CHAPTER III

"As I Lay Dying": Madness and Sanity

No American writer's work opens itself for critical displacement more readily than Faulkner's, yet for many years the critical tradition largely repressed that openness for the purpose of a certain edification that explicitly denied Faulkner's novels their status as objects of knowledge. (Morris, Wesley with Barbara A. Morris. Reading Faulkner: Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989. 7)

The dividing line of madness and sanity is not as marked as we generally understand. Just as it is difficult to grasp reality which is in a state of flux, similarly, it is difficult to understand the distinction of madness and sanity. Again, what we believe a particular action to be sane may not be so in reality. Most of the time our judgment is heavily coloured by layers of motive and other considerations. In this story we see the sharp difference between action and motive. All the members of the Bundren family engaged in the bizarre funeral journey has a hidden motive or selfish interest which they hide to themselves and which Faulkner confides to the readers.

All the members of the family are convinced that Darl has gone into madness and the treatment he receives at the end of the novel is considered reason-
able or justifiable. He is sent to Jackson, a lunatic asylum. Even Cash, who cannot support wholeheartedly the way the family members treat Darl, finally thinks that Jackson is a better place for Darl. Gradually Faulkner reveals that the views of all the members of the Bundren are coloured by some individual interest. They cannot come out of their self-interest to give objective view on Darl's behaviour. It is true that Faulkner has not absolved Darl of the shortcomings of other characters. There are indications that there is a gradual breakdown of the mental state of Darl. But this malady is not an isolated phenomenon; rather it is an aspect of the totality of the lives of the Bundren.

Addie, once a schoolteacher near Frenchman's Bend, married Anse Bundren, a countryman with a small farm near the Yoknapatawpha River. After she had borne him two children, she asked him to promise to take her to Jefferson to be buried with her kin when she died; she considered it as revenge for Anse's trickery of her with words about love, which, she came to realize, he could neither understand nor feel. Believing that the reason for living was to experience the violation of one's aloneness, and knowing that Anse could never break through their separate cells of individuality, she had an affair with Whitefield, the preacher. After their relationship was over, Addie found that she was pregnant with Jewel, whom Anse accepted as his own child. She then gave Anse another child, Dewey Dell, to "negative" Jewel, and still another, Vardaman, to "replace the child she had robbed him of" (467).

Nine years after the youngest child was born, Addie lay dying, while outside the window Cash hammered on her coffin and neighbours came to visit. Darl persuaded Jewel to go with him to pick up a load of lumber, knowing in his
preternatural way that Addie would die before they returned and that Jewel, her favourite son, would be absent from her bedside. Just after Addie's death a violent storm broke, the lumber-loaded wagon lost a wheel in a ditch, and what with one thing and another it was three days before the coffin was loaded in the wagon and the family set off on the twenty-odd mile journey to Jefferson and the cemetery.

The novel tries to explore, among others, the breakdown of the experiential communication, which is often replaced by language. The verbal formula, however, is a merely sounding gong which does not serve the experience apart from being a mere superficial decoration. In this connection Dorothy Tuck says: "One of the basic premises of human relationships in the novel is that the individual is doomed to a cellular existence whose isolation is rarely broken by contact with another only rarely and, in many cases, not at all" (38). Addie, at first unaware of the intrinsic superficiality of contact even between husband and wife, discovers with a shock, when her aloneness is violated by the birth of Cash, that Anse has never touched her, that he had interposed empty words between them without ever knowing the reality of the things for which the words stand. Darl, the most sensitive of her children, feels his isolation perhaps the most deeply, but uses his perception as a weapon to intrude upon other consciousness as means to violate what Hawthorne calls the sanctity of the heart. This type of violation is intellectual rather than emotional, and thus deadly. Darl learns not to give but to probe, not to touch but to threaten.

Related to the idea of human isolation is the failure of the characters to live up according to the verbal formula. Cora Tull is the most extreme example of this
kind. Conventional and righteous, as devoid of brains as her chickens, her speech is full of the phrases and rhythms of rural Southern religion, her life is largely shaped according to its verbal formulas, and her response to both individual and situations is automatically dictated by it. She sees life only in terms of words like "sin" and "pride" and "repentance" and "duty" and other similar pious phrases which are the more appalling because she implicitly believes in what she is saying without having the least understanding of it. Addie reveals both her pity and contempt for Cora, whose life is composed only of words, without any significant action, when she speaks of her as "Cora, who could never even cook" (465).

The novel is constructed out of the thoughts and feelings of fifteen characters—the seven Bundrens and eight "outsiders" (both neighbours and strangers)—each of whom narrates one or more short sections describing Addie's death or funeral journey. The neighbours supply objective information and physical details, while the Bundrens, circling in their small orbit around Addie, talk about each other and reveal themselves. As the other narrators speak, impression is added to impression as the same event is given slightly different emphasis in the eyes of each beholder, and broad outlines of personalities are suggested, to be corrected and filled in as the action of the novel progresses.

The process of multiple perspective results in a gradual unfolding of meaning in which an action described by one character is given further significance when the scene is passed through the imagination of another person and another perspective and more bits of information are presented. The author's voice is almost entirely lacking. We are not told about the characters, but exposed in the midst of them to find out for ourselves what they are like. As a result, we are not
given any conclusion or judgment about the characters except those that they themselves have made.

The physical fact of Addie's death and the funeral journey provide the occasion for the action. With the addition of flood-producing rains, July heat, and washed-out bridges and roads, the stage is set, and the unfortunate Bundrens encounter a series of disasters that make their progress punctuated with farce and horror. In the course of the novel the Bundrens face death and flood and fire, the most elemental obstacles to man's mastery of his environment, and those over which he has least control. And in their struggle to cope with the situation, each member of the family is subjected to stress that reveals the most basic aspects of his personality.

Out of the fifty-nine narrative fragments, with a total of fifteen speeches by varying characters, the half of the fragments is narrated by Darl Bundren, the second child of Eddie Bundren. Darl's sections count nineteen in total. The remaining forty sections are narrated alternately by the other five members of the family including a section of Eddie herself and the neighbours of the Bundrens. The characters speak or reflect at various turns of the action and on numerous levels of consciousness; so the reader immediately becomes aware of the problem of perspective with the characters. The method of withholding information in Faulkner's novels also creates extra burden for the reader to assess the characters along the progress of the story.

Next to Darl, Vardaman narrates ten sections but most of his sections deal with a child's reaction to the events without understanding them properly. However, Vardaman's substitution of his mother for a fish is not as simplistic as a
child's inability to make the difference. Faulkner has dealt with this issue as another dimension of the major themes of the novel which will be dealt with later on. Anyway Faulkner makes Dari as the single predominant narrator through whose eye we gain perspective closer to the reality to the bizarre funeral proceedings. In Faulkner's understanding reality cannot be grasped so easily. So we cannot say that Dari's has been made perfect to represent the reality. If it were so, he could foresee the betrayal of his family members when he is sent to prison.

Anyway, among the Bundrens Dari is the most articulate, and disturbed, member of the family, and he attempts to resolve his dilemma in terms of language. Cash occupies an intermediate position in number of sections assigned because he represents a balance between words and deeds. Jewel and Addie, who claim to avoid words, are assigned one section each. Although the community receives only slightly more than a quarter of the sections, its presence is maintained for two reasons. First, since men like Samson, Armstid, Mosley, and MacGowan remain fixed in their respective locations, they help to record the stops the Bundrens make on their journey toward Jefferson. Secondly, the community's presence offers absolute norms of value against which to measure the Bundrens' endeavours. Lastly, the communal characters provide the reader with information the family otherwise distorts or suppresses. Tull, for example, narrates directly and factually the attempted river crossing.

Although Darl Bundren seems to be the spokesman of the author, or, at least, Faulkner shares all the opinions expressed by Darl, he is the most misunderstood person in the novel. While the hatred of Dewey Dell and Jewel towards Dari is prompted by their awareness that Darl knows their secrets, other mem-
bers of the family fail to know him. Even Cora, who thinks that Dari has deep affection for his mother, is also wrong. Dari cannot love his mother, because he has seen her treating Jewel with more affection. Again he knows his mother’s adulterous life—her relation with Whitefield.

Dari, whose abnormality is insistently noted by others, is a character whose style, and thus identity, sometimes approximates Faulkner’s. By this similarity, Faulkner suggests the familiar theme madness allied to genius, a topic he commented on at the University of Virginia: “who can say just how much of superperceptivity.... A mad person might not have? ....... it’s nice to think that there is some compensation of madness. That may be the madman does see more than the sane man. That the world is more moving to him” (Gwynn 113). Paradoxically, however, if one assumes that Faulkner remains relativistic in technique in this novel, he is implying through Dari’s madness the inadequacy of verbal forms to order and reflect reality, a view which allies Faulkner also with Addie and, by inference, Jewel.

There are evidences that Faulkner’s voice shares some of the features of Dari’s speech. This fact can be ascertained when we compare the syntax of Dari’s speech with the fourth section of The Sound and the Fury, in which Faulkner drops the interior monologues of the three previous characters to assume his own voice. Dari’s syntactic incompleteness and semantic shifts from one level to another and the density of his structure are the hallmarks frequently associated with Faulkner himself. For example, we can cite the following sentence of The Sound and the Fury:

The day dawned black and chill, a moving wall of grey light out of the north-
east which, instead of dissolving into moisture, seemed to disintegrate into minute and venomous particles, like dust that, when Dilsey opened the door of the cabin and emerged, needled laterally into her flesh, precipitating not so much a moisture as a substance partaking of the quality of thin, not quite congealed oil. (265)

Here we can note the suspension of forward movement and return to previous levels and the packing of several structures within one layer. The same syntactic structure and the frequent shifts of semantic levels are seen in the monologues of Darl. His records of Dewy Dell’s response to his knowledge of her pregnancy becomes obsessive and his syntax reveals a linguistic of madness. For example we can cite the following sentence:

Her face is calm and sullen, her eyes brooding and alert; within them I can see Peabody’s back like two round peas in two thimbles; perhaps in Peabody’s back two of those worms which work surreptitious and steady through you and out the other side and you waking suddenly from sleep or from waking with an expression on your face sudden, intent, and concerned. (97)

As Cash comments, Darl’s insanity is a relative matter, in actuality, based on the presumptions of others. Cash realizes that although perception and judgments are subjective, they are passed to be true or objective when a number of interpretations or opinions coincide. In other words, on the basis of people’s word coincidence, not verified by further observations and experimentations, people usually make judgment about the validity of a thing. In such kind of inference there is every possibility of committing a blunder. So it is better not to have a
passionate conviction about a matter. There is always a scope of qualification and redefinition about a particular fact. Too much assertiveness and absolutism is only a sign of immaturity and weakness. Cash says: "Sometimes I think it aint none of us pure crazy and aint none of us pure sane until the balance of us talks him that-a-way. It's like it aint so much what a fellow does, but it's the way the majority of folks is looking at him when he does it" (223).

The community's indictment of Darl is as much the product of verbal constructs as are Anse's concept of love or Cora's convictions on sin. Faulkner seems to underscore the nature of subjectivity of every judgment by assigning Cash to comment on the motif of insanity which he says in colloquial dialect and diction indicating uncertainty with phrases such as "sometimes", "it's like", etc. Then Cash uses his carpenter's terminology and his standard of craftsmanship to judge Darl's burning of the barn. Accordingly, Cash says, "there just aint nothing justifies the deliberate destruction of what a man has built with his own sweat and stored the fruit of his sweat into" (228). Cash's statements carry the significant form of surface symmetry expected of the artisans. This indicates that judgment or opinions are formed within the individual's frame of reference over and above his necessity of some neat label to fix on the matter concerned, although the label may not be able to signify it adequately.

Faulkner's use of the technique of multiple perspective is not a mere narrative strategy, but it has relations to his recurrent theme dealing with the fluidity of reality. All the characters—even Darl whom we know to be the most insightful—have their limitations of perception. Despite his clairvoyance and its accuracy in may cases, Darl fails to foresee the culmination of events that led to his
imprisonment as a lunatic as well as for the crime of burning the barn of Giliepsie. Darl is struck with deep anguish when he sees himself being betrayed by even Cash whom he trusted. He thought that Cash would certainly inform him if something very bad develops, but Cash, incapacitated by his broken leg or by extension the crippling human factors, fails to inform Darl about the motives of his family members.

Whatever the crime of Darl, (if there is a crime at all) Darl does not deserve the punishment. Darl does not burn Giliepsie's barn with any criminal motive. Instead, he sees that the burning of the putrescent dead body by way of disposal is the only way he can think of in that situation. So Cash who is very close to him also feels that Darl has done right although he does not succeed in burning the dead body.

Although Cash also agrees with the majority that Darl deserves the jail for burning the barn of Giliepsie, he never thinks Darl in terms of madness. If a man's mistake is called madness, everyone has committed such mistakes in his/her life not only once but several times. Cash makes a valid reasoning in this line of thinking, although he does not have the capacity to assert his points, which otherwise would have saved Darl from being imprisoned. Before departure, Darl repeatedly asks Cash as to why he did not inform him about the secret plan of the family members.

With a wry humour Faulkner has suggested that the so-called sane people may act in a bizarre way, equally deserving the term madness, when a person responds to a certain situation, particularly a situation that is very crucial in his/her life. For example, we see Dewey Dell transforming herself into Draculla-like
creature pawing Darl in a violent way when she sees that Darl has ultimately been caught and that the table has been turned on him. Darl observes:

She hadn’t said a word, hadn’t even looked at him, but when them fellows told him what they wanted and that they had come to get him and he threwed back, she jumped on him like a wild cat so that one of the fellows had to quit and hold her and her scratching and clawing at him like a wild cat, while the other one and pa and Jewel threwed Darl down and held him lying on his back, looking up at me. (227)

Dewey Dell hates Darl because he knows her affairs with Lafe and the subsequent pregnancy out of their love affairs. Dewy Dell’s awkward position out of the pregnancy is not created by Darl; so her pregnancy is not for Darl’s fault. He just happens to know this and he has not divulged this secret to any person. Dewy Dell’s strange act at the time of catching Darl comes under more critical scrutiny if both of them are placed together to weigh their sanity and madness.

Although it is a funeral procession of Eddie Bundren, the characters concern little about the solemnity of the occasion. Because except Darl, each character has a secret plan to gratify their personal desire. So the appearance is deceptive. Just how unimportant the funeral procession is may be understood from the little mention Eddie gets at her final destination. Faulkner has deliberately left out the burial part of Eddie, which otherwise should receive more details in the episode as her burial should be the culminating point in the narrative. The deliberate absence of details about Eddie’s burial suggests that it is a story of something else.
Everyone is pointing towards Jefferson—to each of them the town seems to be a place of their fulfillment which unites them with a driving force, as a result of which they forget that the dead body has become putrescent to an outrageous extent. The reaction of the people of Mottstown and the constant hovering of buzzards in the trail of the wagon suggest the decaying condition of the body. While all the members of the family on the wagon hold a posture of steadfastness as if nothing has happened to the condition of the dead body, the shock and reaction of Mrs. Armstid, and Vardaman's constant attempt to drive away the buzzards, give the objective information about the condition of Addie's body.

Anse Bundren's long cherished desire to get new set of teeth seems to fulfill with the death of Eddie. Having nothing common with him in their conjugal life, Eddie probably thinks of going back to her people at least after her death, if not in living condition, as she cannot choose to leave her husband's home and the children while she is alive. The way Anse manages to elicit the money of Dewey Dell given by Lafe for her abortion is something very grotesque that Faulkner's genius could ever invent. This episode breaks the conventional notion of propriety in any fictional work. Perhaps no other writer would ever think up such incident that is both bizarre and amusing.

Eddie's life seems to be a penal servitude rather than living a normal life of a Yoknapatawphan county peasant. Unlike other country folks, such as Cora and Mrs. Armstid, Eddie was educated and had been a school teacher. Her education probably alienated her from her husband and other country folks who were illiterate. Her indifference to life and the family suggests her independent nature which in the absence of stimulus becomes devastated. Perhaps in order
to escape the utter isolation, she develops a sexual relationship with the clergyman Whitefield. The mental desolation leads her to request Anse to take her dead body to Jefferson—a sort of dream fulfillment. Cora thinks it is the revengeful mind in Eddie that makes her husband take her body while she lays dying in the coffin. It is a design to hurt herself without letting them know how she suffers.

Addie's reflection on word indicates that there is every danger of the signifier being thought itself as the signified. Addie's disillusionment with the word of "love" uttered by Anse needs special attention. There is a huge gave between what Anse says and what it carries with it as its meaning. Anse can utter the word quite slovenly without seeing its act being performed in reality. Addie sees Anse uses the word to fill the gap of lacking. Ultimately, she becomes resigned, and she sees her existence as a living dead. Her profound realization of the emptiness of word, when it is projected to substitute its action, gives her an awareness of its wider ontological implications.

The problem of communication in the context of the inherent indeterminacy of language, and the slovenliness of man's nature in the use of language is clearly seen here. Language is a vehicle to carry the meaning of what a person acts or thinks; but Faulkner has seen that most of the time language itself asserts as the absolute, or the reality, instead of representing what it purports to represent. Moreover, word may help to disguise certain devilish action under its garb and represent it in an appearance which is accepted as something positive by the society. Addie, after giving birth to her first child Cash, realizes that word may play a cruel joke in the life of a person. The society may call the birth of Cash as the fruit of Anse's love of Addie, but she cannot accept it to be so. The reality Addie
faces is different from all the words showered upon her. Addie says, “That was when I learned that words are no good; that words don’t ever fit even what they are trying to say at……. Love, Anse called it. But I had been used to words for a long time. I knew that word was like the others: a shape to fill a lack…………” (164).

Addie’s practical experience during child-rearing period does not conform to the presumption made by Anse and the society. There is a gap between what people like to term her experience from outside and her own feeling about it from inside. Addie says, “I would think how words go straight up in a thin line, quick and harmless, and how terribly doing goes along the earth, clinging to it” (165).

Addie’s realization of the emptiness of word is not a casual observation or a sudden realization of hers. In fact it is the very concern of the author which find wider treatment in this novel. The tendency to substitute one for another readily takes place when one cannot bear the intensity of reality or when one cannot consciously try to gain a deeper insight into the reality. Except Darl all the characters take recourse to substitution of one kind or another as they are caught in the tragic situation of Eddie’s death. In Darl’s mind, the horse is Jewel’s mother, because it is jewel himself, not Darl, who has become so engrossed with the animal that Jewel readily finds a substitute of his mother after her death. Faulkner seems to emphasize this point when he refers to the background of the horse. It is not an ordinary horse; Jewel’s horse is a descendent of one of the famous spotted horses Flem Snopes brought from Texas—a legendary steed with noble ancestry. The horse Jewel caresses and curses is a surrogate for Addie which perpetuates Addie’s emotional relationship with Jewel, and one can presume that it prevents Jewel to love another woman.
Darl is fundamentally different from the other members of the family because he can find no link whatsoever, not even a selfish one, between his vision and the long trek to Jefferson. When Eddie dies, leaving the family no longer a coherent unit, one of Darl's mirrors of himself is broken. Thus he begins his journey to the mental disintegration that he reveals when, on the train for the state mental hospital, he speaks of himself in the third person: "our brother Darl in a cage in Jackson where, he grimed hands lying light in the quiet interstices, looking out he foams" (244). Reacting to Addie's emotional rejection of him, Darl forces an awareness of himself on others in an attempt to assert the reality of his self. With extraordinary perception, he is able to divine the secrets of the other members of the family. As Tull says, he looks at you "like he has got into the inside of you" (119). Thus Dewey Dell is forced to recognize Darl because his knowledge intrudes between her and her sweetheart Lafe. As a result, she hates Darl and is finally responsible for having him sent to Jackson.

The difference between Darl and the others lies in his expansive vision that transcends the limits of space and time. Darl describes even the scenes he has not seen. He is the reliable witness at crucial events whether he is present, as he is in the crossing of the river, or absent, as he is at the death of Addie. Darl proves through cause-effect logic the reality of what is irrevocably there, including his own being: "Yet the wagon is, because when the wagon is was, Addie Bundren will not be. And Jewel is, so Addie Bundren must be. And then I must be, or I could not empty myself for sleep in a strange room. And so if I am not emptied yet, I am is" (76).
The rest of the Bundrens, uncontrolled with ontology, confine their awareness to the plainly real, either to those objects that attract them to Jefferson or, in the cases of Jewel and Cash, to the horse and coffin that become essential parts of the trip. In these objects they discover themselves as well as a focus for whatever grief the death for Addie Bundren invokes, and thus reduce the grief to the human dimensions that make it tolerable. Jewel and the horse he has bought by working both day and night for five months, Cash and the coffin he builds for Addie with such painstaking care, Vardaman and the fish he substitutes for the body of Addie and later the toy train that waits in Jefferson, Dewey Dell and the abortion she frantically seeks, Anse and his long-desired teeth—these are the channels of grief and the reasonable substitutions of new purpose. They are the images that enlist the Bundrens in the journey to Jefferson. “Out side the body of images”, says Donald M. Kartiganer, “like a Nietzschean Dionysos, beckons the madness of a vision that rejects image, that cannot convert feeling into object, motive into action” (26). Darl’s remoteness from things is his remoteness from the journey, from the family, and even from the narrative line of the novel. Whatever the members of the family and the others think about Darl, the reader has no difficulties in identifying the dept of his efforts. When he says, "She wants Him to hide her away from the sight of man"(204), the members may not understand it, but to the reader it appears to be the only rational voice among the Bundrens, in spite of their considering it to be the voice of insanity, seemingly rejecting the forms that sanity requires. Darl’s deep insight of human life and situation goes beyond the comprehension of the family members. William Rossky says, “The total vision of life, of the universal and terrible incongruitites of existence, which is essentially Darl’s vision and to a
degree Addie's, inspires, then, Dari's sardonic yet poignantly anguished laughter" (183). However, this laughter is taken to be a symptom of madness by the society.

Of all the Bundrens, Vardaman is the one whose transformation of death is the purest. The shortest monologue in the novel is this: "My mother is a fish" (79). Being a child Vardaman lacks the cunning of Anse and the doggedness of Cash, which enable them to replace the shock of death with what they well know is self-interest or the mind-consuming activities. In his innocence Vardaman resorts to a basic primitivism: my mother is dead but she lives still, as the body of a fish. This identification of Addie and the fish is the act of a mind prior to metaphor, prior to the need to imagine rather than simply to receive an immediate substitution of body for absence. Addie must be somewhere, in some sensual form. There can be no idea of Addie that does not take the shape of something in Vardaman's world.

Vardaman exemplifies the kind of primitive mind Ernst Cassirer discusses in several works: the mind that, not yet educated to the ways of scientific thought, sees life as an unbroken continuous whole, and can move without self-deception from the mother to the fish. The barrier of difference is not insurmountable; they dissolve and fluctuate. Nothing has a definite, invariable, static shape. By a sudden metamorphosis everything may be turned into everything. The law of metamorphosis can be clearly seen as the characteristic feature of the mythical world: anything can be transformed into anything; anything can be interpreted as anything through associations or metonymic process.

By understanding the primitive tradition behind Vardaman's initial reaction to Addie's death, we can understand the background of what it is the other
Bundrens are doing. Faced with the problem of death, the Bundrens instinctively resort to images and gestures only once removed from Vardaman’s awareness of a world of magic. Jewel’s horse is, like the fish, a totem figure. And although he knows the difference between his mother and the animal, Jewel has been able to transfer to the horse, and thereby to some extent control, his jealousy and rage regarding Addie. Andre’ Bleikasten writes in his study of the novel, “Seeing Cash so thoroughly engrossed in the making and transformation of the coffin, one wonders if he has not forgotten what it contains”(86). The coffin is for him what the horse is for Jewel and the fish for Vardaman—the objects of transference. Cash’s obsession with the coffin shows a concern more with the specific totem than with Addie.

We find several hints of Faulkner’s reservations about well-made things in his fiction. Well-made things cannot represent the reality, because the shape of reality cannot be described in a neat concept or diagram, as people desire it to fit into. Another well-known tendency of Faulkner is to rank authors and books in terms of their failure rather than their success. The symmetric or well-made things easily attract the sensibility of a man. So it is natural that the success of an author means he has been able to catch hold of the sensibility of the majority that is characterized by stimulation of the surface level of common people’s aesthetic threshold. Faulkner’s failure to get publishers for his books also indicates the same problem—he did not intend to give a polished shape to his novel and even his language. The basic difference between Darl and Cash lies in the fact that Darl rejects the physical, rejects form, pursues absence, while Cash consciously or unconsciously is devoted to achieve form. This is the central irony of As I Lay
Dying—the gaping distance between vision without form and form without vision, or, as Bleikasten puts it, between "consciousness without identity or identity without consciousness" (127). It is a fact that Faulkner likes to dwell on and Faulkner does not descend to the simplistic idea of presenting either Darl or Cash as the bearer of a "full humanity" or a full awareness. Yet it is worthy to contrast the vitality and resilience that is vested in the figure of Cash with Darl's mental faculty that sets him apart from the rest of the family. The reader himself has to choose either Cash's smooth coffin or Darl's logic of inference to see through things.

Darl's alienation from the other members of the family is the price of his remarkable vision. With the clarity of his intuitive faculty about things which others cannot see and the store of the uncanny reports of events he cannot witness, he remains an outcast amongst the family members, seemingly disliked for the lack of involvement in the events and feelings of the family members. Darl maintains a sharp vision—an attribute of the detached intellectual mind; for this reason one might scarcely guess that Darl is talking about the death of his mother. Referring to the bizarre absorption of Cash in the making of the coffin Darl observes:

He looks up at the gaunt face framed by the window in the twilight. It is a composite picture of all time since he was a child. He drops the saw and lifts the board for her to see, watching the window in which the face has not moved. He drags a second plank into position and slants the two of them into their final juxtaposition, gesturing toward the ones yet on the ground, shaping with his empty hand in pantomime the finished box. For a while still she looks down at him
from the composite picture, neither with censure nor approbation. Then the face disappears.

She lies back and turns her head without so much as glancing at pa. She looks at Vardaman; her eyes, the life in them, rushing suddenly upon them; the two flames glare up for a steady instant. Then they go out as though someone had leaned down and blown upon them. (47)

Dari’s descriptions of the Bundrens are full of metaphor, but his real search is for a meaning divided from image, identity free of the body that confines. He desires a oneness with the mother beyond what he sees as the insane structure of the journey she herself has chosen. Dari’s quest, the opposite of Vardaman’s, is to attain what Cassirer describes as a religious consciousness, epitomized in the Old Testament prophets, which chooses to liberate itself from things, to move from the sphere of material existence to the true religious sphere of meaning, from the image to the imageless. Like Quentin in *The Sound and the Fury*, Dari is looking for the supremacy of words, toward a realm of language beyond the merely existence. This “merely existent” is the world of the Bundrens, the world of the journey, the body of narrative. The journey is both a linear form and a social action designed to make death tolerable. It builds a ceremony in the presence of nothingness. This journey, in all its implication, is closed to Dari. So he has no share in it in a sense.

This tendency to transfer or to take recourse to the substitution as an equal with the thing for which it stands for is a common phenomenon which may hinder in grasping reality. Dari is free from transference. He can have better understand-
ing of things, or he does not merely look at the manifest form to grasp the deeper reality, because the unformed mind’s understanding is based on visual perception of the physical contours. Moreover, this kind perception may be motivated by personal desire or by a longing for dream fulfillment. All the characters have preset mind, which becomes the primary source of their motivation to undertake the perilous journey. Since their motives are deeply embedded with the funeral journey, being part of the narrative, Faulkner seems to suggest man’s inability to grasp the reality of existence, or his inability to get immersed in that situation for long. The life force seems to come to relief them through illusions or substitutions. In many cases the substitute seems to take the place of the reality in the process of mental response to a situation.

Under such circumstances the human behaviour becomes habitual response rather than genuine expression. In this reasoning the Bundrens, except Darl, become incapable to have a touch with the reality of Addie’s death. The outrageous funeral proceeding almost gives shock to the fellow peasants of Yoknapatawpha countryside. Mrs. Armstid thinks of Anse committing a crime to treat Addie’s body in such a way, while Mrs. Rachel, the wife of Samon, sheds tears to see the way Eddie’s dead body is treated by her ignorant children and Anse Bundren. It seems that all the members, except Darl, have put on a brazen mask to either insulate their conscience or to numb it with. The protective suit of the nakedness of the Bundren can be confirmed with the utterance of Anse. Although the peasants may think him differently, his mask allows him to utter thus: “I am the chosen of the Lord, for who He loveth, so doeth He chastiseth. But I be durn if He don’t take some curious ways to show it, seems like”(415). His words
create an image of himself as the meek and magnanimous victim forgiving a cruel and heartless world. The implication is that Anse must have something to justify his actions and to accept his defeat with some unshakable hard logic. Calvin Bedient says:

In *As I Lay Dying* life is conceived as the antagonist, living is 'terrible,' the protagonist self is alone: a naked and isolated consciousness in a broad land. This nakedness, this dreadful isolation, is already a kind of defeat, a form of abjectness, so that the utmost to be expected from the mind in its continual conflict with the world is simply a capitulation without dishonour: a surrender of everything, if need be, except pride. (97)

The Bundrens certainly cannot remain unaware of their surroundings, but the pride has assumed role to sustain them, to live up to their imagined responsibility. The outsiders, being detached and without personal motive, can see what is happening to Eddie Bundren, because it has turned out to be an obvious outrage to the peace of the dead.

Darl's insanity gets increased, when he sees the nakedness of things; shorn of the pride and the arrogance that cover up the nakedness of the other Bundrens, Darl gradually loses the integrity of his mind. The elements of pride and arrogance effectively work to sustain life force at different levels of situation. In a sense they are like safely valve for the sustenance of life in the absence of the requisite factors demanded by social norms or family code. They function to resist the shame of normal mind and work to blindfold the individuals involved, at least, till the purpose is accomplished. But Darl does not have the safety valve of the other members which ultimately leads him to mental breakdown.
Although we have no knowledge of the level of Darl's learning, we can notice Darl's use of language. Unlike his brothers and the peasants, Darl uses the language of a cultivated mind. Free from the double negatives of the other characters except Peabody, Mosley and a few more, Darl uses a form of formal language. Faulkner has invested him with this quality with a purpose to use him for a deeper level of consciousness. Peabody and Mosley, by their occupation, must be educated persons; so their use of the cultivated formal language is natural. But when Darl uses the similar language with them, then we have to justify Faulkner's device as a deliberate one with a purpose to make Darl his spokes-person.

Darl's use of language differs from other characters in the quantity of figuration and abstraction. The minds of many of the characters tend towards abstraction, and Darl is not unique in his use of figurative language—he simply uses it more often and draws his images from a wider set of experiences. The quantity of metaphorical expression assigned to each character depends on the depth and level of understanding of the characters; but more important, as an aspect of character development, the quantity of such metaphorical expression also depends on the basic sensitivity of his nature and sometimes on the level of a particular consciousness operating at the moment. Although the sensitive characters like Vardaman, Dewey Dell, Eddie, and Peabody also sometimes use figurative language as poetic as Darl's in the intensity of their thoughts, it is Darl whose use of such language abounds throughout the novel.

There is no question that the language of many of these country folk is often beyond their intellectual capabilities and somewhat unrealistic. Faulkner
probably intended it to be a verbal recreation of the person's vision of reality and his state of mind, and this is particularly so in the case of Darl. Yet for all this lack of verisimilitude, the images—though not all the abstract words—are drawn from the life and experience of the particular character. In the novel there is a mention of Darl's trip to France, and this trip could well have provided him with the experience of those art objects which he saw in France and which he uses as images to embody his vision of life in Yoknapatawpha County.

Faulkner has also deliberately invested Darl with cubistic vision because it is an art that recognizes the multiplicity of reality in the perception of a certain object. The cubists do not claim supreme reality in their work; rather they reject it because they have solipsistic reasoning in expressing reality. They are more concerned with the functioning of the traditional notion of reality or truth. They always emphasize the possibility of multiple realities or aspects of a single object.

In Darl's section we find passages affected by cubistic vision in his narrative. Look at the method of Darl's description of the picture of Gillepsie's barn bursting into flames: "The front, the conical facade with the square orifice of doorway broken only by the square squat shape of the coffin on the sawhorses like a cubistic bug, comes into relief" (208-09).

Not only does Darl make an explicit verbal allusion to cubism, but also does he create a cubist painting by reducing the three-dimensional barn to geometric shapes—conical and square—flattened to the two-dimensional surface of the facade with the coffin and sawhorses brought up to the plane of the empty doorway. Much the same effect is created by the way Darl presents the opening scene in the first two paragraphs of the book:
Jewel and I come up from the field, following the path in single file. Although I am fifteen feet ahead of him, anyone watching us from the cotton-house can see Jewel's frayed and broken straw hat a full head above my own.

The path runs straight as a plumb-line, worn smooth by feet and baked brick-hard by July, between the green rows of laid-by cotton, to the cotton-house in the center of the field, where it turns and circles the cotton-house at four soft right angles and goes on across the field again, worn so by feet in fading precision. (3)

Dari's vision in this scene is his development of a multiple points of view. With the purpose of representing 'profound' reality—reality as it is conceived by the mind, rather than, as it is perceived by the eye, the cubists make deliberate use of certain techniques which include the multiple perspective. Gleizes and Metzinger describe the method as moving around an object to seize several successive appearances, which, fused in a single image, reconstitute it in time. The basis for this technique is grounded in the belief, derived from Bergson, that there is nothing real outside ourselves; there is nothing real except the coincidence of a sensation and an individual mental tendency. Be it far from us to throw any doubt upon the existence of the objects which impress our senses; but, rationally speaking, we can only experience certitude in respect of the images which they produce in the mind. (Gleizes 216)

Dari unites his multiple points of view, which combine sight, memory and imagination to conceive the scene before him. Instead of imitating the superficial
reality through detailed photographic description, he creates the profound reality by defining the spatial relationship among the forms conceived, embodying that reality in arrangements of simple and generic words that refer to the simple though particular forms that he sees. The essence of Dari's verbal technique is like the essence of painting as Gris stated it: "Painting is the expression of certain relationships between the painter and the outside world, and ... a picture is the intimate association of these relationships with the limited surface which contains them" (Kahnweiler. 201).

Since reality is not easy to grasp in a single perspective or even in multiple perspective, Dari's vision of objects becomes like collage paintings. In one of his visions, Dari sees Vardaman's face at the moment of his mother's death "fading into dusk like a piece of paper paste on a failing wall" (48), and later he describes Jewel's eyes as looking "like spots of white paper pasted on a high small football" (203). Faulkner has made Dari to perceive things through surrealistic perspective because he knows it would be too simplistic or rather didactic if he made him a spokesperson of a particular commitment. Dadaism or surrealism has its own artistic value and its application by Faulkner in this novel; it has given him due credit in experimentation with the technique. There is nothing to surprise when Dari describes Tull's mouth as "bluish", like a circle of weathered rubber" (152) or Mack Gillepsie in the middle of the barn fire with "his eyes and mouth three round holes in his face on which his freckles look like English peas on a plate" (210) or the eyes of Jewel's horse as they "roll in the dusk like marbles on a gaudy velvet cloth" (174).

It seems that Faulkner has a warning to the reader that the more one tries
to grapple with the perception of reality, the more one has to back away from the profound reality, because reality understood in Bergson's way is kinetic and in a state of constant flux. Bergson has discouraged the attempt of getting to the profound reality, as he thinks that there is no conceptual framework that can adequately grasp reality. He thinks reality, being creative and in constant movement in time, evades a satisfactory definition; in An Introduction to Metaphysics he says it is like a "bottomless and bankless river" (48) that eludes all conceptual frameworks that try to define or categorize it. This notion of definition ultimately makes one engaging one's energy in explaining a variety of possibilities in perception. Sometimes skeptical, and at other times non-committal, we find Dari assuming a position to decrease emphasis of the importance of the object viewed. A breakdown in the integrity of objects, their dislocation and disorientation, is explicit in Dari's description of the stream, road, and hills that he watches as Jewel tries to repair their broken wagon. He sees colours dissociated from the forms of which they ought to be accidental concomitants: "about Jewel's ankles a runnel of yellow neither water nor earth swirls, curving with the yellow road neither of earth nor water, down the hill dissolving into a streaming mass of dark green neither of earth nor sky" (48). The effect of ambiguity, common amongst the cubist painters such as Picasso, Braque etc. is prismatic and fragmented.

Later, mesmerized by the flowing surface of the river which seems to him "peaceful, like machinery does after you have watched it and listened to it for a long time" (156) senses his own disintegration. The metaphorical association of the human person, and of rivers and machinery, into "the myriad original motion" indicate a consciousness on Dari's part of the deduction of the whole universe to
a basic principle of dynamic energy. Darl attempts to encompass in a single static image (the work of art) all the energy and flux of an object in its spatial environment. He often tries to contain in a single verbal construct the "dynamic immobility" he envisions in the world. Faulkner himself spoke of the aim of every artist "to arrest motion, which is life, by artificial means and hold it fixed so that hundred years later when a stranger looks at it, it moves again since it is life" (Meriwether 253).

The concepts of motion and time and particularly their relationship to artistic creation are among many Faulkner shared with the painters and writers of the teens and twenties. In As I Lay Dying, Darl's mode of vision and Faulkner's mode of composition reflect these and other shared ideas: dislocation, disintegration, fragmentation, juxtaposition, simultaneity, ambiguity, conception rather than perception. Alfred Kazin says:

[Faulkner represents] like the surrealists, like the anxious and moving search for spiritual integrity in so much of contemporary poetry, the loneliness of the individual sensibility in a period of unparalleled dissolution and insecurity, and.... even more vividly a reaction against a literature of surface realism that merely records the facts of that dissolution. (362)

The tension between Darl and other members of the family has significant link to Darl's mental state. If cubism is a state of mind, it springs from the original conception of cubism that there are multiplicity of manifestation of a thing that it is difficult to catch sight of the fluid nature of reality, not even by the earnest mind, not to mention Dewey Dell and Jewels whose minds are already biased.
Juan Gris maintains that cubism is an aesthetics, and may be called even a state of mind; it is therefore inevitably connected with the manifestations of contemporary thought. Faulkner has deliberately used cubistic elements in the characterization of Dari to grapple with the problem of perception. To the members of the Bundren family the madness of Dari may be as sure as the dead of Addie Bunren, but Faulkner does not fail to inform to the reader that the reality is not as straight and symmetrical like a label of word to give it a final shape—a problem that Addie reflected when she was alive.

Faulkner has used cubistic elements to portray one of the characters of the country peasants with a definite purpose: to expose the fact that perception is much coloured by the traditional mode in the community. Everyone of the family members, one way or another, justifies their perception of Dari's madness. Anse Bundren, who is not as biased as Dewey Dell and Jewel, treats Dari as if he were a criminal when he calls police to grab and carry him to Jackson, the jail of lunatics. No matter whether Anse is acting on his own or under the influence of others, he represents the simplistic community response to a problem which they try to understand on the basis of isolated surface evidence. Although certain individuals, like Peabody in this context, as a result of their position which is detached from the issue concerned or for having more acute indispensability show deeper insight, they cannot prevail or rather they pass off like an ineffectual dissent note amongst the majority.

**Works Cited**

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