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THE FUNCTION OF PRONOUNS LACKING REFERENCES  
IN WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *AS I LAY DYING*

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A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
English Composition

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by  
Brian Michael Sherman  
December 2006

THE FUNCTION OF PRONOUNS LACKING REFERENCES  
IN WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *AS I LAY DYING*

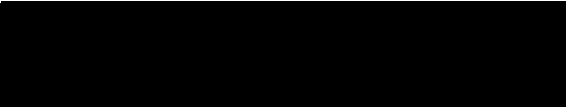
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A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

---


by  
Brian Michael Sherman  
December 2006

Approved by:

  
Yvonne Atkinson, Chair, English

Nov 22, 2006  
Date

  
Bruce Golden

  
Jacqueline Rhodes

## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the stylistic functions of pronoun use in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. The study is both quantitative, for the purpose of comparison, and interpretive, and the purpose of the study is to examine how Faulkner utilizes pronouns without references in Vardaman's sections as a stylistic device. The quantitative portion of the study establishes a numerical difference in pronoun use between Darl, Dewey Dell, and Vardaman's texts in order to show authorial choice played a large part in determining how pronouns are used in these different character's texts. Included in this first portion of the thesis is an examination of changes made by Faulkner when revising the original hand-written text. The study goes on to examine three pronouns in particular, it, she and her. The effects of the pronoun it, when used without a proper reference, are shown to stretch into the psychological foundation of Vardaman's character, as well as his notorious claim that his mother is a fish. The pronouns she and her are examined under the same criteria, but these pronouns' effects are examined according to how they appear to help Faulkner maintain Addie's presence in the novel as an active entity.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Eleanor Partridge, Dr. Bruce Golden, Dr. Yvonne Atkinson, and Dr. Jackie Rhodes for their time, effort, support, and encouragement to explore.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### A BRIEF HISTORY AND JUSTIFICATION

William Faulkner wrote *As I Lay Dying* (AILD) between October 25, 1929 and December 11, 1929, while supposedly working as a stoker in the University of Mississippi's power plant. He says he wrote the book between the hours of midnight and four in the morning and never changed a word. While there is little doubt that the initial text was written in six weeks, Faulkner's claim that the text was not revised is simply not true.

If one accepts the indications given in the manuscript, the composition of the novel did in fact take little more than six weeks. Yet to these six weeks one needs to add the month Faulkner took to type his manuscript: a comparison of the two texts provides substantial evidence that the typing up involved a process of meticulous revision. (Bleikasten 12)

In his book analyzing some of the stylistic and thematic aspects of *AILD*, *Faulkner's As I Lay Dying*, Andre Bleikasten discusses some of the alterations by Faulkner, which include "modifications of this order: deletions,



additions and substitutions relating to words, sentences, or parts of sentences, more rarely to whole paragraphs" (Bleikasten 12). Faulkner makes alterations such as: adding Anse's comment that Cash was fortunate to break the same leg twice, adding a description of Cora while she is returning home from Addie's funeral, "sitting on the wagon seat, the shawl around her shoulders and the umbrella open above her head" (Bleikasten 12), expanding the description of Addie's corpse by noting, "The quilt is drawn up to her chin, hot as it is, with only her two hands and her face outside" (Bleikasten 12). While these changes seem to aim at expanding and perfecting the images Faulkner is creating, others seem to be intended to enhance the amount of sensory perception being conveyed by the text, and there are some alterations that, oddly enough, seem to go against the normal purpose of the revision process, which is most often clarity, and actually create a sense of vagueness in the text. In order to create a more ambiguous text, Faulkner makes changes such as changing coffin to box at the end of the first section of the novel, and his "replacement of nouns by personal pronouns without antecedents" (Bleikasten 13).

Although the replacement of nouns with personal pronouns without antecedents is limited to personal pronouns, it helps demonstrate that Faulkner was probably very aware of the use of pronouns in the text of *AILO*. After all, the text must mimic thought, and people don't think in proper nouns or use references for the pronouns they use in thought. But Faulkner must contend with the stylistic problem of pronouns without antecedents and their impact on the text. Stylistically, pronouns with proper references are a cohesive device, while they also permit the writer to omit repetitious nouns. Conversely, when antecedents do not exist, they make textual comprehension amazingly difficult. Deciphering who the speaker, or thinker, is speaking or thinking about often requires significant amount of effort on the part of the reader, and this effort, if the reader is overburdened by their amount or frequency, can greatly interrupt the flow of thought that Faulkner is trying to create. And within this stylistic quandary, Faulkner decided to use 243 of the 522 pronouns within Vardaman's sections without antecedents, while deciding to use much smaller frequencies in the texts of the other characters in the novel.

Vardaman is undoubtedly one of the most brilliantly composed characters of *As I Lay Dying*. The youngest Bundren's interior monologue is utilized for ten of the fifty-nine sections, which is significant considering only one character is permitted more chapters in which to speak. Vardaman's sections are arguably some of the most difficult to comprehend. Faulkner uses a child-like logic, relatively simple sentence structure, and syntax which is devoid of the type of writing that most critics consider typical during Vardaman's sections. Missing are the enormous, confusing and contradicting words piled one after another that typify Faulkner to many. In their place, he utilizes pronouns without antecedents. Initially, because of the difficulty in comprehending the text, Vardaman had been typically dismissed as an idiot, but critics eventually began to take note of the context in which Vardaman acted out his seeming idiocy and began disputing their predecessors' claims. The most prominent stylistic feature that impedes on comprehension, and the largest contributing factor to the above mentioned misconception, is the over-abundance of pronouns without antecedents, but the effects and importance of this anomaly extend far beyond this limited scope.

In this thesis, I will examine Faulkner's use of pronouns without antecedents. My examination will focus on Vardaman's text, but I will include discussions on Darl's first three sections, and all three of Dewey Dell's sections for the purpose of comparison. I will examine the distinct possibility that the use of these pronouns is intentional, the effects these pronouns have on the reader, how these pronouns influence character development, and how they help Faulkner maintain the presence of the novel's key figure, Addie Bundren. My study, although interpretive in nature, will rely on quantitative analysis for support and for the basis of certain assertions. I realize that quantitative studies aren't common when examining a piece of fiction, so I must qualify my choice to extend my approach beyond that normally used.

Every reader of *As I Lay Dying* is undoubtedly affected by the basic structure of the novel. Faulkner's decisions to use an interior monologue style rather than rely on a traditional type of narrator, use fifteen different characters, and divide the novel into fifty-nine sections certainly have an impact on those more accustomed to a more familiar type of narrative. These structural devices

make different types of examinations more plausible. The linguistic factors that contribute to our impressions of any given character are more apparent because the text originates directly from the mind of the character. Although a portion of any impression created by this text might be attributable to a description, or sequence of descriptions, from other characters as well as character's actions, which is the case with Jewel as he only delivers one section, a majority of the impressions created originate in the text delivered by that character. The reader doesn't believe Darl is insane, even though his actions arguably make the truth clear, until he or she reads Darl's final monologue. The impressions of Dewey Dell's emotional state, Anse's incessant complaints, and Addie, who is hardly mentioned or discussed in the novel, rely almost entirely on the text delivered by each character, but as the Bundren family makes their way towards Jefferson, the texts of these characters change.

Faulkner was certainly careful about the changes that occur as the novel progresses. The characters must, and do, essentially stay the same throughout the novel, but they must also change to reflect the fluidity of these characters' mental states within an ever-changing

environment. As these changes occur, Faulkner alters the language being used to suit the situation, but the subtlety with which these changes are made is extreme. Faulkner certainly compels the reader to do his or her job. His prose style is challenging, and understanding some of its complexities and the effects of even small changes over multiple sections can help the reader better understand and appreciate the resources of language and its possible effects. Tracking these changes, specifically by quantifying them and examining the different ways any frequently used rhetorical device is being used throughout the novel, can help us observe the vision inspiring Faulkner's style more clearly.

Here, a clear definition and distinction needs to be drawn between two of the terms mentioned thus far, style and technique. As definitions for both of these terms differ from critic to critic, this thesis will define both terms as follows:

Style is the way in which language is used in a given text, determined by the frequency of occurrence of particular linguistic features in that text;

A literary technique is the way in which language is used in a given text determined by its artistic function. (Jurus 5)

These definitions apply well to this thesis as the definition for style includes the relevance of the frequency of occurrences, and the definition for technique observes the need to identify function. But there is a dilemma when examining the frequency of occurrences.

The most serious difficulty in any study using frequency of occurrence as a factor is that in order to establish that a frequency is not normal, a normal frequency would have to be first established. But establishing a normal frequency or even odds of occurrence to judge a seeming abnormal frequency against doesn't seem to be possible, yet. An additional problem arises when considering that a given word, when appropriated by subject matter, is bound to naturally appear during the text, and just because it, or words akin to it, appears with a given frequency doesn't necessarily mean that it is being used with an abnormally high frequency, or, as far as technique is concerned, that it is serving any purpose other than being appropriate diction.

Fortunately, neither of these problems impede on the work being done in this thesis. The dilemma surrounding the idea of natural occurrences is sidestepped by the comparison of texts. The interior monologue style of narration could certainly permit more pronouns without antecedents than a more traditional narration technique for obvious reasons: thought isn't necessarily coherent or logical, thought constrained by text should inevitably be subject to knowledge that only the character thinking possesses but hasn't been given to the reader. This dilemma is negated in this instance as there are other characters who should follow a somewhat similar pattern if pronouns without references are naturally occurring in interior monologue narration. The problem of a normal frequency is also negated. Although this examination will not venture so far as to attempt establishing any type of norm to measure against, it will present a quantitative study, which will demonstrate a mammoth disparity between the frequencies in which pronouns lacking proper references are being used by Faulkner for a given character. What differentiates this study, and in fact permits it to be made, is the fundamental structure of the novel. Without the interior monologues of Dewey Dell,



Darl, or any of the other characters in the novel, a point of comparison is not valid. This uniqueness of this text invites unique styles of interpretation and examination, and in this instance, makes the abnormal examination an obvious choice.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A QUANTITATIVE EXAMINATION OF PRONOUN USE

Attempting to make claims of authorial intent is conceivably one of the most difficult claims to support. For this reason, I have chosen to examine the possibility that Faulkner's use of pronouns without references is intentional through two means not normally used when examining fiction; I will examine each section from Vardaman and the previously mentioned sections from Darl and Dewey Dell quantitatively in order to view a wider perspective on the appearance of pronouns without references in the novel, and I will examine some of the changes Faulkner made to Vardaman's sections while typing the typescript using his handwritten text.

One of the most visible differences between the texts of Darl, Dewey Dell and Vardaman is the number of pronouns used. The sections sampled from Dewey Dell cover nine pages containing 209 pronouns. Darl's first three sections cover five and two-thirds pages, but only contain 111 pronouns. Vardaman's total text covers eighteen pages and uses 522 pronouns within ten sections. While there is an obvious difference in the amount of pronouns used for

each character, when these numbers are broken down by section and further examined according to pronouns with and without antecedents, the differences in the use of pronouns between these characters is much more startling.

Vardaman's initial section, section 13 of *AILD*, contains seventy-nine pronouns and is his largest, three and one-half pages. Of the seventy-nine pronouns in this section, forty-five lack proper referencing, while thirty-four are referenced properly. A majority of the forty-five pronouns lacking references are grouped together, and a similar pattern is seen in the thirty-four that are referenced. During the first one and one-third pages of the section, twenty-five pronouns without references appear. Within this same span of text, only ten pronouns with references are used. The subsequent page and a half of text reveals twenty-four pronouns with references and only nine without. The final two-thirds page of text continues this trend with eleven pronouns lacking references and none with references. Not only does the amount of pronouns without references eclipse those with references, but the pronouns without references are massed and virtually uninterrupted. While the pattern of

grouping pronouns isn't as pronounced in Vardaman's subsequent section, it still remains.

The opening third of a page of Vardaman's second section begins with eleven pronouns lacking references and four with references. The following two-thirds of a page contains fourteen referenced pronouns and eleven without references. This is followed by a little less than half a page of text which contains twenty-nine pronouns without references and only three with references. In this section, the number of pronouns without references is far greater than those with references. Only twenty-one pronouns are referenced while fifty-one pronouns are not. Pronouns lacking references constitute seventy-one percent of the pronouns within the section. Furthering this disparity is the fact that in this section, when pronouns with references dominate the text, they do so only by the slightest margin, but when pronouns without references dominate the text, pronouns with references are almost non-existent. Out of the eight paragraphs that constitute this section, only two do not contain pronouns without references. Not surprisingly, these two paragraphs total five sentences combined, and when placed in context, their uniqueness is easily missed due to the confusion created

by the other paragraphs. This section is overburdened by the amount of pronouns used by Faulkner, and comprehending the topics of the section requires familiarity with the topics, something any first time reader of the novel certainly does not possess. This problem is further compounded by the grouping of unreferenced pronouns. This problem would have been obvious to the writer, as Faulkner was absolutely aware of the complexities of his texts, but he chose to group them in enormous chunks that make the issue of comprehensibility more problematic.

Vardaman's fourth section deviates from the patterns above. The referenced pronouns outnumber those without. Although the section's first third of a page has four pronouns without references and three with, the subsequent page is almost entirely referenced, thirteen pronouns with references and only five without. The remaining third of a page has fifteen total pronouns, nine of which are not referenced and six that are. While there are structural differences between this section and sections previously touched on, referenced pronouns outnumber those without by four, and half of those without pronouns don't appear until the final three lines of the section. While five pronouns without references is significant in only three

lines, it seems minor in comparison to the previous acts of grouping. In this instance, the use of pronouns without references seems more isolated due to the fact that there are only five. In Vardaman's fifth section, section thirty-five in *AILD*, they are spread out much more evenly.

In this section, referenced pronouns are once again more numerous, thirty-eight, than those without which total twenty-seven. The first third of a page contains twelve pronouns without references and five with, and the second page contains thirty-three with references and fifteen without. Including one pronoun that is non-referential, a total of sixty-six pronouns are found within one and a third pages. While this is an astounding amount of pronouns within such a limited space of text, it isn't until the final third of a page that referenced pronouns dominate the text. The first paragraph contains two referenced pronouns and five without references, the second has twelve referenced pronouns and eleven without, the third has thirteen with references and ten without, the fourth contains seven with references and only one without, and the final paragraph contains four referenced

pronouns. This broad pattern seems to carry into the next section as well.

Vardaman's sixth section contains thirty-nine referenced pronouns and only thirteen that aren't. During the first page and a third there are ten pronouns without references and twenty with, while the second half of the section has nineteen pronouns with references and only three without. This change in ratio of referenced pronouns is most startling when compared to Vardaman's previous sections: section one forty-three percent, section two twenty-nine percent, section four and five fifty-five and fifty-eight percent, section six seventy-five percent. The pronouns in this section are overwhelmingly referenced in comparison to previous section, and the pronouns without references aren't grouped as they were either. This relatively high rate of properly used pronouns continues into Vardaman's next section, seven, where it is fifty-eight percent, but there are only twelve pronouns in this half page section. This pattern falters in his eighth section, and falls to forty-four percent, and the pattern of grouping seems to return.

Using a total of eighty-five pronouns, thirty-seven referenced, forty-seven not referenced and one that is

non-referential, this section doesn't quite revert to a percentage of referenced pronouns that is as low as the initial two sections, but it does group pronouns similar to these sections. The initial third of a page contains ten pronouns without references and only one referenced pronoun, and half of the next page of text contains eighteen pronouns lacking references and only five with them. Then the pattern of grouping returns with the remaining half a page of text and nearly three quarters of the following page using a total of twenty-six pronouns with references, four without, and one that is non-referential. The section reverts one final time to a reliance on pronouns without references during the final two paragraphs and the acts of utterance in between them. This portion of text contains sixteen pronouns without references and only four with references. The amount of grouping in this section is possibly the most extreme of all of the sections that use a similar technique, but the final two sections take a dramatic turn from this path.

Seventy percent of the fifty pronouns in Vardaman's ninth section are properly referenced. The first third of a page contains five referenced pronouns and four without references. The subsequent page is dominated by



referenced pronouns, with twenty-three referenced pronouns and only six without references, and the section closes with approximately half a page of text using twelve pronouns, five without references and seven with references. Faulkner's use of pronouns in this section is nearly mirrored in the final section from Vardaman.

The tenth section from Vardaman contains forty-six referenced pronouns and twenty-two without references. The percentage of pronouns that are referenced is sixty-eight percent, and a majority of the text is dominated by referenced pronouns. The first third of a page uses five referenced pronouns and three without references. The next full page of text uses thirteen referenced pronouns and seven without references, and the page subsequent to this uses twenty-six referenced pronouns and only nine pronouns without references. The final quarter of a page is the only portion of this section where the pronouns without references outnumber those with references. In this final portion of text, two pronouns are referenced and three aren't.

Vardaman's sections seem to present a few persistent patterns in pronoun use. These sections consistently use significant amounts of pronouns without references, as is

evident from the percent of pronouns without references which only falls beneath forty percent during three of the nine sections examined and falls below thirty percent only once. Many of these sections group and virtually isolate referenced pronouns from those without references, creating a text in which clear comprehension could seem lopsided at times. Furthering the comprehension issue is the fact that when comprehension should be more easily attained, the dazzling effect of the previous pronouns without references remains with the reader and hinders comprehension of the areas containing pronouns that are referenced.

Considering that pronouns without references would seem to be necessitated by the nature of the narrative structure of *AILD*, it seems a logical deduction that if their existence in Vardaman's text is merely to mimic thought patterns, and is not functional, similar patterns would be seen in other characters' sections. It would also seem logical to expect that there would be similar comprehension issues in these sections as well. But a comparison to random sections from Dewey Dell and Darl does not reveal any sort of similarities as might be expected. These sections show a very different numerical

picture that is decidedly lopsided in comparison to Vardaman's sections. Their uses of pronouns without references takes a much more conservative approach that certainly supports my contention that Faulkner intentionally packed Vardaman's sections with unreferenced pronouns and did so with the intent of further exploiting them as a stylistic device.

The use of pronouns in Dewey Dell's first three sections differs greatly from Vardaman's sections; they are not used in similar stylistic patterns, as frequently, or in percentages of referenced pronouns to pronouns without references that is similar to Vardaman's. If doubled, as Dewey Dell's pages are exactly half that of Vardaman's, her total pronouns used would be four-hundred and eighteen, exactly one-hundred and four fewer than those used in Vardaman's entire text. Consequently, the average pronouns used per page, which is slightly over twenty-three, is nearly six fewer than Vardaman's average. But while these general differences are statistically substantial, some of the smaller details of pronoun use in her sections reveal some much more startling differences.

Dewey Dell's first section contains fifty-six pronouns through one and a half pages, forty are

referenced, fifteen are not, and one is non-referential. Her first third of a page contains eight referenced pronouns. The next full page has twenty-seven referenced pronouns and eleven without references, and the final slightly less than a third of a page contains five referenced pronouns and four pronouns lacking references. The percent of pronouns with references is seventy-three. This percentage is reached during Vardaman's sections once, during his sixth where it is seventy-five percent. Furthermore, referenced pronouns and those without references are spread throughout the section more evenly than is seen in Vardaman's sections, and this type of use would seem more sensible from a writing standpoint, if the author is concerned with textual comprehension. The majority of unreferenced pronouns in this section are found on the only full page of the section, and on this page the highest concentration is found during five lines of text where there are seven pronouns without references and only two pronouns with references. The remaining four pronouns lacking references are spread through the text and are not grouped, but her second section takes a different turn.

The second section from Dewey Dell is her largest. It is five and one-half pages long, which constitutes sixty-one percent of her total text. This section also contains a noteworthy amount of pronouns, one-hundred and eighteen. Sixty-two of these pronouns are referenced, fifty-four are not, and three are non-referential. The first third of a page is dominated by pronouns lacking references, eight, and of the remaining three pronouns only one is referenced, as the other two are non-referential. Excluding non-referential pronouns, the next two full pages contain twenty-four referenced pronouns and twenty without references. Separately, both of these pages each have two more referenced pronouns than pronouns without references, and neither page displays the grouping of pronouns without references as is seen on the first page of this section. The third full page of text contains fourteen pronouns with references and nine without references, a much higher rate of referenced pronouns, and while this page does group five pronouns without references during the bottom half of the page, one of which is eight lines from the other four, the amount of pronouns grouped is obviously not nearly as severe as seen previously. The next full page of text uses referenced

pronouns almost exclusively. There are fifteen of them and only two without references. The subsequent full page, containing eleven referenced pronouns and fifteen without references, uses four more pronouns without references than those with them. But once again, the grouping of pronouns without references is not clearly separated as in Vardaman's sections. Those without references are split, the top and bottom thirds of the page, with three referenced pronouns between these two sections, and the remaining referenced pronouns are spread evenly throughout these two sections. Even in this section, which is by far the closest numerically to Vardaman's sections of any of the sections sampled for comparison, patterns of grouping do not exist. Faulkner spreads referenced pronouns evenly throughout the section, resulting in a text that both mimics thought while remaining accessible to the reader. If Faulkner did not intend to use pronouns without references to serve a purpose beyond mimicking thought patterns during Vardaman's sections, then it would seem that following a pattern similar to what is seen in this section from Dewey Dell would be the most obvious choice, but this is not so.

Dewey Dell's third section displays the greatest percent of referenced pronouns seen yet in this study. With a total of forty-one pronouns, this section only contains three pronouns without references. The percentage of referenced pronouns reaches ninety-two percent in this section. The first third of a page has five referenced pronouns, one without a reference, and two that are non-referential. The only full page of text in this section has sixteen referenced pronouns, two without references, and one that is non-referential, and the final two-thirds of a page of text contains fourteen referenced pronouns.

The pronouns used in Dewey Dell's three sections total 137 referenced pronouns, and seventy-two without references. The total number of referenced pronouns, when doubled to account for the difference in the number of pages examined, is nearly statistically identical to Vardaman's total. Dewey Dell's total would equal 274 while Vardaman's is 279. This is astonishing considering that performing the same calculation with her pronouns without references reveals that her text would use ninety-nine less than Vardaman's. Ninety-five percent of the difference in pronoun use between these two characters is

attributable to a difference in the use of pronouns without references.

Statistically, Dewey Dell's sections differ greatly from Vardaman's, and the grouping that can be tracked through Vardaman's sections is not running through Dewey Dell's text. While the statistics already presented differ significantly, the number of pronouns without references represents the greatest difference between the use of pronouns in these two characters' texts. They are not used as frequently, or stylistically, as they are in Vardaman's sections. Dewey Dell's sections seem to truly reach the compromise necessitated by the dualistic nature of the issue of using pronouns that are not referenced and still creating an accessible text. The dualistic nature of this issue is furthered when examining Darl's sections.

Darl's sections, even when he is insane, are clear, articulate, and extremely accessible, yet still retain the semblance of natural thought patterns. Faulkner uses pronouns very differently during these sections. He does not express the need to use unreferenced pronouns at all, but he still achieves his aim of mimicking thought in text. The examination of Darl's sections demonstrate that Faulkner was certainly aware that he could achieve the



stylistic challenge of the novel while not using pronouns without references.

The three sections being examined from Darl's sections are his first, second, and final sections. The total of pronouns found in these sections is 111. The total pages used during these sections is five and two-thirds, which I will round up to six pages for the ease of data comparison. Darl's sections not only contain fewer pronouns on average per page, nearly nineteen, they are also nearly void of pronouns without references.

The use of pronouns in Darl's sections is very simplistic and much more demonstrative of the way pronouns are used during the majority of the novel. In the first section twenty-two pronouns are used during one and a half pages of text, and none lack references. His second section uses a total of sixty-three pronouns through three pages of text, and three of these pronouns are without references. His final section contains twenty-six pronouns within the span of one and a third pages, and only one of the pronouns lacks a reference. Ninety-six percent of the pronouns used in these sections are referenced. Compared to Vardaman's average of fifty-three percent, and Dewey Dell's average of sixty-six percent,

Darl's average shows an astoundingly different use of pronouns. If Darl's totals were tripled, as the sample is approximately three times less than Vardaman's, the total use of referenced pronouns would equal 321, which would be forty-two more than are used in Vardaman's text, but the total number of pronouns without references would only equal twelve, which is 231 fewer than Vardaman's total. While the use of referenced pronouns is amazingly similar, the use of pronouns without references varies significantly. This statistical variance is extremely demonstrative of the variance that would be evident if comparing Vardaman's text to the texts of most of the other characters in the novel. Even Dewey Dell's sections are an exception by the standard of the other characters' uses of pronouns without references, as she was selected to be examined based on the impression that her sections contained a significant amount of pronouns that are not referenced. A study of this type that excluded Dewey Dell from the comparison samples would undoubtedly demonstrate that the variation between Vardaman and other characters would be as astounding as the numerical differences between Darl and Vardaman. While I believe that the statistics shown suggest both intent of use and function,

through frequency and the existence of grouping patterns, I am also quite certain that an examination of the only portion of Vardaman's text that Faulkner chose to seriously revise will firmly establish that Faulkner intended the use of pronouns without references to serve a function beyond mimicking the nature of thought during Vardaman's sections.

Faulkner claimed he never changed a word of the novel, but he certainly made some changes while typing the manuscript from the original handwritten text. And although while this claim has been attributed to a jab of sorts, poking at a similar boast previously made by Ernest Hemingway, Faulkner's boast, even though not true, seems to hold some weight. With a few exceptions, the alterations made to Vardaman's first sections are relatively minute as are most of the revisions to the novel.

It is true that certain pages give the impression of having found their final form from the very onset. Most of them, however, bear the traces of numerous corrections. Thus on the first page of the manuscript, which corresponds to the first section of the published book, there

are sixteen deletions, with more than fifty words crossed out, and a short sentence appears in the margin, with a line indicating where it should be inserted in the text. Almost the whole of the manuscript shows modifications of this order: deletions, additions and substitutions relating to words, sentences or parts of sentences, more rarely whole paragraphs. (Bleikasten 11-12)

Bleikasten's statement certainly applies to most of Vardaman's text as much as it does to the texts of the other characters. The changes made to Vardaman's sections are mostly concerned with the addition of words and the addition and deletion of phrases, and sometimes an entire sentence. These changes appear to be relatively minor and their purpose appears to be rooted in the philosophical underpinnings of the issue of existence and the appearance of non-existence that are explored by Vardaman and Darl during the novel. The most profound amount of alterations that occur during this revision period are found in the initial three paragraphs of Vardaman's text, which demonstrates deletions of a different sort. Faulkner's handwritten version appears in as follows in Figure 1:

Успешно

Then I begin to run. I can feel something hit me and I stop. I know I am running. I run around the back of the house because that is the way I can see and I try to run back on it before it comes out, running back into where it began to run. I run to the edge of the pond and stop because beyond that is where it is and the edge of the pond is the edge of the world. Then I begin to cry.

I can feel when the fish was in the dust. It comes as the man with feeling... It is cut into pieces of not-for now, not blood on my hands and nails. It comes as that with feeling, with not being, and so it is not. Then it wasn't so. Then it hadn't happened. So what is it to sink the piece much and put the blood back and the alive in the dust somehow and put that back before she is too far to catch her, so it will not be. The loss feels like children when they suffled into the dust on the last days.

I can see the talking in the room. I can see the talking. It looks like nothing in a story of words, whispering along  
around the corner of the door and into the room. I can hear the bed, the face. I that the face was and  
was it is not. I don't know what it is. It is not less. I that it was and will be. But it is not and was  
not and she was not and I that is. I can see hearing like long whispering together, with no words, tapping,  
singing up and down when the film shakes when he walks that come here made less not is and was and  
upon. That made him not, the last one of a batch.

"Get out me of a hole."

I jump from the post, running. The top of the beam comes swooping up out of the twilight. I could go there if like the post body on the line then the hoop, into the woman smiling, without having to work. My hands grab at the bushes, my hands do. Hal me: I would not work but my hands would work. Down to my feet

Figure 1. Handwritten Vardaman's Text.

(Faulkner, William, Joseph Blotner, and Thomas McHaney. As *I lay Dying: Holograph Manuscript and Carbon Typescript*. New York/London: Garland, 1987).

Literally typed out, with deletions underlined, the page reads:

Then I begin to run. I can feel something  
hot and sickness beginning to come up from  
inside me I run toward the back door because  
that is the way I came in and I try to run back  
on it before it can let running back into when  
it hadn't been. I run to the edge of the pines  
and stop because beyond that is where it is and  
the edge of the pines is the edge of the is-not.  
Then I begin to cry.

I can feel where the fish was in the dust.  
I can see the mark with feeling. It is cut into  
pieces of not-fish now, not-blood on my hands  
and overalls. I can see that with feeling, with  
not-seeing, and so it is not. Then it wasn't  
so. Then it hadn't happened. So what is it to  
stick the pieces back and put the blood back and  
the alive in the dust somewhere and put that  
back before she gets too far to catch her, so it  
will not be. The trees look like chickens when  
they ruffled into the dust on the hot days.

I can see the talking in the room. I can  
see the listening. It looks like milk in a  
glass of water, creeping along around the corner

of the doors and into the room. I can hear the  
bed, her face. I thot her face was and now it  
is not. I don't know what it is. It is not  
her. I thot it was and will be. But it is not  
and was not and she was not and I thot is. I  
can see hearing like long creeping tongues, mile  
in water, run up and down when the floor shakes  
when he walks that came and made her not is and  
was and never. That made her not. The fat son  
of a bitch. (Faulkner, Blotner and McHaney 42)

When completed, Vardaman's initial section, number 13 in  
the novel, reads as follows.

Then I begin to run. I run toward the back and  
come to the edge of the porch and stop. Then I  
begin to cry. I can feel where the fish was in  
the dust. It is cut up into pieces of not-fish  
now, not-blood on my hands and overalls. Then  
it wasn't so. It hadn't happened then. And now  
she is getting so far ahead I cannot catch her.

The trees look like chickens when they  
ruffle out into the cool dust on the hot days.  
If I jump off the porch I will be where the fish  
was, and it all cut up into not-fish now. I can

hear the bed and her face and them and I can  
feel the floor shake when he walks on it that  
came and did it. That came and did it when she  
was all right but he came and did it. (Faulkner  
53-54)

The original text is quite different from what is printed. Most of the revision to these paragraphs is deletion. Nearly every word in the printed version exists in the handwritten text, additions are noted by the underlined text in the above reprinted paragraphs; only in the handwritten text there is a considerable amount of text between these remaining sentences.

The deleted sentences are pertinent to the interpretation of the event that is occurring during the first paragraph of Vardaman's text as this event is foundational to Faulkner's development of this character. Within the deleted portion of the text from the first paragraph, the pronoun it appears five times. The pronoun is intended to mean the back door, an unknown event, and an unknown object. The deletions from the second paragraph contain the pronoun it in three spots. They are intended to represent, in this order, an unknown object, a non-referential use, and an unknown event.



As the next chapter will clearly demonstrate, if left in the text, these deletions would have amounted to eight additional uses of one of the most pertinent words in the opening paragraph. Their existence in the text would have spread the psychological phenomenon, occurring rhetorically, so far apart, that interpreting what is actually happening in Vardaman's mind at that moment would be nearly impossible when considering what Faulkner was attempting to accomplish with this text.

CHAPTER THREE

STYLISTIC FUNCTIONS OF THE PRONOUN IT

WITHIN VARDAMAN'S TEXT

Vardaman's character is remembered by most readers for his stunning single sentence section wherein he claims that his mother is a fish. A common interpretation of Vardaman's statement and the psychological justification for it involves psychoanalyzing how Vardaman's statement exemplifies a process called transference:

Psychoanalyzing the Vardaman consciousness can make sense of "My mother is a fish" as a classic case of transference. Vardaman kills the fish; Vardaman witnesses Addie's death; Vardaman replaces the mother with the fish in an effort to gain psychic control over the trauma of her death. He also narcissistically feels responsible for her death (for some reason), so because he caught and killed the fish, the fish's death and her own blurs. (Boren 5)

The transference of the events rhetorically occurs within the text during both of the sections preceding the notorious statement, but the notorious sentence doesn't

appear in the text until section 19, page 83 of the text. The transference isn't meant to be a notable event. Instead, Faulkner uses the pronoun it and paragraphing structure to permit the transference event to occur within the text, which helps the event seem semi-logical instead of simple nonsense, while he simultaneously utilizes *it* and other unreferenced pronouns to create Vardaman's voice.

One of the most calculable differences between Vardaman's first two sections and the remainder is the frequency and use of the pronoun it in the dialogue and text during Vardaman's sections. During the initial two sections, the pronoun occurs sixty-four times during four and a half pages. In the first section alone the pronoun is used forty times. The second section utilizes it twenty-four times in the text and once during dialogue. The subsequent eight sections from Vardaman utilize this pronoun less frequently, ninety-six times during thirteen pages: never in his third section, twenty times in his fourth section, eight times in his fifth section, nine times in his sixth section, twice in his seventh section, fifteen times in his eighth section, twenty-three times in his ninth section, and nineteen times in his final

section. Vardaman's final seven sections cover nearly three times more pages, yet the occurrence of the pronoun is less frequent. A more detailed analysis reveals that this difference can be largely attributed to Faulkner's need to prepare the reader to make some sense of the transference event, while establishing a voice for the youngest Bundren.

Faulkner wastes no time in initiating the process of creating a voice for Vardaman while presenting the transference event. The first paragraph of text from Vardaman begins both of these processes.

Then I begin to run. I run toward the back and come to the edge of the porch and stop. Then I begin to cry. I can feel where the fish was in the dust. It is cut up into pieces of not-fish now, not-blood on my hands and overalls. Then it wasn't so. It hadn't happened then. And now she is getting so far ahead I cannot catch her.

(Faulkner 53)

Initially, the pronoun is used to represent the fish that Vardaman recently caught and chopped at with an axe, "It is cut up into pieces of not-fish now" (Faulkner 53). In the next sentence, Vardaman uses the same pronoun to refer

to the event of chopping up the fish, "Then it wasn't so," but omits a reference to denote the change (Faulkner 53). He seems to reiterate this idea in the next sentence, "It hadn't happened then," (Faulkner 53). At this point in the text, Vardaman seems to switch the topic of his monologue, but doesn't begin a new paragraph, which would signify a change of topic. Because he doesn't begin a new paragraph here, the apparent use of the last two pronouns comes into question after Vardaman states, "And now she is getting so far ahead I cannot catch her" (Faulkner 53). Obviously, determining the sex of a fish is impossible at Vardaman's age. The she he is referring to without a reference is his mother. In this context and sentence sequencing, the last two pronouns, and possibly the first as well, refer to both events.

The use of the pronoun constitutes approximately thirty percent of the subjects during this paragraph. Understanding their references is vital to textual comprehension, but it is extremely difficult to ascribe meaning as its meaning seems to shift and blur. The blurring of meaning this creates in the very first paragraph of the reader's introduction to Vardaman's psyche is the rhetorical foundation for the psychological

events that underlie the soon to come conclusion that his mother is a fish. By demonstrating rhetorically that both events are interchangeable in Vardaman's mind, Faulkner begins the process of subtly convincing the reader not to dismiss Vardaman's conclusion that his mother is a fish. At the same time, Faulkner is introducing the reader to this character with an amazingly vague paragraph filled with pronouns that defy the basic premise of pronoun use.

In order to retain some sense of subtlety, while entrenching the use of unreferenced pronouns as a fundamental aspect of Vardaman's voice, Faulkner uses the pronoun it five times, three times without references and twice with, in the following paragraph, even though the paragraph is only four sentences long.

The trees look like chickens when they ruffle out into the cool dust on the hot days. If I jump off the porch I will be where the fish was, and it all cut up into not-fish now. I can hear the bed and her face and them and I can feel the floor shake when he walks on it that came and did it. That came and did it when she was all right but he came and did it. (Faulkner 53-54)

He uses it in the second sentence to refer to the fish, in the third sentence twice to refer to the floor and then Addie's death and twice in the last sentence where both occurrences refer to Addie's death once again. Each reference to Addie's death is not referenced properly. Twenty-eight words separate the first and second occurrences, five separate the second and the third occurrences, four separate the third and fourth occurrences, and ten separate the fourth and fifth occurrences. While rhetorically, Faulkner focuses the text on the pronoun it through repetition, which should direct the reader towards its importance, he also fills the short paragraph with six other pronouns, five of which lack references. These reinforce the impression of unreferenced pronouns being typical to Vardaman's thought process.

Throughout the remainder of the section, Faulkner continues to use the pronoun in many different ways while all too often ignoring references. The next occurrence has a standard reference to denote meaning, but the next two are a little more unusual, "vomiting the crying, and then I can breathe, vomiting it. It makes a lot of noise" (Faulkner 54). In these instances, the use of the pronoun

is awkward, as Faulkner uses it to refer to a verb, which he uses as a noun. He promotes the awkwardness further through context, as the image created by the juxtaposition of two events that don't normally occur simultaneously is perplexing. Twenty-nine words separate this use and the next. In this instance, and the next, its use refers to an unknown object, "I cannot find it" (Faulkner 54). In the same paragraph, with the first two uses still unknown, he uses the pronoun to refer to the crying once again, "The crying makes a lot of noise. I wish it wouldn't make so much noise," (Faulkner 54). This use is properly referenced but perplexing. Vardaman is the one crying, yet he refers to the action as if it were separate from him. Faulkner then follows this by using it to refer to the unknown object again only eight words later. The final clause of the paragraph reveals the unknown object, "Then I find it in the wagon shed, in the dust, and I run across the lot and into the road, the stick jouncing on my shoulder" (Faulkner 54). These uses of the pronoun, although unusual, reflect the state of Vardaman's mind most accurately as he has just witnessed the death of his mother and is undoubtedly suffering from a level of trauma that would elicit frantic feelings, incoherent thoughts



and a certain amount of detachment from the situation at hand. Faulkner's style of pronoun use helps reflect this state of trauma because the awkward use encourages a quick read, sentence structure also plays a large role in this, and an overwhelming sense of confusion as there are so many in such a small amount of text, which reflects Vardaman's emotional state perfectly.

The final significant use of the pronoun in the first section occurs during a speech event wherein Vardaman states, "Then hit want. Hit hadn't happened then. Hit was a-layin right there on the ground. And now she's gittin ready to cook hit" (Faulkner 56). Here the same pronoun, now phonetically expressed, is without a reference and once again the implied meanings freely fluctuate between the fish and the event of the fishes death, which are now inextricably and rhetorically connected to Addie and the event of her death. Although expecting the reader to make this connection before Vardaman's third section is most likely asking too much, a dilemma Faulkner probably expected, the premise that Vardaman believes his mother is a fish is rhetorically reinforced with the pronoun it acting as the stylistic facilitator. This speech event, which is directed towards

no character as none are present, is a prelude to Vardaman's subsequent section in which this event is revisited in more intense fashion.

Vardaman's second section follows the same type of pattern of pronoun use as the first. The first three uses of the pronoun *it* are each without references, but their meanings can be assumed with a relative certainty based on context. "When they get it finished they are going to put her in it and then for a long time I couldn't say it" (Faulkner 65). The third pronoun is particularly confusing because the first two represent the coffin and although they are not referenced, it is a relatively simple assumption, but the third could be the coffin, or Addie's death. The pronoun continues to associate itself with Addie, at least in Vardaman's thought process, and the meaning's fluidity continues to hold the reader a hostage of sorts bound by the perplexing nature of Vardaman's pronoun use. While the next two uses of this pronoun are more standard, the remainder of the section returns to the transference event.

During the final full page of text during this section, Faulkner makes a more concrete connection between Addie and the fish by increasing the intensity of pronoun

use numerically as well as through context. Faulkner begins by inverting the reference point of the pronoun it, "It was not her. I was there, looking. I saw. I thought it was her, but it was not. It was not my mother" (Faulkner 66). This is the first time Vardaman has properly referenced the pronoun when using it to refer to his mother, but Faulkner almost immediately reverts back to a more flexible meaning for the pronoun while reinforcing the rhetorical movement to associate Addie with the pronoun.

And so if Cash nails the box up, she is not a rabbit. And so if she is not a rabbit I couldn't breathe in the crib and Cash is going to nail it up. And so if Cash lets him it is not her. I know. I was there. I saw when it did not be her. I saw. They think it is and Cash is going to nail it up. (Faulkner 66)

The next and final paragraph of the section begins with the same use, but then blurs the deaths of the fish and Addie, "It was not her because it was laying right yonder" (Faulkner 66). The three uses following these literally refer to the fish, but without references, which would separate these two entities, "And now it's all chopped up.

I chopped it up. It's laying in the kitchen on the bleeding pan, waiting to be cooked and et," (Faulkner 66). The blurring intensifies until the paragraph's conclusion.

Then it wasn't and she was, and now it is and she wasn't. And tomorrow it will be cooked and et and she will be him and pa and Cash and Dewey Dell and there wont be anything in the box so she can breathe. It was laying right yonder on the ground. I can get Vernon. He was there and he seen it, and with both of us it will be and then it will not be. (Faulkner 67)

Five of the first twenty-four words in this paragraph are the pronoun it. In total, the entire paragraph consists of only one hundred and seventeen words, but there are twenty pronouns whose references must be assumed while their implied meanings are regularly switched. Foremost in this stylistic mannerism is the pronoun it. While most often during this paragraph, the pronoun's intended meaning could be ascertained by the fact that its reference point is she and her, and these pronouns are thus far reserved for Addie, Faulkner alternates meanings for the pronoun between the fish and Addie regularly. He also increases the intensity of their use numerically and

drastically increases their proximity to one another, which is probably the most effective stylistic device in use here as the pronouns completely dominate the text. The fifth sentence climaxes this effect while the sixth sentence concretely connects the fish, Addie, and the pronoun *it*, "Then it wasn't and she was, and now it is and she wasn't. And tomorrow it will be cooked and eaten and she will be him and pa and Cash and Dewey Dell and there won't be anything in the box so she can breathe," (Faulkner 67). Literally, the fifth sentence reverses the fish and Addie's positions in time and space when she becomes "wasn't" and *it* (the fish) becomes "is." But this sentence is tedious and an average reader is hard-pressed to recognize the play on words, so Faulkner relays Vardaman's psyche more clearly in the following sentence and makes the connection more accessible to the reader by replacing the fish on the Bundren's dinner plates with Addie.

Not coincidentally, the most bold and obvious connection between Addie and the deceased fish is placed in the very last paragraph of this section as Vardaman's subsequent section dedicates itself to the climax of Vardaman's seeming psychological breakdown when he finally

defines the dilemma by stating, "My mother is a fish" (Faulkner 84). The ambiguity, intensification by overuse, and reliance placed on it and other unreferenced pronouns in order to comprehend the text, makes Vardaman's proclamation much more believable because these uses of the pronoun have distorted the two events and entities at least subconsciously in the mind of the reader.

After Vardaman states that his mother is a fish, the frequency of the pronoun it and other pronouns declines, and the use of it becomes more standard. Vardaman's fourth section's first four uses are not referenced, but at least their implied reference is a single object, the train he obsessively yearns for, "it will be behind the glass again, shining with waiting" (Faulkner 100). After the second paragraph, it is used sixteen times. During this section, the pronoun becomes a significant problem in comprehension only once, during the discussion he has with Darl, wherein they discuss the differences, or lack thereof, between is and was. The pronoun becomes bothersome here not so much due to the pronoun's use as it does from the effect created by Faulkner's awkward use of the derivations of the verb be:

But my mother is a fish. Vernon seen it.  
He was there.

"Jewel's mother is a horse," Darl said.

"Then mine can be a fish, cant it, Darl?" I  
said.

Jewel is my brother.

"Then mine will have to be a horse too," I  
said.

"Why?" Darl said. "If pa is your pa, why  
does your ma have to be a horse just because  
Jewel's is?"

"Why does it?" I said. "Why does it,  
Darl?"

Darl is my brother.

"Then what is your ma, Darl?" I said.

"I haven't got ere one," Darl said.

"Because if I had one, it is was. And if it is  
was, it can't be is. Can it?" (Faulkner 101)

During the first three sections from Vardaman, the  
percentage of pronouns without references is relatively  
high. In the first section, fifty percent of the use of  
the pronoun it are not referenced, eighty-eight percent in  
the second, and sixty percent during the fourth. Although

the percent of unreferenced uses in the fourth section seems to follow suit with the first and second sections, the techniques discussed aren't utilized in this section with the exception of the discussion between Darl and Vardaman described in the previous paragraph. The five subsequent sections use the pronoun under circumstances where its references are clear much more often. In fact, only twice during these sections does the percent of pronouns without references reach fifty percent, and these sections have a total of ten uses of the pronoun it. The other three sections have a comparably low rate of pronouns without references, section five, twenty-two percent, section seven, twenty percent, and section nine, twenty-six percent. Only in the final section is it again used awkwardly, and these instances don't create a confusing effect on the text, as techniques such as overuse and intensification by proximity aren't utilized, and consequently comprehending the text isn't dependent on clear points of reference for the pronoun.

After establishing Vardaman's section, with the assistance of a significant amount of pronouns both referenced and unreferenced, Faulkner doesn't need to continue to use such large amounts and neglect references



so often because his primary purposes for these tools has expired after Vardaman's third section. Not only is the pronoun it used differently, but other pronouns follow suit. This results in the text after Vardaman's third section being much more accessible to the reader.

Unfortunately, most opinions of Vardaman's character have already been firmly entrenched due to the tremendous confusion created by the style of pronoun use previous to his third section. Consequently, even though the use of pronouns has a profound effect on the readability of the text, which should result in a change in a reader's opinion of Vardaman as his sections progress and the text becomes more comprehensible, seeing past the psychological proclamation of his third section and the rhetorical events leading to it would take a tremendous amount of insight that can only come from a study of the language of Vardman's text.

CHAPTER FOUR

STYLISTIC FUNCTIONS OF THE PRONOUNS SHE AND HER  
WITHIN VARDAMAN'S TEXT

The heart of *AILD* is undoubtedly Addie Bundren. Although most members of the family have ulterior motives for making the journey, it is foremost a journey to honor Addie's demand to be buried in Jefferson. The action of the novel as well as the motivation behind decision making, centers around Addie and her burial. Consequently, many of the thematic issues found in *AILD* also pivot around Addie. When discussing the structure of the novel Addie, Olga Vickery claims,

Centrifugally, each section establishes the relationship between Addie and the character whose thoughts and observations are being recorded. Linearly, each section contributes to the sequence of actions and events which constitutes the plot. (Vickery 55)

While this may seem true before section 19, not coincidentally the section wherein Vardaman claims his mother is a fish, succeeding sections don't seem to support the idea that they establish relationships. In

fact, the text that is devoted to Addie is surprisingly sparse when examined for mention of her, but Addie does not, and for obvious reasons cannot, disappear from the text entirely. After section 19, as the journey to bury her begins, Addie is present most often in the text of Vardaman. She is represented most often by the unreferenced pronouns she and her, but more importantly, these pronouns create Addie's presence within the text and permit Faulkner to largely omit her name and mention from the text of other characters because of the stylistic means with which he utilizes them during Vardaman's sections. Initially, it may seem strange to any reader of *AILD* to believe that Addie is rarely mentioned in the texts of characters other than Vardaman, but an examination of the text shows this point to be clearly obvious.

The sections between sections 19 and 24, seem to lack significant mention or discussion of Addie. In section 20, Tull discusses Addie near the end of his nine page section, but the topic covers only two full paragraphs and two lines of text.

"She has hern," I say. "Wherever she went, she has her reward in being free of Anse Bundren."

She laid there three days in that box, waiting for Darl and Jewel to come clean back home and get a new wheel and go back to where the wagon was in the ditch. Take my team, Anse, I said.

We'll wait for ourn, he said. She'll want it so. She was ever a particular woman.

On the third day they got back and they loaded her into the wagon and started and it already too late. You'll have to go all the way round by Samson's bridge. It'll take you a day to get there. Then you'll be forty miles from We'll wait for ourn. She'll want it so. (Faulkner 92)

This type of discussion regarding Addie is unusual after section 19. Apart from Vardaman's sections, this quote is the most thorough discussion of Addie for the next nineteen sections. This small bit of text ironically focuses on Anse's general inability, but at least Addie is the topic of their discussions. The three sections following this one provide far less discussion of her.

Sections 21, 22 and 23, from Darl, Cash, then Darl again, certainly lack mention and discussion of Addie. During section 21, Darl begins two thematic issues, the

presence of Death, symbolized by the ever-present buzzards hanging overhead, and the renegotiation of the idea of family without the mother. This section stretches across two pages, with less than one full page of text, and Addie is mentioned only once, "I cannot love my mother because I have no mother. Jewel's mother is a horse" (Faulkner 95). Her presence is implied when Darl tells Jewel, "It's not your horse that's dead, Jewel," and when he notes the presence of the buzzards twice. The majority of the text in this section is dedicated to descriptions of Jewel and never really focuses on Addie except through the philosophical implication of renegotiating the meaning of family roles without the mother. While section 22 does not address Addie, Darl's next section, 23, does so for about one full paragraph. This small discussion of her is limited to describing the initial motion of the casket as they begin carrying it to the wagon. Combined, these three sections cover pages 85-99, but Addie is found in only a small amount of the text. The lack of Addie's existence in the text is apparent here, but this changes in Vardaman's next section.

Section 24 is unique for Vardaman as he uses the pronouns she and her to refer to entities other than

Addie; this is one of only two sections to do so. He does refer to her via the pronouns twice during this section, while she is the subject of over half of the section. Even though these pronouns aren't utilized maximally during this section, the section nevertheless centers around Addie. She is referred to in this section as "ma," or "mother" most often, four times, and she is further referred to by means not normally recognized by the reader, using the possessive pronoun "mine," as well as the noun one and the pronoun it.

But my mother is a fish. Vernon seen it. He was there.

"Jewel's mother is a horse," Darl said.

"Then mine can be a fish, cant it, Darl?"

I said.

Jewel is my brother.

"Then mine will have to be a horse, too," I said.

"Why?" Darl said. "If pa is your pa, why does your ma have to be a horse just because Jewel's is?"

"Why does it?" I Said. "Why does it, Darl?"

Darl is my brother.

"Then what is your ma, Darl?" I said.

"I haven't got ere one," Darl said.

"Because if I had one, it is was. And if is was, it cant be is. Can it?"

"No," I said. (Faulkner 101)

While these uses don't coincide with my contention concerning pronouns use, it begins the process of utilizing Vardaman's text to shoulder the burden of maintaining Addie's presence in *AILD* as the actual journey to bury her begins. Vardaman's subsequent section, 35, differs from this one in use of pronouns as well as total text that is utilized to maintain Addie's presence.

Section 35, refers to Addie via the pronouns she or her thirty-one times. Twenty-seven of these uses are not properly referenced, but the pronouns don't hinder reading comprehension because of context; this is the section where the family fails to safely cross the overflowing river and Addie's corpse is dumped into it, and because every one of these two pronouns is obviously intended to denote Addie exclusively. The use of these pronouns in this section is very streamlined in the sense that they

are clearly intended for Addie as the text of the section is once again nearly completely centered around her.

This section is most interesting when considering Faulkner's authorial choices. Faulkner utilizes the pronoun he twenty-two times, and it is properly referenced all but once. His use of pronouns to denote Addie, are properly referenced only four times. Additionally, the sections between this one and Vardaman's last section cover forty-six pages, but only mention Addie on eight separate occasions, pages 115, 130-131, 135-136, 136, twice on 144, 145, and 149, totaling only two pages of text dedicated to her. These two separate facts are interesting authorial choices as Addie isn't very present in an enormous amount of text considering the brevity of the novel, yet she is the center of Vardaman's sections. Furthermore, she is represented by unreferenced pronouns almost exclusively, and her mention constitutes this entire section as opposed to such a limited exposure in the sections between Vardaman's sections. He chose to make Addie's presence more apparent in Vardaman's sections, yet widely omits her topic from the forty-six pages between these sections. This tendency is continued through sections 36, 37, and 38, where she is not



mentioned at all during thirteen pages, and then there is a brief shift in Addie's presence in the text of the novel.

Section 39 is from Cora, and this section seems to be preparing the reader to encounter Addie's section, which is next. With this in mind, it makes logical sense that Cora's section should center around Addie almost exclusively, which it does. After these two sections, Faulkner returns to mentioning Addie rarely, and limiting her presence to mentions as opposed to her being the subject, which is most apparent in Whitfield's section.

Whitfield's section, 41, is one of a few places in the novel where there is a break in chronology. Whitfield's section reverts to tell the story of his journey to the Bundren's home the day Addie died. The most amazing thing about this section is that Addie is mentioned quite frequently, fourteen times in total, yet she is never the subject of the text. Whitfield remains the subject of the text throughout the section. This is most likely a statement regarding Whitfield's character, but it is an interesting choice from Faulkner considering that the next thirteen pages, the amount between Whitfield's section and Vardaman's next section, 44, there

are only five isolated mentions and no discussion of Addie in any way. Each of these sections seems to use Addie very similarly, rarely, but Vardaman's subsequent section includes her in the text more than the previous thirteen pages combined.

This section covers nearly three pages, and mention of Addie constitutes about three-quarters of a page when totaled. Eight times she is mentioned by means of unreferenced pronouns. Although the focus of the section is Darl trying to help Cash be comfortable while sitting in the back of the wagon with his broken leg, Faulkner still chooses to deploy mention of Addie in the section, but fails to mention her by name and opts to refer to her by pronoun. This section and its relevance will be further dissected towards the end of this chapter when I discuss the function of these pronouns more clearly.

Sections 45-48 contain only five mentions of Addie and no discussion. She is mentioned once in Moseley's section, but this mention refers to Dewey Dell possessing a mother in a general sense. She is mentioned three times in section 48 by Darl. The discussion of her is small in duration, and her presence isn't really carried by his mentions because she is only the topic of discussion

briefly. But once again her presence exists clearly in Vardaman's next section, 49.

Similar to section 44, this section brings Addie into the text with the use of the pronouns she and her. This discussion that results from their use covers the first full page of text from this section. Not only are mentions of her more frequent in Vardaman's section, thirty-two times in this section and all without proper references, the actual amount of text used for Addie in any sense far exceeds the sections between this section and his last; under these same guides, this section far exceeds the entire remainder of the novel.

Darl mentions Addie once by name during the next section. This is another interesting authorial choice especially under the context. This section relates the heroics of Jewel when saving Addie and the animals in the burning barn that Darl has set ablaze. He refers to "the coffin" three times during this section, but it is remarkably, or maybe not so remarkably depending on how you choose to interpret the actions of Darl, devoid of the presence of Addie Bundren. Darl doesn't even express anger that Jewel has thwarted his attempt to "hide her from the sight of man," (Faulkner 215). Darl is so far

removed from the situation that he expresses no horror at the image of Jewel riding his mother's casket to freedom.

Then it topples forward, gaining momentum, revealing Jewel and the sparks raining on him too in engendering gusts, so that he appears to be enclosed in a thin nimbus of fire. Without stopping it overends and rears again, pauses, then crashes slowly forward and through the curtain. This time Jewel is riding upon it, clinging to it, until it crashes and flings him forward and clear and Mack leaps forward into a thin smell of scorching meat and slaps at the widening crimson edged holes that bloom like flowers in his undershirt. (Faulkner 222)

Ironically, the next section finds Darl crying on top of the coffin.

"Where is Darl?" They said.

He is out there under the apple tree with her, lying on her. He is there so the cat wont come back. I said, "Are you going to keep the cat away, Darl?"

The moonlight dappled on him too. On her it was still, but on Darl it dappled up and down.

"You needn't to cry," I said, "Jewel got her out. You needn't to cry, Darl." (Faulkner 225)

This might seem to imply some break in the logic of Faulkner in making the choice to have Darl describe the scene so removed when he is emotionally wrapped in it to the point of crying only moments afterward. Additionally, Faulkner chooses to have Darl describe his mother as the coffin, and in turn use the pronoun it for the coffin. This sequence of choices removes Addie from the text completely. The context of the events of the section as well as Darl's emotional state regarding the events, would seem to dictate that Addie be included in the text, as she is present and a large part of the event. As he did in section 35 when Vardaman "narrates" the story of the doomed river crossing, Faulkner could have employed Addie into the text, but then Darl's role in the novel would have partially negated Vardaman's.

Vardaman's next section, 51, mentions Addie only four times through the use of the unreferenced pronoun *her*.

Even the small amount of text that Vardaman's section uses to discuss Addie, roughly eight lines of text, is more than what was used during Darl's previous section. Ironically the events of Vardaman's would seem to dictate less mention simply through context, but this isn't the case. In fact, with the exception of Vardaman answering a question, his mention of his mother in this section doesn't seem too necessary. The first mention is between the first and third paragraphs. This one sentence paragraph, "They carried her back under the apple tree," is completely disassociated with the paragraphs before and after it. This statement merely informs the reader of Addie's current location, but it is also the type of statement that helps maintain Addie's presence in the novel.

The remainder of *AILO* mentions Addie extremely rarely, except for Cash's section, 53, wherein she is mentioned six times. The final twenty pages of the novel mention her only once, and this mention is on the second-to-last page of the book. This sequence of six sections is so devoid of Addie that it is surprising to think of the context of the sections. This is the crescendo of the

journey, the burial of their mother and wife, yet she is almost completely absent from the text.

Statistically, Addie is present in the text of Vardaman far more than any of the other characters in the novel, both in amount of text with her as the topic and the amount of times she appears in the text. Excluding mentions and discussions relying on words for his mother other than the pronouns she and her, Vardaman's mentions and discussions nearly outweigh the total of all other characters even though those characters' mentions and discussions were permitted to encompass any mention present in the text regardless of how it was presented. The issue of context, as Vardaman narrates some of the sections where the action truly centers around his mother, can be attributed to authorial choices as Faulkner could have made Addie the focus of any section in the novel, but did not choose to do so. But a multitude of mentions and discussions of Addie could be in vain if they failed to bring her into the text as an active character, which is one of the more vital aspect to Vardaman's rhetorical treatment of his mother that further differentiates his text in relation to his mother from every other character's.

When Vardaman mentions Addie, often he situates her physical position in time and space, or her state of being: "They carry her down to the barn, the moon shining flat and quiet on her." (Faulkner 217), "That's why Jewel and I were both in the shed and she was in the wagon," (Faulkner 195), "She's in the box; how could she have got out? She got out through the holes I bored," (Faulkner 196), "She was under the apple tree," (Faulkner 214). Many of these types of mentions seem almost arbitrary while reading the text because Vardaman will often place her into the text when he is discussing a completely different topic, "Maybe I can draw the ropes a little tighter," Darl says. That's why Jewel and I were both in the shed and she was in the wagon," (Faulkner 195). But these mentions are anything but arbitrary. These mentions exist to remind the reader of Addie by specifying her current place in the action, and as I've shown, they do so within the context of major portions of the text that lack any references to her. While these mentions definitely contribute to maintaining Addie's presence in *AILD*, Vardaman does something else even more effective at maintaining Addie's presence.



Addie seems to be mentally active three times during the novel. Obviously, section 40 is the most prominent section. Here Addie addresses some of the issues and themes that have risen and lays out the motive for the journey that constitutes the main plot of the novel. This section seems to establish Addie as an active agent who is involved in the text and makes the reader feel that she is at least emotionally aware even though she doesn't really address any events that have occurred since her death. During sections 35 and 49 Vardaman employs Addie into his text in this same manner.

During section 35, Addie appears to have full control and will when it comes to evading capture. The rhetoric Vardaman uses during this section is vital as it truly does re-animate the corpse floating down the river.

Cash tried but she fell off and Darl jumped going under he went under and Cash hollering to catch her. . . Vernon passed me because he was seeing her come up and she jumped into the water again and Darl hadn't caught her yet. . . and I hollering catch her darl catch her darl because in the water she could go faster than a man and Darl had to grabble for her so I knew he could

catch her because he is the best grabbler.

(Faulkner 150-151)

Literally, Addie's coffin is bobbing in the current of the river, but Vardaman brings Addie to life by describing her as falling, coming up, and jumping. She is an entity that needs to be caught because she is evading capture. This re-animation is amplified by the repetition of the phrase "catch her." This phrase is almost a constant through nearly the entire section. Besides having a hypnotic effect on the reader through repetition, this phrase seems to insist on Addie's active engagement in the pursuit due to its unrelenting presence.

Addie's direct involvement in the action of *As I Lay Dying* is also the forefront of section 49. In this section, Vardaman and Darl seem to listen to Addie moving and speaking to God from her coffin.

She was under the apple tree and Darl and I  
go across the moon and the cat jumps down and  
runs and we can hear her inside the wood.

"Hear?" Darl says. "Put your ear  
close."

I put my ear close and I can hear her.  
Only I cant tell what she is saying.

"What is she saying, Darl?" I say. "Who is she talking to?"

"She's talking to God," Darl says. "She is calling on Him to help her."

"What does she want Him to do?" I say.

"She wants Him to hide her away from the sight of man," Darl says.

"Why does she want to hide her away from the sight of man, Darl?"

"So she can lay down her life," Darl says.

Why does she want to lay down her life, Darl?"

"Listen," Darl says. We hear her. We hear her turn over on her side. "Listen," Darl says.

(Faulkner 214-215)

This active role in the novel is quite different from the two already mentioned. Here, Vardaman isn't the only character who views the actions of Addie. Darl may help to inspire the conversation, but he only asks Vardaman to hear. Vardaman then seems to recognize her speaking without being prompted that this is what he is to listen for. In some insane sense, this fact seems to validate the event, unless a case can be made for Vardaman's

insanity, but there isn't a significant amount of evidence, if any at all, that would support such a contention. But regardless of Vardaman's sanity, this section undoubtedly brings Addie to life during a period of the book when she is rarely mentioned.

Both sections from Vardaman wherein Addie comes to life in the text contribute enormously to her presence in the novel. When combined with the way Vardaman often mentions her simply to make the reader aware of her physical location, and the lack of Addie's presence throughout the sections from most of the other characters, Addie's presence is largely, although not solely, maintained by Vardaman's sections. The lack of participation from other characters is, at times, so overwhelming, while Vardaman's sections contain significant contributions between them, that authorial choice seems to be a sensible possibility.

The possibility of authorial choice is compounded and furthered by the fact that nearly all of these mentions are by pronouns lacking antecedents. Faulkner uses approximately sixty-six of these when intending their meaning to be Addie, and he does so in a way very different from the way he utilized the pronoun it during

the earlier portion of the novel. These unreferenced pronouns have a pretty clearly implied meaning, especially when considering that these pronouns only have three meanings total throughout Vardamans text: Addie, Dewey Dell, a cow. They aren't used in ways that seem to hinder the accessibility of the text, yet the ratio of unreferenced to referenced she and her pronouns is remarkably lopsided, favoring the unreferenced pronouns.

It is very possible, because of these factors just discussed, that the role of maintaining Addie's physical presence by mention could be a minor one. These factors suggest that one of the roles of the large amount of unreferenced she and her pronouns in the text of Vardaman could be to create a force within the novel that is ever present, and hasn't necessarily left even after it is gone, just as the presence of Addie's section within the text implies.

APPENDIX A  
CHAPTER TOTALS

CHAPTER TOTALS							
Dewey Dell		pronouns		pronouns			
Section		with references		without references		TOTALS	PAGES
7		40	73%	15	27%	55	1 1/2
14		62	53%	54	47%	116	5 1/2
30		35	92%	3	8%	38	2
TOTAL		137	66%	72	34%	209	9
Darl		pronouns		pronouns			
Section		with references		without references		TOTALS	PAGES
1		22	100%			22	1 1/2
3		60	95%	3	5%	63	3
57		25	96%	1	4%	26	1 1/3
Total		107	96%	4	4%	111	5 2/3
Vardaman		pronouns		pronouns			
Section		with references		without references		TOTALS	PAGES
13		34	43%	45	57%	79	3 1/2
15		21	29%	51	71%	72	1 1/2
19		0		0		0	
24		22	55%	18	45%	40	1 2/3
35		38	58%	27	42%	65	1 1/3
44		39	75%	13	25%	52	2 1/2
47		7	58%	5	42%	12	1/2
49		37	44%	47	56%	84	2 1/2
51		35	70%	15	30%	50	2
56		46	68%	22	32%	68	2 1/2
TOTAL		279	53%	243	47%	522	18

APPENDIX B  
THE PRONOUN IT



THE PRONOUN <u>IT</u>									
Dewey Dell									
	With references			Without references					
Section	thought	utterance		thought	utterance		non-referential		
7	2		15%	10		77%	1		13
14	15	4	58%	10	1	33%	3		33
30	10		71%	1		7%	3		14
Totals	27	4		21	1		7		60
		31			22				
		52%			37%				
Darl									
	With references			Without references					
Section	thought	utterance		thought	utterance		non-referential		
1	4								4
3	11			0	0				11
57	6	1		0	0				7
Totals	21	1		0	0				22
Vardaman									
	With references			Without references					
Section	thought	utterance		thought	utterance		non-referential		
13	16		40%	19	1	50%	4		40
15	3		12%	21		88%			24
19									0
24		8	40%	8	4	60%			20
35	3		38%	4		50%	1		8
44		7	78%	1	1	22%			9
47	1		50%	1		50%			2
49	9	2	73%	2	1	20%	1		15
51	10	7	74%	4	2	26%			23
56	5	1	32%	10	3	68%			19
Totals	47	25		70	12		6		160
		72			82		12		
		45%			51%		4%		

APPENDIX C  
THE PRONOUN SHE

THE PRONOUN <u>SHE</u>								
Dewey Dell								
Section	With references			Without references				
	thought	utterance		thought	utterance		non-referential	
7				2				2
14	4			2	2			8
30								0
Totals	4		0	4	2		0	10
Darl								
Section	With references			Without references				
	thought	utterance		thought	utterance			
1	0	0		0	0			0
3	0	0		0	0			0
57	0	0		0	0			0
Totals	0	0		0	0		0	0
Vardaman								
Section	With references			Without references				
	thought	utterance		thought	utterance		non-referential	
13	8			3				11
15	2			8	2			12
19								0
24	1	1		2				4
35	1			7				8
44	3			1	1			5
47								0
49				2	14			16
51								0
56	13			2				15
Totals	28		1	25	17		0	71

APPENDIX D  
THE PRONOUN HER

			THE PRONOUN HER				
Dewey Dell							
Section	With references			Without references			
						non-referential	
7				2			2
14	3				3		6
30	1						1
Totals	4	0		2	3	0	9
Darl							
Section	With references			Without references			
1	1						1
3							0
57							0
Totals	1	0		0	0	0	1
Vardaman							
Section	With references			Without references			
						non-referential	
13	7			5			12
15	1			6	1		8
19							0
24	1	1			1		3
35	3			20			23
44	2				1		3
47							0
49				7	9		16
51				4			4
56	1						1
Totals	15	1		42	12	0	70

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