

Lillian LeCompte

“Delving into the Mind of Faulkner’s Darl Bundren”

Nicholls State University

There is no question that William Faulkner disregarded the boundaries and methodologies of “standard” writing and very well deserves his place being praised as one of today’s greatest modern writers. He did not know how to write a “normal” book. *As I Lay Dying* is one of the best examples of this; the stream of consciousness text written in fragmented lines, rambling monologues, and philosophical prattle narrated by fifteen people makes for a difficult yet unique narrative. Darl Bundren has remained an enigma since 1930 when the book was originally published. An integral force in *As I Lay Dying*, he is an intellectual, contradicting mess of existentialism, clarity, madness, and perception. Over the past nine decades, analysts have combed through the novel, trying to understand the complex man. Even with hundreds of theories and interpretations formed and shared, he is no less a mystery now, possibly garnering more layers of perplexity with every analysis. However, given his language in his inner monologue and spoken word along with his thoughts of and interactions with his siblings, Darl Bundren can be seen as a combination of philosophical, psychic, and insane for certain.

Psychology and Darl: Introductory Remarks

To be fully transparent—the opposite of Darl— “insanity,” “psychic,” and other terminologies need to be defined¹. “**Insanity**” is not a medical term as one might misunderstand, rather a general legal term defined as follows: “**a defect of reason, arising from mental illness,**

¹ It is important to be familiar with the academically accepted definitions as misinformation on these complex, not yet professionally understood topics is widespread, leading to them being commonly misused in colloquial forms. These are the meanings I will be using in this paper.

that is severe enough to prevent a defendant from knowing what he did or that what he did was wrong” (Law 325). The term is used in determining guilt or innocence of an individual on trial. Simply put, “insanity” is an umbrella term for the mentally ill or unsound. Keep in mind if Darl is mentally ill, “insane” is not his diagnosis. “**Psychosis**” is a term that crops up commonly in analyses such as this, defined as follows: “**a severe form of disturbed behavior characterized by impaired ability to interpret reality and difficulty meeting the demands of daily life**” (Greene, Nevid, & Rathus 558). “**Psychotic,**” then, **denotes one suffering from psychosis.** Again, Darl can be psychotic, but this would not distinguish any specific disorder. Psychosis, insanity, and their variants will be used interchangeably. Moving on to pseudo-scientific terms, the internationally recognized parapsychologists² Harvey J. Irwin and Caroline A. Watt define “**clairvoyance**” as “**a person’s awareness of sensorially inaccessible visual events**” and “**extrasensory experiences**” as events “**in which it appears the experient’s mind has acquired information directly, that is seemingly without either the mediation of the recognized human senses or the process of logical interference**” (5). They write that both terms are used “usually... to refer to a hypothetical paranormal³ process” (6)⁴. Likewise, the New Oxford American Dictionary defines “**telepathy**” as “**the supposed communication of thoughts or ideas by means other than the known senses,**” (1744) and also define “**psychic**” as “**relating to or denoting faculties or phenomena that are apparently inexplicable by natural laws, especially involving telepathy or clairvoyance**” (1375). With a familiarity with the terminologies, an analysis can begin.

²“Parapsychology is the scientific study of experiences which, if they are as they seem to be, are in principle outside the realm of human capabilities as presently conceived by conventional sciences,” (Irwin & Watt 1).

³ “Paranormal” defines anything “currently unknown to or unrecognized by orthodox science,” (Irwin et al. 1)—not just ghosts!

⁴ Take these definitions as you will. I cannot speak to the accuracy or validity of the phenomena itself as this is a pseudo-science. However, I provided these definitions as a baseline for later points discussed.

If “average” can even be used to refer to the man, Darl Bundren seems to have a relatively average past, at least for someone born into a poor, rural family. He was raised on a farm, working with his siblings to tend to animals and sell wood. The second oldest of five kids, he is most likely somewhere in his early 30s. Faulkner hints that Darl was a soldier in World War I, one line of the book reading “Darl had a little spy-glass he got in France at the war” (Faulkner 176). Assuming that Darl joined or was drafted during the third round of registration for the war and was 18 at the youngest, he is between the ages of 31 to 35 (granted the narrative also takes place in 1930). He is in the same socioeconomic status as the rest of his family, but his eloquent narration can be explained by his time in France educating him more than his siblings. The easiest example of his articulate skill is the fact that he fully speaks “out of” instead of saying “outen” like the other characters do. This is demonstrated in section 37; Darl mentions that Cash purchased something “*out of the catalog,*” (Faulkner 107, my italics) after Jewel has recently said “Let’s get *outen* here,” the page directly before (106, my italics). Aside from omitting apostrophes in contractions, the odd verb tense disagreement, and comma errors, he is the most grammatically correct. His only other family member that speaks outside their class is Addie, who is a former school teacher. Regardless of how he came to be so articulate, his fanciful, objective narrative style has caused him to be heralded as the most reliable speaker of the fifteen total narrators. This remains to be the case throughout his first eighteen sections, until his nineteenth, where Darl appears to have split away from his consciousness. Alongside his intelligence, he is a deep, philosophical thinker and is highly perceptive. Because of this, those around him describe him as “queer, lazy, and pottering about the place no better than Anse,” (15), “the one folks talks about” (73), having “queer eyes... that makes folks talk,” (81), and “considered queer by us mortals,” (113). He speaks with a detached tone, according to Armstid’s

comment that he said something “just like he was reading it outen the paper. Like he never give a darn one way or the other” (129). At another point, Cash addresses the reader, saying, “It was like [Darl] was outside of it, too, *same as you*, and getting mad at it would be kind of like getting mad at a mud-puddle that splashed you when you stepped in it” (163, my italics). The reader is given a larger understanding of Darl through his siblings, both in what he tells us in his sections and in what the others narrate in their own.

Relations With Siblings

Darl’s relationship with his siblings—specifically Jewel, here—cannot be overlooked in any analysis of the man. Specifying physical distance between himself and his brother is important for Darl. The novel starts with him delineating, “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*”. Two paragraphs down, he repeats, “Jewel, *fifteen feet behind me*,” and “*In single file and five feet apart and Jewel now in front*, we go on up the path” (1, my italics). In other sections, Darl specifies Jewel being a head taller than him again (11), denotes “watching Jewel *ten feet ahead*,” (98, my italics), seeing Jewel as “he come up the fast lane, yet we are *three hundred yards beyond*,” reiterating a paragraph later that Jewel is “*three hundred yards back*,” (69, my italics), and mentions Jewel being ten yards from the rest of the family (107). Whether this need for delineation comes consciously or subconsciously, it suggests that he is always aware of Jewel’s position in relation to his own person when the man is there. More evidence to support his actions and commentaries are—more times than not—indirectly influenced by Jewel is abundant. Elizabeth Hayes asserts that Jewel’s feelings are more important to Darl than his own (52), evident with how Darl’s fourth section focuses on Jewel’s reaction to his questions. In previous sections, Darl takes Jewel to sell some lumber before they make the trek to Jefferson. Up until

the point of her death, Jewel had been adamantly in denial that his mother was ill, repeatedly commanding Darl to “shut up,” or “shut [his] goddamn mouth,” (Faulkner 10-11) and chastising his family and neighbors for being so insistent and crowding on the matter. In a brief conversation with Dewey Dell, Darl simply says, “She is going to die.” When his sister inquires when, he gives a curt, “Before we get back.” Dewey Dell asks him why he would want to take Jewel, then; he only explains, “I want him to help me load” (17)⁵. In his fourth section, which starts with a physical description of Jewel and a mention of how “he has not once looked back,” he inquires to his brother as they are setting out, “Jewel... Do you know she is going to die, Jewel?” The section ends with a similar question: “Jewel...do you know that Addie Bundren is going to die? Addie Bundren is going to die?”⁶ (25). In the one-page chapter, a conversation spoken without words with Dewey Dell is recounted. Hayes analyzes that, “the structure of the monologue thus gives great weight to Jewel’s reactions (in this case, to his denial of his mother’s death)” (52). Further, Darl often fails to give an antecedent for pronouns that refer to Jewel, opting to make note of him with only pronouns. No other character is refused an antecedent like this one, a detail which Hayes argues “reveals the constancy with which Jewel occupies Darl’s thoughts, for Darl never sees any need to clarify pronoun references to Jewel” (53). To exemplify, section twenty-three begins with “He stoops among us above it, two of the eight hands. In his face the blood goes in waves...” and so on until sixteen lines later where Jewel is

⁵ This conversation may have been spoken without words, instead being between the siblings in their heads or in Dewey Dell’s head alone. The exchange follows a line from Dewey Dell that reads, “He said he knew without the words like told me that ma is going to die without the words...” (16). However, knowing the convoluted and confusing layout of the narrative, this could be referring to an entirely different conversation.

⁶ Remembering Darl’s detached and monotone voice adds so much more to the scenes where Darl tells Dewey Dell Addie will die before they return and when he asks Jewel, “Do you know she will die?” Imagine a sibling telling you that your parent will pass away in a voice void of emotion.

finally specified as the subject (63). Jewel essentially runs Darl's brain, seen with his philosophy-driven thoughts.

Darl, Existence, and Plurality

His philosophical nature defines his relationship with Jewel. Several times throughout *As I Lay Dying*, Darl attempts to prove he actually exists. Hayes calls attention to the existential dilemma being “expressed in terms of Jewel, Addie, and himself” (56). She argues that this need to understand his existence is the motivation behind how Darl interacts with Jewel—something I do not fully agree with. His desire to know if he exists does not cause the harassment spoken of earlier, but that desire does riff off of his preexisting obsession with Addie and his brother's bond. Addie and Jewel are just a way for him to find these answers; the reason he focuses on Addie and Jewel to understand complex questions is because his resentment lead to the fixation on the bond between them. Being a fixation, those thoughts—of course—translate into other aspects of his life, like how he perceives himself and the world. His “emptying yourself for sleep” rambling, for example, comes after an entire chapter of an unrelated topic with no fluent introduction, saying, “I dont know what I am. I dont know if I am or not. Jewel knows he is, because he does not know that he does not know whether he is or not” (Faulkner 51). The Bundren's wagon exists because he “can hear the rain shaping” it. If the rain is hitting against the wagon, they are interacting with each other; thus, the rain proves the existence of the wagon. Jewel exists because he has never questioned if he does or that he could ever question his existence at all. Further, if “Jewel *is,*” then “Addie Bundren must be” (51, Faulkner's italics). In Darl's logic, the existence of Jewel proves the existence of Addie. Like the rain and wagon interact, proving themselves to be tangible objects by using each other, then Addie and her special, more prevalent interactions with Jewel prove she is real. Darl does not transfer this logic to prove he, himself, is real, though. He calls this existential pondering “thinking of home,” and

states he does this often (52), suggesting that Addie has never interacted with him in a way that would prove he exists. He cannot connect himself to his mother because—as he states in a different section—he does not have a mother. If there’s one passage that has stumped readers into writing articles—academic or otherwise—to try to make the rambling digestible, that is the “*Are* is too many for one woman to foal,” conversation between Darl and Vardaman. In his attempts to cope with the confusion around him, Vardaman adopts the famous, “My mother is a fish,” credo, and Darl tries speaking philosophically with him instead of offering comfort, saying that even if Jewel’s mother is a horse, that does not mean his mother cannot be a fish. Tracing this sentiment back to the disconnection between Darl and Addie, he is confident that he and Vardaman can have different mothers. The Addie he watched petting and coddling Jewel is not the same mother who raised Darl and the others. Darl’s mother is not a horse or a fish; instead, he says he does not have one, “Because if I had one, it is *was*. And if it is *was*, it cant be *is*.” Regardless of whether Addie was alive or dead at the time he said this, Darl’s mother has been dead to him long before the book starts. On to the source of speculation: “*Are* is too many for one woman to foal” (65, all Faulkner’s italics). Darl states he can be “are” but not “is.” The conjugation “is” refers to a singular subject (“he is” or “she is”), so Darl means that he is not a singular being. He is “are,” the conjugation of “to be” for a plural subject. Even when conjugated with “you,” “are” can be plural, not just singular. Assuming he is using “are” in the plural sense to refer to himself, then the phrase “*Are* is too many for one woman to foal,” means that Addie cannot be Darl’s mother. He truly is emphasizing how much Addie could not have been his mother. He is still only one physical person, though. How can he be plural?

There are other instances in the book where he suggests he is omnipresent. In sections twelve and seventeen, he narrates events happening at the Bundren house—in detail, too—while

he is away with Jewel, their wagon having broken a wheel. In his version of Addie's death scene, he quotes his sister as calling out, "You, Cash! ... You, Cash," (30), a quote that matches up with Peabody's recount of events ("Cash!... You, Cash," [29]). Darl also depicts Vardaman bolting out the room after his mother passes away, which then happens in Vardaman's own chapter. Most notably, though, is what he narrates of Dewey Dell. He writes her preparing dinner, and again, his sister's section narrates the same—nothing shocking at this point. However, he predicts Dewey Dell staring at Peabody and thinking,

"You could do so much for me if you just would. If you just knew. I am and you are and I know it an you dont know it and you could do so much for me if you just would and if you just would then I could tell you and then nobody would have to know it except you and me and Darl" (33, Faulkner's italics).

These are near exact quotes from Dewey Dell's thoughts in her own section: "He could do so much for me if he just would. He could do everything for me... And he could do so much for me,... he could do so much for me and he dont know it..." (37) and "He could fix it all right, if he just would. And he dont even know it. He could do everything for me if he just knowed it" (40). Darl's version of these lines are set aside from the rest of the narrative in italics, signifying they are Dewey Dell's thoughts. Not only does Darl know physical actions and spoken lines occurring back home, he knows what is in Dewey Dell's mind because of his omnipresence. He narrates section seventeen without being there, too. While there are not any direct or near-direct quotes shared with other chapters, the general events pair with surrounding sections, like Cash finishing the coffin and the Tulls coming over. The only detail that lets you know he is still away with Jewel is Anse's comment of "Darl taken his coat with him" (49) until the last two paragraphs of the chapter where he launches himself into his "emptying yourself for sleep"

thought process and refers to the wagon and lumber sale. In these extrasensory events, Darl has not only been suggested a clairvoyant, but also a telepath. Nicholas Royle coined this ability of Darl's as the "Telepathy Effect" in his own criticism of the matter. Darl shows the Telepathy Effect in more than just that instance. For example, he knew of Dewey Dell's pregnancy by merely looking at her—and she is not exactly showing at the time the novel takes place. The tenth section holds a conversation of no spoken words between Dewey Dell and Darl, with the man taunting his sister:

““You want her to die so you can get to town: is that it?” She wouldn't say what we both knew. ‘The reason you will not say it is, when you say it, even to yourself, you will know it is true: is that it? But you know it is true now. I can almost tell you the day you knew it is true. Why wont you say it, even to yourself?’ she will not say it.” (25).

In her own section, Dewey Dell reports that “[Darl] said he knew without the words like he told me ma was going to die without the words, and I knew he knew because if he had said he knew with the words I would not have believed that he had been there and saw us” (17). They each recollect the silent conversation with roughly the same content, only strengthening the case for Darl's telepathy. Possibly, Darl could have literally caught Dewey Dell and Lefe together, whether the pair knew or not. Though, going with the other nuances and details of the book, “he had been there and saw us,” is not an explicit confirmation that he did just that.

Clairvoyancy

Given that he knows these details of the plot, he certainly knows others as well.

Clairvoyance can be the reason he knew Addie would die before he and Jewel returned. Before he sets out with Jewel to sell the lumber, he looks into Addie's bedroom. Cora interprets the scene as, “He just looked at her, and I felt the bounteous love of the Lord again and His mercy. I

saw that with Jewel she had just been pretending, but that it was between her and Darl that the understanding and true love was” (15). What Cora was seeing was not true love, but she was right about understanding. If Darl is privy to current events he did not experience and was not told about, is knowing of past events possible? Events that occurred during his fetal stage? Briefly returning to the tensions between Darl and Jewel and how Addie plays a role in it, I believe Darl is aware of Addie’s internalized negativity and plan for revenge. Addie delineates her discovery of being pregnant with Cash as a “violation.” When she conceived Darl, she refused to take the pregnancy for truth, then she “believed [she] would kill Anse.” She perceived the conception as Anse beguiling her. She settles on taking her revenge on him in a way he would not recognize her plan as such. Thus, when Darl was finally born, she made her husband promise to bury her in her hometown when she died knowing whole-heartedly that the journey would be absolutely tedious (116). This is not hyper-perceptiveness anymore—this is clairvoyance and the experience of an extrasensory event. He knows that he indirectly caused Addie to place a kind of curse on him and his family, leading to him not claiming Addie as his mother when he is an adult. If he knows of the nature of the trip to Jefferson, his attempts to destroy the coffin are attempts to thwart the progress of the journey not only because he sees the strain on and danger to his family, but also because he cannot let Addie’s revenge follow through—not necessarily because Addie hated him. Addie’s testament that Jewel would save her “from the water and from the fire,” (113) was foreshadowing to Jewel’s self-sacrificing actions later, but her true savior could very well be Darl. Perhaps by absolving the woman’s sins by abandoning her in the river in a type of baptism or burning her body (and by extension, the source of the curse), he meant to be the “salvation” Addie believed Jewel was. He tried to save her from her own spite and bitterness. This would explain why he cried when Jewel saved her

from the burning barn—his genuine attempts to help Addie failed. Darl, in my own interpretation, is a clairvoyant, a telepath, a psychic—everything along those lines. Darl, though, is such an enigmatic character that even Faulkner is unclear how he has the ability to do what he can. During a conference, he was asked how Darl was privy to Addie's death, a question that he responded to with, "who can say just how much of super-perceptivity... a mad person might not have? It may not be so, but it's nice to think that there is some compensation for madness. . . He has something of clairvoyance, maybe, a capacity for telepathy" ("Class" 192). Regardless, psychicism is the only way to explain Darl's knowledge.

Omnipresence and Further Plurality

There are cases where Darl asserts himself as outside himself or as an omnipresent being rather than a single human separate from being psychic, as well. Quoting Cash again, "It was like [Darl] was outside of it, too, same as you," (163); John K. Simon writes that "the reader, like Darl, [is] capable of identifying and remaining detached..." (108). He shows himself outside of his physical body when the family is held up at the river, saying that,

"[Cash] and I look at one another with long probing looks, looks that plunge unimpeded through one another's eyes and into the ultimate secret place where for an instant Cash and Darl crouch flagrant and unabashed in all the old terror and the old foreboding, alert and secret and without shame. When we speak our voices are quiet, detached" (93).

Simon posits that, "Darl is the surrogate of the author in the novel in a very definite sense insofar as his clairvoyance allows him to roam inside and outside the mind of others and his own mind" (108), which he proves countless times to be able to do. Along similar lines, Harold Hellwig argues that "Darl's voice dominates the novel...and his mad visions tend to suggest that his is the inevitable voice of the novel" (201). Darl is essentially the author of the book, and who is to say

he did not narrate the sections labeled as the other characters? If he knows so much of the narrative, suggesting he wrote the other chapters through the perspective of the other characters is not an implausible theory. His multiplicity does not stop there, though. In the cement-pouring scenes, Darl uses the subject “we” throughout. Darl is the one to mix the cement, almost in full with the exception of Vardaman collecting and pouring sand. After this one explicit mention of Vardaman helping, no other name is specified as helping Darl pour the mixture over Cash’s leg, yet Darl still narrates, “we loosen the splints and pour the cement over his legs,” “we replace the splints...,” “then we all turn on the wagon...,” (142, my italics), ““you want some water poured on it?’ we say,” “so we poured water over it,” and most notably, ““we ought to thought,’ we said” (145, my italics). Darl is not using “we” to mean himself and his family members, only himself. He has begun to split into the multiple beings he suggested he was in the “*Are* is too many for one woman to foal” passage. His omnipresence correlates with his apparent clairvoyancy, but this connects to his insanity, as well.

Insanity and Psychosis

If the cement pouring scene marks the beginning of Darl’s unraveling, then he only unravels worse from then on. After his sections where he hints his plurality, his next chapter is his burning of Gillespie’s barn that housed Addie’s coffin. Darl’s nineteenth and final section is a mess of delirium narrated in a mix of third and first person, verifying that the subject “we” of the cement scenes in sections forty-six and forty-eight refer to Darl alone and not the other Bundrens. The section opens with, “Darl has gone to Jackson. They put him on a train, laughing, down the long car laughing... ‘What are you laughing at?’ I said,” (Faulkner 176). After seeing his family at their wagon, he launches into another torrent of words: “Darl is our brother, our brother Darl. Our brother Darl in a cage in Jackson where, his grimed hands lying light in the quiet interstices, looking out he foams” (177). Simon theorizes that, “The actual split in Darl

merely culminates a consistent tension in the novel between the ‘Darl of action and event’ and the ‘Darl of inner consciousness,” (104). He further explains, “In the last soliloquy, the first person does not disappear entirely but is neatly reserved for the verbs of speech and knowledge: ‘I said, I know,’ while Darl’s actions are treated impersonally, as though the narrator were now in Jewel’s or another’s mind or another place” (105). Darl was already “are” instead of “is,” and now he cannot contain all of the individual voices in his head that make up the “we.” As Southard explains, “all of his rumination on identity, disembodiment, and unraveling are realized; his own identity appears to unravel into a multiplicity of voices” (58). Keven Sandoval explains Darl’s climax of delirium with the prospect that he has schizophrenia. Darl gives a mention of voices in his head in his third section: “A feather dropped near the front door will rise in brush along the ceiling, slanting backwards, until it reaches the down-turning current at the back door: so with voices. As you enter the hall, they sound as though they were speaking out of the air about your head” (Faulkner 12). According to Sandoval’s analysis, Darl is hearing (in the quoted passage and in other instances Darl uses “we” to refer to himself) “the authentic consciousnesses of other characters” (178), following the common trait of schizophrenia of feeling as though there are another person’s thoughts in your mind. He argues that Darl’s repetitive speech can be explained by the disorder, additionally (181). However, Darl’s disorganized speech is not the same as the hallmark disorganized speech of schizophrenia. Yes, there is the “incoherence and lack of typical logic patterns,” as described by Barlow and Durand (479), but his incoherence involves an assemblage of other voices that are his own, the subject “we” implying a kind of unity among them. Darl, then, is not schizophrenic.

A common criticism is that Darl has post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD; I do not quite agree with this either. Given that Darl fought in the Great War—the bloodiest and most

terrifying war at the time—assuming he does suffer from PTSD is not the worst assessment a reader could make, but the accounts of Darl’s actions, reactions, and interactions with the world around him do not suggest the man has PTSD. The disorder is defined by the DSM-IV as an “enduring, distressing emotional disorder that follows exposure to a severe helpless- or fear-inducing threat. The victim reexperiences the trauma, avoids stimuli associated with it, and develops a numbing of responsiveness and an increased vigilance and arousal” (Barlow et al. 155). Darl does not experience any of these traits, per se. One can argue that Darl is unresponsive due to the disorder, but his quieter, more introspective nature was present during his teen years, before he was in the military, seen in the recollection of how Jewel bought his horse. One trait he does have that might speak to PTSD is his dissociative stare, though having one trait of a disorder is not a diagnosis. He is described by others to have “land in his eyes,” or a similar wording by others throughout the novel (16, 23, 79). Even with his plurality, he does not match the criteria for dissociative identity disorder, either—when “as many as 100 personalities or fragments of personalities coexist within one body and mind” (195). Faulkner does not give enough on what Darl’s extra voices are for the reader to tell. With that being said, Faulkner is quoted, “Darl was mad from the first...he was mad all the time” (“Class” 110). So by the end of the novel, Darl is most definitely insane.

From the very beginning of the book the man was not in perfect mental health. The events of the trip caused him to inevitably devolve into a truly insane person. However, he cannot be diagnosed with a specific psychosis. Whether that is because Faulkner did not fully characterize him with the madness he wanted Darl to have for his audience to make a home-diagnosis or because he never intended for Darl to have a certain disorder is unclear. I personally feel that his psychic abilities mixed with the stress of the trek to Jefferson were too

overwhelming, causing the mental break we see in section fifty-seven. As a philosophical, intelligent man, perhaps he opened more opportunities for his own perceptions, pushing himself over the boundaries of perceptive and into psychic. Whatever the case, ultimately, his mind could not handle all that was being thrown.

Faulkner, himself, was mystified by Darl, not being able to fully understand the character that he wrote. Darl's philosophical thoughts, psychicism, and poor mental health (later insanity) are so thoroughly intertwined that each trait influences the other in an undeniable, unmistakable way, causing them to become one single amalgamation of nonsense contributing to the Gordian knot that is his character. He was seen as a queer outsider and treated as such because of his clairvoyance and telepathy. His psychicism enabled him to gain access to plot points such as Addie's scheme for revenge and her death that would kickstart it, and contributed to his introspective and philosophy-driven nature—both of which adding to the multiplicity and omnipresence that he implies with his use of third person to speak of himself. This omniscience, in hand with his psychicism, led to his eventual descent into true insanity. The ways he thinks of and interacts with his siblings with either detachment or collected hostility leave clues to something bigger regarding his state of mind and inexplicable knowledge of events he should not be privy to, especially when considering the scenes he shares with Jewel. Specific language, such as his use of "we" to identify what should be his singular self further play into this insanity and clairvoyance, but also assert omnipresence. His philosophical ramblings only work to reinforce his perceived multiplicity. Darl Bundren refuses to be classified and fights against any explanation of his character. All that can be said undeniably is that his philosophical nature, potential psychicism, and insanity make him one of literature's most complex figures.

Works Cited

- Barlow, David H., and Vincent M. Durand. *Essentials of Abnormal Psychology*. 4th ed., Thomson Wadsworth, 2006.
- “Class Conferences at the University of Virginia.” Faulkner, pp. 189-195.
- Faulkner, William. *As I Lay Dying*. Random House, 1957.
- Greene, Beverly, Jeffrey S. Nevid, and Spencer A. Rathus. *Abnormal Psychology in a Changing World*. 8th ed., Prentice Hall, 2011. Print.
- Hayes, Elizabeth. “Tension Between Darl and Jewel.” *The Southern Literary Journal*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1992, pp. 49–61. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20078044.
- Hellwig, Harold. “AS I LAY DYING and Features of Greek Tragedy.” *The Explicator*, vol. 68, no. 3, Dec. 2010, pp. 199–202., doi:10.1080/00144940.2010.499088.
- Irwin, Harvey J., and Caroline Watt. *An Introduction to Parapsychology*. McFarland & Company, Inc., 2007.
- Law, Jonathan. *A Dictionary of Law*. Oxford University Press, 2015. *Google Books*, <https://books.google.com/books?id=nTrvBQAAQBAJ&>.
- “Psychic.” *New Oxford American Dictionary*. Edited by Elizabeth Jewell and Frank Abate, Oxford University Press, 2001. pp. 1433
- Royle, Nicholas. “The ‘Telepathy Effect’: Notes on Toward a Reconsideration of Narrative Fiction.” *Acts of Narrative*. Ed. Carol Jacobs and Henry Sussman. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2003, pp. 93-109.

Sandoval, Kevin, "Like Watching Neural Machinery: William Faulkner's Literary Redress of Trauma in *As I Lay Dying*, or The Autophenomenological Achievement of Darl Bundren's Consciousness." *Watermark*, vol. 12, no. Spring 2018, pp. 177–185. *JSTOR*, http://www.cla.csulb.edu/departments/english/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Watermark_18_Complete_Post.pdf#page=188.

Simon, John K. "What Are You Laughing at, Darl? Madness and Humor in *As I Lay Dying*." *College English*, vol. 25, no. 2, 1963, pp. 104–110. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/373399.

Southard, Marybeth. "'Aint None of Us Pure Crazy': Queering Madness in '*As I Lay Dying*.'" *Faulkner Journal*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2013, pp. 47–63. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/24908411.

"Telepathy." *New Oxford American Dictionary*. Edited by Elizabeth Jewell and Frank Abate, Oxford University Press, 2001. pp. 1828