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Watson G. Branch

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On ne peut pas porter partout avec soi le cadavre de son père.
—Guillaume Apollinaire

Darl Bundren's experience "in France at the war"¹ had a major role in determining both the substance and the mode of his vision of reality. Though Darl's French experience is never described in *As I Lay Dying*, it was as important to him as was the unmentioned but obviously traumatic experience of war to Nick Adams in "Big Two-Hearted River." In Nick's case his total effort is directed towards re-ordering his life to regain control of himself so he can operate with grace under whatever pressures may arise in the future. This effort is apparent in Nick's deliberate and ritualistic behavior, and it seems successful to a high degree even though the symbolic fishing of the swamp is left for another day. The structure of Nick's thoughts and actions, embodied in the style Hemingway chose to portray them, reveals through contrast the nature of his wartime experience: reasonable order is the antidote for maddening chaos.

Darl, however, makes no obvious effort to counteract the wartime experience. In fact, what Darl saw in France has so marked his view of life and his mode of vision that Faulkner reveals it through identity: dislocation and disorientation are the reflection of maddening chaos.

Because the journey to France is never narrated, its nature can only be hypothesized, but internal evidence in *As I Lay Dying* points emphatically toward two basic aspects. First, the war showed Darl absurd and wasteful death (and, by extension, absurd and wasteful life) on a scale unimaginable to him had he remained at home in Yoknapatawpha County. Second, the exposure to contemporary movements in the plastic arts—especially Cubism, which had been prevalent in Paris for a decade before American soldiers got there—provided Darl with a mode for conceiving reality commensurate to the disorientation he felt.

The most fundamental cause of Darl's present anguish, as has been so often noted,² is located in his relationship with his mother, Addie Bundren. The rejection Darl felt as an unwanted and unloved child has left him without a sense of identity. In the night he ponders his own "is-ness," and in the day he reacts to the living members of his

family, especially his brother Jewel, on the basis of feelings centered around Addie's relationship to each of them. But the war, too, had a most important effect on Darl, especially on his sanity. Faulkner once said that "Darl was mad from the first,"³ but this was in response to a specific question regarding the possibility that Darl became mad in the course of the book. Darl is mad in the opening section, though he is certainly more in control of himself than he will be in the closing sections. But he is not mad in the flashback scene (pp. 121–29) in which he describes Jewel's working to buy his horse, a section that predates the wartime trip to France.⁴

As Ronald Sutherland points out, the change in Darl's personality from this flashback to the present action of the story has two main causes. First is the discovery at the end of that section of the special relationship between Jewel and Addie. This explains Darl's fascination with Jewel and his preoccupation with family ties. The second cause is Darl's journey away from "his native soil":

Darl has been overseas during the World War, which undoubtedly played havoc with his sensitive nature, broadening his awareness and deepening his sensibilities, creating a problem of readjustment to the temporarily forgotten crudeness of home life—a grotesque kind of crudeness which the atmosphere of the novel vividly impresses upon the reader. It is significant that Faulkner had Darl avoid mention of the war until the last, when, on the train to Jackson, he is rapidly losing his grips on sanity and is speaking of himself in the third person. . . .⁵

The traumatic experience of war puts Darl in the company of other characters Faulkner created during this early period of his writing, characters such as Bayard Sartoris III, Donald Mahon, and Elmer Hodge.⁶ They return home from war unfit to cope with life as they find it, and they escape it one way or another.

Images of the horror and confusion that could have twisted the consciousness of young American soldiers like Darl are contained in the first two paragraphs of Faulkner's recently published essay "Literature and War": the "squash and suck" of the duck-boards in the mud, the "casual dead rotting beneath dissolving Flemish skies," the "dreadful smell of war—a combination of uneaten and evacuated food and slept-in mud and soiled and sweaty clothing," in that ambiguous land where hillsides dissolve in the rain "until the very particles of earth rise floating to the top of the atmosphere," and where "air and earth are a single medium in which one tries vainly to stand."⁷ Michael Millgate suggests that the essay, though undated,

“is certainly to be associated with the thinking about the First World War which produced such poems as ‘November 11’ . . . and which led eventually to *Soldiers’ Pay*.” And he later remarks “the extraordinary persistence with which the First World War pervades Faulkner’s work both as subject-matter and as theme—as a point of reference, a gauge of morale, a phenomenon at once physical and psychical with which his characters must come to terms.”⁸ In his listing of Faulkner’s works in which the First World War plays a major or minor role, Millgate does not specifically include *As I Lay Dying*, but the change in Darl’s character from his prewar portrait to the disoriented individual seen in the balance of the book is strong evidence that once again Faulkner is representing the ravages of war upon the mind of a sensitive young man.

Of equal importance for Darl’s character is the hypothetical exposure in France to European art, especially to Cubism and related movements like Vorticism and Futurism. Faulkner makes no specific mention of Darl’s ever having seen art works in France, but the internal circumstantial evidence points in that direction even more strongly than it does regarding the war. Such an exposure would provide Darl with a realistic source for certain imagery—imagery that is the major qualitative feature that sets his language apart from that of the other characters. Allusions to Greek friezes and Cubistic bugs, to carved tableaux and painted canvases, seem highly inappropriate for a country boy and have led even so astute a critic as Olga Vickery to say, “The images are not derived from Darl’s experience but rather snatched from some region beyond his knowledge and comprehension.”⁹

Except for these and similar images drawn from the world of art, Darl’s language differs from that of the other characters only in the quantity of figuration and abstraction, stylistic modes which pervade the book. The minds of many of the characters tend toward 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, including particularly his trip to France. The quantity of metaphorical expression assigned each character depends, obviously, on the space or number of sections allotted him; but more important, as an aspect of character development, the quantity depends on the basic sensitivity of his nature and sometimes on the level at which his consciousness is operating at the moment.¹⁰ Faulkner gives sensitive characters like Vardaman, Dewey Dell, Addie, and Peabody figurative language as poetic as Darl’s, so their sections contain highly expressive and profound images while those of Cash, Jewel, Anse, and most of the non-Bundrens usually do not.

There is no question that the language of many of these country folk is often beyond their intellectual capabilities and is therefore unrealistic. Faulkner probably intended to be a verbal recreation of, or metaphor for, the person's vision of reality and his state of mind. 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. Darl is no exception because his trip to France could well have provided him with the experience of those art objects which he uses as images to embody his vision of life in Yoknapatawpha County.

The exposure to art in France also gave Darl a new *way* of seeing reality: he has the eye of a plastic artist, particularly that of a Cubist. And this aspect of Darl's characterization, like some of his images, was probably a product of Faulkner's own trip to France after the war.

In mid-August 1925, Faulkner arrived in Paris, "that merry childish sophisticated cold-blooded dying city to which Cezanne was dragged by his friends like a reluctant cow, where Degas and Manet fought obscure points of color and line and love, cursing Bougereau [*sic*] and his curved pink female flesh, where Matisse and Picasso yet painted."¹¹ He stayed first at a hotel in Montparnasse but soon moved to his more permanent quarters at 26 Rue Servandoni, near the Luxembourg Gardens, where he could watch toy boats being sailed on the pond, and the Luxembourg Galleries, where he could see Post-Impressionist and other modern painting. As Joseph Blotner noted, "There were also many small galleries in the Quarter, some of them showing the work of artists rejected by the Salon. There was a wide range of exhibitions to see, from the cubist paintings of someone like André Lhote to the strong nudes of Jules Pascin."¹² Letters home from Paris indicate that he had plenty of time to look at paintings, for, Faulkner wrote, "When it rains—as it has for a week almost,—I go to picture galleries." One day he told of going to "a very modern exhibition" of "futurists and vorticists," and in September he managed to see the works of Matisse and Picasso in two private collections, as well as, in his words, "numberless young and struggling moderns."

It is highly probable that Faulkner was aware of movements such as Dada and Surrealism, whose techniques in great measure grew out of Cubism. Though Dada, which had been born in Zurich in 1916, had pretty much run its course by the twenties, many of its elements and its members had been absorbed by the Surrealist movement. In fact, André Breton had published his first *Manifeste du surréalisme* in Paris the year before Faulkner arrived, and during Faulkner's stay

there in 1925 two extremely important events in the history of Surrealist painting took place: the first one-man show of Paul Klee in Paris, from October 21 to November 14 at the Galerie Vavin-Raspail, and the first group show for Surrealist painters, the *Exposition, La Peinture Surréaliste*, from November 14 to 25 at the Galerie Pierre.¹³ The show included works by Jean (Hans) Arp, Max Ernst, André Masson, Joan Miró, Man Ray, and Pierre Roy, as well as Klee, Giorgio di Chirico, and Picasso, though the last three were not considered part of the movement per se: di Chirico's exhibited paintings were from the prewar period and Picasso's were definitely Cubist. Faulkner did not mention going to this show, but it would be somewhat surprising if he missed so important an exhibition. His photographer friend, William C. Odiorne, who did a series of portraits of Faulkner in November, probably would have been aware of a show that displayed Man Ray's works.

The fame of Dada and Surrealism was widespread thanks to the groups' penchant for contrived public demonstrations, disruptions, and soirées, their wild and well-attended "manifestations," and—because they were guided by writers rather than painters—their publications, especially *Littérature* and *La Revolution Surréaliste*. The latter proclaimed in 1925 that Le Bureau Central de Recherches Surréalistes would be open every evening from 4:30 to 6:30 at 15 Rue de Grenelle—just a few blocks from Faulkner's room in the Rue Servandoni.

Because Faulkner was himself a graphic artist, he must have been strongly affected by the new things being done by these "moderns." The rejection of the curvilinear and decorative style of Art Nouveau by the Cubists and their followers probably shocked an artist whose drawings, such as those in the University of Mississippi yearbook a few years before, so resembled that earlier style. And Faulkner acknowledged his admiration for the progenitor of Cubism when he wrote to his mother on September 21, "And Cezanne! That man dipped his brush in light like Tobe Caruthers would dip his in red lead to paint a lamp-post."¹⁴ In his speculations on the influence of Cézanne and of Impressionists and Post-Impressionists in general on Faulkner's writing, Richard P. Adams cites a 1958 interview during which Kraig Klosson asked Faulkner

to comment on the theory of a critic "who is of the opinion that on your first trip to France you became familiar with the works of several of the French impressionists, and especially Cézanne, and who has found a similarity in your use of color in your books and Cézanne's use of color in his paintings." Faulkner

said, "I think that criticism probably has a great deal of merit in it. As I was saying before, a writer remembers everything he ever reads or ever sees and then when he needs it, he draws upon his memory and uses it." Mr. Klosson pressed for a more definite statement: "Then, Sir, when you were in Paris you did go to the art galleries and did see and remember the paintings of Cézanne?" Faulkner said, "Yes, that's right."¹⁵

But Cézanne's use of color was not of paramount importance, as Adams recognizes when he determines the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist influence on Faulkner to be "also a matter of how the artists go about building the structures of the works." He sees Cézanne's method as having been one of "laying on patches of color" and filling his canvas "until the forms emerged," a method demanding that the viewer "enter into the process of constructing the picture along with the painter, to recapitulate and bring to life the painter's experience of the scene." The manner of composition, Adams asserts—though he does not attempt to prove it here—is similar to Faulkner's method of writing.¹⁶

This technique, common to Impressionists and Post-Impressionists alike, was not the most revolutionary feature of Cézanne's painting. The aspect that most influenced the painters in Paris in the earliest years of the twentieth century—and which must have been available to Faulkner the graphic artist, who, as Adams says, "always looked at things with a painter's eye"—was Cézanne's ability to conceive and to form, out of temporary and fragmentary visual sensations, a permanent and unified plastic structure. The emphasis then is not on the object represented nor, as with the Impressionists, on the act of perceiving the object. Instead it is on the form created on the surface of the painting itself. As Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger, themselves Cubist painters, wrote in 1913 of Cézanne, "His work, a homogeneous mass, shifts under the glance, contracts, expands, fades or illuminates itself, irrefragably proving that painting is not—or is no longer—the art of imitating an object by means of lines and colors, but the art of giving our instinct a plastic consciousness."¹⁸ They contrasted the "superficial realism" of the Impressionists to this "profound realism" of Cézanne, which plunges "into the profoundest reality, growing luminous as it forces the unknowable to retreat."¹⁹

There has been a tendency, as John K. Simon observes, to invoke "Pictorial comparison" when dealing with Faulkner's work,²⁰ but in the case of Darl, Faulkner has created a character whose particularly painterly vision appears marked by the Cubist imagination with its large and admitted debt to Cézanne. Specific Cubist images appear in

Mosquitoes,²¹ the novel Faulkner began while in Paris and then put aside in favor of “Elmer” only to complete it upon his return to the United States. While it seems appropriate for the New Orleans artists of *Mosquitoes* to see things in painterly terms, it is unusual for a country boy from Yoknapatawpha County to envision reality as a Cubist artist might, but that is exactly what Darl is presented as doing.²²

Several critics have called Darl an artist or poet, and one of his passages has been compared to Post-Impressionist painting.²³ Darl’s vision of reality, as portrayed in his own words, has much in common with that of the Cubists and Post-Cubists, as manifested in their paintings—paintings seen by Faulkner in Paris in 1925. Darl often exhibits specific Cubist techniques in the verbal constructs by which he expresses his view of the world: geometric patterns of juxtaposed forms, multiple points of view, collages, emphasis on two-dimensional surface rather than three-dimensional depth, and dislocation and disorientation of forms in space.

The vision and the technique are certainly Cubist in Darl’s picture of Gillespie’s barn bursting into flames:

The front, the conical façade 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. (pp. 208–09)

Not only does Darl make an explicit verbal allusion to Cubism, he also creates a Cubist painting by reducing the three-dimensional barn to geometric shapes—conical and square—flattened to the two-dimensional surface of the façade with the coffin and sawhorses brought up to the plane of the empty doorway.²⁴ 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 cottonhouse 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 cottonhouse in the center of the field, where it turns and circles the cottonhouse at four soft right angles and goes on across the field again, worn so by feet in fading precision. (p. 3)

Critics have already noted the geometric precision of this description,²⁵ and while surface geometry is one obvious quality of Cubist painting, other elements of Darl's vision here may be compared to the very clear and direct Synthetic Cubist still lifes Picasso, Braque, and Gris were doing in the teens and early twenties. The green rows of cotton are divided by the earth-colored path, and the square brown cottonhouse is centered in the field where it is circled by the path's right angles to create a geometric pattern of juxtaposed masses of color.

Another element of Darl's Cubistic vision in this scene is his development of a multiple point of view. First he opposes his own position to that of "anyone watching" from the cottonhouse who would see the brothers coming up the path with Darl superimposed on Jewel. Then he presents the scene from both a horizontal perspective parallel to the earth's surface and a vertical one perpendicular to it, allowing the reader to see the path and the cottonhouse *simultaneously* from ground level where the rough logs and opposing windows show and from above where the right angles of the path and the centrality of the cottonhouse become apparent. And in the paragraph immediately following the two quoted here, Darl's clairvoyance permits him yet another point of view as he "sees" Jewel's "wooden face"²⁶ (p. 4) inside the cottonhouse though there is no window in the side for him to see through.

Multiple point of view is apparent in Cubism from its earliest, Analytical period for the purpose of representing "profound" reality, reality as it is conceived by the mind, the senses operating in conjunction with the memory and imagination, rather than as it is perceived by the eye, from one fixed viewpoint at one instant in time. Gleizes and Metzinger described the method as "moving around an object to seize several successive appearances, which, fused in a single image, reconstitute it in time." The theoretical basis for this technique was grounded in the belief, probably 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.²⁷

Darl unites his multiple points of view, which combine sight,

memory, and imagination,²⁸ 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 relationships 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.²⁹

One of the most obvious techniques of Synthetic Cubist paintings was collage, the process of pasting paper and other materials onto the picture surface, and Darl often describes objects as if they were composed in this manner. In one of his clairvoyant visions, Darl sees Vardaman’s face at the moment of his mother’s death “fading into the dusk like a piece of paper pasted on a failing wall” (p. 48), and later he describes Jewel’s eyes as looking “like spots of white paper pasted on a high small football” (p. 203). Dadaist and Surrealist artists assumed the collage technique as part of their anti-art campaign. Their purpose was to discredit paintings by including found, real-life objects and materials incompatible with aesthetic beauty, and the parodic effects they achieved were not unlike those created by Darl when he describes Tull’s mouth as “bluish, like a circle of weathered rubber” (p. 152), or Mack Gillespie in the middle of the barn fire with “his eyes and mouth three round holes in his face on which the freckles look like English peas on a plate” (p. 210), or the eyes of Jewel’s horse as they “roll in the dusk like marbles on a gaudy velvet cloth” (p. 174).

When Darl prepares the cement to fix Cash’s leg, he presents the action in terms of an artist creating a mixed-media work. First he mixes the cement in the can, “stirring the slow water into the pale green thick coils” (p. 197), to which he adds some sand and then applies it to Cash’s leg from which “the sawdust is running out” (p. 197) as if Cash were a broken doll. The addition of the wooden splints and the cords, with the cement moving along them in “thick pale green slow surges” (p. 198), creates a work more Dadaist than Cubist: the cast becomes an ironic and negative parody of a true cast, similar to the way in which the collage and constructionist techniques of the earlier movement were used by Dada to make absurd and nihilistic statements against art itself.³⁰

Darl’s vision is specifically painterly rather than sculptural or constructional in one of his earlier, clairvoyant sections: “Upon the dark ground the chips look like random smears of soft pale paint on a black canvas. The boards look like long smooth tatters torn from the flat darkness and turned backside out” (p. 71). Here Darl displays the Cubist technique—taken from the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists—of applying paint to canvas in smears that seen close

up are no more than patches of paint but when viewed from what the earlier generation of painters would regard as the proper distance give the illusion of the object represented. The Cubists, rather than treating the surface of the painting as a window through which to see imitated reality, kept the emphasis on the brushstrokes of paint as one more means of focusing the viewer's attention on the surface itself.

Darl has taken this Cubist step forward from Impressionism by concentrating on the smears of paint and by lifting up the horizontal dark ground spread before his clairvoyant eyes until it becomes the vertical black canvas of the picture plane. In keeping with the Cubist emphasis on the picture surface, Darl turns the black canvas into the ultimate reality of the scene: the boards, which in the three-dimensional yet "superficial" reality of his clairvoyant sight lie on the dark ground, are conceived by Darl as tatters torn from the surface of the canvas itself—the canvas that has become the two-dimensional but "profound" reality of his vision—and turned backside out so that the strips of white, unpainted canvas contrast with the black surface.³¹

This emphasis on surface is related to Darl's and the Cubists' de-emphasis of the importance of the object viewed in favor of its conceived, "profound" reality. The aesthetic principle here grows out of a common vision of the nature of things outside the mind. A breakdown in the integrity of objects, their dislocation and disorientation, is explicit in Darl's description of the stream, road, and hill that he watches as Jewel tries to repair their broken wagon. He sees colors 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*" (p. 48). The similarity of this passage to Faulkner's description of Henri Barbusse's writing about the war, cited above, makes clear the underlying emotion that creates such a vision, but certainly the terms of its presentation here are more painterly. Darl depicts, with a muted palette of yellow and green, the disintegrating forms as they fade and blend into each other, no longer holding their individual shapes and colors. The same effect of ambiguity, though visually more prismatic and fragmented, is achieved by Picasso, Braque, and even Gris in their work between 1910 and 1912, leading the art critic Jacques Rivière in March of the latter year to condemn the "inexplicable continuum"³² of Cubism that confused and welded together objects and the space that separated them.

Later Darl, mesmerized by the flowing surface of the river³³ which

seems to him “peaceful, like machinery does after you have watched it and listened to it for a long time,” senses his own disintegration, as though “the clotting which is you had dissolved into the myriad original motion” (p. 156). The metaphorical association of river and machinery and its connection with the dissolution of the human person, and of rivers and machinery, into “the myriad original motion” indicate a consciousness on Darl’s part of the reduction of the whole universe to a basic principle of dynamic energy. This principle, for which Bergson was usually given credit, was commonly held by painters and sculptors of diverse movements during the teens and twenties, though most, whether Cubist or not, depended on the technical innovations of Cubism for the expression of it. The fascination with what the Futurists in their 1910 “Technical Manifesto” called “universal dynamism”³⁴ led to the depiction of innumerable and varied metamorphoses as the integral distinctions among objects—animate and inanimate—broke down under the weight of the discovery of their essential nature of motion or flux.³⁵

Many twentieth-century artists—and Darl is like them in this respect—attempted to encompass in a single static image or 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” (p. 72) 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 a hundred years later, when a stranger looks at it, it moves again since it is life.”³⁶

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, disorientation, fragmentation, juxtaposition, simultaneity, ambiguity, conception rather than perception. Alfred Kazin said that 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.³⁷

Ultimately, the ideas Faulkner shares with Cubist and Post-Cubist painters are more important than the specific influences of those artists’ works that he saw while in Paris in 1925 or saw or heard

about earlier in New Orleans or New York City. Faulkner obviously never approached the literary Cubism of Gertrude Stein in some of her portraits or in *Tender Buttons* or of Guillaume Apollinaire in poems like "Zone."³⁸ But as Juan Gris said in an interview published in Paris a few months before Faulkner arrived there, "Cubism is not a manner but an aesthetic, and even a state of mind; it is therefore inevitably connected with every manifestation of contemporary thought."³⁹

Darl Bundren, though not even a would-be artist like Elmer Hodge to whom he bears a "family" and experiential resemblance, often sees with the eye of and conceives with the mind of a Cubist or Post-Cubist painter, indicating something more specific in his characterization than a general expression of "contemporary thought." Faulkner, when he wrote *As I Lay Dying*, was remembering and using the contemporary art he saw in Paris in 1925 in the same manner as he was using Cézanne's paintings. He created a character whose vision reflects directly, by specific allusions, and indirectly, by a mode of conceiving reality that tends toward the creation of painterly images, the influence of Cubist art.

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Notes

1. William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (1930; rpt. New York: Vintage Books, n.d.), p. 244. All subsequent citations from *As I Lay Dying* refer to this corrected edition and are included within parentheses in the text.
2. For readings of the relationship of Darl and Addie, see Calvin Bedient, "Pride and Nakedness: *As I Lay Dying*," *Modern Language Quarterly*, 29 (March 1968), 67–68, 70; André Bleikasten, *Faulkner's As I Lay Dying*, trans. Roger Little (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 87–91; Cleanth Brooks, *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 145, 158; William J. Handy, "As I Lay Dying: Faulkner's Inner Reporter," *Kenyon Review*, 21 (Summer 1959), 447–51; Robert Hemenway, "Enigmas of Being in *As I Lay Dying*," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 16 (Summer 1970), 137–38, 140–42; Michael Millgate, *The Achievement of William Faulkner* (1966; rpt. New York: Vintage Books, 1971), pp. 104–07; John K. Simon, "What Are You Laughing At, Darl?: Madness and Humor in *As I Lay Dying*," *College English*, 25 (November 1963), 105–06, and "The Scene and the Imagery of Metamorphosis in *As I Lay Dying*," *Criticism*, 7 (Winter 1965), 18; Ronald Sutherland, "As I Lay Dying: A Faulkner Microcosm," *Queen's Quarterly*, 73 (Winter 1966), 543, 546–47; Olga W.

Vickery, *The Novels of William Faulkner* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1964), pp. 53, 54, 58–60; and Edmond Volpe, *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1964), pp. 133–34, 137–38.

3. *Faulkner in the University*, ed. Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner (1959; rpt. New York: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 110. Though Addie gives both Dewey Dell and Vardaman as well as Darl to Anse so that "he has three children that are his and not mine" (p. 168), the two younger ones do not lose their sanity as their brother does. For an examination of the sources of Darl's madness, see Simon, "What Are You Laughing At," pp. 104–10.
4. The time of the action is not stated in the book, but internal evidence points to 1919 or 1920 as an approximate date. This was the time of the action in *Soldiers' Pay* and *Sartoris*, which also have to do with men returning from World War I. Dewey Dell says she is seventeen (p. 190). It is probable that Addie "gave Anse Dewey Dell to negative Jewel" (p. 168) fairly soon after Jewel was born. Cash says he and Darl were "born close together," but it was "nigh ten years before Jewel and Dewey Dell and Vardaman begun to come along" (p. 224). That would mean Jewel is about 18, Cash 27, and Darl 25 or 26. Vardaman, from his behavior, seems to be 11 or 12. If the time of the present action is 1919 or 1920, Darl's flashback section (pp. 121–29) takes place in 1916 or 1917, when Jewel "was fifteen" (p. 121). If the present action is much later than 1920, Darl and Cash would have to be older than they logically seem to be, and the span of years between Cash and Jewel greater than Cash says.
5. Sutherland, pp. 543–44.
6. Bleikasten (p. 90) also mentions Quentin Compson and Horace Benbow as examples of "those wounded heroes (literally or figuratively) who appear so often in Faulkner's early novels."
7. The essay is published in full and discussed by Michael Millgate, "Faulkner on the Literature of the First World War," *Mississippi Quarterly*, 26 (Summer 1973), 387–93. Faulkner is discussing here the writings of Siegfried Sassoon and Henri Barbusse.
8. Millgate, "Faulkner," pp. 387, 391; emphasis added.
9. "As I Lay Dying," *William Faulkner: Two Decades of Criticism*, ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951), p. 197. Also, see Vickery's *The Novels of William Faulkner*, pp. 50–51. For examples of other attempts to deal with the "inappropriateness" of Darl's language, see Bleikasten, p. 41; Warren Beck, "William Faulkner's Style," *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism*, ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (1960; rpt. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963), p. 149; Brooks, pp. 146, 160; Richard Chase, *The American Novel and Its Tradition* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957), p. 207; Irving Howe, *William Faulkner: A Critical Study* (New York:

Random House, 1952), pp. 137–38; Joseph W. Reed, Jr., *Faulkner's Narrative* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1973), p. 98; and Sutherland, pp. 542–46.

10. For comments on style as an indication of levels of consciousness, see Vickery, *The Novels*, p. 51, and Volpe, p. 128. A thorough analysis of language and style in *As I Lay Dying* can be found in Bleikasten, pp. 21–43.

11. This passage is from an unnumbered TS page of the unfinished novel, "Elmer," which Faulkner began in Paris in 1925, quoted by Thomas L. McHaney, "The Elmer Papers: Faulkner's Comic Portraits of the Artist," *Mississippi Quarterly*, 26 (Summer 1973), 292–93. Joseph Blotner reads "Monet" for "Manet" and "life" for "line" when he quotes the same passage in *Faulkner: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1974), I, 460.

12. Blotner, p. 453. The documented facts regarding Faulkner's activities in Paris and the citations from his letters home are taken from chapters 25 and 26 of Blotner's biography.

13. Information about these shows may be found in the "Chronology" prepared by Irene Gordon and published in William S. Rubin, *Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1968), p. 205.

14. This phrase echoes one Faulkner wrote the preceding April in a sketch for the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, in which he remarked to the painter William Spratling, with whom he was to make his trip to Europe in a few months, "how no one since Cézanne had really dipped his brush in light" (*New Orleans Sketches*, ed. Carvel Collins, rev. ed. [New York: Random House, 1958], p. 46). Faulkner's interest in Cézanne may have developed through Sherwood Anderson, as McHaney speculates (pp. 290–91), or possibly through reading Clive Bell and Élie Faure, whose books he has Elmer Hodge take on his cruise to Europe (see Blotner, p. 444). Bell, in his *1913 Art* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, n.d.), says that "Cézanne inspires the contemporary movement" (p. 199). His collection of reprinted essays, *Since Cézanne* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922) discusses the Cubists in some detail and devotes one whole essay to "Matisse and Picasso." The fourth volume of Faure's *History of Art*, trans. Walter Pach (New York: Harper, 1924) is devoted to "Modern Art." He gives Cézanne considerable space in the chapter on "The Contemporary Genesis" and also discusses Picasso and mentions a number of other Cubists. Faulkner probably knew something of contemporary movements in painting before his trip to Paris. He may have gotten firsthand reports of the famous 1913 Armory Show, and his stay in Greenwich Village in the autumn of 1921 certainly exposed him to avant-garde art (see Blotner, p. 319). Marcel Duchamp was in New York City at that time, and both Francis Picabia and Man Ray had lived and worked there, the latter moving to Paris in July 1921. Faulkner said in another *Times-Picayune* piece (8 February 1925) that "planes of light and shadow were despair for the Vorticist schools" (*New Orleans Sketches*, p. 16).

15. Richard P. Adams, "The Apprenticeship of William Faulkner," *Tulane Studies in English*, 12 (1962), 128. Adams also cites Hemingway's acknowledgment in 1950 of his debt to Cézanne. (See Lillian Ross, "Profiles: How Do You Like It Now, Gentlemen?" *New Yorker*, 16 [12 May 1950], 57, 59–60.) On 15 April 1924, Hemingway wrote to Gertrude Stein about his progress on "Big Two-Hearted River," "where I'm trying to do the country like Cézanne and having a hell of a time and sometimes getting it a little better" (*The Flowers of Friendship: Letters Written to Gertrude Stein*, ed. Donald Gallup [New York: Knopf, 1953], p. 164).

16. Adams, pp. 128–29. McHaney (pp. 295, 299, 301–04) discusses the influence of Post-Impressionist art on Faulkner in much the same terms Adams uses, but with detailed attention to "Elmer." In regard to Faulkner's other early novels, McHaney notes a pattern of structure composed "of equal parts juxtaposed" to make up "a whole which constitutes a post-Impressionistic novel of the generation after the war" (p. 304). And in particular the fifty-nine sections of *As I Lay Dying* create an "almost pointillist" composition (p. 304).

17. Adams, p. 127.

18. Originally published in *Du Cubisme* (Paris: Figuière, 1912), this translation is from *Cubism* (London: Unwin, 1913) as reprinted in Herschel B. Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1968), p. 209.

19. Chipp, pp. 208, 209.

20. Simon, "The Scene," p. 2n. For a number of pictorial comparisons regarding *As I Lay Dying*, see Bleikasten, pp. 12, 37, 69, 109, 125.

21. William Faulkner, *Mosquitoes* (1927; rpt. Garden City, N.Y.: The Sun Dial Press, 1937). An early description of Jackson Square in New Orleans pictures the cathedral "cut from black paper and pasted flat on a green sky" (p. 14), and later the sculptor, Gordon, sees the warehouse and dock as "a formal rectangle without perspective," and the masts of a freighter as flat "as cardboard, and projecting at a faint motionless angle" above the warehouse (p. 47).

22. A clue to Darl's painterly vision may be found in the similarities between him and Elmer Hodge, the aspiring painter who is the main character in Faulkner's unfinished novel. In "Elmer," the protagonist's past is disclosed in flashbacks to "reveal that experience has *gradually* shaped the young American into a would-be artist" (McHaney, p. 301), and his youth has much in common with that of Darl, whom André Bleikasten (p. 90) calls "Faulkner's portrait of the artist as a young madman." As Blotner (p. 68) notes, "Elmer's family suggests the Bundrens"—both families are poor and live in the South; Elmer's shiftless father is much like Anse; his sister's name, Jo-Addie, "suggests that of Addie Bundren," (McHaney, p. 284n); and her peculiar relationship with Elmer resembles that between Dewey Dell and Darl, particularly as shown in the scenes

deleted from *As I Lay Dying* where "mutual empathy" (Blotner, p. 637) is expressed between the two Bundren children. Also the two mothers die in the course of the novels, Elmer's before and Darl's after the army experience they have in common. And both men come from that experience unfit for the old way of life.

23. Bedient, p. 61. Also see Bleikasten, p. 90; Blotner, p. 635; Brooks, pp. 145–46, 398–99; Handy, p. 445; Reed, p. 90; and Simon, "What Are You Laughing At," p. 108.

24. Juan Gris said in a lecture printed in the *Transatlantic Review* the year before Faulkner came to Paris, "the only true pictorial technique is a sort of flat, coloured architecture" (reprinted in Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, *Juan Gris: His Life and Work*, trans. Douglas Cooper [New York: Harry N. Abrams, n.d.], p. 197).

25. Millgate, p. 105; Simon, "What Are You Laughing At," p. 106, and "The Scene," p. 6.

26. Darl's often repeated description of Jewel's wooden features suggests the carved wooden masks from Africa that Picasso and other Cubists so admired when the movement was beginning in 1906–1908, and it suggests the masklike faces on the portraits the Cubists did under the influence of those African carvings.

27. Chipp, pp. 216, 214.

28. Darl's clairvoyance—and his telepathy—can be equated to poetic imagination. See Faulkner's remarks on Darl's madness and poetic vision in *Faulkner in the University*, p. 113.

29. The geometric pattern of juxtaposed masses and the multiple views of forms that Darl composes into his opening vision resemble in technique the angular Synthetic Cubist paintings Faulkner might well have seen in Paris in 1925, ranging from the simplicity of Gris's "Grapes" (1921, Kunstmuseum, Basel) to the ambiguity of Picasso's "Still Life in a Landscape" (1915, private collection of H. Berggruen, Paris), in which the ambiguity arises as much from the arrangement of the forms on the canvas as from the representation of the forms themselves, some of which are quite clear in their reference to objects. The essence of Darl's verbal picture is like the essence of painting as Gris stated it in 1924: "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, p. 201).

30. The Dada-Surrealist artist Max Ernst sometimes constructed collages by fixing wooden slats and twine dipped in paint to the surface of his canvases, and he combined pieces of painted wood and metal within a frame to represent "Fruits of a Long Experience" (1919, Penrose Collection, London). The Cubists also worked with these mixtures of material to achieve constructions that could be called, as Alexander Archipenko did, "Sculpto-painting," like his "Médrano" (1915, Tate Gallery, London), made of painted tin, glass, wood, and oilcloth, or Picasso's "Still Life" (1914, Guggenheim Mu-

seum, New York), which combines painted wood, cut to represent objects, with upholstery fringe.

31. In the scene of the finishing of the coffin, Darl's imagination brings the background towards him, cutting it off with a plane close behind his subject as the Cubists did with their pictures from the very beginning, following Cézanne's example. The air behind Cash and Anse is for Darl an "impalpable plane" upon which "their shadows form as upon a wall" (p. 72). In another scene, Darl's sense of inviolable surface makes it seem to him that the river has severed the bodies of Jewel and Tull who wade in it because "they do not appear to violate the surface at all" (p. 156). He uses the word three times in one sentence to describe the flooding river: "the yellow surface dimpled monstrously into fading swirls travelling along the surface for an instant, silent, impermanent and profoundly significant, as though just beneath the surface something huge and alive waked for a moment of lazy alertness out of and into light slumber again" (p. 134; emphasis added).

32. First published in *Revue d'Europe et d'Amérique* and quoted in Nicholas Wadley, *Cubism* (London: Hamlyn, 1970) p. 54. The late works of Analytical Cubism, such as Picasso's "Portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler" (1910, Art Institute of Chicago) or "Ma Jolie" (1911-12, Museum of Modern Art, New York), Braque's "Man with a Guitar" (1911, Museum of Modern Art, New York) or "Le Portugais" (1911, Kunstmuseum, Basel), and Gris's "Portrait of Picasso" (1912, Art Institute of Chicago), portray the same dissolution of forms and the muting of colors, the merging of objects which spread and invade the space around them and simultaneously dissolve into the background until objects, space, and background become undifferentiated, reduced to the plane of the picture surface.

33. Darl's imagination turns the river's "thick soiled gouts of foam" (p. 134) into lathering sweat of a driven horse, and a surging, foam-draped log becomes Christ (p. 141): objects grow ambiguous, move, and are transformed into strange new beings. His surreal vision of life suggests, in its ambiguity regarding the appearance of things, Picasso's nonillusionist Cubist paintings of the twenties such as "The Three Musicians" (1921, Philadelphia Museum of Art) and his "Mandoline and Guitar" (1924, Guggenheim Museum, New York) in which the elements of the still life seem arranged on the flat plane of the canvas to form a death's head. The hallucinatory paintings Surrealists drew forth from the subconscious, such as Miró's "The Tilled Field" (1923-24, private collection of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Clifford, Radnor, Pa.), Masson's "Woman" (1925, private collection of Dr. and Mrs. Paul Larivière, Montreal), or Ernst's Dove Series, the *frottage* (rubbed) pictures begun in 1925, depict strange juxtapositions and stranger metamorphoses, imaginative constructs similar to what Darl envisions at the river and elsewhere in the book. Bleikasten (p. 106) equated Darl's picture of men and beasts in "identical attitudes and expressions" of "common terror" when faced by death and disaster at the river to Picasso's "Guernica"

(1937, Museum of Modern Art, New York), painted in response to the destruction of that Basque town in April 1937.

34. The manifesto, originally published in Milan as a pamphlet, was translated into English for the first London exhibition of Futurist painting and is reprinted in Chipp, pp. 289–93. Gleizes and Metzinger said in *Cubism* (Chipp, p. 209) that Cézanne “teaches us to overcome the universal dynamism.”

35. Writing of these prewar years in *From Baudelaire to Surrealism* (New York: Wittenborn, Shultz, 1950), Marcel Raymond said,

We seem to be confronted with two opposite currents—on the one hand, the poets attempt to adjust themselves to positive reality, to the “mechanical” world of our era; on the other hand, they desire to shut themselves up in the enclosure of the self, in the world of dreams. . . . Moreover . . . a whole era of contemporary facts supplies ample justification for the reconciliation of the real and the imaginary, the positive and the irrational, life and dreams, and in the light of these facts the opposition of the two attitudes just defined becomes a mere abstraction. (p. 221)

Machines—those inanimate embodiments of speed and power and energy—and the relationship of machines to men and to other animate creatures were of special interest to the artists of the period, such as Fernand Léger and Raymond Duchamp-Villon. The latter’s bronze “Horse” (1911, Museum of Modern Art, New York) depicts the state of transition between animal and machine, an image of metamorphosis and dynamism very like the one Darl creates when, in one of his clairvoyant scenes, he sees Cash, machinelike, at work on the coffin (pp. 72–73).

36. Jean Stein, “William Faulkner” [interview], in Malcolm Cowley, ed., *Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews* (New York: Viking Press, 1958), p. 139.

37. Alfred Kazin, *On Native Grounds* (1942; rpt. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956), p. 362.

38. Raymond (p. 234) said this poem “belongs to the genre of so-called cubist, synthetic, or ‘simultaneist’ poems. Here, on a single plane, without perspective, without transition, and often without any apparent logical relationship, we find heterogeneous elements, sensations, judgements, memories intermingled just as in the flux of psychological life.”

39. Kahnweiler, p. 202.