaking the constrictions of an enforced patriarchal imagination and a freeing movement into feminist consciousness. Feminist reading is a political act. It is a direct intervention in the operation of ideology and an act of resistance and empowerment.

The process of reading I am proposing is both grounded in and divergent from already existing models and practices within feminist literary criticism. It begins within a post-structural theory of signification which enables gender representations to be conceived as products in the act of their becoming, as images created in and through language in use. These representations of gender serve to reproduce and

reenforce the social reactions of gender that link women to men in a heterosexual contract that constitutes and validates the sexual, political and socio-cultural oppression of women.

My attention to gender as a set of social relationships links everyday life, the social world of experience, and culture, the domain of ideological representations. This counters two moves that deconstructionist theory makes. The first is the insistence on regarding gender as a location within language, a textual figure of the feminine that has no relationship to the reality of gender differences as lived experience in the social world. The second is its insistence on delineating the play of polymorphous sexuality within a text. This has resulted in the recontainment of women within the ideology of femininity and a repositioning of woman within a male subject, as a critical look at psychoanalytic models reveals.

My attention to male texts is counter to the practice of gynocritics, analysis of writing by women, which predominates in feminist literary criticism at the moment. The thrust of gynocritic analysis is to perceive the specificity of women's texts in their resistance and alternative to patriarchal representations. This approach assumes that patriarchal representations are ideological and thus oppressive, and that women authors have imagined alternatives. This type of reading presupposes a level of feminist consciousness on the part of the reader.

The critical analyses of male texts has focused on the

production and reproduction of misogynist, patriarchal images and has sought to identify points of resistance within these texts. This form of dialogical reading, as well as the movement towards gynocritics, reflects the theory and practice of feminism. Feminist theory, in the first instance, must be vigilant in its delineation of the operation of a socio-cultural system which oppresses women and contains the possibilities of all human expression. Reading as ideology critique is a method of analysis crucial to this task. In the second instance, feminist theory must construct an alternative vision of human society. Since society can be nothing other than the totality of human experience and creation, it is necessary to construct the future from the past and present. Resisting readings of male texts and gynocritic readings of texts by women contribute to this second task of feminist theory.

The types of reading that prevail in feminist literary criticism are appropriate practices then, consistent with the dual vision of feminist epistemology and practice. My decision to read male texts is a political one, motivated, both by my experience in the classroom, and by the degree to which "post feminism", a discursive textual practice, has become one of the dominant theoretical models in the male-dominated academy. By post feminism, I mean the practice of deconstructing the notion of the subject and the move to define the feminine/woman as a point of resistance, a discursive possibility within language that is understood as

stemming from the pre-oedipal moment in which gender differentiation has not yet occurred. This deconstructionist endeavor ignores the materiality of gender. It apprehends gender merely as the representation of difference thereby ignoring the concrete social relationships of gender that structure everyday life. Gender is an experienced reality as well as a system of representations. This shift makes it easy to forget the oppressiveness of power as it is embedded in institutionalized knowledge. This is understandably desirable for male intellectuals who have embraced feminism as an intellectual pursuit. It is dangerous for feminists. The tenuous safety of the academy and our ideas must be weighed in relation to the continuing oppression of women, flesh and blood gendered beings, in the social world.

My experience in the classroom over the last five years has jolted me into recognizing just how insulating my intellectual and personal world had become. The feminist framework I nonreflexively employ in conceptualizing and acting in the social world is not simply not shared by my students, but is one they think of as unnecessary because the revolution has occurred. The existence of women's oppression in society and misogyny in culture does not inform their consciousness; neither does it inform some academic theory as we have seen. My task as a feminist and teacher is to disrupt this taken-for-granted view, wherever it exists. This task comes directly out of a conceptualization of feminism as a praxis, a political intervention on the level of consciousness;

therefore to teach is to be engaged in consciousness raising.

There are, of course, steps in this process. The first is to help an individual come to the realization that oppression and misogyny are features common to material life as well as the system of cultural representations. When this is accomplished, she can then identify points of resistance to the hegemonic ideology, and in turn, begin to imagine alternatives. The reading of male texts within the theoretical framework of ideology and representation I am proposing, is the first step in consciousness raising. It connects cultural representations to everyday life and provides a framework for the interaction with patriarchy as direct experience. The second step is to engage in resisting readings of these male texts in order to uncover alternative images that are empowering to women readers. The second step is predicated on a movement into feminist consciousness.

My experience as a teacher has taught me how necessary it is to pay attention to the first step despite the fact that my intellectual life so takes this step for granted. My encounter with my students has alerted me to the danger feminists risk when we assume that the case against patriarchy has been definitively made, and we therefore direct all our attention to the points of resistance. Resisting and gynocritic readings, without an insistence on on-going ideology critique, perpetuate a feminist practice that risks losing its grounding in material life, the very setting for our praxis.

The method of reading I am proposing first seeks to

identify the representations of women consistent with patriarchal ideology. These representation, by their very nature, are familiar because of their circulation in all realms of cultural and material life. Since these images are created through language, it should be possible to identify a language game that reinforces the image.

The images of women will be balanced in a more or less dichotomous relation to the images of men in order to reaffirm the superiority of the masculine. This can also be accomplished however, through a good woman/bad woman dichotomy.

My method of reading assumes that the text will disguise its implication with ideology. This involves uncovering the ways in which the text reveals its hidden intention, revealing how it betrays its innocence. My assumption is that the text has something to hide and that it uses the representations of women to accomplish this task.

The delineation of what is hidden marks the shift from a reading that uncovers hegemonic representations to a reading that resists these images and structures. This can include nonpatriarchal images of women and a critical discussion of patriarchal institutions and practices using the images of women as mirrors in which the failure of these institutions and practices are reflected/revealed. Judith Fetterley's reading of "A Rose for Miss Emily" exemplifies this form of resistance.

Resisting reading can also involve a critical attention to the representation of masculinity, debunking its attributes

and presupposed superiority. The act of drawing attention to masculinity, in order to reject it, is an act of sabotage.

Lastly, a resisting reading can emphasize the relationships and bonds between women thereby suggesting an alternative frame of reference that breaks the confines of a heterosexual bond/bind. This means not only imaging a lesbian continuum but pointing to the ways in which the text denies this possibility.

The content of a reading must necessarily be conditioned by the text and the predisposition of the woman reader. A resisting reading is a working through of one's experience of immasculation; this experience, while conditioned by culture, is nonetheless a personal one. Each woman must necessarily begin from what she has internalized. Her reflection entails connecting to that which she can recognize as the being she has been asked to become.

A resisting reading is difficult and requires courage. The reader must admit that she has used the images of culture to form her own sense of what a woman's identity should be. Every woman in a patriarchal culture has used male-centered images to come to know herself.

As the reader identifies the images she is reminded that she has used them in forming her sense of self. She becomes aware of knowing herself as male culture wants her to be. She recognizes that immasculation is an experience she lives and feels. Anger accompanies this recognition, and it can be misdirected at herself. The woman reader must move on. How

she does is up to her. Her appropriation of the text must make her happy. Any movement she makes beyond the intentionally structured patriarchal consciousness is a step in the right direction. The pleasure of reading this way is the activity of making the text hers for the first time. It is the pleasure the woman reader can have again and again. The pleasure entails living within a new consciousness.

What follows is my reading of two texts by William Faulkner, a once favored author of mine. I remember reading him with complete absorption, seeing all the characters from the male-centered point of view. The lessons from the women characters were clear. I was totally inscribed in my own immasculation.

Now I read him as a feminist with a predisposition towards interpretation determined by the analytic framework articulated in the previous chapters. The pleasure comes, not in finding positive images of women characters, but in interrogating what lies beneath the ideological representations I encounter. I seek to discover what a patriarchal culture hides from itself, realizing that it is this which prompts the need for misogyny.

The intention of cultural representations is to keep the woman reader locked within the male point of view. Revealing what this point of view is is a source of pleasure.

## CHAPTER V: RESISTING THE PATRIARCHAL TEMPLE

Sanctuary, written in 1931 is considered to be one of Faulkner's greatest works. The novel tells the story of Temple Drake and her abduction into the Memphis underworld by a ruthless gangster. It also tells the story of Temple's own inherent corruption. Requiem for a Nun (1951) picks up Temple's story eight years after her disappearance with some emphasis on the consequences of her corruption. Interestingly enough, literary critics of Faulkner do not ordinarily read these texts in relation to each other, despite the fact that they are so clearly paired. Requiem for a Nun is identified by the author as a sequel, and even though Faulkner has repeated certain significant women characters in short stories and reintroduced minor women characters from these stories in his novels, Temple Drake is the only prominent female character that reappears in more than one of his novels. The lack of attention to Requiem for a Nun is justified by the critical assessment that it is not concerned with profound, transcendental themes or provides a successful experiment with form. Despite the fact that the text combines narrative sequences interrupted by a continuing play.

The story of Requiem for a Nun is straightforwardly simple, lacking in overpowering ambiguity and activity. It simply concludes the story of Temple, and in a form reminiscent of daily life, a sparse play with very few characters.

The narrative and figurative complexity of Sanctuary

has lent itself to a reading that treats it as if it is self-sufficient, independent of any ideological content. In one sense, this can be understood as part of the more general modernist critical practice of managing an otherwise explosive diversity and ambiguity of materials. The implicit denial not only of context but of the discursive ideological determinations to which, as we now know, every text is subject is part of what Jameson (1984) has called censorship, and what a number of literary scholars see as representation. In regard to feminism, this practice avoids the identification of the patriarchal representations within Faulkner's work. The misogyny inherent in patriarchal representations of femininity has thereby been overlooked, obfuscated and/or denied; and in that way misogyny has been allowed the latency of a virtue. The latency of misogyny, provides a character of virtuousness that adds to the plausibility or semblance of truth that adheres to the narrative and makes its appeal to convention altogether unobtrusive. This embeddedness however, provides a consistent undercurrent that unifies the two novels and is most apparent when they are examined together. The feminist, ideologically critical reading that I have advocated foregrounds this undercurrent, by indicating the extratextuality of the narrative and by emphasizing the subtle complexity with which it insinuates it without holding it out as an issue.

The patriarchal undercurrent of Sanctuary is picked up in Requiem for a Nun and there brought to its logical conclusion. Temple's story ends by reaffirming the position of women

within a patriarchal culture. But what makes this implicit is the way in which this position is given an aura of inevitability. Reading Temple's story through these two narratives reveals an attitude toward women oriented to our "function" and our "structuration" within a patriarchal order that for virtue of the functional and structural rendering of the female position is itself only implicit. It also indicates the cost to Our-Selves, our sisters and our daughters without making that cost a matter of accountability. It is important for the woman reader to confront the patriarchal narration in all its forms, figures and structuring of events because its intention, what animates it beyond the plot, is to socialize by providing a sense of familiarity, completeness and coherence that together defy any critical possibility of response: women rendered as virtuous in the failure of resistance. In this sense, the story of Temple Drake is an appeal to women to participate in our own oppression, to harness even the desire that underlies the conformity that is ultimately valued.

Sanctuary tells a violent story in unflinchingly, relentless fashion. It spans six months in the life of Temple Drake and is populated with characters memorable for their violence, brutality and corruption. The violence is predominately sexual; and the women characters are sexualized in a manner consistent with that. This sexualization of women is accomplished by various tropes. Perhaps the most striking of these however, is the verbal equivalent of what many have referred to as "the gaze" the realization of women as objects

held to a concentrated view, constructed from the standpoint of the hyper-masculinized male viewer. The reader is forced to assume this viewer's position, and so the woman reader finds herself encountering women characters constructed from the standpoint of the hyper-masculinized male viewer. The reader is forced to assume this viewer's position, and so the woman reader finds herself encountering women characters constructed from within a framework of male sensibility regarding female sexuality that is then articulated by male characters as the "fictional truth" of the novel.

The first mention of Temple in the text illustrates this hyper-masculinized, objectifying gaze...

"Townspeople taking after-supper drives through the college grounds or an oblivious and bemused faculty-member or a candidate for a master's degree on his way to the library would see Temple, a snatched coat under her arm and her long legs blonde with running, in speeding silhouette against the lighted windows of the Coop, as the woman's dormitory was known, vanishing into the shadow beside the library wall, and perhaps a final squatting swirl of knickers or whatnot as she sprang into the car waiting there with engine running on that particular night" (p.29).

The sexualization of the woman on view is accomplished by the fetishism of parts in motion, an integration of movement that needs only the coherence of visibility, not that of a purpose consistent with the purposefulness of bemusement. Thus the glimpse the reader gets of Temple, through eyes that must be radically different from hers, as she begins the ride that the

reader but not her observers will see as actualizing her life story and adversely affecting the lives of almost every major character in both novels, culminating, in Requiem for a Nun, in the murder of Temple's infant daughter and the state execution of the woman responsible for the baby's death.

"They (three town boys who are one of the total set of observers established in the preceding paragraph) watched Gowan slip his arm into hers, and the fleet revelation of flank and thigh as she got into his car" (p.30).

The text only incidentally establishes the possibility that Temple is promiscuously sexual. Fundamentally, this ploy depends on the objective passivity of her established at the moment she becomes visible within the novel. Thus, the subnarrative of "the ride" is contained within the narrative frame of "the gaze". The woman riding is already the woman capable of states of being rather than action in the fullest, male sense of the term. Temple's ride with Gowan occurs in two stages, a Friday night date and a Saturday morning pick-up at the train station in Taylor on the way to a baseball game in Starkville. Gowan spends the intermittent time getting drunk with the three town boys thereby forming in a moment of shared indulgence, the prior movement of the gaze with the movement of sexuality.

"He was still trying to tell them, in a cramped, dark place smelling of ammonia and creosote, vomiting into a receptacle, trying to tell them that he must be at Taylor at six-thirty when the train ar-

rived. The paroxysm passed;...and in the flare of a match he leaned against the wall, his eyes focusing slowly upon a name written there in pencil. He shut one eye, propped against the wall, swaying and drooling and read the name. Then he looked at them, wagging his head.

Girl name....Name girl I know. Good girl. Good sport. Got date take her to Stark....Starkville. No chap'rone, see? - No chap'rone, see?"(p.36)

This passage highlights the point that Temple's essential sexuality and nature is a crucial figurative component of the narrative. It explains and justifies, by intimation, as with omens, what happens to her in Sanctuary and what happens to her daughter in Requiem for a Nun. In Sanctuary it is men who pose this culpability on Temple, and the reader is made to feel this through the various occurrences of the gaze. In a sense, her helplessness to her sexuality (as her mode of being) gives her something of a tragic aspect; but it is a containable and contained aspect, located within a universe that ratifies the gaze as the finality of her condition - an externality that is deeply untragic and moralistic. Temple's compliance with this point of view is completed in Requiem for a Nun. Her immasculation and that of the woman reader of her story, completes the inscription of women in the patriarchal order. It is truly a story of horror rather than the elevation out of tragedy.

Temple meets with gowan at the Taylor train station expecting him to drive her to the college baseball game in Starkville. his drunken state prompts her to tell him to

drive instead to the university. he refuses, wanting to buy liquor, working with her "reputation" as a counter to Temple's attempt to protect herself as if she had a virtuousness that her reputation could only deny.

"Trying to come over me with your innocent ways. Don't think I spent last night with a couple of your barber-shop jellies for nothing. Don't think I fed them my liquor just because I'm bighearted. You're pretty good, aren't you? Think you can play around all week with any badger-trimmed hick that owns a ford, and fool me on Saturday don't you? Don't think I didn't see your name where it's written on that lavatory wall. Don't you believe me?" (pp.39-40).

Temple doesn't answer. gowan, berating her, crashes his car into a tree, stranding them in his pursuit of bootleg liquor and its permission of male indulgence. The crash occurs near the bootlegging operation. gowan walks with Temple to the house occupied by lee goodwin, the bootlegger, popeye, a Memphis gangster who markets the whiskey, tommy and van, helpers, and Ruby, lee's mistress who has a sickly two year old son.

Two things are immediately established by the narrative. Temple is the ideal object of a male gaze that is sinister and threatening, and in the focus of which she is perceived as sexual game. popeye's gaze is merely suggested by the smoke from a cigarette lingering as the trace of it in a doorway (p.45). The use of the smoke as indicative of the source establishes him as the primary threat. his absence behind the

smoke is ominous and his quiet, menacing power over Temple is as nebulous and expansive as air. his lack of bodily presence nevertheless signifies the impotence that will be revealed in his raping of Temple with a corn cob. Thus, the sign of impotence is mingled with the metonymic relation of smoke and purpose.

The relationship between Ruby and Temple is a carefully constructed deception a reader may see as predicated on the impossibility of significant solidarity between women. Temple tells gowan that Ruby has warned her to get away.

"Gowan, I'm scared. She said for me not to - ...She says for us to go away from here ...Gowan, she said for me not to be here after dark. She said to ask him (popeye). He's got a car" (p.51).

Ruby suggest that Temple ask popeye, the most dangerous man present, in order to protect her relationship with lee. Her willingness to sacrifice Temple is predicated on her apprehension of Temple as a sexual threat.

"Do you think Lee hasn't anything better to do than chase after every one of you cheap little -"..."Why did you come here?" (p.59)...You little doll-faced slut, that think you can't come into a room where a man is without him -. Man? you've never seen a real man (p.63). "Listen. If I get a car for you, will you get out of here?"

She (Ruby) said, "Will you go out the back and get into it and get away and never come back here?"

"Yes," Temple whispered, "anywhere, anything."

"You poor little gutless fool," the woman said in her cold undertone. "Playing at it."

"I didn't. I didn't." (p.64)

"It's not Lee I'm afraid of. Do you think he plays the dog after every hot little bitch that comes along? It's you". (p.64)

The reader soon realizes that this berating of Temple is meaningless in itself.

"That car," Temple said. "I could go now, while they're eating."

"What car?" the woman said. "Go on and eat. Nobody's going to hurt you." (p.67)

But, Temple does get hurt. Ruby's words are as false as her effort to hide Temple during the night and the next morning as the men get drunk and prepare to take her. Ruby's ambivalent effort at keeping Temple safe is in all ways compromised.

The narrative makes clear that the men think of Temple as a whore and her body something to which they have unrestricted access.

"Open the door", he (van) shouted.  
 "We're bringing you a customer" (p.77).

The gaze is completed by a declaration. Temple has been placed in a locked room by Ruby; van breaks in and strips her of a coat she had been using to cover herself. he grabs her breasts as does popeye. lee and Ruby come into the room. lee makes them stop and turns to Ruby, telling her to go to bed.

She responds,

"While you finish the trick Van started  
and you wouldn't let him finish? You  
poor fool. You poor fool." (p.79)

Ruby assumes what the men assume. Temple is there; sex is inevitable. Ruby persists in trying to protect Temple in order to keep her from temptation.

Temple's own efforts at resisting the male onslaught is, of course, qualified as well presumably by ambivalence and desire. The credibility of her character requires that because within patriarchal understanding, the male's sexual behavior is precipitated by the desire/action of the woman. The female victim must be seen as available mentally and emotionally as well as physically. In this way her objectification is disguised as a will to comply. As a woman is socialized into patriarchal consciousness she more and more must share this understanding and with it the sense of a divided and self-conquering self.

In Sanctuary, Temple is allowed to resist full participation; though the narrative's overall intent is to convince the reader that Temple's own sexuality is to blame. An important way in which the text accomplishes this is to make all her efforts at resistance resonate within a certain level of sexual play. This is a precursor to what inevitably follows in Requiem for a Nun. Temple must finally acknowledge her own responsibility for fate. The patriarchal script demands that women accept the definition of our sexuality as

insatiable and selfdestructive.

Temple first attempts to protect herself by asking popeye for a ride back to a town. But even here she is coy, almost deliberately alluring - an appeal that is touching for its desperation but one that can only contribute to her plight.

"She faced Popeye with a grimace of taut, toothed coquetry" (p.51).

He of course refuses, yelling to gowan as if it is he who is being tempted,

"Make your whore lay off of me, Jack" (p.53).

This sequence presents an identity between his perception of Temple and her posture in relation to him.

Temple's body, sexualized by the gaze, is transformed for popeye into a catalyst. Her own complicity is manifest when she awakens after being hidden by Ruby, the morning when she will, in fact, be raped:

"With her fingers she combed her matted curls, combing out three or four cotton-seed hulls....she rinsed it (a basin) and filled it and bathed her face. A soiled towel hung from a nail. She used it gingerly, then she took a compact from her coat and was using it when she found the woman watching her in the kitchen door." (p.94).

Temple is caught gazing at herself as is the reader and as were the three who set the gaze for the narrative from the start. She then, apparently for no reason, leaves the house

where she has been kept safe by Ruby. She repeatedly runs back and fourth in the surrounding fields. The narrative consistently draws attention to her legs, the part of her body first established in a sexualized way earlier in the text. Temple and the reader both watch the running that will place her in the barn where she will be raped.

"For an instant she stood and watched herself run out of her body, out of one slipper and whirl and run again" (p.96).

"She sprang from the porch and ran toward the barn and into the hallway and climbed the ladder and scrambled through the trap and to her feet again, running toward the pile of rotting hay. Then suddenly she ran upside down in a rushing interval; she could see her legs still running in space and she struck lightly and solidly on her back and lay still" (p.97).

Her legs propel her to a position suggestive of immanent sexual activity.

popeye climbs into the barn loft above an unaware Temple. Temple gets up in order to leave; noticing lee watching her from behind a tree, she asks tommy to lock her into the small enclosed crib at the rear of the barn. Initially, it appears as if both lee and tommy will be spectators to the rape; but lee goes into the house and tommy is shot between the eyes by popeye when he unlocks the crib door. This narrative allows no man to witness the impotence of another. Temple screams,

"Something is going to happen to me!...I told you it was!...I told you! I told you all the time" (p.107).

There is no one to hear or to help her. Ruby has left with the baby to sit by the stream down the road. She had fought with lee, convinced that he too was after Temple.

"Do you think you can? Do you think I'll let you? Or any other little slut?" (p.99).

In response, lee beat her, and so she left, unwilling to see her man with another woman.

The narrative abruptly breaks off, refusing to allow the reader to be present during the rape itself thus leaving open the final intentions of the rape. Our parting glimpse of Temple is where she lay,

"tossing and thrashing on the rough, sunny boards" (p.107).

The reader is left with a level of uncertainty. Is Temple's bodily movement sexual or resistant? The ambiguity is fueled by the prior description of Temple and bolstered by the occurrence of the rape off screen, as it were.

While Ruby is sitting by the stream, popeye's car comes by. Temple is next to him on the front seat. She looks Ruby full in the face but nothing passes between them.

"...to the woman beside the road, it (Temple's face) was like a small, dead-colored mask drawn past her on a string and then away" (p.108).

Ruby quickly returns to the house. lee tells her that the sheriff must be called, that the murder must be reported. She walks more than a mile to a neighbor's telephone in order to report that,

"there's a dead man at the Old Frenchman place" (p.109).

Temple's violation is unrecognized. This is repeated later when Temple is finally found and interrogated by lee's attorney. Ruby's initial articulation of this is symbolic of woman's consciousness as it is encouraged to accept male definitions. It reinforces the division among women that constitutes one of the subtexts of the novel.

"But why must it have been me, us? What had I ever done to her, to her kind?... If she'd just stopped running around where they had to look at her....And then she had to come out there, after I had slaved for him, slaved for him" (pp.169-170).

popeye takes Temple to Miss Reba's brothel in Memphis where he will keep her locked in her room for six months. During the car ride, Temple becomes aware of what has happened to her. She begins "saying sully to herself, I'm still bleeding, I'm still bleeding, I'm still bleeding" (p.143). This crescendos into a wild scream which stops only after a violent slapping by popeye. The hemorrhaging, which is finally treated at Miss Reba's, signifies her virginity and its violation. The narrative's description of Temple's stay

at Miss Reba's however, thoroughly compromises her innocence. She is spoken of as a nymphomaniac; and while there is enough evidence to support a sense that her rape unleashed her inherent sexuality, there is an important, if not fleeting, alternative trope that indicates impotent masculinity as the correlate to the wantonness of her sexuality. This alternative is conveyed by a minor narrative, articulated by Reba and her friends. Reba herself contradicts it, as does Temple in Requiem for a Nun. One intention of the sequel is to kill the claim of this alternative narrative once and for all; thereby rendering it false from the start.

When Temple first arrives at Reba's, she feels shock and shame. She hides under the covers, pressing her legs together whenever anything is mentioned that brings her ordeal to mind. Interestingly enough, no one assumes that Temple was brought there against her will; and so her reactions are never understood from her point of view; therefore from the point of view of a victim. Miss Reba, the woman character most supportive of other women, nevertheless interacts with Temple as if she had gone after popeye. This is demonstrated by her attempt to convince Temple how lucky she has been:

"Every girl in the district has been trying to get him honey...But do you think he'd so much as look at one of them? Girls that have took in a hundred dollars a night...I always knowed it wasn't going to be none of these here common whores, he'd take" (p.152).

Temple's complicity is assumed, and she is expected to be

happy with her success. Happiness will eventually come for Temple, but not with popeye. It will come with red, a stud popeye brings in to enhance his voyeurism, his pleasure in viewing sex.

Temple's introspective monologues when she first arrives at Reba's speak to her own sense of innocence and trauma. She thinks about her life as if the weekend events had not happened to her, believing for the moment that she was late for a date. She is intent on her bleeding apart from its cause, as if it were an incident of nature rather than a consequence of another's deed. This combination, signifying innocence and sexualness is evident in her body's response to popeye's first visit to the brothel.

"He came in and looked down at her. She writhed slowly in a cringing movement, cringing upon herself in as complete an isolation as though she were bound to a church steeple. She grinned at him, her mouth warped over the rigid, placative porcelain of her grimace....

"No, no" she whispered, "he said I can't now".

He jerked the covers back and flung them aside. She lay motionless...her flesh beneath the envelope of her loins cringing rearward in furious disintegration like frightened people...He gripped the top of the gown. She caught his wrists and began to toss from side to side, opening her mouth to scream. His hand clapped over her mouth, and gripping his wrist, the saliva drooling between his fingers, her body thrashing furiously from thigh to thigh, she saw him crouching beside the bed...making a whinnying sound like a horse" (p.167).

This erotic sexualization of what a women's reading must see as Temple's resistance to the threat of violence, operates as a trope in terms of which the text sustains the image of woman's nature within the surrounding trope, constituted in the male gaze. Sexual arousal is inevitable; desire is the very condition of the encounter; satisfaction is induced phallically and signified phallocentrically. Only when Temple receives the penis will the full expression of her nature be realized.

Temple is under the constant scrutiny of the reader's necessarily male gaze at Reba's as well as throughout the novel. This abject positioning made ostensibly subjective through the ambiguous description of her postures, allows the reader to witness popeye's impotence as a problem within the masculine centering of the novel's ethos. We are thereby presented with one primary tension of the novel: the ambiguous demand for gratification by women and the inability to provide it. We will soon see that gratification wins out, and it will be at the expense of both men sexually involved with Temple. Here, faulkner not only presents women as men's problem, but ambiguity as the problematic aspect of women - a reprise on the biblical theme of temptation and fatal attraction.

Similarly the reader is given Temple's desire for red without having previously witnessed their being together. The first intimation of the fact that someone other than popeye is involved occurs when Temple sneaks out of the brothel to make a phone call. When she returns to the house she drinks

heavily while preparing to go out again. This time she is intercepted by popeye. he is the first to mention red.

"I'm giving him his chance. Will you go back in that house or will you get in this car"? (p. 243)

Temple initially coy, turns defiant; in doing so, she clarifies the opposition of the two men, and her centrality as a scarce resource to it. Here then is a complex enticement to the displacement of the violence issued at her and to the possibility of a further liaison with popeye.

"You won't do it. You're afraid to. He's a better man than you are" ...." You're not even a man!. He knows it. Who does know it if he don't? You, a man, a bold bad man, when you can't even - When you had to bring a real man in to - " (pp.243-244).

This retort is a turning point in the narrative. It seals everyone's fate. popeye drives Temple to a club where red is gambling. Temple, obsessed with her desire for red, knows that popeye is going to kill him because of it. Her desire overtakes her while standing next to popeye, though it is a desire tied as much to danger as to lust.

"She felt a wild surge of relief. It was not to late; Red was still alive; she felt long shuddering waves of physical desire going over her...She stood beside him (popeye) cunningly, feeling the desire going over her in wave after wave, involved with the music and with the smell of her own flesh...By infinitesimal inches she moved aside until someone

slipped into her place" (p.251).

She runs to a room where she is joined by red. Her desire, bracketed by her anticipation of violence displays an ugliness of character that never reappears in the text yet remains a part of her henceforth. The language used to describe this complex state of desire reinforces that image of perversity in regard to women's essentially sexual nature. It provides a further retrospection on the ambiguity of the rape itself, reconcentrating the novel's fundamental and subtle misogyny. The description of her response to red conveys a desperation colored by both lust and an indifference to the fate of its object.

When he touched her she sprang like a bow, hurling herself upon him, her mouth gaped and ugly like that of a dying fish as she writhed her loins against him" (p.252).

"With her hips grinding against him, her mouth gaping in straining protrusion, bloodless, she began to speak.

"Let's hurry...He came here to kill you. And now it'll just be us" (p.252).

red is confused and attempts to break free. Temple responds with a different and insidious enticement that appeals to red's sense of his manhood.

"But you're not afraid. You're a man."

At the same time, in a parody of her own rape she,

"grind(s) against him, dragging at his

head, murmuring to him in parrotlike underworld epithet, the saliva running pale over her bloodless lips" (p.253).

red succeeds in disengaging himself. he tells her to go to popeye and wait for him. Temple, "in a voluptuous swoon" (p.243) calls out,

"you won't be long? I'm on fire. I'm dying, I tell you" (p.253)

red leaves, and Temple is taken back to Reba's by popeye's men. red is eventually killed but the narrative does not reveal how. popeye never sees Temple again. he is arrested for a murder he did not commit while driving to visit his mother. his refusal to defend himself results in his being hanged in a juridical duplication of his sexual impotence.

The explanation, as well as the condemnation, of Temple's involvement with red is left to Miss Reba and her friends after red's funeral. Their indictment is ambivalent, suggesting an alliance among women that can't be sustained because it is predicated on an awareness of the impoverishment of men. Reba and her friends are unable to sustain the complexity of what they know. The risk is too great, so they turn on Temple as if continued success of patriarchy in the novel as in life depends on the enlistment of women to its interest. The ending of Temple's story in Requiem of a Nun shows the price women pay for both enlistment and resistance the latter ultimately situated somewhere between the morality of inno-

cence and the immorality of betrayal.

The dialogue between Reba and her friends begins to scratch this surface, but only that. The women agree that men make women what they are.

"Men just can't seem to take us and leave us for what we are. They make us what we are, then they expect us to be different" (p.268).

But what they mean, is that men arouse the sexuality of women and that this aspect of women can not be controlled.

"A woman that wants to fool with more than one man at a time is a fool...and the woman that can't stay true to a good man when she gets him, a free-hearted spender that never give her a hour's uneasiness or a hard word" (p.268).

They can not agree on whether popeye is truly bad or not. They conclude.

"It's us poor girls...causes all the trouble and gets all the suffering" (p.2-69).

popeye's error is to have turned on Temple and then to have provided her with red. But it is a tragic error because of popeye's impotence, exacerbated as it is by the ambiguous expressivity of Temple's character.

"He'd ought to've had sense enough to got a old ugly man,...tempting us poor girls like that. Men always expect us to resist temptation." (p.272).

And "we" can not, where "we" embraces both the category "woman" in relation to "man" and the complicity of women in the character of seductress.

red and Temple had been together only four times; yet Reba tells the others what the reader also knows, that Temple got "wild as a young mare" (p.273). Her desire had been triggered and the unleashing of its dangers made Reba want her to leave her house. Temple had transgressed all bounds by revealing her essential nature of womanness, thus putting all women at risk of being found out. Reba's reaction suggests a further complicity of women in disguising what is most true of us and thereby remaining situated within the male gaze. Temple's inability to conjugate with women is represented by the manner of her exit from lee's trial when, surrounded by her father and brothers, her "body arch(es) slowly" (p.304) in their midst.

Lee's pending trial is the vehicle by which the lives of the other major characters in the novel are connected to Temple and her story. While the overall description of women and the language-games in which that description is conveyed, made evident in the narrative of the stalking and raping of Temple, are present in this narrative as well, there are also significant variations that reinforce and add to that description.

The picture drawn of masculinity derived from the characters encountered by the reader in regard to Temple's

ordeal is far from pretty. It's easy to feel that Reba and her friends are correct in their partial indictment of men. The men are violent, corrupt and impotent; popeye's sexual impotence is reflected in red's inability to prevent his own murder; gowan's responsibility and his flight from it is reflected in lee's refusal to defend himself, thereby participating in bringing about his own death. The image is one that generally reinforces the inability of men and women to act for themselves. It thus conveys the absence of power in relations of men to men as well as women to men. Power over women, however, is nonetheless guaranteed. This negative representation of masculinity and its generalization is countered in the text through the character of horace benbow. horace is the good man, despite the presence of bad traits; his character reflects the flip side of the critique of masculinity encountered in the conversation between Reba and her friends, which incidentally is the only time the text allows such a discussion to take place.

horace' presence in the novel reinforces the overall valorization of masculinity and the corrupting danger posed by femininity. horace, along with his counterpart gavin stevens in Requiem for a Nun, serves to uphold the patriarchal narrative privileged by the text. This privileging is accomplished by the negative representation of femininity reflected though horace's rectitude and in the decisive role played by gavin in the concluding acts of Temple's punishment.

horace is first encountered in the novel making his way

back to his hometown after having left Belle, his wife of ten years. he stumbles upon popeye in the woods who brings him to goodwin's. There he meets Ruby whose hard life stirs him to empathize with her. When lee is arrested for tommy's murder, horace feels compelled to defend him for Ruby's sake. This act of championing "the woman", as Ruby is consistently referred to in the text, is a reminder of the power of men. At the same time it sets in motion a rank ordering of women by women that helps bring about lee's death, restores Temple to the fold of her/the father, and brings horace back to his own family where he can continue to fantasize raping his step-daughter, being prompted by her natural seductiveness.

horace insists on letting Ruby and her child stay in his house while lee is in jail. This prompts his sister Narcissa to express the hatred respectable women have for whores like Ruby, and allows horace to voice virtuously indignant outrage at her lack of compassion. The following dialogue between Narcissa and horace on the need of women for male protection from other women, materializes once again a primary theme of patriarchy and phallocentrism. horace's answer blends the virtues of protection with the necessity of the male figure for women's prospects for peace in the midst of female ambiguity and ambivalence.

"...and now to deliberately mix yourself up with a woman you said yourself was a street-walker, a murderer's woman."

"I can't help it. She has nothing, no one....Asking nothing of anyone except to be let alone, trying to make something

out of her life when all you sheltered  
chaste women - "(p.121).

horace's championing of Ruby is not without its compromises. he consistently backs down when opposed by his sister and the townswomen; and while he doesn't immediately abandon her, he extricates himself a little more each time the women take action against her. When Narcissa insists that Ruby can not stay in the family house, horace moves her to the hotel; when horace goes out of town, the townswomen have Ruby thrown out of the hotel. She is then taken in by the jailor's wife. horace returns and promises that he will have her restored. But he finally leaves Ruby in the jail taking refuge in his sister's home. when the trial is over lee is burned to death by the mob; horace returns home to his wife. he had no contact with Ruby following the verdict. It is as if his return, that of the prodigal, cancels the obligations implicit in his compassion - as if the virtue of compassion is sufficient for the man and the promise only an expression of it.

horace's behavior towards Ruby demonstrates another aspect of the position of women vis-a-vis patriarchal power symbolized by the law. Protection is conditional, based on the sanctity of our reputation, and fleeting at best. The text displays, through the figurative aspect of its language as much as by the logic of its narrative that women are the cause of this power, its reason for being. Narcissa's role serves to shift attention away from horace's willingness to accept the division articulated by every woman character

between the good and bad woman. Temple epitomizes the bad woman. She admits as much, and so does Ruby. Temple's character however, reveals that the good/bad division of women is an illusion; all women contain the badness. It merely needs proper stimulus to appear.

Ruby tells horace that Temple had been at the house when tommy was shot because she believes it might help in lee's defense. Her recounting of the events leading up to Temple's rape and tommy's murder places the blame on Temple. This re-articulates the phallocentric notion that male sexual desire and its concomitant actualization are caused by the behavior or sheer presence of women.

"Nobody wanted her out there...I told her before it got dark they were not her kind of people and to get away from there...If she'd just stopped running around where they had to look at her. She wouldn't stay anywhere. She'd just dash out one door and in a minute she'd come running in from the other direction" (p.169; italics mine).

Ruby sees temple as the embodiment of sexuality; thus she knows that Temple will act against her making a move for lee. Ruby expects betrayal by women.

"And she had to come out there, after I had slaved for him....I said "What right have you got to look to me for help" (p.171).

Interestingly enough, Ruby doesn't speak the whole story.

She recounts the events and her actions toward Temple through her success in hiding her. There were no direct witnesses to Temple's rape in the crib the next morning, leaving the facts ambiguous enough not to interfere with the sense that Temple willingly participated in the encounter that took place rather than being its victim. This is enunciated by every character, regardless of the fact that no one was witness to the rape. This provides a certain tension between the reader who knows that a rape occurred and the characters who refuse to recognize it as even the most probable form of the encounter. It reflects a division within the male gaze, the novel's frame of reference, between a monolithic view of women, held by most of the characters, and a sense of the ambiguity of the female. This tension, because of the subtly it introduces to the frame of reference, reinforces the latter by making it seem possible for the reader to stand outside of the phallogentricity of the characters' discourse. But this "outside" is merely a transformation of that discourse, subtlety insinuating the reader among and not actually against the characters, something characteristic of Faulkner's writing in general. We see just how pervasive this phallogentrism is when Horace goes to his sister's to tell what he has just found out from Ruby.

Gowan had been courting Narcissa when he suddenly disappeared without any explanation. Ruby's revelation to Horace provided the explanation, and he wasted no time in conveying how fortunate his sister was to be rid of Gowan. Horace conveys the information from Ruby to Miss Jenny, the

ninety year old great aunt of Narcissa's deceased husband. Their exchange is notable because it again indicts women and provides the first intimation that horace, who may be thought of as a stand-in for the reader, will be as harsh and monolithic in his view of women and our sexual nature as the other male characters in contrast to which he had initially been presented.

"I know why he didn't come back"

"Who" Gowan?"

"Yes; Gowan. And, by the Lord, he'd better not come back."

"He carried a little fool girl out there with him that day and got drunk and ran off and left her." (pp173-174).

It would have been possible for either horace or Miss Jenny to condemn gowan at this point; that they do not indicates that the primary intention of the text is to perpetuate the patriarchal practice of not interrogating masculinity. This lack of interrogation serves to reinforce its entitlement.

Instead, the dialogue between horace and Miss Jenny takes a rather confusing turn initiated by Miss Jenny herself. She begins to discuss a male parent. She can't mean Temple's father because she doesn't yet know that the girl involved is in fact Temple. She says:

"...but just let a man have a hand in the affairs of a female that's no kin to him....What is it that makes a man think that the female flesh he marries or begets might misbehave, but all he didn't

marry or get is bound to?" (p.174)

horace's response completes the shift of referent to women. his answer makes clear that they are talking about his stepdaughter, Little Belle, who because she is a woman possesses a Temple-like sexual nature.

"Yes,...and thank God she isn't my flesh and blood. I can reconcile myself to her having to be exposed to a scoundrel now and then, but to think that at any moment she may become involved with a fool....scoundrel I can face, but to think of her being exposed to any fool" (p.174.).

After this conversation with Miss Jenny, horace returns home. What takes place when he gets there, not only confirms that he was referring to Little Belle, but that he perceives of her as sexual and her sexuality as provocation. For horace, Belle is a creature of nature properly fixed as the object of the phallocentric gaze. he looks at her photograph, gazing at her "sweet, inscrutable face" (p.174) and thinks of an evening at their home, remembering "the murmur of voices darkening into silence as he approached who meant them, her, no harm; who meant her less than harm, good God" (p.175)

But horace's noble intentions are not sustained as his thoughts unfold; and though he preserves his own semblance of innocence, the narrative eventually reveals that it is at the expense of Little Belle. horace remembers the summer twilight,

"darkening into the pale whisper of her white dress, of the delicate and urgent mammalian whisper of that curious small flesh which he had not begot and in which appeared to be vatted delicately some seething sympathy with the blossoming grape."

The picture become blurry for an instant; horace sees archetypal "woman" when he looks again.

"...at the familiar image with a kind of quiet horror and despair at a face, suddenly older in sin than he would ever be, a face more blurred than sweet, at eyes more secret than soft" (p.175).

horace's vision of the misogynistic imagination is reinstated in the depiction of his meeting with Temple at the brothel.

horace intends in his visit with her, to convince Temple to testify on lee's behalf. She doesn't want to see him. horace enlists Miss Reba's support in coaxing Temple to talk. They imply two things - that her silence is an admission of her own guilt and that Ruby's fate is dependent on Temple's coming forth. horace is not concerned with discovering what, if anything, happened to Temple though Temple believes that he is. This episode is consistent with the constant signification of the ambiguity of Temple's victimization and, in the surplus that constantly issues from that signification as latent confirmation of the wantonness of her sexuality. In this respect, it concentrates a view of women that is already taken for granted in the initial framing of the plot.

Temple hides under the covers when horace first enters

the room. Since this is the only time in the narrative that Temple will speak on her own behalf, professing her resistance and denying any contribution to her rape by popeye, the fact that she hides at first appears as part of her defence. horace interprets it however as a sign that Temple needs to hide as if to protect her guilty secret. he says, "you can use a different name, wear clothes nobody will recognize you in, glasses" (p.224) he attempts to convince her to come out and talk with him. When she finally emerges from under the covers the reader is enticed to agree with horace, to see Temple as he does. Temple is naked and the description of her creates an image that counteracts her protestations of innocence. It reinforces the persistent undercurrent that Temple was not violated but, rather, fulfilled by the rape. It is a description in keeping with horace's prejudice.

"Temple flung the covers back and sat up. Her head was tousled, her face puffed, two spots of rouge on her cheekbones and her mouth painted into a cupid's bow. She stared for an instant at Horace with black antagonism, then she looked away" (p.224).

When Temple begins to talk she tells of the time that she was able to remain safe. horace, like a judge at law, grows impatient with this attempt to show the content of her own intentions. he wants "to get her on ahead to the crime itself" (p.225). he believes that Temple is "recounting the experience with actual pride, a sort of naive and impersonal vanity, as though she were making it up" (p.226). horace

fails to hear what he wants to hear. Temple does not describe popeye's murder of tommy, that crime is not discussed.

Frustrated, horace leaves Miss Reba's and travels overnight to return home with dispatch. When he arrives, the first thing he does is once again look at a picture of Little Belle. In response to the representation of Belle, the picture, he is allowed to make abstract the object of the male gaze, as if theory had finally taken hold of his mind in practice.

"The small face seemed to swoon in a voluptuous languor, blurring still more, fading, leaving upon his eye a soft and fading aftermath of invitation and voluptuous promise and secret affirmation like a scent itself" (p.234).

This is after all, not a "face" but the picture of a face. It is fixed for the gaze beyond any need to labor over the ambiguities of life. horace immediately shifts to a recollection of his encounter with Temple. he vomits in the throes of his own imagination of her.

"lying with her head lifted slightly, her chin depressed like a figure lifted down from a crucifix, she watched something black and furious go roaring out of her body" (p.234).

Life, a photo and an imagined state; this concentration or tripling of the male gaze completes his helplessness to it, signifying in him a kind of impotence that reiterates the effects of the seductive nature of woman. It is possible to

see in this reaction an example of sympathy and outrage, on horace's part, at what had happened to Temple. This seems to the point of the narration. But the point fails in the face of the text's compilation of misogynist images in regard to Temple. This episode refers by the force of the narrative of which it is part, a story that reinforces the sense of Temple's complicity in her own victimization. Temple had told horace what she had been thinking while popeye was approaching her in the room where Ruby had kept her the night she had remained safe.

"I wanted to go to sleep, you see. And he just kept on standing there....So I'd say 'You're a coward if you don't'...I kept on saying 'Coward! Coward! Touch me, coward!' I got mad....I'd talk to him. I'd say, 'Do you think I'm going to lie here all night, just waiting on you?' And I'd lie there with the shucks laughing at me and me jerking away in front of his hand" (p.230).

Temple fantasized that the jerking was transforming her body into a man's before popeye's hand touched her. She saw it as evidence that a penis was in the process of erupting.

"then I though about being a man, and as soon as I thought it, it happened. It made a kind of plopping sound, like blowing a little rubber tube wrong-side outward....I could feel the jerking going on inside my knickers ahead of his hand" (p.231).

horace's image emphasized the flow of something "black and furious" - the unleashing of her sexuality.

The movement in the text through the unleashing of the female to settled points of men's perspective is the way in which the text manages the potential disorder for its reader, and at the same time leaves that reader within the subjectivity of the male gaze. This allegorical movement of the text restores, though not without some ambiguity, the phallogentric virtuousness of patriarchy. The controlling force within the plot, is over and over again, the male reflection upon "the" woman. horace fails to enlist Temple as an ally in his attempt to save lee. When he calls Miss Reba's to schedule her testimony date, he is told that she has disappeared. he doesn't know that his sister has engineered this in a attempt to get him to lose the trial, thereby to become free of Ruby and sufficiently wounded to go home to his wife. his sister has revealed Temple's whereabouts to the district attorney, who with help from popeye's attorney arranges for Temple to appear. It is apparent in her court examination that the prosecution knew Temple's story even before her testimony was heard. The reader is brought into the court as a co-conspirator, examining Temple and above all inspecting her for her tendencies and meaning. She is consumed by a gaze that has spread from the plot to the reader like a stain that eventually covers the whole cloth. Thus, Temple's,

"long blonde legs (and)...the two spots of rouge like paper discs pasted on her cheek bones, her mouth painted into a savage and perfect bow, also like something both symbolic and cryptic cut carefully from purple paper and pasted there" (p.299).

The district attorney cajoles her to "tell these good men" (p.300) that she had been in hiding "because something had happened and (she) dared not -" (p.300). he tells her that he wants her to "speak out" to "let these good men, these fathers and husbands, hear what you have to say and right your wrong for you" (p.299).

This is the only part of the text in which Temple is not accused of complicity in one way or another in her rape. The intent of the prosecution is to establish her innocence and shame in order to establish her credibility as a witness. Nonetheless, the specter of her own already compromised nature is an overwhelming presence, signified through her positioning within the gaze and by her lies on the witness stand, and finally by the arrival in court of her father. Before her father arrives Temple testifies that it was lee who had followed her into the crib, shooting tommy who she had asked to guard the door. Temple is not asked to describe what happened to her after the shooting. The district attorney doesn't allow her to speak of the crime committed against her. he turns away saying, "Your Honor and gentlemen, you have listened to this horrible, this unbelievable story which this young girl has told; you have seen the evidence and heard the doctor's testimony; I shall no longer subject this ruined, defenseless child to the agony -" (.303). he abruptly breaks off because Temple's father has entered the court, making a grand entrance down the center aisle. As he passes the

witness stand, "without a glance at the witness" (p.303) he addresses his colleague, the judge.

Temple's silence and invisibility as the victim she is reinforces her insignificance to this drama. The crime is one of a man against a man; not the rape of a woman by a man and not the inevitability of rape in the phallocentrism of man's relation to woman. The narrative has consistently made this clear through the modes of its depiction of Temple's female nature. Temple's father knows that his daughter is not pure, that she, like horace knew about Belle could not be pure. he knows she is not innocent as a matter of her own essence. The reader knows from Temple herself that her father considers her a whore.

"Get down there and sup your dirt, you whore. I have been called that" (p.61).

The men in town do their duty; they right the wrong against them. lee is taken from the jail and burned to death. horace returns home to his wife. The taxi driver who picks him up at the train station expresses the reason for the swift and final retaliation against lee: "We got to protect our girls. Might need them ourselves" (p.313).

When horace enters his house, he immediately goes to the phone and calls Little Belle who is at a house party. he wants to say good-night. A masculine voice answers and says: "Hello, Horace; I want you to meet a -" (p.315). Little Belle takes the phone in the midst of that statement, interrupting

it. Her voice is to horace "breathless, controlled, cool, discreet, detached" (p.315). The ambiguity of this mixed encounter reiterates the image of a cryptic but irrepressible sexuality. Patriarchy's viability as a principle of order is again made manifest in this disorder. When horace hangs up his wife tells him to "lock the back door" (p.316) Temple's exit from the courtroom suggests that that might not be enough.

The reader's gaze is directed toward Temple's arching body as she is surrounded by the men of her family. Our last glance at her reinforces what the narrative has consistently identified as a source of danger to men and the threat of their wrong doing: "the black and furious" flow of women's sexuality as natural to us as breathing. The reader discovers in Requiem for a Nun how Temple's body is finally broken as a life force. The conclusion of her story reveals the cost to women of being perceived as sexual in a society that hates us, and yet, in its phallocentric interest in denying resistance, denies the rationality of hatred in general; hence its legitimacy for the women it condemns.

Requiem for a Nun picks up Temple's story eight years after her fateful ride with gowan. She is now his wife. The narrative which completes her tale, opens with the pronouncement of a death sentence on a nurse who has admitted killing their six month old daughter. The judge permits the woman, Nancy to speak. Upon hearing the verdict, Nancy lets out a resounding "Yes, lord" (p.45) as if her own ratification was

necessary to complete the cycle of justice. Retribution, involving comparison and exchange is most just when its victim endorses her fate, her will joining the will of the accuser so that the cycle in its completion can replace the crime. The criminal becomes the penultimate voice of the patriarchal society, of phallogentric law.

The reader discovers from Temple why Nancy has killed the infant. The scene of this revelation is orchestrated by Gavin Stevens, Gowans' uncle and Nancy's attorney. Temple tells us that "her stinking" (p.57) prompted Nancy to act against her daughter in order to save Temple and her family from her daughter's nature which the girl will necessarily inherit from her mother and enact, in part, through imitation.

Nancy is an "ex-dope-fiend nigger whore" (p.136) who Temple had hired as the baby's nurse because she "was the only animal in Jefferson that spoke (her) language" (p.136). Temple adds that she hired "another reformed whore" so that she would have "somebody to talk to" (p.131). Thus, at the start of the novel, Temple confirms what had been established in Sanctuary and reiterates the larger theme that the sexual woman, the whore, can never be violated.

Nancy, a subtext of Temple, is described pejoratively and above violation throughout the text. The reader learns that "her principal reputation in the little Mississippi town where she was born is that of a tramp - a drunkard, a casual prostitute, being beaten by some man or cutting or being cut by his wife or his other sweetheart" (p.44). The consistency

and relentlessness of this description, in the context of the identity with Nancy admitted by Temple, serves to concentrate Temple's own character as an essence of unlimited baseness. The woman reader is subjected to the misogynist principle of reiterating, in various forms and through various contexts and by various tropes, the relationship between the bodily female and the bottomless well of temptation it represents. The misogyny, by the nature of its generativity, forms whatever other invidious distinctions are available to reinforce repressive domination, in this case racism. The image of the black woman sacrificing her life for the preservation of white patriarchy is a stunning one. The novel ends with Temple, restored to her husband and son, hearing Nancy tell her just before Nancy's execution to believe that she can be saved by god the father from herself.

What Temple has to be saved from is her desire to act on her sexual nature. Not only must she accept the patriarchal control established as a condition of virtuous order in Sanctuary, but she must embrace the phallocentric identification of her proclivities and accept responsibility for what in that light are her transgressions. The fact that Temple "loved the whorehouse" (p.63) is her essential flaw and what has caused so much suffering in the order of affairs.

In this light, Gowan emerges as virtuous as a knight. He pays the supreme price for falling to Temple's nature. He is the wronged one who sacrifices himself as a front to Temple's married respectability. We are told that something has

happened to his face. It shows the horror of what Temple is.

"...something against which it had had no warning, and to cope with which (as it discovered) no equipment, yet which it has accepted and is trying, really and sincerely and selflessly (perhaps for the first time in its life) to do its best with according to its code" (p.47).

We are told by his uncle that he,

"had to lose not only (his) bachelor freedom, but (his) man's self-respect for something (his) wife hadn't even lost, didn't even regret, didn't even miss" (p.64).

The patriarchal imaginary is completed by the return to man's suffering and woman's indifference to it. Temple will be forced to agree that gowan is the deserving one, she the temptress.

gavin contrives to bring Temple to the governor's office where she will speak of her own debasement in order to convince the judge that Nancy's act, while wrong, was for the greater good. he encourages her to anticipate the possibility of the governor's commutation of Nancy's sentence. But he knows that it is too late for that and hopes only that confessing to the governor will serve as an expiation for Temple as this dialogue indicates.

"...We're not concerned with death. That's nothing: any handful of petty and sworn documents can cope with that. That's all finished now; we can forget it. What we are trying to deal with now is injustice. Only truth can cope with that. Or love."

Temple asks him,

"...What in God's name do you want?"

"I told you. Truth."

"For no more than that. For no better reason than that. Just to get it told, breathed aloud, into words, sound... Why don't you go on and tell me it's for the good of my soul - if I have one" (pp.79-80).

Temple agrees to go but does not want her husband accompanying them. She gives gowan sleeping pills which he does not take. Instead, he follows Temple and gavin to the governor's chambers. Eventually he will take the governor's place behind the desk at a very crucial moment in Temples' confession. The reader soon realizes that gavin has orchestrated this deception.

In his chambers the governor tells Temple that she will have to tell him everything. gavin adds that telling the truth is important for her son's sake. gavin knows that his nephew is questioning his son's paternity; only Temple's restoration to the patriarchal fold will assure his legitimacy. The sacrificing of the son is unthinkable; daughters are expendable as this narrative makes clear.

Temple, explains that she "liked evil" (p.117) which made it easy for her to choose to stay with popeye, "to plump for a thing which didn't even have sex for his weakness" (p.121). Initially she was content with him,; but then she "had to do what us sporting girls call fall in love" (p.124). Her reference, we know, is to red.

Temple then tells the governor and gavin what she had been concealing from her husband. She had written letters to red, "good letters" (p.128) that reflected her true nature.

"...they were the kind of letters that if you had written them to a man, even eight years ago, you wouldn't - would rather your husband didn't see them, ...Better than you wold expect from a seventeen year old amateur. I mean you would have wondered how anybody just seventeen...could have learned the - right words....That is, anybody except Temple Drake, who didn't need...not even one lesson because the bad was already there waiting" (p.130).

Nancy had reaffirmed this just before she smothered the baby, leaving the reader certain of Temple's responsibility for the necessity of her daughter's death.

"It ain't even the letters anymore....It was already there in whoever could write the kind of letters that even eight years afterward could still make grief and ruin. The letters never did matter" (p.159).

Temple's nature is the ruinous force that leave grief in its wake. The story delineates its path. red's brother pete had been blackmailing Temple with the letters. Temple states that the way she contrived to get them back "was to produce the material for another set of them" (p.131). Temple had been planning to run away with pete, taking gowan's money with her. Her son was with gowan on a fishing trip; it seemed almost as if she was taking her daughter with her. Nancy

attempted to stop her arguing that Temple would be sacrificing her children despite having been willing to fight for them before.

"You fought back that time. Not for yourself but for that little child" (p.160).

The time referred to by Nancy was before Pete's appearance on the scene. It was a time when Temple's sexual nature, "the bad that was already there waiting" (p.133) was under relative control. Nancy emphasized again and again that Temple would have to give up her children. Temple responded that she was "going to do it....Children or no children" (p.164). It was at this point that Nancy left the room to go and kill the baby.

At last the narrative reveals what was at stake all along. Patriarchal control over women is necessary for the protection of its sons. Nancy prevents Temple from taking her daughter so that the child does not have to witness her mother's badness and therefore will not be influenced by it. She will have no opportunity to be like her mother. The sins of mothers weigh on their daughters, while the sons are protected from maternal sinfulness by the legitimacy of patrimony, by the father's belief that they are their issue.

Temple's acknowledgement of the male reconstruction of her history becomes the source of her own memory: "It wasn't Nancy who killed my baby...I did it eight years ago that day when I slipped out the back door of that train" (p.235).

The reader can not by now any more than Temple escape the narrative's insistence that her woman's body was the cause of events culminating in infanticide. This can only arouse terror in the woman reader who knows at the moment of male certainty that she shares the same bodily proclivity with Temple. However, the narrative points to a way out of our terror of Our-Selves. We are shown Temple kneeling after confessing her "stink" before gowan, who then in acknowledgement of her redemption, tells her it is time to go home. He will take her back to a passionless marriage, a marriage with virtue; all she must do to keep her remaining child safe is to resist herself.

The woman reader must resist this narrative otherwise she can only find herself within the male gaze. But resistance is possible only after an identification of that which endangers others and society. Temple's story is a familiar one. It plays repeatedly on our minds. It is a story we take for granted, a portrayal of women that operates pedagogically to keep us in line. Temple is the woman we are but that we are taught not to be. The phallogentrism of these novels is part of the consciousness of every woman. Its intention is to warn us of our nature and the danger that nature poses to those around us. It extols self control and encourages us to see our own salvation in self-control. But a woman's reading has the advantage of the terror of self-abnegation and the possibility of recognizing the male gaze by its material appearance as frame for Temple's story. These provide

opportunities for resisting the demand that we resist Our-Selves. My intention has been to expose the power of the patriarchal narrative and the opportunities it provides to resist it.

The intention of such an ideological reading is to demonstrate that Temple is an idea, a patriarchal ideal that we can reject. Temple's story is our story only if we allow it to be. I have suggested that the woman reader see this story for what it is - a contrived sexualization of Our-Selves and a denial of the validity of any Self for women. It is a story that attempts to hide its source - impotent masculinity that needs women to assure itself legitimate sons. The identification of this source and the rejection of its definition of our sexuality is an important act of resisting consciousness.

## CHAPTER VI: THE MAINTENANCE OF CLEAR THINKING

This critical, woman's reading of Temple's story signifies the culmination of the journey through my own text. It demonstrates my movement into feminist praxis and the sociological character of that praxis. It was intended to locate the reader inside a feminist epistemology that benefits from the richness of sociological analysis while necessarily going beyond it.

The sociological theory constructed in the first chapter allows for a discussion of language, gender and consciousness within a hegemonic, ideological frame. Its fundamental assumption is that language is constitutive of the world. Language creates and represents our form of life. This theoretical framework explains how a social world comes into being, how it is sustained and experienced by its members and posits intentionality and power.

My intentionality in writing was to display the power of language through the forcefulness of its disruption. This disruption of language made it possible to bring the reader into the tension of the work as a series of reversals: the reversal sociology makes of literary criticism, the reversal feminism makes of sociology, the reversal my method of interpretation makes within feminist cultural analysis and the reversal of heterosexual, deconstructive difference made through the insertion of the lesbian continuum.

My intervention in the feminist debate revolves around

attention to terror. The terror of self abnegation is a response every woman must feel the moment she recognizes that patriarchy wants us to deny Our-Selves. This terror has been combated, within feminist discourse through the search for alternative representations of women in culture or through the deconstructive move beyond gender into the world of difference.

The search for alternatives within patriarchal culture fails to address the extent to which the alternatives are themselves informed by hegemonic inscriptions, and the celebration of difference is not sufficiently free of its grounding in the reproduction of the binary oppositions of heterosexuality. The inscription of heterosexuality into liberatory theory, formulated from within a patriarchal culture can not escape the valorization of the masculine. This contradicts the centering of women as the core of feminist analysis.

My method of reading attempts to delineate the multi-leveled manifestation of hegemonic ideology within a text. It suggests that the reader not look away from her experience of immasculation but work through it by imploding the mechanisms that accomplish her immasculation.

My reading is motivated by the acute awareness that a phallogentric order sustains itself through the organized control of women's bodies. This is demonstrated by the structuration of the gaze in phallogentric literary texts. The woman reader needs to catch herself looking, and think

about what this intended result accomplishes. Her energy can be better spent. The disruption of this intended distraction enables the woman reader to read the text as never before. We are free to take our own pleasure. It is a pleasure we can have again and again. It is the pleasure of coming into consciousness.

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