

**SURROGATE MOTHERS, SURROGATE MISTRESSES, AND SURROGATE
MEMORIES:**

**A Comparative Study of the Re-presentation of the Feminine Possessed in “The
Bear” by William Faulkner and *Borderline* by Janette Turner Hospital**



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INTRODUCTION

When reading most Modernist or Post-Modernist works one is immediately confronted with interpretive barriers and challenges. These can be structural ones such as the use of broken-up chronology or episodic narration, or discursive, linguistic or thematic ones, such as the use of confusing dialogue, convoluted monologues, willfully ambiguous imagery, and contradictory thematic motifs, which makes the texts open to a variety of interpretations. “The Bear” by William Faulkner has been classified by different critics and readers as a romantic hunting story in the deep South; as an initiation story of a young boy facing adulthood; as a spiritual journey; as a critique of industrialism; as a sentimentalized pastoral; a chronicle of racial oppression; as an ecocritical text; and so on. Trying to explain what *Borderline* is about to curious friends and family is even harder, and after my attempts at a brief summary of my interpretative perspectives, their curiosity has usually turned into complete bewilderment. “But that cannot be the same story as the one written about on the back cover of the book” they say. And that is the challenge of these works: The stories have such an immensely complex structure and such many-faceted and intricate means of focalization and narration, so that as soon as one adds personal or cultural ingredients to the mixture the possibilities of interpretation are seemingly boundless. I will thus support my analysis by reference of critical views that resemble my own, and at the same time I will present divergent ones to illustrate the diversity of the interpretations of the works.

It is crucial for any analysis to be as close, precise, and comprehensive as possible.

What complicates such a procedure with regard to these works is the extensive and

shifting subjectivity of both narration and focalization. It is at times hard to distinguish the voices of the narrators from the various levels of focalization, and thus problematic to distinguish value judgments and attitudes of the protagonists in the story from those of the narrator. This is something I will examine more closely in the last part of this thesis. I have, however, largely limited my approach down to the two main characters in the story. As I find both narrators to be unreliable and self-consciously self-deceptive, the idea of finding some ultimate truth is being continuously frustrated. It is therefore important to discuss the significant distance between the narrator and the implied author of these works, both in the course of and at the end of my study.

Thematically speaking, the main problems facing the protagonists of "The Bear" and *Borderline* revolve around their constant struggle for self-definition. Both Ike McCaslin of "The Bear" and Jean-Marc Seymour of *Borderline* are "motherless" men, desperately trying to repudiate their father's or grandfather's legacies. However, constructing an identity completely freed from their histories turns out to be an impossible task, and they both ironically end up trailing their fathers' footsteps. The main difference between the generations is that the protagonists in the succeeding one, Ike and Jean-Marc, are undermining their own sexual selves in the process, as they see their fathers' sexuality as the key element to the corruption of their bloodline and heritage. We follow the protagonists' search for self-assertion through their coming of age, and witness the shifts in their psychological attitude towards their feminine surrogates.

At first, as explored in Part I, the stories of the wilderness and Felicity are mostly substitutes for the mothers they lack in their masculine dominated worlds – Felicity in Jean-Marc's case and the wilderness in Ike's case – but as a consequence of the sparse

contact and communication between them and their surrogate mothers, they take the liberty of constructing an ideal mother with an ideal legacy. Their perception of femininity, however, is extremely complex and filtered through their masculine inheritance and the desperate need for someone to be exclusively theirs. At the same time they are as children also striving to gain the attention and respect from their father figures, which complicates the picture even further.

As their stories progress, as explored in Part II, their surrogate mothers become something more indefinable and problematic as the protagonists reach sexual maturity. Their hatred for their father's deepens, and Oedipal complexes surface. Their attitude towards their feminine surrogates is furthermore problematically dichotomized as Madonna/whore. The inner conflicts that affect and mold the representation of their surrogates are many, and their desperate attempts to justify their actions and attitudes consist of self-conscious and ambiguous intellectual reasoning, according to which they are, in fact, saving their possessed feminine from the abuse of their father/grandfather by idolizing her in a new manner. However, their attempt to escape their legacy of colonization and subordination proves problematic; the protagonists' passive and emasculated approach toward their desired surrogates turns out to deprive them of the intimacy they so desperately crave.

Their re-creation and post-mortem elegy of the surrogates' history, as explored in Part III, is possessive, strongly biased (as history usually is, being written by the winners and survivors) and equivocal because of Jean-Marc and Ike's apparent lack of selfhood without their surrogates. Their illusive and highly romanticized portrayals reflect their attempts at self-justification and self-deception. Their claim to rightfully and truthfully speak at their surrogates' behalf become more and more problematic, as

we find the protagonists resembling their alleged despised father figures in terms of outlook and behavior.

Theoretically speaking, through their complex narrative structure both works present immense challenges for the reader. In *Borderline*, we are introduced to a narrator who is self-consciously writing down a story of the disappearance of Felicity. According to Gérard Genette in his work *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, “the narrating instance of a first narrative is ... extradiegetic by definition”, and a narration where the narrator is present as a character in the story is called “homodiegetic” (235–245). The narration in *Borderline* as a whole can hence be described as extradiegetic-homodiegetic, and a first-person metafiction because of Jean-Marc’s admittance that is in fact he who is controlling and writing the story: “I am going to write it all down before it goes” (14) and “... history is what I am writing” (131).

Jean-Marc is also a self-professed *unreliable narrator*, a term coined by Wayne Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961) what Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan describes in her book *Narrative Fiction* as being signified by “the narrator’s limited knowledge, his personal involvement, and his problematic value-scheme” (Rimmon-Kenan 101).

Jean-Marc willingly asserts: “I have so little to go on: a few encounters, a handful of phone calls, a jumble of out-of-sequence information, and of course my lifetime knowledge of Felicity” (14). As we will see later in this paper, this lifetime knowledge of Felicity is, at best, paradoxical. However, through his profession as a piano tuner he insists on presenting the truthful story to the reader: “The piano tuner does not make value judgments” (53), while he is simultaneously explaining that

the bald facts do not make sense, of themselves. Now is the time to breathe life into them, to examine the dynamics and harmonics, to look for patterns, resonances, meaning. Time for tempering the data. (26)

Many of the chapters, if separated from the rest of the novel, seem at first glance to be heterodiegetic. In these chapters, Jean-Marc tells the history of Felicity and the other main characters by focalizing the story through them. In this respect it is important to assert the difference between the focalizer and the narrator, something Gérard Genette explains as the difference between “who sees” or perceives – the focalizer - and “who speaks” or tells - the narrator (186). Thus, while the story is partly being “seen” through the eyes of other characters, Jean-Marc, remaining for long stretches an anonymous narrator, is nevertheless the “speaker”, and he has complete access to their innermost thoughts, a phenomenon also called omniscience, and drifts in and out of their minds and dreams freely. Consequently in some chapters it appears as if the story is told from an omniscient point of view. According to Genette, extra-heterodiegetic narration is theoretically the perspective that is usually the most objective, because of the narrator being situated outside of the action. It seems that Jean-Marc is trying to give the impression of such objectivity in these chapters, but even here he cannot refrain from commenting on the story, a phenomenon that will be further addressed later on, something that serves to remind us that he is, in fact, the narrator. Another interesting point worth mentioning is that the narrator of the very first chapter in the novel is hard to identify. It could quite possibly be Jean-Marc - but not necessarily, as he does not reveal himself until the second chapter. As a whole, the narrative technique lives up to the title of the work – *Borderline*.

In “The Bear” we start off in medias res with an anonymous narrator that is extra-heterodiegetic. The narrator’s identity is never revealed, but the narrator’s presence is authoritative and intrusive all the way through. Like Jean-Marc, the narrator uses analepses (flashbacks) and prolepses (foreshadowing) showing us that the narrator has

superior knowledge and controls the action. One of the factors that make it so apparent that the narrator is above the action is the language itself. For instance, when Ike is still a child, his mind is often rendered in a language that is not the boy's: "It was as if the boy had already divined what his senses and intellect had not encompassed yet" (185).

Much of the story of "The Bear" is focalized through Ike. Part VI, however, makes use of multiple focalizers, although the main part consists of an extended dialogue between Ike and his cousin, Cass, with Ike's reflections and memories around his legacy and repudiation. Parts of it is presented in a manner that resembles internal stream-of-consciousness monologue, but this does not discourage the narrator from interrupting and interpreting the monologue with comments like: "And Ike McCaslin, not yet Uncle Ike, a long time yet before he would be uncle to half a country and still father to none ..." (286).

Such a multiple narrative technique obviously complicates the reading and analysis of the story, but it also opens up for several different interpretations. If the relationship between the focalizer, narrator, and implied author – the latter is according to Wayne Booth the author's "second self" (67) and elaborated by Rimmon-Kenan as being the "governing consciousness of the work as a whole" (87) – had been non-problematic, the interpretations of the work, and of Ike, would arguably not be as varied as they are today.

When it comes to critical analysis and commentary on Faulker and Hospital, the imbalance is enormous. There is an overwhelming body of secondary sources on Faulkner's works. It is virtually impossible to get through everything written on Faulkner and his works within the time frame set for this kind of thesis, but I have

tried to get a broad overview of the most relevant material for this dissertation and narrowed it sharply in accordance with my particular thesis. The object of my study, the novella “The Bear” in *Go Down, Moses* (1940), seems in addition to be something of a critics’ favorite. Interestingly, none of the perspectives of the secondary works relevant for my analysis concur extensively with my own, although interpretations of certain features of course may overlap. This has made me even more eager to present my own approaches. I am, however, fully and humbly aware of the fact in this wealth of secondary material on Faulkner, there may be sources out there that I have ignored due to their apparently non-relevant titles which nonetheless *may* contain pertinent views.

On Janette Turner Hospital the main problem concerning secondary sources is the complete opposite, namely the lack of relevant critical texts. I have tried to get hold of books and articles from around the world, but my search have been close to fruitless as a most of the few works on her have either been unreliable internet sources, or unavailable, or out of print. Most of the few sources I did manage to procure were in addition only concerned in passing with my object of study, *Borderline* (1986). I would, however, in this connection like to express my gratitude to the people in charge of the Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies at the University of London for sending me a PDF-copy of *Janette Turner Hospital*, a volume of essays that is currently out of print.

My attempt to deconstruct the male protagonists’ and narrators’ constructions will be primarily concerned with the link between sex and property – the rights to possess the feminine. In both works the protagonists’ taking advantage of the feminine other is justified by the claim that they are in fact saving it. These similarities between the two works are in my view striking and interesting, notwithstanding the fact that they are

written at different times, in different cultures and by authors of different genders. I will support my view with extensive illustrations from the works themselves, as well as make use of a variety of secondary sources that support, or differ from, my own views. These secondary sources consist of both specific critiques on the two texts and general interpretations on Faulkner's and Hospital's authorship. In addition, I will illustrate my points with reference to narrative theory and colonial/postcolonial theory. In my view, the implied authors of the works are operating at completely different levels than the narrators and focalizers. We have, in fact, three levels of representation within the works, namely those of the focalizer, the narrator and the implied author. In other words, I will argue that the stories may be read with close attention to veiled signs of narratorial unreliability and self-deception, which also reflect male and (post)colonial positions.

THE SURROGATE MOTHER

The Earth Mother: “in ancient and modern nonliterate religions, an eternally fruitful source of everything ... She is simply the mother; there is nothing separate from her. All things come from her, return to her, and are her ... the most archaic form of the Earth Mother transcends all specificity and sexuality. She simply produces everything, inexhaustibly, from herself. She may manifest herself in any form. In other mythological systems she becomes a more limited figure. She becomes the feminine Earth, consort of the masculine sky; she is fertilized by the sky in the beginning and brings forth terrestrial creation. (Britannica Online Dictionary <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/176089/Earth-Mother>)

The image of nature as the mother, as illustrated above, is timeless. Opposed to the masculinity of intellect and culture, the nurturing Mother Nature is eternal, unbiased and always giving of herself. She has no voice, and is consequently open for any interpretation possible, something that has led to several different justifications for colonization. Her role as a feminized provider of food and goods has also made her the object of exploitation and brutality, often legitimized by romantic literature, as Ania Loomba explains in her book *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* with regard to the symbolism in John Donne’s poem “To his Mistriss Going to Bed”:

... [S]exual and colonial relationships become analogous to each other. Donne’s male lover is the active discoverer of the female body, and desires to explore it in the same way as the European ‘adventurer’ who penetrates and takes possession of lands which are seen as passive, or awaiting discovery ... but the woman/land analogy also employs a reverse logic as the riches promised by the colonies signify both the joys of the female body as well as its status as a legitimate object for male possession. (73)

When seen as feminine, as something submissive and “other” than man, Mother Nature is can be used and misused under the flag of concern for her own well-being. Traditionally, men have had the role of exploring and controlling foreign lands, always looking for something and somewhere better. It is, historically speaking, men who has occupied and tamed the land and thus men who have been the legislators of nature: They free her from the indigenous barbarians, save her from the wilderness by introducing agriculture, and harvest the fruits of their endeavors. As Loomba argues in her book *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*: “During the Renaissance, the new artwork and the new geography together promised the ‘new’ land to European men as if it were a woman” (78). Hence, both women, people of other races, and the land itself, are viewed as something “other” through this analogy. Being feminine, the landscape more easily invites conquest.

The feminine, however, wears many guises, one of which is the mother. No doubt, the mother is a constituent part of shaping a child’s reality. In “The Bear” and *Borderline* the protagonists find their surrogate mothers in the form of a strange and untamed feminized wilderness. Ike McCaslin sees the wilderness itself as his mother, while Jean-Marc finds his wilderness in Felicity, who signifies something exotic and oriental, an embodiment of a faraway land. Jeans-Marc explains: “... [T]he wilderness years are part of her, they seep up. It’s like being a live transparency, she says, from a camera that was jammed. A multiple-exposure life” (16); hence Felicity embodies this ‘otherness’, something that “shows in some peculiar though secret ways” (ibid). Although the characters are approaching the feminine from different angles, their basic experiences are strikingly similar. As children they are enjoying this wild maternal surrogate precisely as it is, without the need of altering it or

conquering it. But as will be illustrated, their masculinity will soon enough emerge, and shape and problematize their relationship towards the feminine.

Both Ike and Jean-Marc furthermore lack involved and definite fathers in their lives, a lack that leave them longing for masculine recognition, something that serves to complicate the picture even more. The feminine is furthermore introduced to them through their father figures who enact the more masculine and traditional roles of hunting and conquest, hence their appreciation of the feminine is colored by their father's approach. To Annette Kolodny, this male ambivalence is analogous to Jay Gatsby's illusion of an inviolate Daisy: "...a kind of miniature of American history itself, with its pastoral longings both to return to and to master the beautiful and bountiful femininity of the new continent" (139).

There are furthermore two major encounters with the feminine that help form the consciousness of the protagonists of *Borderline* and "The Bear", and they happen when the protagonists are at the same ages: ten and sixteen. At age ten both Ike and Jean-Marc are connecting with their surrogate mothers for the first time. The surrogate mothers introduce something completely different into the lives of the protagonists. The empty space left by their powerless biological mother is swiftly filled by a strong feminine presence that embodies something different from their biological mothers. As children they eventually embrace their new mother wholly and with childlike passion. Their initiation with the newfound femininity also represents the exclusive mother-son relationship the protagonists have been longing for.

Ironically, the relationship to the feminine also becomes for the protagonists the instrument of a lesson of masculine power – linked to the male desire to hunt and conquer the land and woman. When the protagonist meets her, she is already tainted

with masculine conquest. After all, the protagonists are introduced to their surrogate mothers through their fathers and the latter's relationship with her. There is also, paradoxically, a strong sense within the protagonists that they are using and developing the connection with their surrogate mothers precisely to become a part of the masculine world of their father figures.

Borderline:

Jean-Marc's biological mother remains nameless throughout the story, and is not described at any length in the novel. It is, however, fairly apparent that she is crucial in shaping Jean-Marc's early attitude towards his father and his world. She is both submissive and nervous around Jean-Marc's father, Seymour. The main piece of information Jean-Marc offers about her is primarily concerned with one single episode in his life. When Jean-Marc is five, his family is visiting a friend of his father's. The men are discussing in the living room and to their families in the kitchen it sounds "like a violent battle" (B 52). The wives of the men are sitting at the kitchen table with their sons crouched under it, and Jean-Marc portrays the wives as intimidated by the discussion. In fact, they are bearing a striking resemblance to the Victorian ideal of the Angel in the House:

Both women had nervous ways: their eyes were unnaturally bright, their lips trembled a little when they spoke, their hands shook when they reached to restrain us. I knew these ways. At the vehement of the living-room discussion, the mothers fell silent and sipped their tea in mute prayer. (52)

The wives are obedient and situated in the kitchen, the room most traditionally connected with femininity and servitude, while their fathers are engaged in a

disagreement – an attestation of voice, opinion and intellectuality – in the living-room. Virginia Woolf describes the concept of the Angel in the House: “in short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others. Above all—I need not say it—she was pure. Her purity was supposed to be her chief beauty...”¹

In the passage above Jean-Marc attests through the sentence “I knew these ways” that he has already inherited his codes of submissive behavior towards his father through his mother. At this point, his masculine father is thus “the other” while he is still attached to and reliant on his biological mother. His passive and submissive mother is furthermore described as “mostly distraught” at this point in his life, apparently troubled by her own shortcomings as a provider of care and nurture for her son, and her subsequent shortcomings in establishing a sense of selfhood and power in them both, as we will see later on.

Their domestic life as a family seems to be primarily dominated by Seymour’s presence, ironically called “the Old Volcano” by Jean-Marc, something that brings to mind the image of a violent and eruptive natural phenomenon. The aggression in the above-mentioned discussion of the two friends intimidates Jean-Marc’s mother, and taking after her, Jean-Marc describes himself as “... already advanced in the art of making [himself] invisible” (52), adhering to the Victorian idea that children should be neither heard nor seen. Referring to Lacanian psychoanalysis, Ania Loomba explains how “... the child learns to see itself distinct from the rest of the world by regarding its own mirror image, but becomes a full subject only when it enters the

¹ Woolf, Virginia. “Professions for Women: A paper read to The Women’s Service League”. Ebooks@Adelaide. <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/virginia/w91d/chap28.html>

world of language” (Loomba 37). Jean-Marc does not yet have a voice – he is silent and obedient just like his mother, and could in this respect be viewed as a reflection of her, and not yet as a full subject. It is furthermore obvious that the family is split in two; the mother and Jean-Marc versus Seymour, the colonized feminine versus the masculine. Jean-Marc is thus a replica of his mother in the sense that he is passive, devoted, and submissive, wanting “... so desperately to please him” (281). The biological mother is no match for the Old Volcano, and her exit from their lives is described as an “escape”:

She made a quantum leap into banality, which is the true secret of happiness – a second marriage, a very ordinary life, other children. Naturally she does not care to see me, a revenant from that earlier bad time, and I do not blame her at all. I understand (52).

Jean-Marc with this insists that his mother is not to be blamed for her acts, even forgiven for leaving her son behind, because to her he is obviously reminiscent of something mentally upsetting – her own weakness and guilt. He is, in effect, making her not accountable for her actions and places the guilt for her the abandonment solely on the violent ways of his father. In addition, he asserts that an ordinary life is the way to achieve happiness, which is truly a paradox once Jean-Marc reveals his intentions of becoming the disciple of Felicity and the warden of her legacy which he guards with a supercilious sense of the intellectual’s superiority to the banality of ordinary life. Also emphasizing his biological mother’s desertion as an escape, Jean-Marc is illustrating what Silvia Albertazzi explains in her article “Violence, Angels and Missing People in Janette Turner Hospital’s World”: “... [I]t’s quite apparent that these silent women are extreme metaphors of colonial subjects, compelled to silence by their colonisers” (37). Following this reasoning Jean-Marc, as a child, would obviously be “colonized” as well, but in contrast to his mother who escapes, he has to

stay. He is confined within the boundaries of his own masculine gender and needs to find a way to live with it or overcome it. As his submissive mother is unable to stand up to his father or support Jean-Marc and thus balance the gender scale, he excuses her and lets her go. In the words of Virginia Woolf, the self-sacrificing woman had to be killed in order for them both to survive: “Had I not killed her she would have killed me”²

Jean-Marc has to start constructing a new identity for himself and chooses to become a piano tuner – the only person he has encountered which could tame the father. As the two five-year old boys – Jean-Marc and his friend - are sitting under the table listening their fathers discussing, the piano tuner tells the men to shut up, and they “... were as kittens in the piano tuner’s hands. They apologized. They wandered out to the garden” (52). Thus, Jean-Marc plans according to one major goal: to conquer his father’s egotism and earn his respect. At the same time, the living room with the grand piano is a symbol of culture, and Jean-Marc’s desire to take part in it and even controlling it - both the living-room (the place of masculinity) and the piano itself (the embodiment of culture) – reflects his wish to participate in the masculine world. It may even embody his wish to change it, to tune it differently and hence change the reality of the dichotomy between the masculine and the feminine. The piano tuner in addition calms the men down, reducing them to harmless kittens, and makes them enter the garden, leaving their testosterone-induced argument and masculine domain behind and entering the feminine landscape.

² Woolf, Virginia. “Professions for Women: A paper read to The Women’s Service League”. Ebooks@Adelaide. <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/virginia/w91d/chap28.html>

Jean-Marc describes his father as a narcissistic philanderer, introducing another potential aspect of the volcano as an erupting phallus symbol. “God only knows how many women came in between my mother and Felicity” (15) he asserts, and later on informs us that when he is ten his mother “... was just beginning to move away down the long corridor of new possibilities with a widowed carpenter” (152). At ten, Felicity enters Jean-Marc’s life for the first time as well. She is having sex with Seymour in his cabin outside Montreal “busily forgetting [Jean-Marc’s] existence” (279) on the other side of the wall, and Jean-Marc asserts: “I hated them” (279). Listening to them through the wall he visualizes them through music, and with his newly acquired skills at the piano, he dreams of confining them and punishing them through the cacophonous torture of pianos out of tune:

I had a favorite fantasy. I would lock them both up in a room full of appallingly out-of-tune player pianos that never stopped. The tempo would get faster and faster, the discord shriller and more unbearable, it would drive them crazy, but they wouldn’t be able to stop, they would have to play each other’s body to a tuneless death (279)

His father later on leaves the cabin “tomcatting” for new adventures while Felicity is reading a book. Jean-Marc, desperate for her attention, hurls a pebble at her and indirectly tells her about his father’s many conquests and how she should not expect him home at all that night. She remains calm, unlike his biological mother’s usual frenzy at such realizations, but nevertheless does not return to her book – something that Jean-Marc celebrates as a token of power: “I can hurt her, I thought. I can make her stop reading her book. I can show her that she doesn’t know my father at all” (280). Winning the attention of Felicity is immediately satisfying to Jean-Marc who has been physically abandoned by his mother and emotionally abandoned by his father, but he also links the gaining of attention with inflicting pain, an obvious

reaction to his mother's problematic relationship with him and his earlier need to stay invisible around his father. In this setting he wishes to hurt his father, to make him aware of his existence and thus affirm his selfhood, and uses Felicity as a means to reach him.

However, when his father finally returns, exuding "the stink of a tomcat" (280), Felicity remains calm and protects the frightened and shivering Jean-Marc from his bellowing father. And while the young Jean-Marc tries to say something in his own defense - "not a word came out" (281), mirroring his intimidated and silent biological mother. Jean-Marc then realizes that Felicity has that same access to black magic that the piano tuner had: the power to silence and embarrass his father, the Old Volcano, through some sort of unknown force. But while the piano tuner was direct and authoritative, Felicity is naturally cunning and manipulative: When Seymour is desperate for her jealousy after his tomcatting, she undermines the importance of his actions by simply asking "does it matter?" Jean-Marc furthermore illustrates Felicity's otherness in a comparison with a Siamese cat: "That blue-eyed innocence, deliciously indifferent ... they smile their little secret smiles ... they are languorous, erotic, exotic, aristocratic" (282). He is, in other words, celebrating her otherness, her self-assertiveness, and her power compared to his weak and submissive biological mother.

From that moment on Jean-Marc stopped hating Felicity. His acceptance of Felicity is engendered through a strange combination of the comfort and protection she offers, the selfhood she possesses (and that he can with time learn) and the promise of the satisfaction of revenge that she posits. He is at this point not simply inviting Felicity into his life, he is more importantly using her in order to acquire the skills she has to control his father. As he puts it: from now on he "knew whom [he] wanted to study"

(282), portraying her as an object he can use in the strange possessive battle against his father.

When later on Jean-Marc rushes into the woods, “running away for good” (152), Felicity finds him, upset and angry, and he pummels her until he has “no energy left” (152). She comforts him by motherly stroking his hair, listening to him and telling him stories, and he settles against her shoulder. Jean-Marc, as the mature narrator, contemplates how his own mother abandoned him because he smelled of his father’s “oils and paint thinners and self-indulgence” (152), while remembering how he was engulfed in Felicity’s smell of gardenias, creamy skin, and hair of “ferns and darkly brilliant flowers” (152) in the woods – the smells of otherness, tropicality and faraway lands. This contrast between the father’s reeking of synthetic remedies, which has started to rub off on him, and the surrogate mother’s natural perfumes illustrate Jean-Marc’s position in between the feminine and masculine. Furthermore, the link between the exotic, tropical wilderness – the “other” – and Felicity is consistent throughout the novel, and is partly why Jean-Marc will find her presence and essence problematic. In his book *Orientalism* Edward Said has argued that the studies of the Orient promoted binary oppositions of the Oriental “other” vs. the Western “us”, claiming that this opposition is crucial to the Western selfhood and self-conception. As Loomba puts it in a comment on Said, “the Orient has to be feminine so that Europe can be masculine” (Loomba 47); it is precisely this notion that complicates Jean-Marc’s perception of Felicity.

At this age, Jean-Marc is bonding with Felicity as the substitute mother. “At ten, I suppose, one is desperate to find someone perfect, and it couldn’t be my mother...” (152) Jean-Marc asserts, and when Felicity shares the story about her past with its fears and horrors, Jean-Marc quickly asks whether she has told this story to anyone

else. Felicity says no, and the exclusivity of the story seems to form the basis for what Jean-Marc sees as their shared history and dreams. The problem is, evidently, that this story is a history of a different world he has never been to and does not have the maturity to grasp. Although Jean-Marc hails this sharing as something that connects him with Felicity and seizes the opportunity to collect the story as the first piece in his struggle for the recognition of his father, it is a story of the rape and abuse of women, and Felicity affirms the distance asserting: “Anyway, I don’t think you’ll ever have to worry about it” (153). In this manner she is also foreshadowing the impotence of the mature Jean-Marc.

The war he is beginning to wage against his father is one of possession – fighting for the reality of what Felicity’s body, mind and past mean, and the right to *re*-present it. Their respective versions of Felicity are of course shaped by their own needs. David Callahan notes in his article “Becoming Different in the Work Of Janette Turner Hospital” that her characters are often “... displaced from their histories, [and] they often find themselves needing to reconstruct them” (23). Being robbed of his mother because she failed to be a proper role model, Jean-Marc connects with Felicity’s in order to recreate his own sense of self and history. “This leads to two related problems”, Callahan asserts: “how to represent the Other, and how to incorporate one’s sensitivities with respect to that representation into rendering the Self” (ibid). What is problematic for Jean-Marc is that his sensitivities in general have been corrupted. His identification of nurture with pain, love with possession, and “mother” with absence and jealousy makes it impossible for him to be in any sense objective and neutral when interpreting Felicity’s, and hence his own, history. He is trying to make Felicity’s otherness express his own familial needs - in one sense to create a

selfhood through her history, in another in order to confirm his own manhood, and in yet another sense to compete with his father's affection for her.

Margaret Schramm explains in her article "Identity and the Family in the Novels of Janette Turner Hospital" that her more recent novels such as *Borderline* "... portray the family as fragmented, with a physically or emotionally absent father the object of the protagonist's quest" and that the main characters are "... obsessed with fathers whose absence creates in them feelings of loss and dislocation" (85). Jean-Marc's desperate attempts to evoke some sort of response and reaction from his father can thus be seen as one of his primary goals when he starts to adopt and interpret Felicity's history as his own. This is most certainly not a very sensitive approach to the feminine, as we are facing the protagonist who tries to make himself interesting for his father by dressing up in Felicity's attributes and past history.

"The Bear":

Like Jean-Marc's, Isaac McCaslin's biological mother is absent from his story. His preoccupation with his bloodline is exclusively linked to his forefathers, as McCaslin Edmonds explains when he points out that he himself is only a McCaslin "by sufferance and courtesy", since his relationship is "derived through a woman" (245). His cousin McCaslin Edmonds, or Cass, becomes Ike's father figure within the "fatherland" – the farm and the cultivated land inherited by his grandfather, old Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin. Ike consistently refers to himself as fatherless, but, as Laura P. Claridge notes, it seems as though he at times has too many fathers.

Claridge explains, however, that: "... [E]ach relationship suffers from such severe limitations that, paradoxically, Ike finally emerges alone, parentless" (242), arguing that both Cass and Sam Fathers are "weak surrogates" (ibid) who fail to play out the full and authoritative parental role. Although his biological mother is present in his memory a couple of times in the course of the narrative, she plays no significant part in Ike's story, and is not mentioned anywhere in the action of the novella pertaining to the hunt.

Sophonsiba Beauchamp, Ike's mother, is for a brief moment the wife of Ike's father, who is referred to as "Uncle Buck". As we read in the story "Was" in *Go Down, Moses*, she allegedly seduced the disinterested Buck, but had to be won (or, rather, lost) in a poker game before Buck agreed to the marriage. Critics have speculated about the strange and close relationship between the twin brothers Buck and Buddy; it resembles more a marriage than a normal sibling relationship. It certainly seems that even though Ike's mother tried to establish a new home for the family of three with her dowry, it represented an escape from Uncle Buddy: "[T]he move being the bride's notion and more than just a notion and none ever to know if she really wanted to live in the big house or if she knew before hand that Uncle Buddy would refuse to move" (287-288). The brothers had a close relationship, and shared a one-room cottage built by Buck and cared for by Buddy. Uncle Buddy is described by the feminine terms as "the cook and housekeeper" (255), and although this is not specifically troubling in relation to his sexuality at first, it is repeatedly hinted at. When Ike's father joins the war as a member of the cavalry command, Uncle Buddy "who should have been a woman to begin with", is taking care of Cass: "cooking and caring for himself and the fourteen-year-old orphan". It certainly seems as if Ike is being mothered exclusively by men as he is coming of age. There are also the comments about his father buying a

slave who seems incapable of doing any of the assignments he is bought to do; this may covertly suggest that he might have been bought to sexually satisfy Ike's father, supported by the fact that this slave later becomes a proprietor of a brothel, and when meeting Buck after several years apart, the former slave "gave him one defiant female glance and then broke again" (280). Hence, like Jean-Marc's, Ike's childhood is dominated by masculinity and a heritage of possessive sexuality, something that is further underscored when he later realizes that his own grandfather has not only sexually abused his slave, but also the offspring of the liaison. In *Faulkner's Women: characterization and meaning*, Sally R. Page comments on the motifs of perverted sexuality and the role of the mother:

Faulkner's portrayal of evil and destructiveness in terms of perverted sexuality and his portrayal of the human need for order, security, and love in terms of the need for the sacrificial, life-giving love of the mother make an inevitable appeal to man's deepest emotions and his most significant experiences. (175)

Ike finds his spiritual, surrogate mother in the wilderness and his spiritual, surrogate father in Sam Fathers, a name that means "of-many-fathers", a name that suits Ike as well. He is growing up in a masculine environment on a plantation which is tainted with a long history of slavery and abuse, and finds his peace of mind and spirit in the even more masculine hunting trips once he reaches the magic age of ten.

Sam has a complex bloodline of black and Indian blood. He is his own master on the farm and although no one can tell him what to do, he carries the inheritance of bondage within him, something Ike at several occasions recognizes in his eyes. In the wild, however, he is compared to the forces of the wilderness, because of his Indian blood. For Ike, there is something strangely romantic in this. In order to be a true hunter and connect with the bear and the wilderness, it is stressed that the

qualifications most important are patience, endurance and humility – the ideals the white colonizers lack and the hunters problematically claim to have. Ike is constantly contemplating his own skills according to these ideals, and at ten “the humility was there; he had learned that. And he could learn the patience” (188).

Interestingly, the white people are considered subordinate in the wilderness, as is proved by Sam Fathers’ presence at the initiation of Ike to the wild. Sam’s closeness to the land might precisely be a result of his family’s history of captivity and slavery, linking him to the tamed wilderness of Ike’s fatherland, perhaps reflecting the idea of Cleanth Brooks that Faulkner’s characters “can learn the truths about themselves and about reality only through suffering” (75). Thus, it may also be argued that Ike’s lack of suffering as the direct male descendant of the perverted and wealthy slave owner makes him unable to learn these truths fully. His lack of shared history with Sam, and his obsession with his bloodline make it impossible for Ike to distance himself from the colonialist reality he wishes to escape. As Loomba argues:

Dominant scientific ideologies about race and gender have historically propped up each other. In the mid-nineteenth century, the new science of anthropometry pronounced Caucasian women to be closer to Africans than white men were, and supposedly female traits were used to describe the ‘lower races’ (63-64)

In this way, the links between the blacks, the wilderness and femininity are crucial in the shaping of Ike’s complex sensitivities towards himself and the surrounding landscapes. His cultural inheritance of slavery and sexual abuse of women as property is in addition discovered by young Ike on one of his many trips to his Uncle Hubert escorted by his mother. They find a black woman wearing his mother’s dress, and with the succeeding screams, the woman runs off and Ike remembers:

... a swirl, a glimpse of the silk gown and the flick and glint of an ear-ring: an apparition rapid and tawdry and illicit yet somehow even to the child, the infant still almost, breathless and exciting and evocative ... the child which he still was had made serene and absolute and perfect rapport and contact through that glimpsed nameless illicit hybrid female flesh ... (289)

Thus, Ike's first initiation to sexuality is, next to his mother, induced by a former slave whom Uncle Hubert refers to as his property: "She's my cook! She's my new cook!" (289). Ike, or the narrator, recognizes the illicitness and is at the same time excited, something that casts alarming shadows in the direction of his grandfather's sexual pleasures.

In Ike McCaslin's life, the longed-for initiation to the wilderness is, like Jean-Marc's introduction to Felicity, taking place at the age of ten. He is finally allowed to join the older hunters in the yearly hunt for the old bear that "loomed and towered in his dreams" (185). Sam Fathers, Ike's spiritual father, is waiting for him in the wagon, and together they advance into the wild. As they enter, the wilderness "opened momentarily to accept him" (187). He declares that it was as if "at the age of ten he was witnessing his own birth" as the two of them approached "the apparently impenetrable land ... [that] swings slowly and opens the widening inlet which is the anchorage" (187). The sense of the exclusiveness of this initiation and the portrayal of the wilderness as a mother figure are striking. Considering that Sam Fathers is partaking in the experience, it seems as if he is being reborn as a result of a relation between Sam Fathers and nature itself. To me the landscape bears out the symbolism of the birth canal (and also the aroused vagina) as they are experiencing it:

He entered his novitiate... opening before his advancement as it closed behind his progress ... the wagon progressing not by its own volition but by attrition of their intact yet fluid circumambience, drowsing, earless, almost lightless (187)

The initiation seems to be a reciprocal event as they progress without any effort or violence. It is as if the wilderness itself is giving birth to the passive Ike, wanting him to share its world and mysteries. There is considerable irony, therefore, in the fact that he is partaking in a masculine hunt for a specific bear, Old Ben, within the foreign feminized landscape. Because of the stories told by his fellow hunters and family, Ike “had already inherited then ... the long legend” (185) of the bear he had not yet encountered. Much like Jean-Marc who runs away into the woods and into Felicity’s comfort, Ike’s first true initiation to the wilderness is when he leaves everything from the hunting world behind and heads for the woods “a child, alien and lost in the green and soaring gloom of the markless wilderness” (199). As a child lost in the woods, the big, mythical bear reveals himself to Ike, if only for a brief moment, and Ike’s personal relationship with the wild is finally established. The wilderness from now on becomes Ike’s preferred home and safe haven, as a counterpoint to the owned land and the legacy of his forefathers. As Laura P. Claridge notes:

Part of the attraction of being reborn is the chance to create history anew by stopping it in its tracks. By imitating the exemplary acts of a god or a mythical hero, man can leave the profane and enter the sacred, so that the annual ritual of the hunt is an attempt to resurrect pure time, the instant of creation. In one sense, this return to *in illo tempore* constitutes a return to Eden, before the fall (247)

What Ike, however, fails to acknowledge is that his conception of the Edenic “motherland” is tainted with “the best of all talking” (183) – the oral stories of conquest by the hunters engaged in a war of sacred rules (205) and crop owners whose crops have been ravished by the bear – just as the “fatherland” is tainted with the written records of sexual abuse in the yellow ledgers of slavery in the commissary store. Although deeply romanticized, his initiation is not necessarily a simple first

connection with the feminized land. To Ike, the initiation into the wilderness is also the beginning of something completely different than a new world of motherly femininity. In his longing for the Bear and the Wilderness lies the seeds of a dominant desire to become a true man by stripping himself of the androgyny of childhood and entering the masculine world of hunting and conquering. His wish to join the hunters in their sacred crusade into the wild is flavored by the contrasting feelings he recognizes in the dogs: “It was in him too, a little different because they were brute beasts and he was not, but only a little different – an eagerness, passive; an abjectness, a sense of his own fragility and impotence against the timeless woods, yet without doubt a dread” as he realizes “that the bear ... was a mortal animal” that the hunters, in fact, are planning to kill (192). Already here, the problem of constructing a second Eden arises. It seems that in his instinctive desire for the eternal and spiritual garden lies not only his innate feminine wish to bond with it, but also the masculine compulsion to order it and conquer it, as Ike later attests in his reference to the Genesis of the Bible: “He made the earth with dumb creatures, and then He created man to be his overseer on the earth and to hold suzerainty over the earth and the animals on it...” (246). Ike is thus captured in a peculiar paradox: He wants to keep his intimacy with the wilderness as his mother and nurturer, but he has an almost desperate masculine wish to become old enough and skilled enough to conquer it. He similarly has the deep, cultural urge to become a hunter, but has, it turns out, no intention whatsoever of killing the bear.

Ike somehow realizes this dichotomy at ten when he goes into the woods to see the bear for the first time: “*So I will have to see him*, he thought, without dread or even hope. *I will have to look at him.*” (196). Realizing that the wild spirit of the hunting stories will materialize into something real, Ike is not looking forward to facing the

body of the spirit. The father of transcendentalism, Ralph Waldo Emerson, claims that “the material is degraded before the spiritual” and that “the things that are seen, are temporal; the things that are unseen, are eternal” (1093). Seemingly preferring the spirit and ideal cultured in him by the myths and legends of the masculine fellowship, Ike is reluctant to face the stripped-down reality of the matter. Obviously, something “real” and known is harder to kill – even with the vindication of the action itself that makes him a true Hunter and Man – and Ike proves already at this point to linger and be drawn towards the transcendental “ideal”. Considering that “The Bear” as a whole is so densely modernistic, it is already at this point in the story hard to read this initiation without noticing traces of irony. In view of the story as a whole, the implied author of “The Bear” does not at this point allow this sort of Romantic and pastoral hesitation take place without a sense of paradox. This sense of irony will be discussed further in the next chapter. As a sympathetic character, however – a boy not yet in his teens and still viewing the wilderness as his mother - Ike is already beginning to feel caught between the paternally inherited urge to hunt and tame the land, and the son-to-mother urge to keep it eternally nurturant. This attitude towards his “mother” changes in his teens when the “mother” gradually evolves into an enigmatic and sombre backdrop as he finally joins the hunters’ “yearly rendezvous” (186) with the bear. What is also referred to as “the yearly pageant-rite” (186) in his childhood indicates that his concept of the hunt is viewed as something innocent and reciprocal, though already tinted with sexual connotations. As Caroline Rooney argues in *Decolonizing Gender: Literature and Poetics of the Real*: “... it is because the real is ultimately an undivided totality that this material/spiritual dichotomy arises on a cultural level” (1), and it is with the emergence of masculine culture and sexuality that

Ike's attitude towards the wild finally changes, as will be further explored in the following chapter.

Conclusion:

The lack of strong mother figures in childhood creates obvious and deep problems for both protagonists' attempts to construct a self, a foundation from which to interpret their surroundings. In addition, the lack of devoted father figures leaves them wedged between the need for maternal nurture and the need for paternal recognition. Their claims to possess an exclusive relationship with their surrogate mothers bring about the first hints of unreliability in the narrators, as we see that their initiation into the wild is not merely a way of embracing the values of the feminine; it is just as much a means to establish their own masculinity, directly or indirectly inspired by their fathers. Where Jean-Marc is using Felicity to attain the black magic she possesses in order to gain the recognition he so desperately craves from his father, Ike's entrance into the wilderness is seen as a direct way of establishing his masculinity of hunting and taming in order to connect with the group of father-figured hunters that dominate his life. These initiations are furthermore portrayed as a necessary means of reaching adulthood and self-assertion, but at the same time they make the reader question the true motives of the protagonists, because of their imperialist and colonialist attitude towards their subjects.

Although the two protagonists' attitudes to their biological mothers were already complicated, it is when they finally meet their surrogates they experience a mix of

craving to be a part of the opposite gender and a distance to it. They both somehow decide, however, to preserve the relationship to the surrogate mother at least until they strangely enough seem to accept taking part in, or witnessing her destruction in order to connect fully with the masculine world.

This half-willing, half-passive complicity in the demise of the Other is somehow connected with the extremely complex narrative perspectives of the two texts.

Borderline is a homodiegetic story and thus subject to the illusions and self-delusions of a subjective, first-person narrator. Jean-Marc is present in the story he narrates (even in the chapters that first appear to be third-person narratives) and he is painfully aware of his readers at all times. He says he is writing his story down for himself, “to try to make sense of what happened” and also for “Felicity’s delectation when she reappears” (14). Hence, according to Jean-Marc, Felicity and Jean-Marc himself are the “narratees” of the story, the people to whom the story is told. This, however, brings about another question: namely whether Jean-Marc is deceiving himself by in reality appealing to a larger group of readers, or simply trying to assure himself, of his own truths, as when he addresses the narratee directly after scrutinizing his father’s portrayals of her: “I can assure you: This is not Felicity” (16). He is constantly shifting between the role as the adult narrator who apparently has all the information necessary for telling a true story, and the role as both a subjective focalizer and a character at the story level. At times information was, as he admits, scarce, something that complicates his recreation of the story. This makes the reading of the story a problematic process. “We are forced to work at constructing the text”, David Callahan asserts in his article “Becoming Different in the Work of Janette Turner Hospital”: “This is by no means straightforward, and we are constantly dislocated in time and in narrative voice, as well as in hermeneutical certainty, in our encounter with the

multiple voices, aberrant decodings, and time dislocations of these plots” (32). Jean-Marc’s own affection for his creation, furthermore, turns out to become overwhelming and as we will see in the succeeding chapters of this thesis, he regards his writing as a direct means of contesting his father’s artistic portrayals of Felicity. The result is that the possessive quality of his self-conscious writing cannot be overlooked; ironies, whether conscious or not, abound.

The narration of “The Bear” is different. Here the anonymous, covert, heterodiegetic narration is supplemented by extensive internal focalization through Ike. Like the adult and self-conscious narrator in *Borderline*, the unknown narrator of “The Bear” is intrusive. As Fredrik Chr. Brøgger argues in his article “Do You Love Nature If You Fear Her Body?: Style, Narrative, and the Southern Wilderness in Faulkner’s ‘The Bear’”: “The brooding, prophetic voice of the narrator constantly competes with Isaac’s vision for the reader’s attention”, leaving us “all too often unsure of whether reflections presented are those of the character Ike or those of the anonymous narrator, or a fusion of both” (173). In addition, the third person narrator also intrudes with romanticized as well as satirical passages – something we similarly find in *Borderline*. All this engenders in “The Bear” what Brøgger calls an “unusually fertile ground for irony” (174).

Both at the levels of story and narration, therefore, tensions and contradictions make straightforward interpretations difficult. There is obviously, as illustrated, nothing exceptional in either being a male conqueror or enjoying the position and power it presents. However, these protagonists make such a brouhaha out of taking the opposite stance in their worlds, justifying and hailing their mission as the preservers and curators of the feminine forces in their lives. These stances – presented by the disillusioned focalizer in the story, and enhanced by the playful, part-sentimental, and

part-ironic, intrusive narrator – have repeatedly been hailed by critics for fulfilling the romantic and noble ideal they have set out to create for themselves. A closer look at the text, however, reveals in my own and other critics' opinion that such a simple interpretation of the texts is insufficient. The protagonists are in fact not at all as innocent as they present themselves to be to the reader, and hence it is crucial to investigate the gaps between what is proclaimed and actually takes place, what is said one place and then contradicted in another. And this is particularly true with regard to questions of adult gender roles and sexuality, which is the subject of the next chapter.

THE SURROGATE MISTRESS

As previously argued, in the words of Ania Loomba; “ from the beginning of the colonial period till its end (and beyond), female bodies symbolize the conquered land” (152). The analogy between the land and the woman embodies the possibilities of exploitation, as I have tried to show in the preceding chapter. To link this to the issue of sexuality complicates the picture even further, something which has been extensively noted by colonial theory:

The long pictorial tradition in which the four continents were represented as women [in the Renaissance] generated images of America and Africa that positioned these continents as available for plunder, possession, discovery and conquest. Conversely, native women and their bodies are described in terms of the promise and the fear of the colonial land, as in the much later description of ‘a wild and gorgeous apparition of a woman’ [in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*] (Loomba 151)

Sally R. Page’s comment on Faulkner’s *Mosquitoes* is pertinent in this context: “If real women are to betray man’s search for beauty and truth and immortality, then man can become the artist and create his own ideal woman to be his salvation” (28).

However, she explains, and this will become a prominent problem for our protagonists:

The desire of the heart demands expression; it directs the Romantic to art through which he can, theoretically, recreate the ideal vision. Simultaneously, however, the desire of the heart directs man to sexuality” (33)

Hence, ironically, the protagonists’ quest for the ideal virginal vision of the “Other” will be corrupted by their repressed sexuality: “The Romanticist’s own sexuality

betrays his vision of ideality. The desire literally destroys the vision; the virgin cannot be captured and remain virgin” (S. Page 34).

The passiveness of the protagonists in “The Bear” and *Borderline* serves to illustrate their self-professed distance to the imperial action of appropriation and possession. However, as we will also see in this chapter, their passiveness does not exempt them from participating in the act of taking advantage of the “colonial body”, both as impotent voyeurs and as interpreters who impose this colonial discourse onto their desired subjects, however non-sexual and non-possessive their behavior is intended to be.

Both Ike and Jean-Marc, at sixteen, have interesting ways around the problem of capturing the virgin. Instead of actively participating in the sexual acts with their surrogate mothers/mistresses, they leave all the action to their “father figures” while watching, interpreting, and passively engaging in the show. For Ike, the prime hunter with the best shot, this means never firing at the bear himself, but participating in hunting it down and capturing it to merely watch it being killed, while romanticizing and justifying the slaughter.

Jean-Marc runs unexpectedly into the naked Felicity and his painting father, something that will confuse his feelings towards them both. However, it also establishes Jean-Marc’s role as a viewer and interpreter, which again will lead to his transcriptions as an adult.

These two protagonists’ feelings and emotions are furthermore quite diffused; in fact, after the initial surprise: they seem oddly untouched by the action, something that will be explored in this chapter.

Borderline:

Jean-Marc's problematic relationship to sexuality and nakedness is obvious at several occasions in the course of the novel. The initial incident seems, however, to occur when he at sixteen spies on Seymour painting a nude painting of Felicity. The transition is remarkable: Jean-Marc walks around in his father's studio, looking at the paintings of the exotic Felicity he has come to know and connect with, "... monsoons and coral reefs ... Queensland surf ... Bellbirds ... Brisbane gullies..." (94), and is abruptly interrupted by the sight of the live model: "He slipped round a study of eyes and crows that was big as a mainsail – and there was Felicity sprawling naked on a sofa while her father painted her" (94). Jean-Marc felt "embarrassed, bewitched, awkward, angry" (94) at the sight, and these confused feelings serve to illustrate his troubled attitudes towards Felicity from now on. He seems not only to be uncomfortable by her nakedness, but also completely baffled by the physical proof that his father has this kind of intimate relationship with her. Such a scene has analogical antecedents in the history of art, as suggested for instance by Christa Grössinger's analysis of Renaissance portrayals in her chapter "The Evil Woman":

Depictions of The Woman and the Fool proliferated, the women often in the nude, as a prostitute; always, women would lead the men on, would ensnare them, their powers of temptation coming naturally to them, and allowing them to command men with ease (136)

In this manner, Jean-Marc's view of his father's sexuality as a corrupting force in his life is seen as something enforced by the feminine. At the same time, Jean-Marc later asserts: "She's not aware of how she encourages men, she has no idea what she does" (191), excepting her, too, from the active choice of non-chastity.

In addition, he adds that “neither of them seemed in the least aware of his intrusion” (94), not even Felicity, something that sparks a deep jealousy and thirst for revenge in him: “Whenever he saw that abstracted look – that studio vacancy – in her eyes, he was swamped with a muddle of desire and of murderous rage toward his father” (95-96). Jean-Marc is already emotionally estranged from his father, and by spying on the naked and “abstracted” Felicity he experiences a sexual excitement that alters his hitherto exclusive mother-son spiritual connection with her. His new, although confused, feelings toward her are starting to resemble those of his father who, less eloquently, tells Felicity about his physical compulsions: “I can’t tell which I want to do more, paint you or fuck you or eat you” (246). We are also made aware of the fact that Jean-Marc’s exclusive childhood memories of her appearance and fragrance as highly exotic are noticeably similar to Seymour’s portrayals of her in his paintings, which problematizes his claim of representing her as different from his paternal and colonial inheritance. As Carol M. Schuler argues in her article “Virtuous Model/Voluptuous Martyr”:

In much Western erotic imagery from the Renaissance down to the twentieth century, passive sensual females display their charms for the attentions of male admirers ... It has by now become almost a cliché to note in these images the objectivization of the female, who is observed, submissive, powerless in her nakedness, and deprived of individuality and free will, reinforcing male control over the passive female (17)

Competing with his father’s sexually intimate relationship with Felicity, Jean-Marc continues to insist that he has direct and authoritative access to her subconscious. Whereas Seymour has been intimate with Felicity’s flesh and body as her lover and painter, Jean-Marc claims to have an intimate connection with her mind and dreams. This, in his opinion, makes him the only one qualified to tell her story (16) in

contradiction to his father's many portraits of her through his art, bearing names like "Eve Fragmented" and "Reclining Nude". Jean-Marc names Felicity and her types of women "the Holy Innocents" (12), thus insisting on her pureness and sanctitude.

Ironically, in the chapters when Felicity is the focalizer, Jean-Marc describes Felicity as a hearty lover with a strong sexual appetite, and even draws attention to the fact that she resents what she calls "dream-sniffers" adding that they are "... a prurient bunch" (13).

Jean-Marc's language is no more innocent of inherited and cultural meanings than his father's paintings are. With reference to Saussure's and Derrida's influential theories of language as arbitrary and Lacan's idea of the child entering the world of language, Loomba notes:

Language emerges not as the creation of the speaking subject; rather the subject becomes so only by schooling his speech to a socially determined system of linguistic prescription ... Thus from a variety of different intersecting perspectives, language is seen to *construct* the subject. (37)

Furthermore, the language that Jean-Marc employs in the metafictional creation of Felicity's story serves just as much as a construction and affirmation of his own self as of Felicity's. And reaching the last pages of the novel, Jean-Marc self-consciously admits:

I've been bitten. I've had a taste of the stage, I got carried away by the performance. The piano tuner wants to conduct. It's the shape of the thing, and the power, and a sense of what the audience wants or think it wants. (282)

Although the possessive urge to keep Felicity for himself has been present all along, Jean-Marc here reveals that the narratorial temptations to conduct – to interpret – ultimately makes him unreliable. This is ironic in view of the fact that Felicity had

problems with Seymour's comment that the woman in his paintings is not real, but "an idealization, an embodiment of the painter's fantasies" (17), that made her feel that it was "vulgar" of her "to insist on being literal" (18). Felicity insists that she is often distressed "by the gulf between experience and the possibility of representing it in any medium other than memory" (22) – a claim that can both be seen as an invitation to Jean-Marc to be the caretaker of her memory and represent it in writing, but at the same time it serves to show Felicity's apparent distrust in representation in general. This, of course, becomes further complicated by Jean-Marc's intrusive narration.

As Deborah Bowen explains in her article "Borderline Magic: Janette Turner Hospital and Transfiguration by Photography":

Jean-Marc... plays with what information he has to create the story he wants. Sometimes he is so closely identified with Felicity as to be almost her double. At other times his yearnings for her are so strong that he invents her as the ideal woman around whom the light is so bright that he can barely see her.³

Thus, at the same time as Jean-Marc resents his father for his physical intimacy with Felicity, claiming that he has lured her in and is using her body and sexuality in exchange for information about her long-lost father, Jean-Marc is creating his own version of the truth. And while insisting that Seymour's paintings serve to "trap" Felicity and tamper with the truth by representing her in settings and surroundings of the artist's preference and ego, Jean-Marc does the exact same thing when he calls Felicity's story "the gospel according to Jean-Marc" (189). He even confirms that "the absolutely accurate is too narrow; it is false and imperfect" (25) and that his own tempering with and personal interpretation of the facts are crucial to present the "the

³ http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/SCL/bin/get.cgi?directory=vol16_2/&filename=Bowen.htm

truth ... the whole of it ... the well-tempered heart of the matter” (26). Caroline Rooney explains these two different approaches to the feminine:

In Western culture and beyond, the real has often been designated by the feminine. This pertains both to the materiality of nature, land, the body and so on, and to the real in a more mystical sense as may be found in certain Lacanian accounts of femininity and strands of feminism concerned with the feminine divine... (Rooney, 1)

While Seymour is embracing the body and nature of Felicity, Jean-Marc is aiming for the “re-presentation” of Felicity as the feminine divine. His attempt to give Felicity eternal life of sainthood in his gospel undermines her reality as a woman in flesh and blood. As he attests: “One falls in love with one’s own creation, one rather enjoys playing God” (189). The absence of Felicity’s father mirrors Jean-Marc’s emotional distance to Seymour, and as K.M. Schramm explains in her article “Identity and Family in the Novels of Janette Turner Hospital”: “This common loss causes Jean-Marc to identify with Felicity and to claim her past as his own” (91). Thus, because of Jean-Marc’s claim to be Felicity’s double, he is in effect ascribing part of this sainthood onto himself.

His self-proclaimed separation from the “inherited” natural masculine sexuality of his father seems to stem from the exact moment he was caught spying on Felicity. It was his father that saw him first and erupted into “roars of laughter at the embarrassing evidence of his son’s adolescent excitement” (94). Sharing the sexual excitement towards Felicity leaves him confused with jealousy towards his father and the wish to exterminate him and thus the origin of his masculine needs. It finally makes him reject sexuality altogether. In her discussion of Freud’s theory of the Oedipus complex, Rooney argues that “... Oedipus’ desire for his mother would pertain to a taboo desire to retain or remain on the side of the femininity of boyhood. Although Oedipus cannot

but become a man, there is a sense in which he is reluctant to ‘cross over’ and thus castration would be what he invites upon himself” (31). According to Encyclopedia Britannica:

Freud attributed the Oedipus complex to children of about the ages three to five. He said the stage usually ended when the child identified with the parent of the same sex and repressed its sexual instincts ... In the presence of trauma, however, there occurs an “infantile neurosis” that is an important forerunner of similar reactions during the child’s adult life.

(<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/425451/Oedipus-complex>)

Jean-Marc’s contradictory responses of impotent lust faced with sexuality certainly have a fragrance of the Oedipus complex. He consequently “castrates” himself in his adulthood by insisting on being virginal in spirit and in important intimate relationships. However, he obviously engages in some sort of relationship with girls whom we learn strangely resemble Felicity, as his father comments: “They all look like your stepmother” (91). Furthermore, Jean-Marc imagines Seymour telling his friends that his son “... may be a piano tuner, but at least he is not gay” (91), somehow approving and taking pride in Jean-Marc’s conquests. Obviously, Jean-Marc is avoiding the taboo of having sex with his stepmother who has become his closest relative, as he asserts: “Felicity is my real family” (280). He furthermore has to gather strength to avoid getting intimate with her: “He leaned into her embrace for a dangerous minute then pulled away. (As a patient leaves an anesthetic, tempted by the narcotic, knowing it is necessary to resist)” (96). Hence, in order to both try to satisfy his need for closeness with his surrogate mother, and at the same time get some sort of respect from his father - his solution is to engage in relationships that are substitutes of the surrogate. Although this is getting a bit confusing, it simply translates into a second degree of transcendental projection: The constructed *idea* of

Felicity is his true mistress, her flesh the nature he cannot have in order to keep the ideal intact – and hence the lookalikes are far enough away from the ideal not to contaminate it, but still close enough to offer some sort of consolation and access to the divine through the resemblance. This transcendental projection is something that will become apparent in the last part of the chapter concerning Ike and his wife as well.

Simultaneously, however, in my view it lends itself to an additional and different interpretation. If Jean-Marc is still using Felicity to gain the recognition of his father, this may illustrate that his “castration” and rejection of sexuality might be a way of getting closer to his father. Both killing his father and saving him from the wild, savage woman is contemplated by Jean-Marc:

I thought about how I was going to stab him one day with the pointed handles of his paintbrushes. His blood would come squirting out like color from a new tube of paint and I would dip a brush in it and make great smears of red across his paintings. I also thought about the time I was going to find him bleeding on his studio floor because someone else had stabbed him first (some enraged and abandoned woman), and how grateful he would be that I had arrived in the nick of time, and how sorry that he had never realized, and so on. (153)

Jean-Marc seems unable to decide whether he wishes to kill his father to save himself and the women Seymour is using, or to or save his father from the unreliable and dangerous nature of femininity. Speaking of himself in third person, Jean-Marc is “tormented by guilt” by not having done more to save her: “Why does he pretend he made suggestions that might have dissuaded her from the journey toward her disappearance?” (193). This ambivalence is continuous throughout the story as Jean-Marc is obsessing as much about his father as he is about Felicity. His desperate need for selfhood leaves him uncertain about where to turn. Embodying both the feminine

and the masculine self, Jean-Marc remains passive and perplexed. This does, however, not keep him from commenting: “Do you really think you have made an original discovery? The androgyny of Jean-Marc? His own quest for a father?” (192). If this androgyny exists in Jean-Marc, as he himself insists, then he is, according to Freud, still a child and is obviously trapped in a strange threesome drama with his own “parents”, unable to decide on which parent to “marry” and which parent to “kill”. Hence, the Electra Complex (the daughter wanting to kill her mother) – the feminine equivalent of the Oedipus Complex – is part of his emotional make-up as well.

“The Bear”:

Ike’s transition from the initiation, or birth, as a ten-year old boy into the motherly nurturing wilderness to being promoted to the rank of hunter in his adolescence is revealed most clearly in the major hunting episode that the short story revolves around. At sixteen, Ike has “heard the best of all talking” (183) for six years. He has become part of the exclusively masculine environment of the hunters – “...the men, not white nor black nor red but men, hunters, with the will and hardihood to endure and the humility and skill to survive...” (184). Although this passage is most often referred to by critics who hail this hunting discourse as evoking an ideal world, I would like to stress that this passage reeks of masculinity and testosterone almost to the point of ridicule as it progresses:

... [T]he voices quiet and weighty and deliberate for retrospection and recollection and exactitude among the concrete trophies – the racked guns and the heads and skins – in the

library of town houses or the offices of plantation houses or (best of all) in the camps themselves where the intact and still-warm meat yet hung ... There were always a bottle present ... which not women, not boys and children, but only hunters drank, drinking not of the blood they spilled but some condensation of the wild immortal spirit... (184)

By juxtaposing the “racked guns”, obvious phallus symbols, to the trophies of “the wild immortal spirit” – the irony of immortality is striking. The feminized landscape with its creatures is evidently not very immortal as the latter hang as slaughtered symbols of male victory on the masculine walls of libraries (intellectuals), offices (legislatures) or camps (hunters). However, the narrator asserts that it is the spirit of the land that is immortal, and this is the crux of the matter. In hunting down and taming the “body” of the land through their masculine hunter’s fraternities, they insist on connecting with the “spirit” of the place, which is their ultimate goal. There is no apparent need for the meat; their objective is the hunt itself, the “unremitting contest” and “best game of all” (184). The problem, obvious to the reader but strangely obscure to the hunters, is that while they are ravaging the feminized body of the land, they are consequently ravishing the spirit they so dearly seek to unite with. In her book *Faulkner’s Women: Characterization and Meaning* Sally Page explains this irony:

Woman, like the land, is the unthinking and submissive agent of the natural force of life. Man, on the other hand, is engaged in a furious effort to escape the power which woman and the land hold over him and to establish his own self-sufficiency (161)

When the bear is finally hunted down and killed, Ike is sixteen. He has grown up in an environment where he as a child longed to be included in the group of hunters, at ten is accepted, and at sixteen has earned himself the position of being the best hunter of the group. His sensibility towards the wilderness is as ambivalent as his inheritance is.

At the final hunt, they are using a dog “almost the color of a gun or a pistol barrel” (207), broken down by captivity and starvation only to be built up as a killing-machine to assist the hunters in capturing the bear. He is consistently referred to by his color and shape; “... with cold yellow eyes and a tremendous chest and over all that strange color like a blued gun-barrel” (209), interestingly linking the image of Lion to the phallus symbolism mentioned earlier. When Lion finally is sufficiently (but not wholly) domesticated, he is taken in by Boon who shares his bed with him. Ike explains:

It was as if Lion were a woman – or perhaps Boon was the woman. That was more like it – the big, grave, sleepy-seeming dog which, as Sam Fathers said, cared about no man or no thing; and the violent, insensitive, hard-faced man with his touch of remote Indian blood and the mind almost of a child (211)

If this cold and impersonal relationship, of a caged animal partially tamed to obey and an infantile and insensitive man, is what Ike connects with the love and passion of sharing beds – it is perhaps no wonder that he later on will have problems believing in his grandfather’s rapes. The immediate uncertainty concerning the gender roles of Boon and Lion is also worth noting, as it will be discussed later in this chapter. Furthermore, Ike’s own loss of virginity will also prove to bear resemblance to this scene, as will be discussed later on.

The climax of the hunt, however, is the kill itself. The foreplay of the scene is equally important to form the setting and mood of the hunt. To illustrate my point, it would be necessary to quote the narrative at some length to get both the formulations and feeling of the scenes right. First of all: the sexual connotations and the resistance of the woods itself are quite noticeable as they follow the dogs, penetrating the outskirts of the forest in order to reach the bear:

Then he and Major de Spain and Sam and Tennie's Jim rode after them and heard the first cry out of the wet and thawing woods not two hundred yards ahead, high, with that abject, almost human quality he had come to know, and the other hounds joining in until the gloomed woods rang and clamored ... it seemed to him that he could actually see the big blue dog boring in ... (228)

The woods are seen as “wet and thawing” obviously from some sort of heat source which could be interpreted as something sexually inviting, into which the blue, gun-barrel dog is “boring in”. The violence of the hunt and resistance by the woods that “rang and clamored” become even more apparent as the hunters penetrate more deeply into nature. In contradistinction to Ike's earlier “birth” into what was described as the momentarily accepting wilderness at ten, the woods are now described in very different terms as he and Sam

... came out of the undergrowth and *struck* the entrance almost exactly ... They emerged from the narrow roofless tunnel of *snapping* and *hissing* cane ... They *plunged* down the bank, *slipping and sliding* in the thawed earth, *crashing* through the willows ... *scrabbling* up the bank ... Now the woods ahead of them and the rain-heavy air were one *uproar*. It *rang and clamored*; it *echoed and reformed and clamored and rang* until it seemed to the boy that all the hounds which had ever bayed game in this land were *yelling* down at him (229-230; my italics)

Everything and everyone are in addition soaked with water, both from the rain and the “thick yellow river” they have to cross in order to get to the bear, almost resembling sperm as the “water about them, was full of dogs” (229). The birth-scene he experiences at ten is also soaked with metaphors of water and tunnels, but the quoted scene above shows an apparent change from his birth-scene when the miniscule and innocent squire he and Sam Fathers were traveling in as a child was compared to “... a solitary small boat [that] hangs in lonely immobility, merely tossing up and down,

in the infinite waste of the ocean ...” (187). Although the implications of the wilderness as a female reproductive organ has been present all along, this time the whole wilderness is consistently described as screaming with dismay and resistance. The “mother” is turned into something sexual and conquerable, and the hunt itself is now a masculine game of domination; or, in sexual terms – a rape.

The combination of sexuality and violence is perhaps most obvious as they approach the bear. Vastly outnumbered by dogs and now hunters, the bear is on its hind feet with its back against a tree, still fighting off the bellowing hounds. When Lion leaps for the bear for the last time, the whole scene is a strange mix of passion and bloodshed:

This time the bear didn't strike him down. It caught the dog in both arms, almost loverlike, and they both went down ... he could see nothing but spotted houndbodies until the bear surged up again ... he could see Lion still clinging to the bear's throat and he saw the bear, half erect ... rising and rising as though it would never stop, stand erect again and begin to rake at Lion's belly with its forepaws (230)

When the bear is proving to be stronger than the man-trained killing-machine of a dog, Boon interferes with the action in order to try and save Lion from being killed. The intervention becomes somewhat ridiculous as Boon jumps onto the bear's back and probes his knife into the bear. Nevertheless, the connotations of sexuality are once again insistent in this threesome-scene:

For an instant they almost resembled a piece of statuary: the clinging dog, the bear, the man stride its back, working and probing the buried blade. Then they went down, pulled over backward by Boon's weight, Boon underneath. It was the bear's back which reappeared first but at once Boon was astride it again. He had never released the knife and again the boy saw the almost infinitesimal movement of his arm and shoulder as he probed and sought: then the bear surged erect, raising with it the man and the dog too, and turned and still carrying the

man and the dog it took two or three steps toward the woods on its hind feet as a man would have walked and crashed down (231)

The probing and seeking of the blade, Boon being “astride” the bear, the going down and surging erect all carry sexual connotations. Linked with what was described as “loverlike” earlier, this passage of the unified piece of “statuary” made up of man, bear and dog serves to illustrate how this violence and killing is not only justified, but also strangely romanticized.

After the kill, everything suddenly calms down. Boon worries about Lion, and speaks “in that calm voice” (231) to Tennie’s Jim, and Sam Fathers lies “motionless on his face in the trampled mud” (231). In fact, Boon’s “calm voice” and “calm face” is repeated several times throughout the section. There is something sated about the whole section, and the wilderness has stopped communicating with them, stopped carrying meaning altogether as soon as the bear is dead. When the bear is dragged back to the camp, Lion and Boon cared for by the doctor and Sam Fathers left at his house, Boon insists on placing the dying Lion outside in the sun. “[H]e never did want to stay in the house until I made him. You know that” (237), Boon asserts, hence admitting that whatever the nature of the liaison between them had been, it was in fact enforced by him.

Throughout this Ike remains remarkably unmoved. As with the first confrontation with the bear when he was facing him was “without dread or even hope” (196), Ike feels “no shock, no cold” (229) when he enters the water in the final hunt. “[H]e should have hated and feared Lion” (201), but does not. And when the bear, his spiritual mother and “his alma mater” (202), would finally be killed he knows that “he would not grieve” (217). Knowing that it would be the end of something, he would

rather be “humble and proud that he had been worthy to be a part of it too or even just to see it too” (217), than to either try to preserve the wilderness or simply let it be.

This emotional detachment has been praised by critics as a symbol of understanding and respect for the temporality and natural cycles of life, like we find in for instance *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner* by Edmund L. Volpe: “By confronting the essential self, he acknowledges his relation to the world of nature, its cyclical pattern of death and regeneration, and hence his own role in that pattern” (239). I would, however, like to suggest that Ike’s lack of apparent emotions may be linked to his transcendentalist perception of nature as a depiction of something Other, something ideal outside the boundaries of temporality and the flesh and blood of matter – something immortal. And although Ike has been stubbornly insisting on his ideal relationship with Mother Nature, when he enters puberty he seems to become completely bewildered. His detachment proves that he has not quite understood what he has been partaking in.

He is in addition a hunter without any intention to kill, holding an impotent “useless gun which he knew now he would never fire at it, now or ever” (194), wishing to stay “innocent” of action, something Brooks calls “a blindness to the nature of reality” (63). His moral justification for the killing of the bear furthermore represents anthropocentrism poorly disguised as anthropomorphism: ““that’s why it must be one of us. So it wont be until the last day. When even he dont want it to last any longer”” (204). Ike thus believes that his group is the only one worthy of killing the bear, the only ones worthy and able to grasp and communicate the deeper meaning of the wilderness, conforming to his vision of man as God’s overseer on earth.

The act is also presented as an act of mercy in order to release the bear from its potential future misery. Obviously, being previously shot fifty-two times and with a

trap-ruined foot, the bear might have been suffering somewhat from its man-induced injuries. But there is nothing to support the view that the bear is weakening. In fact, even when overpowered by a pack of dogs, the bear prevails. The hunters, by insisting on killing it nevertheless, are claiming to know the conditions of the bear better than the bear itself – a deeply questionable assertion. In his pamphlet *Nature* Emerson insists that the poet is the only one capable of interpreting the true meaning of nature, these “... best moments of life ... these delicious awakenings of the higher powers, and the reverential withdrawing of nature before its God” (1090). Here the hunters have assumed a similar role: they are the chosen ones to kill the bear – and they kill in order to keep the legend intact. Part of this myth is that the hunters who assisted in the kill will from now on also be, as Ike puts it, proud to have taken part in it. As explained earlier, the prey of the hunt is simply conceived by the hunters to be a link to the divine immortal spirit of the wilderness. Its body and flesh are of no real importance to them, it is the Ideal they are after. Thus Lion is the one celebrated as the warrior and hero for baying and conquering the spirit, spread out on his death bed for all the hunters from near and far to see and praise. They are at the same time given the opportunity to have a share in the immortality present in that slaughtered body of the bear that has now become their trophy and property.

Another interesting point worth noting is the gender of the bear itself. If, as I have shown in quotations above, Ike, after some initial confusion, sees Lion as the man and Boon as the woman, why, then, is Boon suddenly in charge of the phallus symbol, and the bear continuously referred to as “him”, “Old Ben”, or “Old Priam” suddenly being feminized? Although I have restricted myself to the novella “The Bear” in this paper, I would like to quote a passage from “Was”, the very first story in *Go Down, Moses*,

and the only other place in the novel Ike's mother appears, in order to show an interesting comparison between the bear and the feminine.

In this passage, Uncle Buck has returned to Hubert Beauchamp's farm to try to talk himself out of the responsibility of marrying Sophonsiba, Ike's future mother, after he allegedly walked into the wrong room and had some sort of intimate contact with her:

Be reasonable. Say I walked into a lady's bedroom, even Miss Sophonsiba's; say, just for the sake of the argument, there wasn't no other lady in the world but her and so I walked into hers and tried to get in bed with her, would I have took a nine-year-old boy [Cass] with me? (21)

Sophonsiba's brother and Ike's godfather, Hubert, trying to get rid of his sister, interestingly compares Sophonsiba with a bear and Uncle Buck to a hunter or trespasser:

You come into bear-country of your own free will and accord. All right; you were a grown man and you knew the way back out like you knew the way in and you had your chance to take it. But no. You had to crawl into the den and lay down by the bear. And whether you did or did not know the bear was in it dont make any difference. (21-22)

As illustrated by Hubert's argument, Ike's mother is compared to a bear and her 'habitat' is described as "bear-country". This does not only shed light on the close ties between nature and the feminine, and between animals and women; it more importantly portrays Ike's mother as the obsessed over bear herself. Thus, it could be argued that Ike has a hard time killing the bear, not only because it represents the last masculine frontier of the feminized Wilderness, but because it represents his own biological mother as well. Nevertheless, Ike does go through with it, without guilt or remorse – being properly taught by his masculine environment – and partakes in the killing of his own mother.

Furthermore, according to Meredith Smith's chronology of *Go Down, Moses* Sophonsiba dies in "1877 (or before)" (271) – something that would make Ike ten years old or younger at the time of her death. As we remember, Ike also enters the wilderness and sees the bear for the first time when he is ten. His cousin, Cass, was present and a witness to the whole séance at the Beauchamp farm quoted above, and Ike, who "even at almost eighty would never be able to distinguish certainly between what he had seen and what had been told him [by Cass]" (278), would most certainly have been introduced to the story somehow. And although it might not have meant all that much to Cass or the other listeners, I would (at least *like* to) believe that such a story would leave some sort of permanent trace in Ike's mind.

If we apply this analogy to the interpretation of the hunt and kill, Ike is choosing to partake in the killing of his symbolic biological mother - the bear – while, having rejected his history and inheritance, he is at the same time eulogizing the wilderness as the spiritual and ideal mother; "the deathless and immemorial phases of the mother who had shaped him if any had toward the man he almost was" (311).

The gender of bears in general is furthermore confused towards the end of the story, when trains and wood-cutting have invaded the bear-habitat and the shrill whistle of the train scares a small bear up into an "ash sapling not bigger than a man's thigh" where it "climbed as high as it could and clung there, its head ducked between its arms as a man (a woman perhaps) would have done" (304). Here, the remains of the fertile wilderness (the sapling) is associated with the masculine, perhaps as a sign of the invasion of capitalism and industrialism, while the bear, who may or may not be feminine, is desperately climbing up the thigh of the masculine sapling to escape the train. The sexual connotations of the "perhaps" feminized bear climbing "as high as it could" up on the remaining "thigh" of the wilderness could have evoked connotations

of reproduction if it were not for the fact that the scene is ludicrous, perhaps because of the now destroyed and barren – impotent – woods and bear-habitat.

It is, however, in Ike's relationship with his wife we finally realize the extent and complexity of his disillusionment. The nameless wife is first introduced in the last pages of the troubling reflective and confusing Chapter IV, and Ike's attitude and approach to the feminine temptress will prove to resemble Ike's participation in the hunt for Old Ben. His future wife's treacherous interests are revealed already in her first quoted lines: "and she: 'Papa told me about you. That farm is really yours, isn't it?'" (297). She is obviously leading Ike on in order to get access to his farm, to become the chatelaine of the plantation. As she orders him to sit down on the bed in the beginning of the seduction scene, Ike evidently recognizes the duplicity: "he saw her face then ... not even touching yet, her face strained and terrible, her voice a passionate and expiring whisper of immeasurable promise" (298).

This combination of professed love and egotistical gain is as present in Ike as it is in his wife. Although he identifies his wife's face as 'strained and terrible', Ike is persuaded by the 'passionate' voice that promises sex. When Ike passively and half-heartedly tries to stop her violent and aggressive behavior her voice is still what Ike conceives passionate; "the hot fierce palm clapped over his mouth, crushing his lips into his teeth ... the fingers themselves seeming to follow through the cheek the impulse to speech as it died in his mouth, then the whisper, the breath again, of love and of incredible promise..." (298). Ike's desperate need to recognize love and passion in his violent and manipulative temptress' acts thus casts alarming shadows back to both the romanticized hunt, and the time when he learned of his grandfather's sexual abuse. Ike, however, seems to justify and pardon his wife's behavior as he somewhat pathetically tried when he discovered his grandfather's transgressions: "But

there must have been love he thought. Some sort of love. Even what he would have called love: not just an afternoon's or a night's spittoon" (258). Distancing himself from the truth, Ike deliberately and problematically confuses lust and greed with love to justify his grandfather's and his wife's actions, as well as his own.

Passively, like in the bear hunt, Ike continues by following the orders given to him by his wife: "'Stand up and turn your back and shut your eyes' ... 'Lock the door' ... 'Take off your clothes'" (298-299). The real proof of emotional distance, however, is revealed as Ike describes that throughout it all, her head remains "turned away, looking at nothing, thinking of nothing, waiting for nothing, not even him" (299). He has never seen her naked before, and he is longing for the feminine recognition and intimacy: "he wanted to see her naked because he loved her and he wanted to see her looking at him naked because he loved her" (299). It is, however, the wife that is running the show on her own premises and she is controlling both the emotional intimacy and the physical distance with the power of her hand – a hand that seems somehow detached from both herself and Ike: "moving as though with volition and vision of its own" (299). The wife and her hand are then mystified - if not 'mythified' - as Ike describes the progression of the sexual interaction:

... the hand drawing him and she moved at last, shifted, a movement one single complete inherent not practiced and one time older than man, looking at him now, drawing him still downward with the one hand down and down and he neither saw nor felt it shift, palm against his chest now and holding him away with the same apparent lack of any effort or any need for strength, and not looking at him now, she didn't need to, the chaste woman, the wife, already looked upon all the men who had ever rutted and now her whole body had changed, altered... (299).

Acting as more of a passive observant than a participant, he seems to be in awe and bafflement by the wife's approach, much like Jean-Marc's initial response to the naked Felicity. Furthermore, the passage serves to illustrate the 'otherness' of the wife, as her movements are described as something he cannot fathom or thoroughly recognize. This significant initiation, the shared nakedness and interaction and the concurrently paradoxical estrangement epitomize the recurring theme of distance and disillusionment in the story.

We learn that the wife is continuing her aggressive, greed-motivated seduction and finally forces Ike to promise that he will take over the land. Just like Ike blamed his grandfather for losing his humanity by not being able to control his lust and greed, the reader is suddenly presented with the analogous dilemma in connection with Ike and his wife. Through this unmistakably loveless and cold intercourse, Ike is glorifying in his experience assuring the reader that "it was like nothing he had ever dreamed, let alone heard in mere man-talking until after a no-time he returned and lay spent on the insatiate immemorial beach" (300). The man-talking of the women obviously a link to "the best of all talking" of the wilderness in the opening page of the story, as Brøgger argues in his article:

It is of course not exceptional to have a man reach an incomparable and immemorial climax with a woman whose flesh he fears and despises. The crucial issue is whether we, as readers of the story, would be prone to trust the interpretations of such a man, be his comments concerned with women or wilderness. (167)

It is precisely Ike's trustworthiness and credibility that are taking a severe blow in this passage. The irony and paradox of his intercourse with his wife is a direct analogy to the hunt: Just like Ike is a passive participant in corrupting the intimacy between

himself and his wife, he is a passive participant in hunting down and killing the last bear.

The wife furthermore seems to realize that the Ike never intends to keep his promise and turns away from him laughing spitefully, declaring that this is to be their last intercourse ever, announcing: “And that’s all. That’s all from me. If this don’t get you that son you talk about, it won’t be mine” (300-301). William Faulkner himself, however, seem to justify this coldness and spitefulness in his own commentary recorded by Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner:

She assumed when they got married that she was going to be a chatelaine of a plantation and that they would have children. And she was going to be as – according to the rules of the book a good wife to him. She’d still be frigid and cold and a shrew probably but she’d be a good wife. Then when he was going to throw the plantation away for idealistic folly, all she – the only revenge she has was that. At least he would have no children from her. He’d have no wife from her. (116)

Cleanth Brooks argues that the main principle between men and women in Faulkner’s fiction is that, in contradistinction to the idealism of the men, woman has access to a wisdom “which is veiled from man; a man’s codes, good or bad, are always, in their formal abstraction, a little absurd in her eyes. Women are close to nature; the feminine principle is closely related to the instinctive and natural; women typically manifest pathos rather than ethos” (61). Thus one could argue that both the mother and the wife as well as the wilderness are being misread, misinterpreted and misused by Ike who is lost in his own “idealistic folly”.

Conclusion:

Once the “mother” turns into someone sexual, our heroes – connecting sexuality with something corrupted and evil their forefathers engaged in – are completely bewildered by their own sexual reactions. Their need to kill their erotic urges is unmistakably intertwined with their praise of the spiritual over the physical. Suddenly being introduced to both their own masculine sexuality and the feminine one leaves them wanting “to pound the persistence out of her” (95), as Jean-Marc explains when seeing Felicity nude and abstracted, in order to escape from their own maturity and pubertal awakening in which intimacy is connected with pain. Realizing that the only thing them can do in order to escape their own sexuality is to emasculate themselves, both Ike and Jean-Marc later in life swear to abstinence and Platonic relations.

In order to “save” the feminine spirit from the corruption of sexuality, they ironically become witnesses “cheering on”, however passively and painfully, the violence of sexuality imposed by masculine father figures in their lives. They somehow need her to be “raped” and “killed” in order for them to get the opportunity of re-creating, and savoring the illusive portrayals of her legacy as one of virginity and pureness.

Although she has obviously been used before, the protagonists wish to be passive partners in the orchestration of the “grand finale”, offering them the opportunity to take part in the loss of the physical, something that will somehow serve to justify and explain their consequent renunciations of the sexual and their desire for the ideal.

To furthermore reach their goal of an exclusive, spiritual connection with their surrogate mothers, they are obsessively preoccupied with making the ultimate offer: specifically to celebrate this ideal of virginity by their renunciation of a carnal life.

From the day the maternal surrogate leaves the protagonists' lives, the protagonists create an environment that serves to exclude everything that could possibly interfere with their interpretation of the feminine: Ike turns his back on the farm, and engages in an extensive debate with his father figure, Cass, in which he insists that his own purity and sanctitude are dependent on his rejection of the material and sexual inheritance of his family.

Jean-Marc on the other hand writes the elegy of Felicity, where he not only competes with his father's sexual portrayals of her, but also includes in his "gospel" extensive sexual chapters in which Seymour and Felicity are having intercourse:

She laid her cheek against his thigh and breathed in his yeasty smell and nuzzled his prick. It stirred in sleep, and half in sleep he pulled her onto himself. She rode him gently, not wanting to disturb him ... (233)

In this sense, he has, in fact, captured them "playing on each other's bodies" in his story like he envisioned as a child. He is furthermore innocent of action as merely a transcriber of possible events, at the same time as he is passively partaking in the detailed intimacy without having to tamper with his ideal, or deflower the virgin. By openly moving in and out of all his focalizers' minds, he allows himself to invent, experience and interpret all the characters' thoughts and conduct, without having to physically engage in them himself.

In the escapes of both protagonists lies a fundamental sense of distrust in the paternal interpretation of the feminine, at the same time as a certain relief is present in the knowledge that business is being taken care of without the protagonists needing to interfere with the action itself. The relinquishment of the physical world, in addition, leads them into a condition of self-professed saintliness – the carpenter Ike portrayed

as a Messiah figure, and Jean-Marc as the apostle – both, ironically, intensely preoccupied with their own legacy instead of the gospel of the vanished femininity they claim to preach, something that will become even more apparent in the last chapter of this paper.

THE SURROGATE MEMORY

Discourse analysis makes it possible to trace connections between the visible and the hidden, the dominant and the marginalized, ideas and institutions. It allows us to see how power works through language, literature, culture and the institutions which regulate our daily lives (Loomba, 47)

As illustrated in the previous chapter, Jean-Marc and Ike are bewildered by both their own sexuality and the sexuality of the feminine forces in their lives. Their subsequent choice is first of all to remain passive, allowing the sexual actions they seemingly find troubling to happen. Then, the protagonists pick up the pieces of the puzzle, the shattered fragments of evidence of the feminine presence, and glue them together into the frame most appropriate to themselves, and - more importantly - most assertive for their own selves.

In this, the feminine is turned into a static and controllable beauty as opposed to the wild and unruly one. This is illustrated in Ike's interpretation of the static girl captured on the urn in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" by John Keats. When Cass quotes the passage "She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss" (283), Ike interprets the story to be about "a young man and a girl he would never have to grieve over because he could never approach any nearer and would never have to get any further away" (284). And exactly this seems to be both Ike and Jean-Marc's ultimate paradox: In being passive observers and interpreters, and in failing to acknowledge that their loved ones are gone, they cannot grieve and move on. By refusing to accept change and forever claiming equilibrium with regard to their surrogate mothers and mistresses, they are in effect imprisoning themselves in stasis by arresting time itself in their memories.

This manipulation of memories and the rendition of them as the one and only truth is therefore just as possessive as any of the masculine and imperial strategies despised by the protagonists, and should therefore be examined carefully. While the reader's sympathies for the protagonists have been constantly elicited by the narrators of the stories, there have also been hints all along of something being 'off'. As we reach the climax of these stories, which both are situated near the end, we realize that we have somehow been 'tricked' into feeling empathy with the protagonists, an awareness that alters the over-all reading of the stories and makes us note the discrepancy between what is actually said and what is told subtly through the narration. Bowen explains this phenomenon in Jean-Marc's rendering in *Borderline*: "His narrative is, then, an exploration of ways to read meaning in appearances, unashamedly motivated by a desire for immortality in a transcendent other".

In this manner the protagonists' intentions, which are presented to us as noble and virtuous, are tinted with egotism and the desire for self-assertiveness. The oppositions created between the object and the narrating subject, the feminine and the masculine, are furthermore underscored by the fact that they are offering a sense of self-definition for Ike and Jean-Marc:

The 'othering' of vast numbers of people ... [is] crucial not only for creating images of the outsider but equally important for constructing the insider, the (usually white European male) 'self' (Loomba, 104)

Borderline:

Felicity's intimate story to the ten-year old Jean-Marc about being raped as a girl serves to illustrate one of the two fears she asserts are primary. The fear is clearly gender-based – namely the abuse and exploitation of the feminine by superior masculine force – and she declares that Jean-Marc need not worry about this kind. The other fear is the fear "...that you're all alone in the world" (152). She furthermore explains that in order to overcome it, you must accept the temporality and transience of existence: "...[T]he truth is that everyone is alone, and all the people who matter to you are going to leave you sooner or later. You expect it, so it doesn't bother you"(152). This concept of letting go gracefully of the maternal and repudiating the paternal will later on prove to be impossible for Jean-Marc and Ike to accomplish, at the same time as they themselves play constituent parts in the repulsion of the feminine forces from their lives.

Jean-Marc has consistently through his story shown two contrasting versions of Felicity. In the chapters where he is not the focalizer himself, Felicity is portrayed as a complex, empathic, physical, caring, confused, and despairing woman. She is described by Seymour as "the sanest, the most real, the most ideal" of all the women he has known. He furthermore adds: "She lives at the tips of her senses ... a pure sensual being" (22). Hence, Seymour's view of Felicity is a binary opposition to Jean-Marc's view of her as being virginal in the chapters where he is the focalizer himself. He even compares her to Dante's Beatrice several times in the course of the novel: "We're all of us looking for Beatrice, all in the dark wood together" (171), hence admitting that his need for perfection and idealism exceeds his wish for the closeness of the physical Felicity.

Felicity's past history is one of violence, rape and desperation – something that is illustrated in her keeping of a “wilderness file” – the “clippings of dark and bizarre events, world news, the familiar international insanities” (16) – real life events. She explains her need of keeping the file by stating that “it's a kind of proof that I didn't invent my own childhood. There are things that I saw, things I think I remember ... and such things still happen. Even stranger things, worse things, though they have no reality here” (16). Jean-Marc, however, sees this file as “excessively morbid” (16) and dreams of tuning reality in his own way: “Only consider: the entire cacophonous universe could be tuned. This is a mathematical possibility and a great comfort, requiring only infinite patience. I proceed note by note.” (26). Even more problematically, he tries to convince himself and her that the continuously ridiculed Edenic reality in the garden of her virginal aunts is really where the complex and sensual Felicity wanted to belong: “Of course this was the country Felicity preferred to have come from, the world of gold leafs and lapis. This was where she wanted to belong. Behind a parapet of art and history. Within the aunts' walled garden where all was well, where all manner of things would always be well” (116). The irony of such a claim is truly striking, and the discrepancy between the two versions of the real and the ideal Felicity is furthermore underscored by the portrayal of Felicity suddenly turning her back on the truths of the newspapers:

Felicity lifted up her eyes from the ephemeral and unreliable newspapers to contemplate the garden that had always been there. And the aunts, white witches, who were now perhaps seventy, or perhaps a hundred, or perhaps more, smiled back from their youthful untroubled eyes. All is well, they promised. And all manner of thing [sic] shall be well (119)

Although Jean-Marc intervenes and comments on the irony in this chapter, the tone and response of the aunts mirror Jean-Marc's attempt to dissuade Felicity from

remembering her past through the clippings, and inventing a more romantic one: “I do hope ... that you are not going to clip out any more of those dreadful stories. Such things are always with us, there is no point in getting morbid. It is better to use the proper channels” (119).

Jean-Marc furthermore illustrates his own complex and tempered narration by admitting that Felicity might not approve of his version of the truth, both concerning Seymour – in which case she accuses him of trying to create a monster – and her aunts: “you’ve never even met my aunts. I won’t have you making fun of them” (119). The same thing is true for Kathleen, the daughter of Gus who disappeared at the same time as Felicity did. In Kathleen’s desperate desire for information regarding her father’s disappearance – which Jean-Marc has acquired through his meager meetings and phone calls – she gets involved with Jean-Marc in order to pool their knowledge (26) and get a better understanding of the facts and events that lead to the disappearance. She does not, however, permit Jean-Marc to criticize her father on the grounds that Jean-Marc did not know him and portrays him unjustly. “He wasn’t like that at all” (120), Kathleen says, and thus Jean-Marc’s portrayals of the drunken and confused catholic philanderer chasing his salvation in the wake of the disappeared and enigmatic Dolores Marquez is questioned as well.

Jean-Marc is paradoxically describing Gus, christened Augustine, as a fool who falls in love with his own created personal salvation – namely the desperate El Salvadorian refugee, Dolores Marquez, who mirrors the reformed prostitute of Mary Magdalene. She allegedly bribed her way into the country by offering her sexuality, but has been ‘rescued’ (though later lost) by Gus, something Gus cannot stop romanticizing in his portrayals of her. Gus consequently abandons his family and becomes obsessed with the thought of finding the silent and colonized woman, and hence his own salvation

(much like the original St. Augustine of Hippo, the womanizer who finally – radically influenced by Platonic doctrines – leaves all carnal love behind and becomes a preacher and bishop⁴). Felicity also gets entangled in the search for Dolores, but although Felicity compares Dolores to a painting called La Magdalena and hence recognizes the link to the entrapments of the women in paintings, Felicity’s wish to help the woman is a result of empathy and accountability. Jean-Marc, however, is not particularly impressed with her obvious need and instinct to engage in social and humane responsibilities: “Oh Fliss, not another stray ... You can’t turn anyone down. Your sympathies are totally cockeyed” (93). Thus Jean-Marc also fails to see the closeness that exists between Felicity’s personal identity (her past) and her empathy with the situation of colonized others.

This all leads Jean-Marc to the ultimate confession: “I do not understand women” (120). However, and here is the crux; he justifies his portrayals of Felicity by, shortly after this confession, saying that “Still, Felicity is Felicity” (120) hence, admitting that to him, Felicity is *not* the woman in flesh and blood that his father knows, and thus moldable into whatever shape desired. Her nature is furthermore fused with his own past, as for instance in the passage of his past (previously discussed in the first chapter of this paper) that suddenly becomes Felicity’s present:

Jean-Marc, she’ll dream, you’re impossible. I hope you’re not upset, I did mean to call earlier.
There’s a frightful racket – can you hear me? – because of these two old volcanos arguing.
I’m hiding under the grand piano. Maman says hello” (120)

“The fear of physical harm is not worse than the fear of being alone. I cannot believe it is. I cannot believe anything is worse than this” (165), Jean-Marc furthermore

⁴ Portalié, Eugène. "Life of St. Augustine of Hippo." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 2. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907. 23 May 2008 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02084a.htm>>.

asserts, and desperately tries to call Kathleen claiming “The temptation to mold her is immense, though misunderstood” (24). Jean-Marc’s intellectual fostering of the daughter of Gus in addition vividly resembles Felicity’s relationship with Seymour. With the promise of knowledge of her father and his disappearance, Jean-Marc admits: “She only loves me because I knew her father” (190), the main crime he accused his own father of with regard to Felicity. He furthermore underscores his poorly hidden agenda by stating:

When she thinks of her father she grows pensive until I say something paternal, and at such times I could live off the look in her eyes. I have discovered that admiration sustains – and also, I suppose, corrupts (24)

He describes the relationship between Kathleen and himself as emotionally intimate, but not sexual (172). Kathleen, however, is deeply frustrated by the fact that he has never “laid a finger” on her (204) something that serves to illustrate that Kathleen’s complexity and sexual needs as a young woman makes her a female of flesh and blood, too – the very humanity he has tried to repress in Felicity. At Jean-Marc and Kathleen’s introduction he explains that “He understood how gratitude and adoration could be addictive”, begging her not to leave, thinking “After all, we are far closer in age than the Old Volcano and Felicity” (242). He also stresses that he has been “taking care” of Felicity since he was eighteen, something that becomes problematic to believe, considering that there is no proof of him actually doing so, other than when he is, ironically, begging her to leave Seymour to stay with him: “You need someone who can look after you – but not someone who will merely use you” (191).

Although the evidence of Felicity shows a person who “is never still” (91), “only at ease in transit” (12) and “not anchored to everyday” (93) – he is paradoxically desperate to fix her through his writing, like his father is desperate to frame her in his

paintings: “All these years,” he said, “and I still haven’t got you properly. I want to *fix* you here before you slip away. You’re going to leave me again, I know” (251).

Jean-Marc writes down a personal account of Felicity’s story in an attempt to keep the memory of her from fading after her disappearance. He recognizes all the different agendas of the other men in her life, especially his father’s – and even recognizes the colonial urge within all these masculine attacks:

Anyone who looks at Felicity for long thinks ‘otherness’, or ‘untouched’, or ‘essence’ – depending on verbal and metaphysical capability ... men want to put their mark on her ... the Old Volcano is hungry for salvation, all of life is bread and wine to him ... And I? Oh yes, even I have an interest. I want to save her from the Old Volcano’s misappropriation. I want to be the official biographer, the final authority (256)

In admitting that he in fact wants to create her definite biography, he also admits to the impulse of putting his personal mark on her and hence shaping her into the ideal he is striving for. He molds the story according to his predispositions and continuously refers to her as alive. Consequently he is expecting a phone call from her “every time the telephone rings” (12), although the evidence points in another direction: her apartment is set on fire with her car outside it and a unidentifiable woman inside the burned out flat. Ironically, he recognizes the apparent truth in the case of Kathleen’s father, which resembles Felicity’s case in detail: “Kathleen will hear none of this, of course. She sets great store on the fact that the bodies could not be identified ... she needs to believe” (278). He furthermore recognizes that for Kathleen “there is nothing, I’m afraid, to suggest that her father might come back to us” (284). As for Felicity’s disappearance he admits: “I resist believing it” (12). We are presented with several instances in which he has to remind himself and the reader that she will continue to live on, a desire reflected both in his refusal to believe in her

permanent disappearance and in his written record of her: “Felicity used to say... Correction. Felicity says...” (14).

David Callahan describes the reader’s entry into the exile condition of *Borderline*:

The working out of the various strands of the plots might be thought of as a return to where we had been displaced from only to find that it is not the same place after all and that we also have changed (33)

Jean-Marc realizes himself that through his construction of events and dreams, he has created his own memories, past and present, of Felicity. His eulogy and elegy of her have taken on a life of their own and are now becoming his prominent source of connection with her. He problematically asserts: “Perhaps when Felicity finally calls, she will disappoint. Perhaps I am better at her lines than she is” (189), hence proving that his surrogate memory of her is now, indeed, superior to her as a person in flesh and blood.

At the height of his competition with his father with regard to the correct representation and hence the possession of Felicity, he receives an invitation to Seymour’s exhibition at Felicity’s gallery, thinking that it is Felicity who has sent it to him and hence that she is alive. He keeps the information from the now eighteen-year-old Kathleen, who is “almost old enough to face reality” (284) and who has now moved in with him, and is allegedly jealous because all his talk of Felicity. Like Felicity, “sometimes when she walks across a room, I think of a Siamese cat” (ibid.), Jean-Marc asserts, and thus we are facing Jean-Marc’s attempts of projecting Felicity’s spirit and soul onto a new canvas, namely Kathleen.

In the gallery he finds Seymour’s main painting, the enormous canvas of Felicity, and even Jean-Marc cannot refrain from being impressed:

It's as though he has painted the mind of the sun, the concept of light, the idea of God. Such is the radiance, the effulgence of the canvas that my eyes water and I have to close them. And when I close them, dark flecks like sunspots dance inside my eyelids (287)

The impact of the painting is such that Jean-Marc has to admit defeat: "Oh, I acknowledge grudgingly. Brilliant!" (287). Then he finds his father and he is shocked by the sight: "It's been a number of years, and I am not prepared for how old, how frail..." (288). We are once again presented with Jean-Marc's detachment from life and his preference for the past. In his story, his father has been portrayed as a violent and virile philanderer. Life and loss have, however, changed Seymour - a tendency time generally has in real life - something that does not conform to Jean-Marc's ideal of stasis and immortality. He obviously recognizes the fragility in his father:

His eyes are watering from the brightness of his own painting. His arms are dangling at his sides like broken awnings. He doesn't know what to do with them. He half lifts one towards me and lets it fall. "Jean-Marc," he says, and his voice breaks. "You came. You finally came." (288)

However, Jean-Marc refuses to let go of his interpretations of the past and asserts "Not that this excuses him for anything" (288). The competition is somehow off, now that Jean-Marc has faced his competitor and seen that his father really wanted to see him and bond with him all this time, had it not been for Jean-Marc's surrogates standing in their way. However, while Seymour is facing the reality when he describes his painting as "a shadow of a woman who left me. The idea of a woman I lost" (287), Jean-Marc is still clinging to the idea that she was never in the fire and "will call, of course, though when she drops in from wherever she is, she'll be amazed to see us standing here holding each other like this" (288).

The closure of the story is seen by Schramm as a romantic family reunion: “Jean-Marc’s illumination allows him to forgive his father, Seymour, which their embrace at the novel’s end suggests” (91) In my view, however, Jean-Marc’s description of his own frame of mind must be taken into consideration. Jean-Marc, who describes the embrace as being initiated by his father’s “drunken persistent hands” that “lurch toward” (288) him again, is obviously not romanticizing the embrace. The effect of the meeting with his father hence serves to underscore Jean-Marc’s problems with facing reality. Seymour has become old and haggard, and is obviously grieving the loss of Felicity. His relationship with Felicity must therefore have been far deeper than Jean-Marc has been able to comprehend and realize in *his* story. Jean-Marc, on the other hand, describes himself as being “back in a childhood accent, I’m reduced to begging, I’m pleading with him: ‘Where is she?’” (288). This regression into childhood illustrates his apparent refusal to accept the disappearance of Felicity. He has already seen his grieving father comment on his portrait being of a woman he lost, but Jean-Marc still pleads with Seymour to lead him to Felicity, knowing already that his father could not possibly help him.

Felicity is thus no longer a threat or a prize in Jean-Marc’s competition with his father, as his father has lost her and grieves her. She is, however, still idealized and fixed in Jean-Marc’s representation and interpretation of her as immortal, as well as in his father’s painting. Felicity has in addition materialized in Kathleen, the younger and more innocent version of her – virginal, moldable and immensely grateful for Jean-Marc’s stories of her father. Although Kathleen is presented as headstrong, opinionated and sexual, Jean-Marc continues life within his illusive Edenic reality where immortality is granted to those who never sample the apple – the forbidden fruit of sexuality.

“The Bear”:

For Ike, the gradually diminishing wilderness, the death of Sam Fathers, and the participation in the slaughtering of the last bear are the major events in his life. He responds to the loss by rejecting his “fatherland”, the land founded on slavery, abuse and misogyny. Some critics have argued, like for instance Annette Kolodny in her book *The Lay of the Land* that it is “... because he wants to maintain that intimacy, from boyhood through manhood, that he attempts to reject the means by which others, before him, perhaps even with the same longings, had converted intimacy into violation” (140). I would have argued, however, that he himself has participated in an analogical violation of the land, namely the hunt. In extension of this argument I would like to suggest that his subsequent refusal to accept that the timeless and eternal woods are dying and his escape from the responsibility of his fatherly inheritance display his reluctance to take the steps into the mature manhood that he claims his surrogate mother (the wilderness) and surrogate father (Sam) have created the basis for. Thus Ike is paradoxically repudiating not only his bloodline but also his spiritual legacy by remaining passive and excluding himself from the latter. As Sally Page argues:

The subsequent actions of Ike’s life are determined by his commitments to the idealization of the land and the virtues he has learned through it. However ... Ike’s commitment to idealism results in an isolated and sterile existence. Like woman, the land does suggest to man the ideals by which he must live, but the land also embodies man’s inescapable human limitations. By relinquishing the land to escape the curse of evil which his ancestors have bestowed upon him, Ike relinquishes life (187)

Assuming that no land can ever be owned and that the land “... was never mine to repudiate” (245), he effectively makes himself unaccountable for whatever is to

happen to the land. Ike is playing it safe by making himself impotent of action in order to escape the possibility of corrupting the land. In Kolodny' view (with which I agree): "As soon as the land is experienced as feminine, no masculine activity in relation to it can be both satisfying and nonabusive, and, insofar as we do not wholly control or even understand our responses to that which constitutes the opposite gender, no activity toward it can be wholly 'responsible'" (142).

Ike's preference for the mythical and spiritual over the material is revealed in the text itself as well. Towards the end of the story, Ike returns to the wilderness that is rapidly increasing and reflects:

and he would marry some day and they too would own for a brief while that brief unsubstantiated glory which inherently of itself cannot last and hence why glory: and they would, might, carry the remembrance of it into the time when flesh no longer talks to flesh because memory at least does last: but still the woods would be his mistress and his wife (311)

In this passage, we find Ike romanticizing the spiritual *memory* of the intercourse as being superior the material, but we also find him confirming that his true mistress and wife are the wilderness itself, and even more so his memory of it. Thus, his wife and the intercourse are subordinate to his memory of them, which is in turn subordinate to the feminized wilderness as idea and memory. Flesh and blood are hence ranked as the lowest step on Ike's ladder of preferred feminine surrogates, and is seen as merely a means of reaching deeper spiritual meaning.

In "God's Moral Order and the Problem of Ike's Redemption", Olga W. Vickery argues: "In rejecting sin, Isaac also rejects humanity. Significantly, he holds himself aloof from close human ties; though he is uncle to half the country, he is father to no-one and husband solely to the wilderness" (211), a wilderness that is rapidly destroyed by capitalism and industrialism, as it has been sold to a lumber company.

The vast and immortal wilderness that was once “the tall and endless wall of November woods” (186) is reduced to a small square; Major de Spain’s property is simply the ground that became the graveyard of Sam, Lion, and the bear’s mutilated paw. And as Ike – standing on the knoll that is this graveyard – sees the whole remaining property of de Spain, the unreliability of the storytelling unveils itself. The woods are doomed and colonized but are, still, described as eternal and flourishing:

Then he was in the woods, not alone but solitary; the solitude closed about him, green with summer. They did not change, and, timeless, would not, anymore than would the green of summer and the fire and the rain of fall and the iron cold and sometimes even snow ... (308)

Thus, Ike celebrates the idea of a cyclic nature but refuses, like Jean-Marc, to accept the natural cycles of life and loss. Ike finds his comfort in the illusion of transcendental projection in order to give his beloved woods eternal life. This surrogate memory, the refusal to adhere to physical laws and see the woods as dying, could perhaps seem slightly pathetic but at the same time strangely romantic as a sweet eulogy of the woods. It becomes problematic, however, when we remember that he is, in fact, in the last remnants of the withering woods while making this observation. This glorification of the superior ideal over the imperfect and ephemeral physical aspects of life bears a clear resemblance to the bedroom scene with his wife. He is once again connecting with the spiritual and eternal by merely using the physical as a means of getting there. This, ironically, undermines the importance of the woods and his wife, and the affection Ike claims to have for them. Furthermore, when it comes to the hunting and the bear, Ike asserts:

there was no death, not Lion and not Sam: not held fast in earth but free in earth ... and Old Ben too, Old Ben too; they would give him his paw back even, certainly they would give him

his paw back: then the long challenge and the long chase, no heart to be driven and outraged,
no flesh to be mauled and bled ... (313)

This is the point where Ike's delusion in my view gets slightly ridiculous. Ike suggests that the hunt itself will continue in heaven – the masculine colonization carried on forever and ever in its true ideal form – as there would never be any bloodshed, nor shooting to kill as the impotent Ike has proven himself unable to do. This problematic attitude towards the 'real' is then, at best, a reflection of Ike's desire to participate in the masculine world, but also his inability to inflict pain. At worst, it portrays Ike as a colonizer trailing his grandfather's footsteps into masculine projections of femininity without, however, the carnal pleasures of sex, passion, and love. The latter interpretation will unfortunately emerge as Ike tries to repudiate his fatherly-inherited plantation, founded on the slavery and imprisonment of a race he paradoxically struggles to accept as equal to his own.

As a part of his repudiation of the physical fatherland, Ike decides to locate his relatives of the illicit relationship between his grandfather and his slave in order to give them their long overdue inheritance. In the case of Fonsiba, interestingly named after his mother, his reluctant decision to meet her mirrors the same phrases that he first used when he saw the wild bear for the first time: "*I will have to find her. I will have to ... I will have to find her this time*" (265). And he does find her, in a sparse log cabin in "that roadless and even pathless waste of unfenced fallow and wilderness jungle – no barn, no stable, not so much as a hen-coop..." (265). Already in this description we see that the home Fonsiba and her husband have made for themselves in the wilderness is not romanticized like Ike's home in the wild. It is not managed and structured, and does not even have "a gaunt hound to come up bellowing out from under the house when he rode up" (265). Not even their hog is domesticated;

according to the customs of this country, it is allowed “to range free during the winter for food” and “comes up from time to time” (267). Ike, furious and desperate at their poverty and squalor at and the husband’s stubborn insistence that they are nonetheless free, shouts that their land is not yet Canaan: “But not now. Not yet. Don’t you see?” (266). Not being able to come to an understanding with Fonsiba’s husband, he turns to Fonsiba asking if she is all right. Fonsiba simply answers: “I am free” (268).

The strange but proud husband of Fonsiba, with his bleak and non-materialistic concept of freedom, ironically mirrors Ike’s illusions of freedom. But while Ike insists that the black couple cannot escape history, cannot alter the reality of squalor on the basis of a mere proclamation and adherence to an idea, Ike in turn relinquishes all his inheritance for a principle, in order to escape his own history. The main difference is perhaps that they have done it as man and wife, through love, as opposed to Ike who does it alone. The irony of his inability to realize this serves to illustrate his lack of self-reflection and his disillusionment, and more importantly his inability to view both women and blacks as his equals. This attitude towards the black former slaves and women is underscored in “Delta Autumn”, the subsequent story in *Go Down, Moses*. Ike has become an old man and the hunters have to drive two hundred miles to find wilderness to hunt in (324). Cass’ grandson, Roth, is participating in the hunt, and while Roth is out hunting, Ike is approached by a young black woman who turns out to be the granddaughter of his illegitimate cousin Tennie’s Jim. She has been involved with Roth and is holding a baby in her arms as a proof of their liaison. Ike becomes completely outraged when he realizes that his white relative, Roth, has had a sexual relationship with the black girl and cries “You’re a nigger!” (344) to the girl, and furthermore tells her to move up North and marry “a man of [her] own race” (346). Thus, even after all these years, Ike does not approve of other races crossing into his

own version of Canaan: “*Maybe in a thousand or two thousand years in America, he thought But not now! Not now!*” (344). Ike – who refused to inherit his fatherland because of its foundation on slavery and abuse – has become quite the unsympathetic racist himself, denying the young, black woman a shot at her own freedom and happiness. It is, however, when she assures Ike that she will not simply forget about Roth and move on like an emotionless animal that she hits the painful head of the nail: “Old man ... have you lived so long and forgotten so much that you dont remember anything you ever knew or felt or even heard about love?” (346). It is almost excruciating to witness Ike’s inability to recognize, remember or even imagine carnal copulation as a token of love between man and woman. His self-delusions and transcendentalized surrogate memories have turned him into a bitter old man. He has grown apart from his surrogate parents (the wilderness and Sam) and has instead, ironically and unsympathetically, become an impotent mirror image of his potent, corrupt and insensitive biological grandfather.

These ironies of inherited colonial impulses all culminate in the last paragraphs of “The Bear”. Ike leaves the graveyard of Sam and Lion in search of Boon and finds himself face-to-face with a snake described as the “old one, the ancient and accursed about the earth” (314). Ike subsequently raises his hand and says in the old Indian tongue which Sam once taught him: “Chief ... Grandfather” (314). Thus Ike effectively ties the vision of the snake in with man’s eviction from the original Eden, and, at the same time, he recognizes his own grandfather as the snake of the second Eden – the wilderness. The paradox is that while Sam taught him to hail the wilderness in its prime through a young buck, Ike salutes the dying woods through the “accursed” snake, and his corrupt grandfather, in the same exact manner.

It is, however, in the final two lines of “The Bear” that the extent of the ruination of the wilderness and the delusive insistence on ownership surface. Ike finds Boon desperately hammering on the pieces of his broken – impotent – gun. The tree behind him is alive with squirrels, and Boon shouts at Ike: “Get out of here! Dont touch them! Dont touch a one of them! They’re mine!” (315). The big, mythologized Bear is hence replaced by the small and insubstantial squirrels, and Boon is armed with a dismembered gun that cannot fire. He still insists on ownership and the right to do the killing himself. This scene mirrors the ominous scene where Boon jumps the Bear with his knife and kills Old Ben, which ultimately leads to the destruction of the feminized wilderness. The scene of the frantic squirrels furthermore serves to end the story in a somewhat pathetically and farcical manner: Boon – who hammers the barrel of his gun “with the frantic abandon of a madman” (315) – controls the action through his claims of being the proprietor of the remaining fragment of the wild, while Ike – the skilled hunter and woodsman – once again remains passive with his “gun unloaded and the barrel slanted up and back” (315).

Conclusion:

It is particularly with regard to Jean-Marc’s and Ike’s construction of their *memories* that the narrative technique of the two texts becomes an important issue to consider. By way of their *re-presentations* of past events, both protagonists turn their surrogate mothers/mistresses into a transcendental memory that becomes a surrogate for assuming responsibility for their present lives. It is by a careful reading of the

complexity of narration that the reader discovers this; as I have argued, the protagonists cling to their idealizations and needs for self-justification to the very end.

The external narrator in *Borderline* helps establish a distance towards the subject, a technique Jean-Marc uses to create a sense of objectivity. However, he cannot refrain from intruding into the story, analyzing it, and establishing himself and his perceptions along the way. Thus the external narration turns out to be a trick, an illusion. Ironically, it is mainly through Jean-Marc's first-person justifications and analyses that the stories fall apart. Through the problematically self-conscious and romanticizing narration, we, as readers, are consequently invited to question his reliability. As soon as the discrepancies between plot and reflection surface and become too apparent to ignore, we are forced to reconsider the whole story as well as the characters' sympathies.

The same can be said to be the case with the use of focalization and an authoritative voice in "The Bear". As Herbert A. Perluck explains: "The romantic 'meaning' is Ike's 'meaning' – the way he would prefer to view the events in which he has participated and his own motives – but it is not ultimately Faulkner's" (184). Here it is crucial, however, to keep in mind that there is an implied author "in between" the narrator and the actual author. We should take into consideration Rimmon-Kenan's claim that the implied author is the governing consciousness of the work as a whole, and that through her/his superiority in knowledge and moral standards – through the deviations between the narrator's vision and that of the text as a whole– we can map out what is really being told between the lines (Rimmon-Kenan, 88). The value scheme and vision of the implied author must therefore be examined in order to grasp the story fully. The problem in both *Borderline* and "The Bear" is, obviously, that when the narrator is so intrusive and hard to analyze, the readers are so baffled that it

is hard to assert with any firm certainty the visions of the implied author. I would, in this regard, like to quote Booth's analysis of the unreliable narrator, specifically his claim that "... the narrator's bewilderment is used ... to break down the reader's conviction about truth itself, so that he may be ready to receive *the* truth when it is offered to him" (285). This ultimate truth is nonetheless a personal one, and reflects the reader's "own concern for the truth" (286). Booth briefly analyzes the narration of Kafka's *The Castle* and argues:

We stand on a secure promontory and watch the character stumble. But when K stumbles, we stumble with him. The ironies work against us as much as they do against him. In such works we do not discover until the end – and very often not even then – what the true meaning of the events has been. Regardless of the point of view in the narrowest sense, the moral and intellectual point of view of the work is deliberately confusing, disconcerting, even staggering (287)

Thus, as soon as one reaches the end of these deliberately confusing stories, which I would argue *Borderline* and "The Bear" both represent, the climax at the end of the stories may serve to alter the over-all reading of the text. In my opinion, the climax of the two texts analyzed in this thesis manifests itself in the protagonists' unveiling of their problematic and persistent vision of reality as subordinate to the ideal. The reader furthermore realizes that their preference for this unattainable ideal can only exist in their minds and memories.

By naming this chapter "Surrogate Memories" I have tried to illustrate how the wilderness and Felicity are not merely substitutes for the nurturing mothers and the sexual mistress' in Ike and Jean-Marc's lives, but perhaps more problematically (whatever they represent originally) become more and more modified by protagonists' preferred memories. Once these mothers and mistresses disappear, the

protagonists take over their immortal heritage and separate them – and themselves – from the ‘real’ world. Finding their own original surrogates inadequate and their physical and moral inheritance displeasing, the protagonists now insist on inhabiting a world created solely from their ‘borrowed’ and interpreted memories. This makes them end up living with an illusive and highly romanticized past rather than a life in the present. The passiveness of this choice brings no change to the surrounding world and entraps the protagonists in a reality of stasis and phantasmagoria. It simultaneously, and ironically, leaves them resembling their allegedly corrupt forefathers even more, as the protagonists have now forced their own meaning and personal needs onto their feminized subject.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have tried to offer an interpretation of the link between the possessed feminine and the obsessed masculine protagonists of *Borderline* and “The Bear”. What has been most exciting to me throughout this analytical process has been to uncover the many similarities between the works - works that are so apparently different at first glance. It has been a motivating challenge to put into writing the strange feeling of being ‘fooled’ by the narrator that I experienced after my first thorough reading of the works. I have tried to suggest that this narrative trickery – this attempt to lure the reader into feeling sympathy for the protagonists – is, in fact, the narrator’s attempt to justify colonialist action through his hegemonic, possessive agenda. This does, however, *not* mean that I believe that the authors share this agenda; on the contrary I believe that while the narrator and character focalizers are presented as unreliable (and slightly pathetic), the implied author takes contrasting stand. It is therefore crucial to identify the distance between the views of the narrator and the vision of the work as a whole. In this connection I would also like to assert my awareness of the fact that there could be a distance between the implied author and the real author. This possible distance, however, has not been of any primary concern or importance in this paper.

Following Jean-Marc and Ike through their childhood, adolescence and adulthood, this thesis has first of all attempted to examine their complex mind-sets concerning the gender-issues in their lives and their consequent problems with self-definition. Being raised mainly in a masculine environment, the protagonists evidently have great problems in dealing with both the feminine and the masculine throughout their

lives. They constantly struggle for the masculine recognition of their fathers while trying to establish a conformable relationship with the feminine - a father's wild and exotic lover and a wilderness - that has no direct (biological) obligation towards the protagonists, and whose attitudes and concerns are first and foremost voiced and read by the obsessive protagonists. Although their approach and attitude towards their surrogate mothers change with the coming of age, the protagonists' desire for the feminine "other" profoundly dominates their lives from childhood to adulthood, and is substantially influenced by the approaches taken by their masculine father figures and counterparts. Thus they interpret the feminine according to their immediate needs.

In childhood, this results in the feminine becoming a nurturing mother figure, something that is experienced as an exclusive and harmonious relationship, although already tinted with the realization, in Jean-Marc's case, that she is engaging in a reciprocal sexual relationship with his father, and in Ike's case, that she is subjugated and exploited by his patriarchal bloodline. This, obviously, complicates the picture once they reach adolescence and they are introduced to the sexuality as something also innate in themselves. Their alleged strong, spiritual bonds with their surrogate mother are suddenly thwarted by their sexual urges, a sexuality that they share with their fathers, but which is suddenly portrayed as something far from being reciprocated by their love objects. This, then, already bears the implications of becoming somewhat of a contest to the protagonists vis-à-vis their biological father or grandfather, a competition with regard to ownership, possession, and self-realization.

In order to escape their sexuality they become passive voyeurs. Although impotent of direct action they are vigorous in participating through the acts of language. In fact, they insist on owning the true legacy of the feminine, its immortal spirit. Thus they

distance themselves completely from the physical and material body of it. In this sense they, too, inherit some of its immortality and sanctitude.

The idealization and transcendentalization the protagonists later forces onto the desired subjects in their lives, in effect, dismantles and destroys the feminine – ironically the same ‘damsels in distress’ the protagonists claim to save. In Jean-Marc’s case, he consistently justifies his capturing of the wild and exotic Felicity within his story by claiming it to be her escape from his father’s sexual portrayals of her. He molds his story – idolizing Felicity as a virginal, victimized, and passive participant in her own life – and furthermore fixes this unmistakably inaccurate image of her in the mirage of stasis and equability of his writing and, hence, in memory.

Ike’s alleged love for the wilderness similarly breaks down as we learn that his ideal is not the experience the woods themselves offer, but rather the spiritual image beyond the physical realm of the wilderness. This is problematically portrayed through his passive interaction with the bear (and his wife) and through his misconstrued responsibility for his fatherly inheritance. Jean-Marc and Ike’s feminized subjects become mere means of self-justification, and, at the same time paradoxically illustrate that proprietary idealization and cognitive colonization is at least as disruptive and destructive as physical colonization is.

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