

The Confessional Hero in William Styron's *Lie Down in Darkness*

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Confession is regarded as necessary for attaining divine/social forgiveness or appeasing the burdened conscience. In the *Old Testament*, the Lord, God said to Amram's son, Moses: "Say to the people of Israel, when a man or a woman commits any of the sins that men commit by breaking faith with the Lord, that persons is guilty, he shall confess his sin which he has committed" (Num V.6). If in the ecclesiastical terms, it is "breaking faith with the Lord", then in the social terms it is necessitated by "breaking faith" with the society.

Encyclopedia Britannica (Vol.6) cites another interpretation of confession- "an extra-judicial statement acknowledging guilt of an offence". The voluntary confession, in most jurisdictions, must be corroborated by other evidence before a defendant may be convicted, which can relate to the authenticity of the occurrence of the crime. It also means "self-humiliation and abasement by the acknowledgement of sin", and immediately the image presented to the mind is of a forlorn individual struggling to appease not only the deity and society but also his own conscience. Self-accusation appeases the personal and the collective conscience.

A slightly more comprehensive interpretation of confession can be had from the third volume of *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*: "A confession is a public avowal and formal statement, more or less detailed, of the doctrinal contents of religious belief, framed by an individual or by a group of individuals. It may be addressed orally, orally or in writing, to a few persons in sympathy or out of sympathy with it, or to a congregation, or to a Church, or to the world". Since it is "addressed, orally or in writing to a few persons in sympathy or out of sympathy with it, or to a congregation, or to a Church, or to the world", it makes the gap between the ostracized individual and the social spectrum, conspicuous. We come to appreciate the cleavage and comprehend, but at the same time this "address" links the confessor to the society demanding it. Thus, confession carried out for the purposes of expiation, whether religious or social, acts as the vital link between the individual and the society that is pitted against him. It can take many forms. It can rob the individual of his will to act or to hibernate like Ellison's hero or express himself, attended by tremendous suffering.

The ecclesiastical confession is the basis from which various types of modern confession spring. These confessions may not be necessarily religious. They can be, to be more precise, amoral. The religious confession can be compared to Northrop Frye's (*Anatomy of Criticism*, 1957) archetype, which is the basis, and just as there are displaced myths originating from it, in the same way the confessions of the modern individual are the displaced confessions whose archetype is the religious confession. Perhaps this branching out, neglecting the roots, can be traced back to the advancement of science and technology at the end of the previous century that has robbed man of his basic religious and existential assumptions and religion and its large manna-like promises have lost credence. Matthew Arnold's prediction that poetry will take the place of religion has not come true because what abounds in the modern fiction is not the love for poetry or literature but some sort of, stark and stripped of all grandeur, humanity. This is the last yard-stick that man can said to be in possession of. Even in the degenerated world of Samuel Beckett where everything has failed, the personal relationships still count. The companionship is still present. It is different from Forster's personal relationships. The element of humanity varies with every author, but they all throw it up for tentative acclaim now and then, in some form or the other. This stark stripped humanity is perhaps the only answer to the existential predicament and alienations of the modern individual. In this respect William Styron is neither alone nor unique. He is in the tradition of novelists like Dostoevsky and can be placed at par with the modern novelists like Saul Bellow who is his contemporary.

Novels with confessional heroes have been in vogue long before William Styron began writing. The origin of this kind of novel can be traced in the fictions of Fyodor Dostoevsky. This was used by other modern novelists, like Andre Gide, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Koestler, Golding, Saul Bellow and William Styron. In the modern times, the confessional technique has not only been used but also intensified and interiorised. The central character's or protagonist's concern is with self-discovery trying to find out the meaning of the meaning. The confessional hero dwells on the metaphysical questions of 'how' and 'why', He questions the primary causes of which the hypothesis has to be built and is sceptical of the foundations. He feels that he can arrive at some sort of solution or conclusion through a "sincere and single minded self-analysis".

William Styron's first novel, *Lie Down in Darkness* (1951) brought many laurels to the author. It fetched him the most coveted award of the Prix de Rome of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. The important critics like Maxwell Geismar, Howard Mumford Jones and Alfred Kazin showered praises on the novelist on account of this fascinating novel. It put him into the class of "promising young novelists." It also stamped the native Virginian with the label 'Southern Novelist'. It was set in a Virginia town obviously based on Newport News which was Styron's home town. Moreover, its style has been subsequently described by Styron as "self conscious" and "ornate" was clearly an example of Southern Rhetoric. Styron's indebtedness to *Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!* and *The Sound and the Fury* was all too evident. The manipulation of time, the multiple points of view, the interior monologues-even the plot, character and themes are unmistakably Faulknerian in nature and setting.

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Maxwell Geismar called *Lie Down in Darkness* "the best novel of the year... and may be the best novel since world War II." ¹ Another influential writer Ihab Hassan asserted that Styron's first novel "remains one of the outstanding works of post-war fiction."

Styron himself said in a *Paris Review* interview that the Southern setting provided him with some wonderful material - "the conflict between the ordered Protestant tradition, the fundamentalism based on the *Old Testament*, and the twentieth century movies, cars, television." It also offered him a scene appropriate to a novel concerned with guilt and retribution, for as one of his characters? says, the Southern "ground is bloody and full of guilt." On the other hand, *Lie Down in Darkness* exemplifies perfectly Nathan Scott's definition of the typical contemporary novel as one that deals with the difficult marriage, the intricate maze of personal relationship within the family, the ambiguous sexual identity with all its hazardous involvement the crisis of self-recognition in middle age." In this novel, Styron presents a terrifying and complex vision of man detached from his old structural values which constitute the sense of divide, the nucleus of family, the larger contents of group, class, country, culture and heritage. The characters attempt desperately to infuse meaning and life into their dead lives. Each character has been depicted as pitted in a personal struggle against the meaninglessness of existence. Styron tries to suggest that life must be lived without any help-that "to be" is the supreme truth, the *sumum bonum* of human existence. Jonathan Baumbach has pointed out about this novel that "with the progressive

deterioration of its romantic ideals, the aristocracy of Styron's south falls from innocence into decay, from decay into guilt and finally, from guilt into redemption through death."

Styron, Like Faulkner, is one of the few contemporary novelists, who is absorbed with the tragic mode of fiction-writing. The novel begins with a metaphor of spiritual dissociation. Between the railroad station and the smoky industrial town of Port Warwick lies a desolate stretch of weeds and garbage heaps, with rusty gas storage tanks towering above the wasteland. At the station, Styron's heavy drinking and spiritually bankrupt Milton Loftis is waiting for a train bearing the coffin of his dearest daughter, Peyton who has committed suicide by jumping from a building

in New York city. The death of Peyton not only marks the final stage in the disintegration of his family, it also forces Milton to confront his own mortality and to realise that life now holds absolutely nothing for him. In fact, the death of Peyton results into the death of her father, who loves her intensely.

Styron has drawn inspiration for this Southern tragedy from the Greek myths. The events in *Lie Down in Darkness* are surcharged with a poignant sense of suffering. The most distinctive feature of Greek tragedy was that of intense suffering. The tragic action is a movement from guilt through suffering to purgation and insight. The primary structure is always a progression from guilt to purgation. Although Styron has based his novel on Greek tragedy, his tragic vision is shaped considerably by the "modern temper." Modern sensibility is notoriously sensitive to a world of flux, death, disintegration and disorder-a world which seems to fall apart. The image of life created in the mass of modern literature is that of a "fluid" society without a foundation of traditional values. Man is depicted as if in a vacuum or else in a painful predicament being smothered under violent pressure from the values which he no longer believes in. It has been suggested that it is impossible to understand the universe on the metaphysical plane. There cannot be any definite demarcation of categories and absolutes. Depicting this temper, Styron presents a chaotic vision of man separated from his ethic and unable to return to a stable meaningful world.

Survival is a key word in this novel and the survival in the present day implies adjustment to a world devoid of any order. The characters are portrayed as individuals striving to maintain semblance or order and balance in a frenzied world, torn on all sides by disintegrating forces over which he seems to have no control. The characters find opposition, enmity in bringing order into their lives thereby leading to more and more frustration and suffering.

Lie Down in Darkness is a domestic tragedy like Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and Tennessee Williams' *A Street Car Named Desire*. It describes of a Southern family that finally crumbles into degeneration. Fate which is ever-present and ever-haunting, hounds this family down to its very doom. The novel begins in time "present" with Milton Stuart Loftis, the father, waiting for the coffin of his daughter, Peyton, who has committed suicide by falling into a Harlem street. He is accompanied by his mistress, Dolly Bonner and his faithful black servant Ella Swan. The sight of the arrival of the coffin is surcharged with tension. The day progresses slowly as the coffin is carried from Port Warwick to the Cemetery. But as we move forward in space and time, we move simultaneously into the minds of Styron's central characters - Milton, Dolly Bonner, Helen, the Reverend Carey Carr and finally to Helen herself. The reader comes to know the events that led to this terrible present. Thus, Styron unfolds the whole tragic story in shattered parts. Milton's incessant sucking at whisky bottle and his affair with Dolly Bonner, the childish woman who treats him like a small boy, are both defences against the intolerable notion that life is meaningless and old age is inevitable. Helen, too, sucks persistently on cigarettes and pulls her skin so that the wrinkles disappear and thinks that the greatest gift of all would be never to have been born.

In trying to recover the past, however, the Loftises also uncover the sources of their present anguish and of the guilt that plagues them all. To Milton, morality is personified by the image of his dead father and by Helen, whom he sees through his eyes as the epitome of a Good Woman:

My son, never let passion be a guide. Nurture hope, like a flower in the most barren ground of trouble. If love has fed the flame of your brightest imaginings, then passion will perish in that flame and lonely love endure.... Son, listen.... Believe my boy, you have a good woman.

To recall his childhood is to recall the morality he has violated and the guilt he has incurred with his drinking and his adultery. That is why Milton is filled with doom when he is waiting for the dead body of his daughter whom he loved with Oedipal compulsion:

It would come bearing with it, too evidence of all his errors and of all his love-because he loved his daughter more than anything-and the thought which suddenly struck him-that of meeting coffin-filled him with horror.

This is why he thinks of any disloyalty to Helen in terms of "schism and heresy". And this is why he prays, not to God, but to a father who will forgive his wayward son. The central character of the novel is a young woman, Peyton Loftis who belongs to an aristocratic Virginian family. Her father, Milton Loftis is a lawyer who had been lucky in his youth. His father got him a legal commission in army and throughout the War, he was at Governor's Island where he was made first the Lieutenant and then Captain "emerging from the war with rank and with the Colonel's daughter",

It is parents' excessive attachment to each daughter which brings them in opposition to each other. Milton's affection for Peyton arouses intense feelings of sexual jealousy in Helen and she devotes her entire life to protecting her imbecile child, Maudi. This involves the family in a variety of ambivalent love-hate attitudes and is the cause of many dramatic events. This drives Milton into the arms of another woman, Dolly Bonner. Helen turns at last to religion which gives only momentary relief.

The charges of Helen against her daughter of having caused Maudi's untimely death, Peyton rushes in an agony of emotions into the arms of Dick, who wants to marry her. After that, she starts drinking and indulges in sex before finally, marrying Harry, a Jewish painter. Peyton leaves her parents home due to her father's excessive love and Helen's hatred. Finally, she leaves Harry and commits suicide by jumping from a building. Harry sends back the dead body to old Virginia to a loving sorrowful father who destroyed with his own hands the only thing "he really cared for".

The Oedipal quest is present from the very beginning of the novel. Styron's usage of this classical myth is not to retell the story from the contemporary point of view, but he uses it as a means of literary allusion to lend significance to the theme by means of parallel. The deterioration of the values in the South, the presence of blood guilt, the innered sense of sin and decay are all part of the social life of the people. The references to them are very frequent in the novel. It can be seen on the wedding day of Peyton:

A distinctly believe, DOC, that the race is headed for destruction... you know what it is? It's time and remembrances.(p.303)

There is again reference to the diseased city, infested with guilt and shame through the neurotic dreams of Helen:

In this landscape there were always the vaguest outlines of a city, with many ornate towers, from which pestilence rose like smoke through the air. It was a city of corpses and a faint moldering order ... The corpses which lay strewn about were faceless.... iridescent with decay.(p.227)

In this sense, the novel resembles, Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* in which Oedipus marries his mother by killing his father accidentally.

Milton's father, who is dead for a long time, is acting as Tiresias in this novel. His frequent remarks in the

beginning of the novel through the memory of Milton, clearly tell of the foreboding gloom that is to come:

I do not propose to convince, his father had said (in the feeble light of a March afternoon thirty year ago, before the house was finally condemned, but not long before, when even the lightest footstep on the stairs sent a plaintive wooden squeal through the joints and beams, reminder not only of the swiftly aging house but of the passing of a finer, more tranquil age. I do not propose to convince you merely through paternal advice which no doubt you in your wilful notions of final duty would abjure anyway, I only trust you will heed the warning of one who has seen much water pass as it were beneath the bridge, one to whom I must admit the temptations of the flesh have been potent and manifold, and that you will perhaps in some measures renounce a way of life which even in its most charitable concept can lead only to grief and possibly complete ruin. I am an old man now.(p.14)

Milton's father, who is long dead, seems to echo three oft-repeated curses: sin, guilt and death. Styron describes the final extinction of the Loftis family. The sins of the father are visited upon the children. The degradation of the family is symbolised by Maudie whose imbecility approximates to a representation of "dynastic guilt".

Although Milton is the anti-heroic hero of *Lie Down in Darkness*, Peyton is the centre around which the action revolves. She is the catalyst of her parents' conflicts. Each major episode in the novel takes place on a day of crucial importance to her- the Sunday that inaugurates Milton's fall from grace, her 16th birthday which is climaxed by her discovery of Milton's affair with the day of her departure for college, an occasion marred by the usual Loftis family quarrels and the day of her wedding, which Carey Carr would like to think of as the "symbolic affirmation of a moral order," but which ends in emotional chaos. Peyton's consciousness is revealed to us through the eyes of her parents. We actually move into the psyche of Peyton in the penultimate chapter. Peyton's monologue virtually demands both Freudian and religious interpretations. She has been depicted as neurotic, irresponsible and sexually promiscuous girl who seeks in death the peace and purification she cannot find in life.

Peyton finds herself spiritually orphan partly due to the estranged relationship with her father and partly due to the malice of her mother. She feels that she is drowning in a sea of despair. the estranged relationship between Peyton and Milton can be seen in her monologues.

(1) In a letter to her father, she writes:

Oh, Daddy, I don't know what's wrong. I've tried to grow up - to be a good little girl, as you would say, but everywhere I turn I seem to walk deeper and deeper into some terrible despair. What's wrong, Daddy? What's wrong? Why is happiness such a precious thing? What have we done with our lives so that everywhere we turn to matter how hard we try not to-we cause other people sorrow?(p.35)

Her prayer is always the same: that she be again as she was as a child, when she walked hand in hand with the father who is also lost to her now:

Oh, I miss you so, Daddy: I wish I could see you, talk to you and have you say nice things to me, I wish I could come home. I wish it were possible. Oh Daddy, I wish I could come home: The birds are haunting me beyond all belief. Such wingless.(p.36)

The queer relation of a father and daughter can be seen when Milton and Helen used to visit Connellsville in a car and Peyton stung by the bees came running to her father:

The bees, Daddy, the bees, the bees... but Milton was running from his chair, intercepting her, tossing, Peyton high in the air as the small prim skirt blossomed like a gaudy flower against

the sky. And so, muzzling his face against her neck, he bore her toward the porch, both of them giggling, both of them buzzing like bees.(p.26)

Also, when Milton asks Peyton by taking her hand, "Are you going to stay with me, a little while? ... Well, are you going to my, honey?" Peyton replies in a very rude manner unlike a daughter, "Daddy, get out of here."¹³ On Peyton's wedding day, Milton realises his Oedipal attachment to his daughter with a growing sense of horror:

.... he saw Peyton, those solid curved hips trembling over so faintly; he thought desperately, hopelessly, of something he could not admit to himself, but did; of now. being above-most animal and horrid even since he was child enough to love the face of a woman and the flesh, too.... like a beautiful, bloody savage(p.271)

Also, Milton, speaks in a state of drunkenness, "He remembered then that she was irretrievably lost forever, that he had no claims on her any more." Like Oedipus, she is oppressed with incestuous guilt and this apprehension of guilt drives her to death in search for a father she had never known before. Peyton laments the loss of her father. She is impelled by her quest for father-love:

..... I wept like a baby thinking: if Harry saw me, thinking of St. Catherine, or Orestes and Iphigenia and her knife: my life hath known no father, she screamed, any road to any end may run, and outside cars went serenely on the gravel spring time roads and I could hear children call beneath the trees.(p.327)

It is this guilt which impelled her to commit suicide because she thinks that she will be purged to her guilt in her death. In this way, she will return to her father's arms: clean and in a virgin state like a babe born anew.

Like Oedipus, Peyton's penance is complete and the furies are quiescent. The mythic story of the House of Atreus then forms the sub-structure of this novel. The final achievement of the use of mythical parallel is to deepen the experience of the Loftis family. Styron has successfully and skilfully presented the two levels of experience-myth and reality. We experience these both simultaneously and with equal sense of involvement.

The most engaging and absorbing problem that Styron presents in the novel is the problem of guilt which may be both inherited and individual. There is a quest for a guilt free existence. The pre-destined fall of his characters is caused by a deep sense of guilt and the innate desire to escape from the consciousness of guilt. In *Lie Down in Darkness*, we are led to believe that the struggle to find meaning and the search for grace is a search that leads inevitably to destruction. It is Peyton who is really conscious of her guilt and she tries to wipe off that guilt by falling from a building, thereby committing suicide. The characters in this novel especially Peyton, recognise their inadequacy; theirs is a personal quest for the transcendent self.

Guilt forms the core of thematic content of the novel. It depicts a paradise fallen into chaos as each character attempts to escape the agonising consciousness of guilt. Helen escapes into religion, and when it falls, into insanity, Milton escapes through drinking and adultery. Peyton alone can shake off the knowledge of guilt- not through any conscious process of self purification, but through death.

Throughout the novel, the birds symbolise guilt. In her monologue just preceding death, Peyton murmurs, "Guilt is the thing with feathers, they came back with a secret rustle, preening their flightless wings, and I didn't want to think."(p.352). The dominant image is that of the wingless birds which indicate Peyton's inability to shake off the burden of guilt.

Styron uses the image of the male sexual organ through birds, which implies again Peyton's sexual guilt. Peyton explains her first sexual experience with Dick Cartwright in the form of birds :

Dickie Boy couldn't ever get big after the first time, he was afraid and sometimes he'd sob he

was so frustrated, his bird was so small and futile, but he had warm hands and when we lay down in the darkness, I felt his ribs.(p.340)

Peyton's mind is obsessed with guilt, and birds of all sizes, shapes and colours, haunt her continuously :

I tried to think. There were birds in my mind, land bound birds whirling about, dodos and penguins and cassowaries, ostriches befouling their lovely black plumes and these seemed mixed up with Bunny.

The reference to "Bunny", her father clearly indicates the Oedipal nature of Peyton's guilt. The only alternative which Peyton feels to be in her hand to escape this guilt, is that she must die. "... Oh, God, I must die today, but will I not rise again at another time and stand on the earth clean and incorruptible ?"(p.358)

Peyton desires to establish a new relationship with her father. This seems impossible because she has never witnessed Milton as her father rather she has seen him only as a lover and the vice versa. She also knows that her quest to see him as a father will not be fulfilled in this life. So, she commits suicide in order to see the father in the next life. On the brink of salvation, she longs for the comfort of her father's arms, "Oh my father, Oh my darling, longingly, lonesomely I fly into your arms."(p.368) She has a strong hope and desire that she will see her father in an entirely new form which will be nothing but a daughter-father relation, "Perhaps I shall rise at another time, though I lie down in darkness and have my light in ashes." (p.368)The birds - a symbol of deep-seated guilt, fly at last, when Peyton herself flies into the arms of a loving father :

I turn in the room, see them across the tiles, dimly prancing, fluffing up their wings, I think, my poor flightless birds, have you suffered without soaring on this earth ? Come then and fly. And they move on past one through the darkening sands awkward and gentle, rustling their feathers; come then and fly. And so it happens treading past to touch my boiling skin - one whisper of feathers is all - so I see them go - Oh my Christ : one by one ascending my flightless birds through the suffocating night, towards paradise. I am dying, Bunny, dying. But you must be proper.(p.368)

In *Lie Down in Darkness*, both Milton and Helen have been shown as utter failures. Their life may be summed up by a piteous "Nothing, Nothing; Nothing!" It is Peyton alone, who in her death achieves a kind of transcendence. She rationalises her sins as attempts to find a new father and a home to replace the one she has lost.

In Freudian term, Peyton kills herself because she is convinced that "all hopeless beyond memory, back in the sticky dark womb and that "undivorced from guilt," she must divorce herself from life. That her guilt is connected with the paradigmatic episode of the bell tower is clear from the circumstances of her death. Removing her clothes so that she will be as naked and cleaned as a child, she leaps from a loft in Harlem. She is delivering herself, she feels, into the arms of that god-father-lover who has betrayed her and has been rejected, in turn, by her. In other terms (as the pains in her womb ambiguously suggest), Peyton's suicide is not only an act of destruction, but an attempt at "re-creation". She hopes to find in death the all-powerful father, she could not find in life. She also hopes to find her "light in ashes", to achieve in the darkness of physical death that birth of spirit aborted temporarily.

So, Peyton is a characteristic confessional individual. She had been born in a world of distorted relationships. There had been a grave disorientation. She had been thrust into it, tried to break away from it and consequently had suffered for the whole of her life. Like other confessional individuals, she also has to take into consideration two aspects - namely, self-examination and her true/false relations with others. Her self-examination makes her realise that the chances of finding a meaningful self are bleak. She tries to link herself with the outside through her extended monologues which are a form of confession. Her letter to her father bears testimony to the wrecked

Freudian relationship and its dark shadow enveloping all her subsequent relationships. Through her separation from her father and trying to adjust with one man after the other are futile efforts to understand and establish harmonious and true relationship with other individuals. How successful is she at it, is shown by her last violent act, of stripping herself of all the clothes. It symbolizes her last desperate effort to physically extricate herself from her past guilt and its burden and be as naked as she was when she was born, which again is an attempt to regain the lost innocence and harmony. The disintegration has gone too far with her and the world around her. Even her Oedipus like father realizes it. She also is possessed of the same characteristic paradox. For the whole of her life, when she was living, it had been an emphasizing of the negative aspects, broken relationships and disintegration. It is only when she is the nearest to death does she realize the value of mutuality, harmonious relationship and the life of babe-like innocence. The paradox is that for the whole of her living life, it had been emotional and relationship-wise death. When she is about to die, she has blazing moments of perception and for a moment lives. Once again the paradox is that her baptismal cleansing can only be posthumous. Ironically, she can never have Ella Swan like baptismal cleansing in this life and be united with Christ and the missionary Daddy Faith. Her intense self-examination shows her that the only possible way of regaining order, meaning and truly harmonious relationships can be after death. Are we supposed to understand that death gives meaning to life? One thing at least is clear. In the case of Peyton, death becomes the re-generative force. Her confession and perception can, to some extent, vouch for her baptismal cleansing and the death can, at least in her own eyes, give her a purer and truer life of order and meaning. However, the paradox remains. What is death? If it is the all annihilative force that reduces everything to an empty void, then surely it cannot be regenerative and meaningful in any sense. It may be supposed that death gives a neat emotional rounding up to the biography of Peyton. However, Styron loses Christian mythology in the last chapter and attempts to wipe the curse and cleanse the environment through the waters of baptism, the promises of Jesus in the *New Testament* to the Christians that he would be with them fully resurrected after the crucifixion and the benign presence and prayer of Daddy Faith. But the last scene excludes the major and significant characters. Perhaps Styron wants to indicate only the characters of lesser significance can hope to find baptism and the love of each other as Ella Swan is shown with her children. Then the feeling we get is that the white race is too far gone with alienation and disintegration. There cannot be any comeback for them. Whatever they can get can only be posthumous. Whereas the Negroes with their lesser sensitivity and feeling can hope to have faith in something benign. This again points at the wrecking of religion for the white race. Perhaps the characters with emotional complexity can never hope to find peace and happiness. In this sense, the Negroes are treading onwards to alienation and disintegration.

Peyton's partial cleansing through the symbol of her nudity and her faith in the posthumous existence and the order and meaning it can give, are in consonance with the tentative nature of everything given to man in this life. There can never be absolute affirmation and accommodation. Whatever order and meaning and affirmation can there be, can only be partial, momentary, fragmented and of this fleeting and paradoxical nature. However, Styron excels in the complexity of his character portrayals of Peyton, and the characters surrounding her especially her Freudian and real husbands. This too is in keeping with the explorations of the modern clinical psychology of the human psyche.

Lie Down in Darkness is more complex and fragmented than *The Long March*. Character motivation and action variations have increased considerably. The chronology also is not linear but broken and complex like the psyche of the characters through whom the time and incidents of their life are presented. *The Long March* tended to deal with only one significant action and presented the graph of Captain Mannix's development through the long march ordered by his authoritarian but hollow Colonel. *Lie Down in Darkness* brings in the Electra-complex and presents more subtle variations of the thought processes raging in the minds of the significant characters. It is more in keeping with the paradoxical and contradictory nature of life. Styron has come a long way from the writing of his *The Long March*. The confessional individual, as we have seen, is in

keeping with the tradition of Dostoevsky and follows the same train of thought and development of Gide, Sartre, Camus, Koestler, Golding and Bellow. Like their characters, Peyton too comes to understand through her self-examination and the relation of her self with the others. The only affirmation awarded is her comprehension of her self, relations with others, her predicament and the paradoxical nature of everything. Life and death become the two sides of the coin. Little difference is left between annihilation and regeneration which is akin to O'Neill's *Great Flood* and a new, clean and pure beginning in child-like innocence.

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(The subsequent references are made from this text)