Day 4 – Style and Narrative

*BERGSON’S THEORY OF DURATION*

-Faulkner uses this stream of consciousness; he shifts from character to character, illustrating the difference between each character’s opinions, ideas, and misconceptions.

**-**Bergson's theory of duration states that time may speed up or slow down depending on the individual, and that time and duration can only be grasped in one’s imagination. On one side there is the continuous flow of aging as one moves towards the end of one’s lifespan. On the other side, Bergson refers to the continuous growth of memory, for which Bergson equates with consciousness.

-Faulkner employs ideas of Bergson's theory of duration, within the novel, particularly with Darl.

**ANALYZE P. 81:**

In a strange room you must empty yourself for sleep. And before you are emptied for sleep, what are you. And when you are emptied for sleep, you are not. And when you are filled with sleep, you never were. I don’t know what I am. I don’t know if I am or not.Jewel knows he is, because he does not know that he does not know whether he is or not. He cannot empty himself for sleep because he is not what he is and he is what he is not…and since sleep is is-not and rain and wind are *was*, it is not. Yet the wagon is, because when the wagon is *was*, Addie Bundren will not be. And Jewel *is*, so Addie Bundren must be. And then I must be, or I could not empty myself for sleep in a strange room. And so if I am not emptied yet, I am *is*.

**ANALYZE P. 101**

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.

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"Then what is your ma, Darl?"

"I haven't got ere one," Darl said. "Because if I had one, it is *was*. And if it is was, it cant be *is.* Can it?"

"No," I said.

I am. Darl is my brother.

"But you *are,* Darl," I said.

"I know it," Darl said. "That's why I am not *is*. *Are* is too many for one woman to foal."

**ANALYZE PG. 121**

*He'll do as I say . He always does. I can persuade him to do anything. You know i can. Suppose I say turn here*. That was when I died at the time. *Suppose I do. We'll go to New Hope. We wont have to go to town.* I rose and took the knife from the streaming fish still hissing and I killed Darl.

**ANALYZE PG. 146**

"It is as though the space between us were time: an irrevocable quality. It is as though time, no longer running straight before us like a looping string, the distance being the doubling accretion of the thread and not the interval between."

NARRATIVE ASPECT

**Darl’s Narrative:**

* Darl is always telling what he sees, hears, does and says on their funeral journey, but rarely what he thinks or feels.
* He approaches events neutrally. Dewey dell is pregnant, but he doesn't really do anything with the information or state his own opinion.
* His use of italics varies. The italics describe events he is not physically in, show detachment, or show that he is experiencing multiple levels of consciousness
* We can assume that Darl is reliable narrator, but has an omniscient ability which makes us question his descriptions.
* Typically what he describes, even if he was not physically there, matches up with the rest of the narration by other characters, which validates him as a narrator.
* Most of Darl’s monologues are present tense.
* Darl plays with words, with the past and present forms of the verb of existence.
* Darl does not know the true nature of his existence and ultimately lost his identity because there is no place in time for him; therefore narrating in the past tense and the third person. This is because Darl cannot ﬁnd his place in time because he has been literally displaced in Addie's affection by Jewel
* Darl’s continuous narration shows the reader that sometimes those who are closest to the truth of existence are those who are uncertain of it
* According to the Southern Literary Journal by Michel Delville, Darl is the only character who is unable to cope with Addie’s death.

**Addie’s Narrative:**

* Faulkner wanted to show that we are part of our own existences and that our lives can actually mean nothing to each other
* According to *Dorrit Cohn (Reflexitivity in the Narrative technique of As I Lay Dying)*, Addie’s section brings us back in time.
* Addie’s monologue is an autobiographical monologue, when a “lone speaker recalls its past, and tells it in a chronological order.”

**Jewel’s Narrative:**

* Readers might sympathize with Jewel's description of the adze's sound--"One lick less. One lick less"--more than with Darl's description “Chuck. Chuck. Chuck"
* “One lick less” could also mean that Jewel senses that the closer the coffin comes to completion, the LESS time Addie has to live and that time will begin to dissipate the effect of Addie's death after she is buried.
* For Darl, the sound of the adze is comforting because it signals that Addie is still alive.

**Cash’s Narrative:**

Chapter 18 is Cash's first narrative after he has finished the coffin. His first narrative is also begun in the past tense: having completed the job, he is simply reviewing it to satisfy himself that he did it right, especially since Addie can no longer assure him that she is satisfied

Questions about Narrative:

1. Why does Faulkner use interior monologues (stream of consciousness) in narration? What effect does this have?

Faulkner is able to add his own thoughts and depict his own language style despite the language of the narrator. The interior monologue shows a more realistic description of the events. Also, in these interior monologues repetition is used excessively.

1. What is significant about chapters 39-41?

These 3 chapters are not linear, which connects to Bergson's theory of duration and the concept of the looping string. Also, Addie is placed between 2 religious figures, while she herself is satanistic. This is ironic.

1. Why would Faulkner change past and present within the novel? Consider the Tulls.

The Tulls use past tense when they’re separated by the Bundrens or when the character is an observer or thinking with the family from a distance. Present tense is used when they are physically, psychically with the Bundren Family

**Moseley’s Narration:**

* Faulkner’s purpose in this passage is to view the Bundrens through the eyes of a stranger. Faulkner separates the speaker (the person in town) from the the Bundrens.
* With phrases such as “out in Yoknapatawpha County,” Moseley distances himself from the Bundrens.  His word choice is also important here because it demonstrates the speaker’s feeling of superiority to these country people.
* He refers to Addie as “it” and the coffin as “that home-made box.”  He describes the wagon as “that ramshackle wagon.”
* He shows one side of social view on pregnancy. If you're pregnant you should get married, not get an abortion. She should get help.

*Samson: (Chapter 29, page 114)*

*“I notice how it takes a lazy man, a man that hates moving, to get set on moving once he does get started off”*

*“A woman that’s been dead in a box four days, the best way to respect her is to get her into the ground as quick as you can”*

* *S*amson and his wife Rachel are annoyed by Anse's false performance of duty, as they believe him to be distasteful and the Bundrens' journey in general to be ridiculous. The opinions of Samson and Rachel, as outsiders, reinforce Anse's true nature—self-interested and lazy, despite all his talk of being a dutiful husband to Addie.

Armstid: (Chapter 43, page 114)

“A man’ll always help a fellow in a tight, if he’s get ere a drop of Christian blood in him”

* Armstid *sees Christianity as a reason to give Anse the mules*
* *His chapter provides an outside social view of what people think about Anne and how he treats his children and dead corpse. They disapprove.*

**McGowan: (Chapter 55, page 246)**

“How bad do you want to do something?” I says. She looks at me. “Of course, a doctor learns all sorts of things folks dont think he knows. But he aint supposed to tell all he knows. It’s against the law.”

“Where do I take it?” She says.

“Down in the cellar,” I says

* MacGowan's attempt to pretend to be a doctor is not sophisticated, revealing the extent of both Dewey Dell's desperation and her ignorance.
* Dewey Dell's desperation also points out the extent of her self-interested thoughts throughout the Bundrens' journey, as she truly is willing to do whatever it takes to get an abortion.
* He has the opposite view of Moseley. MacGowan doesn't pity her and takes advantage of her.
* Her meticulous planning and thinking is shown through the italics, showing her inner thoughts. (ex: tricking Vardaman to going to town, using Santa Clause as a tool)

Figurative Language:

**Vardaman’s Metaphor:**

Jewel’s mother is a horse.  My mother is a fish.  Darl says that when we come to the water again I might see her and Dewey Dell said, She’s in the box; how could she have got out?  She got out through the holes I bored, into the water I said, and when we come to the water again I am going to see her.  My mother is not in the box.  My mother is a fish

* Another thing to note: Vardaman’s italics occur when the he has one or more level of thought/consciousness