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"A sort of madman with poetic gifts": Darl Bundren and Henri Bergson

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Abstract. *William Faulkner's As I Lay Dying contrasts differing forms of time-representation to uncover new epistemological processes within its storyworld. Darl Bundren, the principal narrator of the fragmented narrative, utilises a Bergsonian schema of duration to see the world, as opposed to his family, who rely on spatial signifiers to comprehend their surroundings. Faulkner was heavily influenced by the work of T.S. Eliot throughout his formative literary years. The Mississippian came into close contact with the philosophy of Henri Bergson through Eliot's early poetry, particularly Prufrock and Other Observations, despite not reading the French philosopher directly. This essay explores the character of Darl Bundren under the aegis of this influence, foregrounding Eliot's effect on Faulkner's writing before elucidating the Bergsonian elements present in the 1930 novel. Throughout this work, the effect of duration and Bergson's philosophy on Darl is examined, interweaving issues of form and content present in Faulkner's novel.*

Key words*: Faulkner, Bergson, Eliot, Modernism, narratology, philosophy of time*

> There is, it seems to us,
> At best, only a limited value
> In the knowledge derived from experience.
> The knowledge imposes a pattern, and falsifies…
> \- T.S. Eliot, 'East Coker' from *Four Quartets*

The field of literature in the Modernist era was deeply affected by the philosophy of Henri Bergson. Central to this enduring influence was T.S. Eliot who, while in Paris during 1910, attended a number of lectures delivered by the French philosopher in the Sorbonne. Subsequently, Eliot infused much of his early poetry with the thought of Bergson, particularly in relation to the philosophy of time, or "duration", as espoused in

his work (Bergson 1964, 4)[1]. Charlotte C. Eliot, writing to Bertrand Russell on 18th January 1916, seems to have caught the infectious enthusiasm with which her "Tom" approached Bergson, knowingly noting; "In Bergson's emphasis on *life*, its power and indestructibility, I think some persons found an intimation of immortality, which excited their interest" (Eliot 1974, 130). From this early influence and excitement regarding the work of Bergson we can identify key aspects within Eliot's *Prufrock and Other Observations* pertaining to the Frenchman's philosophy.

William Faulkner was deeply interested in T.S. Eliot's early poetic offerings, often lifting passages bodily from the established poet's texts for use in his own juvenile literary productions. One such example, as cited by Cleanth Brooks, is Faulkner's "Love Song", a work that "follows Eliot's 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' almost obsequiously" (Brooks 1978, 13). The borrowings in Faulkner stem largely from Eliot's 1917 poetry collection.

> But, as is plain, the failure to mention Eliot denies what is an obviously important aspect of Faulkner's development. It ignores the fact that Faulkner became acquainted with Eliot's poetry very early, that his poems around 1921-1925 are saturated in Eliot's poetry, and that his fiction acknowledges, from *Soldiers' Pay* to *Pylon*, the themes and attitudes dramatized in Eliot's *Waste Land*. (Brooks 1978, 16)

Through his deep-seated appreciation and admiration for Eliot's work, William Faulkner's early career was frequently referenced his literary idol. Furthermore, aspects of Eliot's philosophy seeped into the younger writer's work. Eliot's early poetry treated time as an arbitrary concept (Gish 1981, 3), something that instructs routine in a spatial manner, rather than revealing its true temporality. Eliot looked to Bergson's "duration" to instruct his construal of time. Duration suggests that the "moment" does not exist, as the instant flows into further instants; "if a mental state ceased to vary, its duration would cease to flow" (Bergson 1964, 2). To measure duration, however, Bergson warned that it must be converted into a scientific, homogeneous quantity, one that immobilises time as a spatial coefficient. As in Eliot's portrayal of this concept in "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" and "Preludes", the true nature of time is seen by Bergson as continual temporal synthesis, one that is not distinguished through arbitrary signifiers such as "past", "present" or "future".

Darl Bundren is the Bergsonian, temporal axis around which *As I Lay Dying* rotates. To set the story in a purely spatial world would be to eliminate the deeper relevance of empty signifiers, reducing them to symbolic representations, rather than imbuing them with a sense of temporality. This is central to our understanding of Darl's connection to his environs and family, in particular to his mother, Addie. This article will explore aspects of Darl's characterisation in *As I Lay Dying*, with specific reference to his relationship with Addie. Previous criticism has indicated numerous latent connections between Addie and Darl, a link usually reserved for the Bundren matriarch and her favoured son, Jewel. Various critics have pointed to the temporal/spatial bifurcation in

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[1] "Duration," as figured in Bergson's thought, "is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances. And as the past grows without ceasing, so also there is no limit to its preservation." For further discussion of duration, see Cunningham's 'Bergson's Conception of Duration' in *The Philosophical Review* 23(5): 525-539

the Bundren family, suggesting that the eventual split in Darl's consciousness is based on the complete turning of his family against him.[2] Analysis of Darl's character has often pointed to his grounding in Bergsonian temporal structures. [3] This paper will utilise this work to suggest further that Darl is connected to his mother Addie through such conceptions of time and memory, something which is at the basis of their mutual distrust of language. The artificiality of language is a much discussed point regarding this text, but my analysis will look to explicate its connection to the narrative solely through this temporal standpoint, indicating its formative status for characterisation and plot in *As I Lay Dying*. This arwill focus on Faulkner's absorption of Bergsonian philosophy through the work of his literary idol, T.S. Eliot. Although conceptions of time in Faulkner's work have been dealt with on a number of notable occasions, this analysis will add nuance to pronouncements of the writer's "rhetorical" usage of Darl's words (Brooks 1978, 252). Paramount to this ambition is indicating through interpretive reading aspects of Darl's unspoken connection with Addie and the narratological structure of the novel, an approach that will exhibit the Bergsonian nature of the book's inner life, furthering the claims of Irwin, (Irwin 1975) integrating a fuller model of Bergson's thought.

Darl's conception of time is an acceptance of what Bergson suggested was the "heterogeneous rule of reality". In saying this, the opposite appears to be true for the rest of his family. Their world of process, based on a model of external appearance and symbols, suggests immobility. It projects time through a grid of space, "thrown out like a net to collect and organise the…dynamic real, to aid action and improvement" (Guerlac 2006, 2). Despite the suggestion that, by spatialising their surroundings, the Bundrens appreciate the stopped moment for intellectual assessment (meaning "of the mind", rather than educated), we can see from *As I Lay Dying* that the family perceives itself as existing purely in space, allowing no contrast with time. Their journey is "uninferant of progress" because progress is closed off to a group that cannot see things temporally. This contrast is necessary, being something that Faulkner utilises in Darl to show that life's stream is only perceived "when some object, or better, some person, can be made to stand still against its flow" (Douglass 1986, 125). Thus, it is through the creation of static images that Faulkner makes motion apparent. The character of Tull and the road sign ("3mi. to New Hope") are such symbols, however only Darl seems to acknowledge the nature of progress he achieves, something that contributes to his reported mental disintegration. Previously, critics have cited various reasons for Darl's insanity in the final chapters of his perspectival narration (Lurie 2004, 13)[4]. From post-traumatic stress that chips away at his mental wellness after his wartime experience, to the revelation of his family's ignoble motives for the journey to Jefferson, Darl's apparent descent into madness is well-documented. What, however, has been ignored is the Bergsonian side of Darl's character, particularly its relation to Darl's journey into insanity.

Darl is the centre of intuitive knowledge within *As I Lay Dying*. Whereas his family rely solely on external appearance and signifiers for their information (i.e. use of

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[2] Particular instances of this in criticism appear in Schroeder (1986). See also Rio-Jeliffe (2001, 35-39 and 52-73).

[3] Further discussion of the artificiality of language in the Addie section can be found in Pikoulis (1982, 10-15)

[4] For example, Lurie (2004) points to Darl's burning of Gillespie's barn and subsequent mental breakdown as an act of protest over his family's treatment of the memory of Addie. For Doreen Fowler (1983) Darl's insanity is a reaction to the realisation that the family are interested only in individual identity, not that of a collective.

intellect), Darl combines this with a keen sense of intuition to inform his thought and narration. This is achieved throughout the narrative by Faulkner's successful ventriloquism of Darl, finding his way into the kernel of his being that appears *a priori* to experience in the physical world (Weinstein 1992, 122). In Darl's first section, we are introduced to a character who not only has the ability to see the world around him, but also holds an imaginative intuition that continues describing after vision is lost. This section immediately foregrounds intuition as an integral part of Darl's knowledge of the world – a truer knowledge that is partly analytical and partly an "entering into the situation."

> Jewel, fifteen feet behind me, looking straight ahead, steps in a single stride through the window. Still staring straight ahead, his pale eyes like wood set into his wooden face, he crosses the floor in four strides with the rigid gravity of a cigar-store Indian dressed in patched overalls. (Faulkner 2004, 1)

Jewel is out of sight but not out of mind for Darl. Utilising the knowledge he has regarding his brother, and combining it with an intuitive expectation of Jewel's next action, Darl gives us an arguably fuller description in this section than if he had seen him. Much like Proust in the ubiquitous "Madeleine" portion of *A lá Recherche du Temps Perdu*, Faulkner (via Bergson) shows the conceiving of an idea as the association of a present sense-impression with a past one. Despite Darl's opposition to repetition, where life's duration plays out in an interweaving stream of unique and unrepeatable moments of experience, he uses his intelligence and intuition to allow the recurrence of memory into a scene, permitting fuller description of the potentiality of action. Donald M. Kartiganer (2007, 432) is incorrect to infer that the only use of memory in the book belongs to Addie. It is an integral aspect of Darl's imaginative intuition that, although not directly referenced, is present throughout his sections, informing his use of intellect, and furthering his understanding of the intuition that presents itself imaginatively in his narrative. If we take the Bergsonian reflection on memory as a progressive movement from the sense-perception to the "present" (Bergson 1988, 164), Darl's connection to Addie becomes clearly apparent. Furthermore, Kartiganer's assertion that Darl is unable to utilise the past in his current situation is nullified by sections indicating the character's gradual ontological breakdown, something, it is suggested, was instigated by his "spy-glass", the metonymic signifier for his time at the war in France. Bergsonian renderings of memory are integral to this, Darl's gradual mental disintegration to the point of his incarceration is based on a causal process, one that is directly linked to his remembering of wartime experience, and the realisation of his family's motives. In itself, realisation is based on the interpretation of past events, and their subsequent combination with present knowledge, to understand the scenario before the subject. Darl's comprehension of his situation upon reaching his destination with the Bundrens is intrinsically linked to his memory of their actions, and his discovery of their duplicity. We can affirm without doubt that Darl's use of memory is a crucial part of his temporal experience and perception, and necessary for his bifurcation from the Bundren family.

For Bergson, the use of intuition alongside intellect is central to the comprehension of the true nature of the world (Bergson 2002, 159-162). What Bergson attempted in his philosophy was to bring to awareness what has been "absolutely suppressed by thought and (that which) is structurally inaccessible to it: the radical force of the time of

becoming" (Guerlac 2006, 63). The very conception of temporal synthesis relies upon the emergence of that which thought represses, namely intuition. To attain real knowledge, we must allow intuition and intellect to combine, working in a mutually beneficial arrangement for greater understanding. To acknowledge is to apply limitations to pure, rational thought. A forever-becoming, and therefore forever-changing, reality is a mutable entity, meaning it is necessary to apprehend it intuitively, with super-intellectual methods. This is reflected in science's inability to measure the time of "inner life", that which moves in duration rather than the arbitrary measurements of scientific method. Bergson saw the need to go beyond the rational, and use intuition to become actively sympathetic with an object's perceived essence.

Darl exemplifies this move towards real knowledge within the Bundren family, utilising his imaginative intuition to gain active sympathy with characters he portrays in his narrative sections. One such episode depicts the characters, in Darl's presence, surrounding Addie's coffin. Darl looks into Dewey Dell's eyes and sees in them Peabody's (the doctor) back. He immediately connects the burrowing look given by Dewey Dell (the same look noted by Samson (Faulkner 2004, 101-102) later on; "If her eyes had a been pistols, I wouldn't be talking now") to Peabody with her legs and sexual anatomy; "one of that calipers which measures the length and breadth of life" (Faulkner 2004, 92). This connection emphasises Darl's reading of the deep, but often obscured, reality of the world around him. Through his analysis of the scene, he realises that Dewey Dell's staring is related to a personal, sexual matter, and is not connected to a sense of grief about Addie's death. Far from being a sign of Darl's incestuous lechery, this chapter serves to point to Darl's "real knowledge" of the world around him. Darl's noted ambivalence towards Dewey Dell (Irwin 1975, 53-55) works as a formative narratological construction – indicating the ambiguous relationship he holds with his family, one that will take on deeper, more darkly relevant elements throughout the text.

It is from this point that we may examine Darl's mental breakdown as a result of his overwhelming "real" knowledge. His intuition often appears without visualisation, making its presence in the book oblique. Much like Darl's usage of memory, his intuitive side is similarly obscured throughout the narrative. It is something that lies in the heart of his consciousness and yet its necessary mutability makes Darl unable to cope with the world (Douglass 1986, 154). The survival of the others seems to be based on the isolation of the creative, intuitive imagination from their acts. Although the other Bundrens often resort to the word "if", it is always placed in a conditional context, as opposed to Darl's sometimes "dreamlike" state, and sometimes imaginative descriptions, which appear as concrete aspects of his narrative. In this way, Darl's mixing of intuition and intellect, as opposed to the others' separation of the two, leads to a deep divergence in his way of approaching the world. Another reason for his centrality in the Bergsonian schema is the psychological depth with which Faulkner furnishes his character. Authorial intrusion, evident throughout, has a different effect on Darl than it does on the rest of the family, further emphasising the distinction he holds in comparison to the others. Vardaman provides an excellent example of this, moving between registers at the behest of Faulkner; "'Durn him. I showed him. Durn him' I am not crying now, I am not anything" (Faulkner 2004, 51). This is a clear example of authorial intrusion upon a Bundren family member. Vardaman's register changes rapidly in these phrases, moving from his public voice ("Durn him") to private voice ("I am not crying now") to a representation of consciousness as imagined by Faulkner ("I am not anything"), a level of ontological

contemplation unrealistic for a young, grieving child. This example, and others concerning the Bundrens, does not show us an evidential change in psychological depth, only a run-through of psychic levels. In passages where Faulkner intrudes on Darl's narration, we get a sense of ontological questioning that does not appear with the others.

The revolt in Darl's consciousness comes at a time when the grief of Addie's death seems to have passed and no mention is made (for the reader to recognise, at any rate) of his time fighting in World War I until his family's full duplicity is finally revealed. The apprehension of "real" knowledge, and the subsequent devastation it causes in his mind, appears to drive Darl insane. The realisation that his family is using the last wishes of his dying mother to fulfil its ulterior, materialistic motives leaves him distraught. This is not a reactionary grief where the worldview of Darl is irrevocably changed; rather it presents the climax of a causal series of revelations and realisations that erode his world-view. For Bergson, there are no flashpoints in life; everything is in some way to be expected. The sense of "becoming" with which duration imbues our lives means that our inner effective states change in intensity, not in frequency. States necessarily overlap with each other, with the past capable of invading the present through its momentum. Therefore, events are not truly unexpected, because a "flashpoint" would require a stopping of duration, an impossible act:

> It is words that lead us to believe the immutability of our sensations and impose a false stability on the fugitive impressions of consciousness… The apparent discontinuity of the psychical life is then due to our attention being fixed on it by a series of separate acts: actually there is only a gentle slope. (Bergson 1964, 64) [5]

If we assume Darl's breakdown is actual, and not one that, portrayed through Cash's utilitarian outlook, is seen as self-sacrificial for the larger group, the reasons behind it are multi-layered. It is the apotheosis of Faulkner's Bergsonian narrative accumulation; it represents the overwhelming of Darl's mental faculties, where the others' narratives overcome his interpretation of Addie's death, delimiting his perception of reality (Bergson 2002, 137). Darl's memories and intuition bring about a realisation of the family's crumbling façade regarding their motives for the journey is at the heart of his perceptive delimiting. "Truth" is hidden from Darl from the start despite his apparent "real" knowledge, obscured by language, a human structure that camouflages intention. The devotion with which the Bundrens carry their matriarch to her burial site is purely verbal, a distinct brand of rhetoric created by the "ventriloquating" Faulkner (Bakhtin 2008, 31)[6]. From Anse's empty words that reflect a misplaced faith in Christianity to Vardaman's childish jabbering about a toy train set that displaces his grief for Addie, the Bundrens' motives, hidden to all except Tull, are shrouded in the trickery of vocabulary; "They would risk the fire and the earth and the water and all just to eat a sack of bananas" (Faulkner 2004, 127). Their language is linked to inherently false aspects of life, arbitrary signifiers that reflect their belief in the fallacy of the physical. The selfishness of the

[5] See also Bergson (1988, 14). For further commentary on the inability of a Bergsonian temporal schema to halt in so-called 'flashpoints', see Muldoon 2006, 102).

[6] The concept of an internal dialogue of voices was described by Mikhail Bakhtin as "ventriloquation," a process through which construals of experience receive linguistic formulation in the "speech genres" available in a given cultural frame.

Bundrens contrasts with Darl's intentions, a further indication of their increasing separation. His "real" knowledge can do nothing to discover the "truth" of the journey, leading inexorably to his self-destruction.

Such separation can be further traced through the characters' respective use of language. It is a crucial connector between Darl and Addie, the latter mistrusting words to the extent that her posthumous narration seems obsessed with their futility; "That was when I learned words are no good; that words don't even fit what they are trying to say at" (Faulkner 2004, 159). We have acknowledged that the Bundren family use words to hide their true intentions, from each other, but from Darl in particular. This leads to the scene that gives the impression of a *Götterdämmerung* climax to the novel where in actuality, the swelling stream of duration has shown Darl recognise his family's duplicitous ways gradually. This is encapsulated in his ostensible insanity, which is part of Darl's accumulation and subsequent overwhelming by the various "simple elements" that "reconstruct…mental life" (Bergson 2002, 137). Starting with his imaginative intuition of Addie's death and informing Jewel while away from their home; "Jewel, I say, she is dead, Jewel. Addie Bundren is dead" (Faulkner 2004, 47). Interestingly, Darl's next narrative section contains the "I don't know if I am or not" (Faulkner 2004, 73) stream of consciousness monologue, the first obvious indication of an ontological breakdown. This self-questioning of existence on a basis of Bergsonian duration and knowledge where "Jewel knows he is, because he does not know that he does not know whether he is or not" (Faulkner 2004, 73) is entirely characteristic of Darl's language as he continues on the journey beyond this point. If, as Bergson holds, the qualitative shift of intensity determines effect, and portrays the image of an inner multiplicity (Bergson 2006, 8), Darl's breakdown is characteristic of the introduction of fluidity into a once-concrete figure. Darl's newly-realised "multiplicity of elementary psychic phenomena" indicates the psychological depth with which Faulkner imbues him (Bergson 2006, 73). It is the gradual alteration of intensities within Darl's perception of duration that lead to his confusion of ontological properties (Faulkner 2004, 73). The little elements of inner life converge and overwhelm tide of mental reconstructions, rather than a momentous realisation.

Darl's descriptions throughout the novel are marked by references to water and fluidity. This introduces the idea of fluid temporality, where ideas of time's arbitrary bondage are surrounded by a telling indication of his temporal viewing of existence. Such instances are often indicated by Faulkner's narratorial intrusion into Darl's consciousness. The appearance of literal and figurative appearances of water in Darl's narration should remind us of Quentin Compson in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and Eliot's "Death by Water" in *The Waste Land* (Eliot 1974, 68 lines 16-18)[7]. The fact that Darl's exposition of psychological depth is exhibited upon his narrative's engagement with the river recalls Quentin's epistemological and ontological travails before his suicide in the river's water (sometimes interpreted as a purifying element). It is important to note these analogous characters in Faulkner's most renowned high-modernist works – their shared fluidity of reference and literal relation to water provide a small aspect of their commonalities.

[7] "As he rose and fell/He passed the stages of his age and youth/Entering the whirlpool."

This idea of fluidity is one that extends to conversations and even the landscape through which the Bundrens travel in *As I Lay Dying*. In his second perspectival section, Darl imaginatively describes the taste of water and his experience of storing water, amidst an ongoing narration about a conversation he is having with Anse on the porch steps. It is important to note that Darl's break in the narrative is prompted by his taking a drink of water, eliciting an associative memory. What does not happen is a break in duration – Darl's inner affective states continue to flow and interpenetrate. The fact that his thoughts are superimposed onto Faulkner's language in many of these narrative breaks only re-affirms the stream of duration in which he finds himself. It is this sense of a fluid narrative that so encapsulates his response to the river scene.

The Bundren family are unlucky in many ways, not least because of the torrential downpours that cause havoc in their locale around the time of Addie's death. Instead of a day's journey to Jefferson, many of the county's bridges have been destroyed in the deluge, leaving few safe crossing points for the horses and, importantly, the coffin. Tull, the epitome of Bergson's spatial observer, sees his "bridge shaking and swaying" (Faulkner 2004, 124) underneath its occupants and cannot divine any sense in crossing it in its current condition. Even he realises something deeper about the water given the Bundrens' situation; "Only it kind of lived. One part of you knowed it was just water, the same thing that had been running under this bridge for a long time…" (Faulkner 2004, 125). Compare this with Darl's treatment of the river in front of him, examined directly after Tull's section: "Before us the thick dark current runs. It talks up to us in a murmur become ceaseless and myriad, the yellow surface dimpled monstrously into fading swirls travelling along the surface for an instant, silent, impermanent and profoundly significant…" (Faulkner 2004, 128).

There are numerous signifiers in this and other passages where Darl describes the river that should alert us to his temporal view of the fluid, moiling mass. The "soporific" and "dreamlike" nature of the journey finds its apotheosis in the river. The fluidity of Darl's narration is made immanent in this scene, a direct development of the meandering wagon; "It runs steady and deep now, unbroken, without sense of motion…" (Faulkner 2004, 132). This description fits many Bergsonian traits of the treatment of time. Although Faulkner's static images ("without sense of motion") have been said to "make motion emphatically apparent" in their interpenetrating juxtaposition (Douglass 1986, 125), the river scene is one where we must feel time as heavy; "a knot, cluster, or tangle, with all the ends lost in the middle. Motion is lost, or stopped; and time is held still for aesthetic contemplation" (Bergson 2002, 134). This point also encompasses the Bergsonian idea of a "system of reference" that is immobilised in relation to what it observes (Bergson 1964, 3). Through Darl's words we can infer his assumed, or perceived, lack of movement within the overall design of the river.

When Darl, Cash and Jewel are thrown off the horse and wagon, narrative confusion reigns. The "thick, dark current" assumes the "ceaseless and myriad" persona that Darl foreshadowed earlier in his section. The river now encapsulates Bergsonian duration, a confused multiplicity where streams (literal and figurative) interplay and overflow within each other. Upon their immersion in the river, the durative streams of the three brothers are encompassed firstly by Darl's narrating duration, secondly by the literally overwhelming river, a natural body that is "real," whose "quantity and quality of movement resists symbolisation" (Bergson 1988, 21), and lastly, the overall stream of the story. Bergsonian philosophy's influence is clearly evident – the river's overlapping

narrative stream, together with that of the characters' duration suggests a qualitative encompassing, something that exists through spatial representations but is based on temporal inference. This point is put sharply in Darl's description of the scene, where his understanding of the temporal nature of the world is exemplified, while also providing subtle hints to the spatial relations of his brothers caught in the water. "It is as though the space between us were time; an irrevocable quality. It is as though time, no longer running straight before us in a diminishing line, now runs parallel between us like a looping string, the distance being the doubling accretion of the thread and not the interval between" (Faulkner 2004, 133).

Taking note of Faulkner's intrusion (it is unlikely that this is the normal language of a Mississippi farmer's son), is evident in Darl's personal feel for duration from this passage. This is a direct reference to a temporal view of the world, one where the true nature of time is not contaminated by, or explained through, space. The journey up to this point, documented in time through Darl, spatially through the others, now becomes one of pure time, under the influence of the all-consuming river. The perception of ease of motion is found in the arrest of "progression" – the river allows the reader to appreciate its soporific movement, particularly the place of the perceptively non-moving Darl. The flow of the river is the perfect location for Faulkner to exhibit his personal exposition of duration. The literal fluidity of the water combined with the durative narration of Darl is suggestive of the Bergsonian belief that "curved lines are more graceful than broken ones" (Bergson 2006, 6). The curve, which always changes direction, "turns in such a way that each new direction is already indicated in the preceding one" (Bergson 2006, 48). Within the meandering, "unbroken" (Faulkner 2004, 132) mass of the river, we can identify in its slowly turning nature the Bergsonian curve.

The structure of the narrative in the river section is deeply influenced by the river's duration. The move between normal, descriptive prose documenting the words of his brothers and the italicised stream of consciousness emphasises the fluidity of time in the section; "*What had once been a flat surface was now a succession of troughs and hillocks lifting and falling about us, shoving at us...*"[8] (Faulkner 2004, 135). The disaster that is set to befall the family is visible, for Darl, in nature. The aforementioned "flat surface" is, we must remember, a spatialised representation associated with Cash's lowering "the team carefully and skilfully into the stream" (Faulkner 2004, 135). When viewed in a purely temporal relation, with the "real knowledge" that Bergson affords to intuition (Bergson 1964, 199)[9], Darl notices in the family's mules "a wild, sad, profound and despairing quality as though they had already seen in the thick water the shape of the disaster which they could not speak and we could not see" (Faulkner 2004, 134). This seemingly simple reading of the animals' viewpoint contains deceptive insight, crucial to an understanding of temporality within this fluctuating scene. Firstly, there is an association of "real knowledge," a foreshadowing of nature's power, with the animals – suggesting a deeper than purely intellectual link between them and the earth. This obscured knowledge to which Darl gains access is hidden from Jewel who "shouts at the horse" and "appears to lift it bodily between his knees" (Faulkner 2004, 137), assuming an anti-natural (and anti-river, given the scheme of the chapter) stance. Concomitantly,

[8] The italics in this sentence represent the author's own emphasis.
[9] Specifically, "the more consciousness is intellectualized, the more is matter spatialized."

Darl shows awareness of the larger, encompassing duration of the experience, taking note of the temporality of all bodies into account. Lastly, the fact that the human characters "could not see" (Faulkner 2004, 134) the impending disaster is testament to their viewing life spatially and not temporally. The place of the humans within the scene does not affect the overall duration, of which they are mostly unaware. Time, like the river, is always flowing, whereas the presence of consciousness is always just working through the flow. The apparent hubris of Jewel in ignoring Cash's pleas of the coffin not being "on a balance" (Faulkner 2004, 132) is a direct counterpoint to Darl's intuitive understanding of the river. The former does not see himself as a sole consciousness within a larger, unforgiving duration, the latter is respectful of this fact. The river rolls onwards, encompassing each individual, ignoring the space that would evacuate its force in time.

Difference between Darl and the other members of the Bundren family has become part of critical consensus since the publication of this novel. Criticism pertaining to *As I Lay Dying* continuously points to his character's divergence from the others, noting their drive for materialistic wealth and self-improvement as different from his more philosophical musings. Also, contrast is found in their respective worldviews, with the family using the journey to Jefferson for other, less than respectful, reasons. It appears that Darl's ostensible insanity is bound with his wish to bury his mother according to her wishes, untainted by dishonourable desires. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Darl does not use words like the other family members. Darl seems to want to discover things about the world around him, utilising memory, knowledge and intuition to inform his judgement. The others use words to obscure the "truth" – Anse's reliance on repetitive cliché merely invokes a need to halt new situations, a constant displacement of life that unburdens itself on a misplaced God. Cash, despite being a stoic, often admirable figure, uses words to hide his pain upon breaking his leg ("It don't bother none" (Faulkner 2004, 184)) and, crucially, cannot speak when Darl needs him most; "I tried to tell him, but he just said, 'I thought you'd 'a' told me" (Faulkner 2004, 225). Dewey Dell hides her pregnancy throughout, lying about money she has received from Lafe for an abortion.

The family's reliance on words further emphasise their difference from Darl and Addie. The latter pair realise the inherent emptiness of speech, (Bassett 1981, 126) a fact that will have grim repercussions for Darl's mental health. As early as his fourth perspectival section, he questions the validity of words while interrogating Dewey Dell's motives for wanting to go to town; "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" (Faulkner 2004, 34). This is reminiscent of Darl's earlier deduction that Dewey Dell's fearsome look at Peabody had an intensely personal dimension. It also suggests his realisation regarding empty signifiers that attempt to superimpose structure on confused multiplicity. As discussed above, the emptiness of words find its apotheosis in the "3mi. to New Hope" sign that obscures temporal reality. Here we may examine further connection between Darl and his mother, Addie, one that is discouraged by the harsh words she reserves for her son in her posthumously narrated section.

Darl holds a, literally, central position in Addie's only perspectival chapter (Ross 1975, 724). Half-way through her reflections we find: "Then I found that I had Darl. At first I would not believe it. Then I believed that I would kill Anse. It was as though he had tricked me, hidden within a word like a paper screen and struck me in the back through it… And when Darl was born I asked Anse to promise to take me back to Jefferson when I died…" (Faulkner 2004, 160-161).

This section intimates the status of Darl with regard to Addie and Anse's marriage. One of the sons to whom Addie "refused (her) breast" (Faulkner 2004, 163), the connection between Darl and his mother is difficult to ascertain from the matriarch's descriptions alone (Rosenman 1977, 176). Looking at Addie's section in relation to Bergson's thought opens a space whereby we can look at this relationship. Clearly, from Addie's words, a physical or emotional connection does not exist. This does not indicate the complete absence of a link however. In fact, Addie utilises what she hates most, words, to obscure it. It is interesting that, of all family members, Darl and Addie use memory to fuel knowledge. As opposed to Dewey Dell and Jewel who remember the past in order to get/stay angry with their situation and focus on the present, Darl and Addie look to reminiscence as an important part of knowledge; "But I had been used to words for a long time" (Faulkner 2004, 160). Addie's worldview is influenced by her mistrust of words, something that is in turn informed by the memory of how they have wronged her previously. It is only Darl and Addie in *As I Lay Dying* that use memory to remind themselves of the superimposed structures that words place over the fluctuating world: "And so when Cora Tull would tell me I was not a true mother, I would think her words go straight up in a thin line, quick and harmless, and how terribly doing goes along the earth, clinging to it so that after a while the two lines are too far apart for the same person to straddle from one to the other; and that sin and love and fear are just sounds…" (Faulkner 2004, 162). Like the New Hope sign and Anse's circumlocutory clichés Darl rejects, Addie places similarly little faith in the power of words.

Within a Bergsonian schema, both Darl and Addie recognise the structures that humankind places on nature to limit the confused multiplicity and, ultimately, freedom; "the artificial imitation of the internal life, a static equivalent which will lend itself better to the requirement of logic" (Bergson 1964, 4). Crucially, both characters lose their freedom to such artifice. Addie feels trapped by Anse's "love" and the children she bears for him – this is symptomatic of her feeling confined more generally; "I merely took the precautions that he thought necessary for his sake, not for my safety, but just as I wore clothes in the world's face" (Faulkner 2004, 163-164). This feeling of confinement within a marriage and family foreshadows the darkness of Darl's later situation. He is confined not with his family, but *by* his family, in a way that is reminiscent of Addie's imposed incarceration because of her children; "Our brother Darl in a cage in Jackson where, his grimed hands lying light in the quiet interstices, looking out he foams" (Faulkner 2004, 242). Their respective imprisonment is not only family-based, but largely down to the structures of language imposed upon confused multiplicity. As Addie was tricked by the word "love", so is Darl tricked into believing purity in his family that simply does not exist.

The narrative structure may also inform our view of Addie and Darl's relationship. The latter's tendency toward imaginative intuition resists the ordering of events in a causal connection, and seems to prevail over a successive model. This suggests that in the spatialised version of time presented by narrative, arbitrary organisation is entirely necessary. In their own respective manners, Darl and Addie stand as the only characters to challenge the idea of narrative placed upon them. Addie, in the present tense, is dead when she speaks to the reader. Darl, upon fully understanding the implications of his situation, seems to go insane. These states fracture the narrative and upset the depiction of causal relations. As we should understand with Faulkner's high-modernist work, the order of words and tenses should not conform to a rudimentary pattern, but by realising

that duration does not break, his two protagonists gain a truer, but more damaging, comprehension of the storyworld. There is no break in duration, only in narration. Addie's short section, when compared with the chapters narrated by Darl (the most-featured narrator in the novel), brings many similarities between the two to the fore. Their narratives are structurally disparate. Darl and Addie are bound by a common mistrust in the actuality of words, their knowledge of various constructs that have been superimposed upon confused multiplicity and the fluctuating, temporal aspects of reality that have been suppressed by static signifiers to order a world for easy comprehension.

Darl is the central Bergsonian figure of *As I Lay Dying*, the "soporific" movement we experience through him aids our understanding of the narrative's temporal foundations. This paper has looked to place his characterisation and relationship with his mother on a purely temporal standing. Through this, I have endeavoured to show that Darl and Addie are centrally connected in the Faulknerian world-view of this text, if not in the physical reality of the other characters. Their respective mistrust of language, their belief in its radical artificiality, places them on a Bergsonian footing throughout with relation to their environment and its temporality.

The connection between Addie and Darl finds its deepest rendering in a Bergsonian schema. The artifice of language that obscures "real" knowledge holds a myriad of connections with the story's other aspects – particularly Faulkner's use of Bergsonian memory and the elucidation of arbitrary everyday structures that serve only to entrap the individual. Faulkner leans heavily on conceptions of duration to interweave the characters' concerns about language throughout the narrative. The ability of duration to change our view of time to a temporal rather than spatial one is crucial to this aspect of our reading. This article has explored Darl Bundren's deeply Bergsonian relation to his world, explicating this connection with Faulkner's appreciation of the French philosopher's thought. In connecting Darl with a temporal conception of the world, we can ascertain the narratological formation of the narrative through this Bergsonian standing. In grounding this analysis in the temporality of Bergson's philosophy, this paper has elucidated the formal and stylistic crossover that so effects the structure and content of the narrative, particularly as seen through the figure of Darl Bundren. Further work in this area may extrapolate further connections between Darl and Quentin Compson; or other such "magical" characters in Faulkner's *oeuvre* through a Bergsonian schema. The proliferation of fluid narratology in Faulkner's work, with a simultaneous inability to square this with actuality is a keystone of these characters. Comparative work would help examine disparate strands of Faulkner's career in literature.

Bergson's influence on Modernist writing, as disseminated through Eliot's work, is central to renewed comprehension of the character of Darl Bundren, providing an innovative, fruitful reading of one of William Faulkner's most complex, challenging characters. Furthermore, the centrality of time in the character's portrayal is inescapably connected to his individual perception and knowledge, elements of form and content that are reflected throughout his *oeuvre*, and further into the representation of temporal figures in Faulkner's work.

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