

Secrets and Relationships in *As I Lay Dying*: A Study of Unorthodox Linguistic Usage

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1 Introduction

1-1 Outline of *As I Lay Dying*

William Faulkner's novel *As I Lay Dying* ¹⁾ is structured into 59 interior monologues which are delivered by 15 characters using the technique of stream of consciousness. (I will refer to each monologue as a numbered chapter hereinafter, for the sake of convenience.) The novel takes up the exploits of the Bundrens, a poor white family of Yoknapatawpha County, Faulkner's fictional world, in Mississippi. They take a journey from their rural home to Jefferson, the central town of the county, to fulfill the wish of Addie, the mother, to be buried in her family cemetery.

The members of the Bundren family consist of Anse and Addie, a husband and wife, and their five children: Cash and Darl (in their late twenties), Jewel (18 years old), Dewey Dell (17) and Vardaman (about seven or eight). In the beginning of the novel, Addie lies on her bed dying, with Dewey Dell at her bedside. Their neighbors, the Tull family, are visiting them. Cash is making a coffin for Addie outside her bedside window. Anse is sitting on the back porch with Vernon Tull. And Vardaman is bringing home a huge fish from the river. Darl and Jewel come back from a cotton field, but momentarily depart again to earn some money, so they are not present for Addie's last moment because they are still out working. Since a hard rain starts and the river is flooded with the bridges swept away, the burial journey takes an unexpectedly long time so that the body of Addie decomposes and attracts buzzards. The family encounters enormous troubles and are forced to make considerable sacrifices to accomplish their journey; Cash has his leg broken, their mules drown, Jewel loses his horse to exchange for new mules, and Darl is sent to an asylum for arson. But they finally get to Jefferson to bury Addie as Anse has promised her.

The title phrase of the novel, "as I lay dying," makes reference to Homer's epic, *Odyssey* (Wadlington 10). Agamemnon, Odysseus' former military commander, tells Odysseus the story about his death experience in Hades using this exact phrase in one of the English

translations. Agamemnon was murdered, upon his return home after the Trojan War, by a lover of his wife, who harbored resentment toward him for sacrificing their daughter to launch the ships for Troy. It is not an overstatement to say that *As I Lay Dying* involves family relationships as complicated as those of Agamemnon's family.

1-2 Importance of Secrecy in *As I Lay Dying*

Nearly every member of the Bundren family harbors secrets. Dewey Dell has become pregnant out of wedlock and desires an abortion potion. Addie committed adultery in the past with a minister, through which she conceived a son, Jewel. And Anse is planning to get a set of false teeth at the end of the burial journey. These are some of the secrets which suffuse the unfolding events in the narrative, and which the novel discloses eventually. But readers are shielded from immediate awareness of some of the important facts by delayed monologues; for instance the sole monologue by Addie in the novel, in which she reveals the fact of her adulterous affair, is the 40th monologue out of the 59 that comprise the work.

Faulkner once revealed, in his interview with Jean Stein, "The reason I don't like interviews is that I seem to react violently to personal questions" (Stein 67). He was a private man, as Addie "was ever a private woman" (*As I Lay Dying* 15) ²⁾. Just as Addie remarked about her students, each of the Bundrens lives life and goes on the burial journey "with his and her secret and selfish thought" (*AILD* 153). The word "secret" is used 13 times in the novel, including in the monologues by Dewey Dell about sexual experience and by Addie about her adultery scene, and the word "hide" and its variants are used nine times, as in "She [Addie] wants Him [God] to hide her away from the sight of man" (*AILD* 195) in a reported statement by Darl. Secrecy can be considered one of the key concepts and words in the novel.

It has been argued that secrecy is an intrinsic and essential element of any novel. Frank Kermode proposes that narrative is "the product of two intertwined processes, the presentation of a fable and its progressive interpretation (which of course alters it). The first process tends toward clarity and propriety ("refined common sense"), the second toward secrecy, toward distortions which cover secrets" (82). He claims that "there will always be some inbuilt interpretation, that it will increase as respect for propriety decreases, and that it will produce distortions, secrets to be inquired into by later interpretation" (83). *As I Lay Dying* illustrates these phenomena saliently. In presenting the fable of a journey with a clear

goal, during which respect for propriety decreases remarkably, all the narrators in the novel interpret the events and facts in order to present their own narratives, covering secrets which are incrementally revealed. Basing the discussion on the recognition of *As I Lay Dying* as a quintessential exemplar of Kermode's theory, in this essay, I would like to take up several specific patterns of unorthodox language usage in the novel. I will examine types of utterances by the narrators in the novel which embody and conceal their secrets, exploring and discussing how these usages deliberately handicap and disrupt or trouble the reading of the novel and at the same time empower the reading and inimitably enrich the novel. The inquiry will be a description of writing craft, and since the novel contains nothing but monologue and reported dialogue, also an exploration of character. Furthermore, since many of the linguistic tendencies described occur across character, the inquiry implicitly becomes an exploration of Faulkner's view of the human. The areas of the language of the novel that this article will take up are distinctive, patterned usages of pronouns, casual connectors, insertions, and tense.

2 Unorthodox Linguistic Usages in *As I Lay Dying*

2-1 Pronouns

It has been observed that Faulkner can wield pronouns, across his oeuvre, in unique and unexpected ways. Faulkner sometimes tries to place a load of significance and meaning on a pronoun. In *As I Lay Dying*, as well, he uses pronouns in an unorthodox manner. Pronouns, in conventional usage and grammars, require a referent in order to function and effect their purpose. Even in literary works, through the time of realism in fiction, when the realists attempted "the faithful representation of reality," it was understood that a pronoun referred to a certain word or a matter. But modernists, Faulkner among them, take advantage of pronouns' contextual dependency and experiment with them to introduce an element of ambiguity. In *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner experiments with pronouns without antecedents. Moreover, since this novel consists exclusively of monologues which are expressions of individual characters' consciousnesses, unreferenced pronouns can be located anywhere freely without obvious artificialness. In this novel, the usage of pronouns without antecedents is particularly noticeable in Darl's sections. Darl fills the role of principal narrator in the story; he narrates 19 sections out of the 59 chapters, and being very observant and skillful with language his

narrations contain colorful, detailed information.

Chapter 5 is the first monologue in which an unreferenced pronoun is used. The chapter starts with Darl narrating, “We watch him come around the corner and mount the steps. He does not look at us” (*AILD* 13). There is obviously no antecedent for “him” and “he” since this is the first sentence of the chapter and the previous chapter was spoken by a different character. The reader naturally wonders who this “he” refers to. It may be possible to guess that the “he” means Jewel – if the reader realizes that chapter 5 presents the continuation of the scene previously introduced and extended in chapters 1 and 3. But this connection is by no means obvious because two chapters which are unrelated in content to Darl’s continuous narration have been inserted between these three chapters and interrupt the flow. Chapter 2 is narrated by Cora and chapter 4 by Jewel. While the reader is left in uncertainty and speculating on possibilities for a period of time, the referent for “he” becomes clear a bit later in chapter 5, when Jewel is mentioned by name. This usage of pronoun leaves the readers in a state of suspension and increases their attentiveness.

The next section of the novel spoken by Darl, chapter 10, starts again with a pronoun without antecedent: “He has been to town this week: the back of his neck is trimmed close, with a white line between hair and sunburn like a joint of white bone. He has not once looked back” (*AILD* 33). By this time, the reader has become accustomed to Darl’s customary usage of “he” and, considering various indications in the story, can guess that this “he” should be Jewel again. The second sentences of chapters 5 and 10 both depict Jewel not looking at the people around him but just staring straight ahead, which helps the reader to guess that the “he” mentioned in these sentences is Jewel and also to get a feel for his personality. The reader receives a sense that Darl’s attention always seems drawn toward Jewel. The first sentences of chapters 23, 25, 27, 42, and 50 also present the pronoun “he” without an antecedent, and in fact “he” refers to Jewel in these cases. The pronoun “he” without an antecedent which appears at fairly regular intervals in his utterances exposes Darl’s state of mind, preoccupation, and deepens the reader’s understanding of the character.

Chapter 42 represents an extension and compounding of this pattern, with “he” appearing in italics: “But after Armstid gave pa a drink, he felt better, and when we went in to see about Cash *he hadn’t come in with us. When I looked back he was leading the horse into the barn* he was already talking about getting another team, and by supper time he had good as bought

it. *He is down there in the barn, sliding fluidly past the gaudy lunging swirl, into the stall with it*" (*AILD* 166). Up until this point in the novel, italicized words and sentences have been employed to indicate narrators' streams of consciousness or to emphasize a concentration of consciousness. However, this passage in chapter 42 is written as if it depicts two co-simultaneous layers of consciousness. On one level, and in the non-italicized type, Darl, the narrator, registers his awareness of the actions and events occurring around him, with "he" referring to "pa." Activities are depicted in prosaic, representative terms and language. And on another level, in the richer and more invested italicized language, Darl has an imagined or clairvoyant and intimate awareness of Jewel. The initial ambiguity prompted in the reader by third-person pronouns without antecedents, swings emphatically into a sure sense of the antecedent and the feelings with which the referent is accompanied. The reader finds confirmation that Darl is not only preoccupied, but even rather obsessed with Jewel.

Deployment of pronouns in a similar way and to similar effects is prevalent throughout the novel, and in the monologues of other characters, such as Dewey Dell and Vernon Tull.

Another usage of a pronoun without antecedent occurs in chapter 7. Dewey Dell talks about her first sexual experience with Lafe, who comes to help the Bundren family at cotton picking time. Through his special, visionary ability, Darl finds out about her affair and pregnancy. Dewey Dell states: "It was then, and then I saw Darl and he knew.... But he said he did know and I said 'Are you going to tell pa are you going to kill him?' without the words I said it and he said 'Why?' without the words. And that's why I can talk to him with knowing with hating because he knows" (*AILD* 22). It is not perfectly clear to whom the third-person pronoun in "Are you going to kill him" refers. I believe that it refers not to "pa" or the fetus, but to Lafe, since this section's main topic is her sexual experience with him and her anxiety about hiding her pregnancy ³). She explains that she hates Darl for knowing about her pregnancy. It is understandable, in general, that you hate the person who knows your secret, but considering her behavior later in the novel, when she jumps on Darl to send him to the asylum, it is unlikely that she would feel such visceral hate for him over just his knowledge of her pregnancy. I believe that she hates Darl because he answers her question with "Why?," which implies an indifference to her and her pregnancy. Dewey Dell, in fact, feels a strong tie to Darl. Cash states that Dewey Dell's favorite in the family is Darl (*AILD* 218). Even though Dewey Dell does not want her pregnancy to be revealed to other people, she desires

to confirm Darl's love and care through his words, for she feels isolated from the world and has nobody to consult with. She wants Darl to get angry at Lame and say he would kill him so that she does not feel alone. Then, what kind of relationship do the two siblings, Dewey Dell and Darl, have? At one juncture, Dewey Dell describes Darl's behavior: "...they [his eyes] swim to pinpoints. They begin at my feet and rise along my body to my face, and then my dress is gone: I sit naked on the seat..." (*AILD* 104). There are also moments in which Darl describes Dewey Dell with sexual and womanly images a couple of times: "...her leg coming long from beneath her tightening dress: that lever which moves the world; one of that caliper which measures the length and breadth of life" (*AILD* 89), and "Squatting, Dewey Dell's wet dress shapes for the dead eyes of three blind men those mammalian ludicrosities which are the horizons and the valleys of the earth" (*AILD* 148). I argue that those descriptions by Dewey Dell and Darl imply their hidden sexual desires toward each other, an incestuous love. Darl's detached answer, "Why?" betrays his suppressed lust.

Addie uses the first-person plural pronoun without an antecedent when she reflects on and recounts her extramarital relationship with the minister Whitfield. This secret affair can be considered the central secret in the novel, and the one which directly or indirectly influences all of the others. As I have already mentioned, this secret is divulged directly by Addie herself (despite the fact that she has already passed away at that point in the novel) in her single monologue which occurs, like a pivot point, relatively well into the story:

I would think of sin as I would think of the clothes we both wore in the world's face, of the circumspection necessary because he was he and I was I; the sin the more utter and terrible since he was the instrument ordained by God who created the sin, to sanctify that sin He had created. While I waited for him in the woods, waiting for him before he saw me, I would think of him as dressed in sin. I would think of him as thinking of me as dressed also in sin, he the more beautiful since the garment which he had exchanged for sin was sanctified. (*AILD* 158-59)

At this point the reader does not know who "we" refers to, but since Addie's husband, Anse, has been mentioned previous to this passage, we might naturally guess that "we" should be Addie and Anse. But "the instrument ordained by God" leads to a second guess that Addie is recounting her affair and that the lover must be a preacher, that he could be Whitfield, who performed Addie's funeral service. This guess is confirmed in the following chapter, which is narrated by Whitfield. Although there is an obscuring usage of personal pronouns at this

point in Addie's monologue, it does not indicate obsession; rather, Addie merely has to conceal his name because of the nature of the matter. Still this ambiguous usage sows confusion in the reader and induces careful reading.

As we have seen so far, Faulkner uses pronouns to throw light on characters' subjective states, to manifest the characters' obsession, anxiety and desire for concealment by emphasizing their conscious focus, which wells from unconscious impulses. The small, innocuous function words, personal pronouns, serve as prisms for bending light and making the unseen visible. Unreferenced pronouns add depth to character and story, and they also galvanize the reader. Placed in uncertainty, the reader finds his or her mental activity stimulated.

Now I would like to return to Darl's obsession. On becoming aware of the fact of Darl's obsession, the next question which the reader wonders about is the reason why Darl is obsessed with Jewel. The answer arrives through the distortion of causal connectors in the text.

2-2 Causal Connectors

Another prominent type of unorthodox usage in *As I Lay Dying* is the use of causal connectors—often conjunctions and conjunctive phrases such as “because,” “so,” or “that’s why”—in a way which is stripped of logic. In many cases, the two propositions or situations which the connectors link, on the surface, do not actually appear to relate to each other in any way. They do not fit into a cause-and-effect relationship. In other cases, a helpfully clarifying and naturally occurring causal connector is passed over, replaced by a more general and ambiguous conjunction, such as “and.” As a result, the relationship between the two elements is lost, and the thought is muddled.

One example is the passage in chapter 5 where Darl talks about Jewel: “Jewel’s eyes look like pale wood in his high-blooded face. He is a head taller than any of the rest of us, always was. I told them that’s why ma always whipped him and petted him more. Because he was peakling around the house more. That’s why she named him Jewel I told them” (*AILD* 14). Darl believes that Addie is partial to Jewel. But here the causal connectors do not sound right. The first “that’s why” indicates that the reason why ma always whipped and petted Jewel comes right before this connecting sentence. In other words, the reason why ma did these

things is because Jewel is a head taller than the rest of the family, or at most his eyes look like pale wood. However, it goes without saying that these physical characteristics alone are not convincing reasons for a special attitude toward one of the children. The clause “because he was peakling around the house more” in the next sentence can be considered, grammatically, as the reason for the phenomenon in either the sentence before it or the one after it. It is understandable to some limited degree that ma would whip and pet Jewel because of his sickness and lingering at home. But the final sentence in the utterance is entirely incomprehensible. The reason for Addie to name her son Jewel can not, chronologically speaking, be the fact that he was peakling around the house. She would, in fact, have named him Jewel soon after he was born, before any of these things happened. The actions linked by the causal connector have little relevance and the sentences from this point of view read as illogical and incoherent. However, the passage would become markedly more logical and coherent if there were another reason for Addie to be partial to Jewel and to name him Jewel. This other reason may also explain why Jewel is taller than the rest of the family, with eyes that look like pale wood in his high-blooded face.

This stretch of Darl’s narration stands out particularly because his usage of causal connectors has no logical flaws in other parts. Therefore it could be said that Darl intentionally gives an unclear, ambiguous narration to cover something very important to him, the secret that he is unwilling to face. The secret he is hiding will be exposed in chapter 32 and chapter 40, but at this early stage of the novel, in chapter 5, the reader has no clue about the reason for Addie’s favoritism. This passage leaves the reader with quite uncomfortable feeling, involves them in the story, and spurs them to read it even more attentively.

Another example of subverted causal connectors appears in Dewey Dell’s monologue in chapter 7. Her narration tends to be full of keen perception and very intuitive. For this reason, her diction includes many repetitions and quite often has no punctuation or is incomplete. She often uses “and” instead of causal connectors, or uses causal connectors illogically, though her own unique logic seems to inform her words beneath the surface. In chapter 7, Dewey Dell narrates as follows:

The first time me and Lefe picked on down the row. Pa dassent sweat because he will catch his death from the sickness so everybody that comes to help us. And Jewel don’t care about anything he is not kin to us in caring, not care-kin. And Cash like sawing the long hot sad yellow days up into planks and nailing them to something.

And pa thinks because neighbours will always treat one another that way because he has always been too busy letting neighbours do for him to find out. And I did not think that Darl would, that sits at the supper table with his eyes gone further than the food and the lamp, full of the land dug out of his skull and the holes filled with distance beyond the land. (*AILD* 21)

It becomes clear eventually that in this chapter Dewey Dell talks about her sexual experience with Lefe, which consequently leads her to pregnancy, and which nobody but Darl has known about. Even possessing that knowledge, it is hard for the reader to understand the connection between each sentence in the passage above because they are connected only by the simple coordinating conjunction “and.” The second sentence states the reason why Lefe is present: it is because neighbors, including Lefe, come to help the Bundrens at cotton picking time, since Anse should not sweat or he will risk his life. The third, fourth, and fifth sentences, at first, seem to describe the personality traits of Jewel, Cash, and Anse. But it gradually dawns on the reader that these sentences actually describe the reasons why the three men do not find out about Dewey Dell’s pregnancy. This meaning becomes evident if we complete the fifth sentence as follows: “he has always been too busy...to find out [my pregnancy].” Similarly, the last sentence in the utterance can be read in the following way: “And I did not think that Darl would [find out my pregnancy]...” This confusing use of causal connectors and significant omissions of crucial content testifies to Dewey Dell’s obsession with her pregnancy. She feels such pain and is so desperate. Obviously, and because of the nature of the matter, she desires to keep her pregnancy from other people. But the tortured logic of this passage seems to paper over feelings deep inside her. This passage sounds as if she blames her family, everyone but Darl, for not noticing her condition. The clause, “he is not kin to us in caring,” implies that Dewey Dell subconsciously longs for their caring affection, although it would also involve them in finding out about her condition and might cause more trouble for her. Dewey Dell feels these contradictory desires because she feels totally alone in this world.

At the junctures in the novel where such distortions of cause-and-effect relationships occur, at some level of consciousness the speaker intends to conceal meaning from other people, or self, or both. Internal stressors compromise language and obscure meaning in order to couch or hedge a sensitive and emotionally or socially difficult matter. The distorted passages involving skewed causal connectors, and the pains which the characters who speak

them go to conceal actual events and accountings, conversely, serve to draw readers' attention and speculation to those very events. The reader is drawn to the lack of sense, sensing a significance lying within it even amidst confusion. Something is patently "off" in these stretches of language. The reader realizes how important the events in question are to the character, and lingers on and muses over the passages. Eventually, a key is found and the secret unlocked, and subjectivities and perspectives on reality fill in.

2-3 Inscrutable Insertion

There are many junctures in the novel where a character utters a statement which strikes the reader as a non sequitur. Although the statement itself may be well-formed, it appears to be inserted and located so far out of context that its significance is indeterminable. In other cases, a statement that is well-formed grammatically or syntactically makes little semantic sense, literal or figurative. There are cases in which a statement of seeming importance and revelatory power is incompletely uttered and can not be reconstructed so that it is effectively impossible to understand. And in yet other cases the apparently clairvoyant ability of a narrator strikes the reader as highly improbable or implausible. I will refer to all such cases in the novel as inscrutable insertions.

A prominent example of an insertion which is inscrutable because of incompleteness occurs in chapter 32. Darl recollects the time when Jewel suffered a spell of sleeping. During this period, Jewel could not keep his eyes open and was prone to falling asleep any moment. Eventually Dewey Dell, Darl and Cash noticed that Jewel was sneaking out of the house every night. One morning, to everyone's astonishment, Jewel comes back home on horseback. Addie's reaction is noteworthy.

‘Jewel,’ ma said, looking at him. ‘I’ll give—I’ll give—give—’ Then she began to cry. She cried hard, not hiding her face, standing there in her faded wrapper, looking at him and him on the horse, looking down at her, his face growing cold and a little sick looking until he looked away quick and Cash came and touched her....She put her hands to her face then and after a while she went on, stumbling a little on the plough-marks. But pretty soon she straightened up and went on. (*AILD* 118-19)

All the family members, for the first time, realize in this scene that Jewel has been working clearing out a neighbor's land every night to obtain a horse. Addie's statement which opens the passage above is truncated and incomplete. What would she have said if she had

completed the utterance? What would the object of the sentence have been; that is, what was it that Addie thought she would give? Although it is impossible to know her specific intent, the impulse and feeling are entirely palpable. Addie would probably give any and everything. The verb “give” is repeated three times emphatically. Addie would give, I argue, her very self to Jewel. The desire to do so, of course, is something that cannot be uttered aloud. Then Addie starts crying without hiding her face, which is a rare and unexpected reaction from a very proud woman like Addie. She even stumbles a little, though she regains her pride when she straightens up. Her emotions are nakedly exposed through her reactions. What are we to make of this reaction, and of Jewel’s own response to it, his face growing cold and a little sick looking. It is apparent that there is something going on between Addie and Jewel.

Addie confesses in her monologue that at Jewel’s birth she feels finally contented and at peace. She says that “with Jewel...the wild blood boiled away and the sound of it ceased” (*AILD* 160). I would argue that Addie’s love toward Jewel is not only motherly but also infatuated or rather incestuous. She feels that Jewel, even as a baby, “cap[s] and suture[s]” her head (*AILD* 160), and she also tells Cora that he is her “cross” and would be her “salvation” (*AILD* 152). Considering that her husband was dead to her and that her lover was already gone when she bore Jewel, I think Jewel takes the place of a mate for Addie. Her extreme reaction toward Jewel in the scene above as Darl recollects it exposes Addie’s anguish in loss, her immediate understanding that she has been robbed of Jewel by the horse.

Then, how does Jewel feel toward Addie? What do we make of his unfit reaction? Since Jewel’s behavior and words are almost invariably savage and violent throughout the novel, we might incline to the misunderstanding that he has only hatred for the people around him. But in Jewel’s sole monologue in the novel, chapter 4, he fantasizes a world of just him and Addie. He says, “it would just be me and her on a high hill and me rolling the rocks down the hill at their faces, picking them up and throwing them down the hill, faces and teeth and all...” (*AILD* 12). He wants to eliminate the rest of the family in order to be alone with just Addie. He is so unable to accept Addie’s death that he can not even say the word coffin (*AILD* 15). It is obvious that he loves Addie and that his hatred toward his family and the people around him springs from his desire for exclusive possession of Addie. The reason for Jewel’s reacting with a sickening expression to his mother’s anguish is because Addie’s incestuous love toward him is disclosed to all the family members by her crying and by his response he

declares his intention to escape from that trap. He realizes that his own feeling toward Addie has the same kind of nature. It is agreed by critics that Jewel's horse is a surrogate for his mother (Bleikasten 93; Anderson 51). I agree with Bleikasten's theory that "this strange transference...is obviously a defense mechanism indicative of the incestuous nature of Jewel's love for his mother" (93).

Another instance of inscrutable insertion, which takes the aspect of a non sequitur, occurs in chapter 37 when Jewel, Vernon Tull, and Darl try to retrieve Cash's tools, which have been swept away in the flooded river. While Jewel and Vernon, standing in the river, argue over how to find the tools, Darl describes the scene, "Jewel looks at Vernon. Vernon is tall, too; long and lean, eye to eye they stand in their close wet clothes. Lon Quick could look even at a cloudy sky and tell the time to ten minutes. Big Lon I mean, not little Lon" (*AILD* 145). This is a strange passage. Setting aside the fact that Darl, as he stands in the middle of the flooding river, finds the composure to observe and describe Vernon's figure, the usage of "too" is strange. Darl points out that Vernon and Jewel are both tall and lean, and their figures exposed by the wet clothes look alike. However, the physiques of the men would hardly be new information to Darl, nor would they be a focus of attention, given the situation. And, above all, the sentence about Lon Quick is inscrutable. It does not fit the context at all. Even though Lon Quick's name has been mentioned once previously, as the seller of Jewel's horse, he does not play an important role at all in the novel. I agree with Mathews' analysis that at this point Darl believes he has discovered Jewel's father, and I also accept her evidence that Darl "taunts [Jewel] about his father" after this river scene (237). But I disagree with her argument that Darl has long suspected Vernon as Jewel's father. The reason I disagree is that Mathews ignores the Lon Quick sentence. I interpret this sentence as Darl's saying that he can tell Vernon and Jewel's kinship clearly, even if others might not be able to, with the same immediate and precise intuition with which Lon Quick can tell the time just by looking at a cloudy sky. If this discovery were the confirmation of a long-running suspicion, Darl would not use Lon Quick as a hidden simile. Furthermore, if Darl has been suspicious about Vernon, he should have acted differently toward him before this scene. But, in fact, Darl only stares at Vernon sometimes, as Vernon reports, "He dont say nothing; just looks at me with them queer eyes of hisn that makes folks talk" (*AILD* 109). Since Darl's tendency to stare with queer eyes is something that other neighbors also mention, it might imply his madness, but it

does not indicate suspicion toward Vernon. Therefore I think this “knowledge” of the identity of Jewel’s father is a sudden revelation for Darl. He must have been wondering who Jewel’s father was for a long time. Finally he has discovered it, he thinks. This discovery must have been quite shocking for Darl because Vernon is their closest neighbor and the Tulls are supportive of the Bundrens in times of need.

There are several descriptions of Darl that indicate his clairvoyance. These descriptions, as well, are inscrutable to the reader initially. For example, Darl relates Addie’s deathbed scene with details and specifics, even though he is far from home, working with Jewel to earn three dollars. And, uncannily, this deathbed scene corresponds with the reports of others. Darl also describes, in several chapters, Jewel’s interactions with his horse in a very vivid manner, although he is not there to observe physically. He is able to communicate with Dewey Dell and Cash without words as well (*AILD* 22, 128). Though we should not put too much weight on an author’s words in discussing his work, Faulkner admits that he granted Darl clairvoyance as compensation for his madness (Gwynn and Blotner 113). Calvin Bedient convincingly asserts that “Darl’s mind leaps barriers of space and flesh” because he “lacks the ingredient the enzyme, of pride” and he is “empty” (100). But, actually, Darl does not see everything and he does not always see accurately. He even could not see his family’s plot to send him to an asylum in Jackson, nor could he see that his discovery about Vernon being Jewel’s father was false. Darl’s second sight therefore is obviously limited. Returning to the deathbed scene, although Darl gives a plausible and convincing rendition of it, his report that Addie wants Jewel at her deathbed could in fact be wrong because his view is warped by his obsession with Jewel. We can at least say that Darl can grasp or read the minds of his family, especially Jewel, because he is very sensitive, intuitive, and observant, and his consciousness is always drawn to Jewel.

Darl recognizes Addie and Jewel’s feelings. He recalls their intimacy when Jewel was born: “Ma would sit in the lamplight, holding him on a pillow on her lap. We [Cash and I] would wake and find her so. There would be no sound from them” (*AILD* 128). Darl repeatedly says that Jewel’s mother is a horse, and describes, in chapter 3, Jewel and his horse as a unity. He describes Jewel “caressing, cursing the horse with obscene ferocity” (*AILD* 9) in a way which is consistent with his description of Addie “whipping” and “petting” Jewel (*AILD* 14), indicating his recognition of their mutual feelings. Darl’s speech in chapter 57

contains many inscrutable passages because Darl is insane and on the way to the asylum. On one level, these inscrutable insertions should not garner excessive attention because it is unremarkable for a mentally unbalanced person to say inscrutable things. However, these particular insertions are shaped to serve a purpose. Darl talks about the seated postures of the state officers who take him to the asylum and the design of the state's money and says, "they [officers] are riding on the state's money which is incest" (*AILD* 233). He also talks about the sensual image in his spy-glass which he got in France. I believe that, in this agitated condition, and free of social or familiar restraints, the disturbed Darl utters the significant insights that the sane Darl had suppressed. An incestuous air suffuses the novel, or at least Darl's mind, as an important and telling element.

Darl's obsession with Jewel comes from his jealousy over Jewel's exclusive possession of Addie's love. Darl torments Jewel constantly, saying things like, "It's not your horse that's dead" (*AILD* 82), "whose son are you?" (*AILD* 193), "your mother was a horse" (*AILD* 193), spurred by envy. But his jealousy does not originate only from Jewel's special standing in their mother's eyes, but also from the fact that Jewel is a man of action and confident in himself. As Darl says, "Jewel knows he is [exists]" (*AILD* 71). Darl knows that the personal qualities of Jewel contrast with his own. Jewel is the one who always rescues Addie's body on the burial journey. Darl's admiration of his half-brother is evident in his description of Jewel saving the coffin from the fire, "he appears to be enclosed in a thin nimbus of fire" as if he were Christ.

Darl's insecurity has origin in Addie's neglect of him. The way he calls his mother "Addie Bundren" instead of "ma" is a reflection of how Addie feels toward him. But deep in his heart, Darl longs for his mother's love desperately. The absence of Addie's love causes Darl to experience an identity crisis and ontological doubt. He states, "I cannot love my mother because I have no mother" (*AILD* 82), and "I don't know what I am. I don't know if I am or not" (*AILD* 71). Then he dreams of dissolving into nonexistence: "If you could just ravel out into time. That would be nice. It would be nice if you could ravel out into time" (*AILD* 190).

Inscrutable insertions by narrators initially obscure or delay meaning and understanding. The reader is puzzled by them. However, with fuller immersion in and progression into the story, the emotional and psychological significance of the inscrutable insertions for the character who utters it emerges. This does not imply, however, that the reader comes to

comprehends an over-riding truth through this process. Faulkner, presenting the story through multiple interior monologues, shows that the reality is not grasped from a single point of view. Not only does the truth differ from one person to another; individuals can also consciously or subconsciously interpret situations mistakenly and evolve a warped idea of reality.

2-4 Tense – Time of Events and Narration

Lastly, I would like to point out there is distortion in chronological references in the novel and tricks played with tense. In chapter 32, Darl recollects Addie sitting at Jewel's bedside on the same night that Jewel came back home with his newly purchased horse, which was three years ago.

That night I found ma sitting beside the bed where he was sleeping, in the dark. She cried hard, maybe because she had to cry so quiet; maybe because she felt the same way about tears she did about deceit, hating herself for doing it, hating him because she had to. And then I knew that I knew. I knew that as plain on that day as I knew about Dewey Dell on that day. (*AILD* 119-120)

This scene describes the night Darl consciously realizes the secret of Addie that he had known for a long time subconsciously. According to the narration, just as Darl has known that Dewey Dell had a sexual relationship with Lame and is pregnant out of wedlock, so he realized that Addie had an adulterous affair and as a consequence has an illegitimate child Jewel. It is interesting that, in the recounting, he places events in reverse order. He talks as if Dewey Dell's encounter with Lame happened before Addie's affair, though in fact it happened three years later. Darl has been struck by the repetition of history between mother and daughter and both events have been seared into his brain so that their actual location in time has become irrelevant to him. This impression of chronological reverse is caused by the time gap between the time of event and the time of narration. The time frame of the presentation of events in this scene is faithful to the psychological time of the characters, and untethered from objective time and the sequence of physical events. Through such manipulation, the subjective experience of the reader approximates that of the characters. Faulkner makes the reader uneasy and uncomfortable, in the way the characters are, by presenting them the new and roughly woven texture of the reality – which continues to weave and unweave.

A similar trick of chronology is seen in Cash's monologue in chapter 53, when he narrates, "...we was in front of Mrs Bundren's house, hearing the music...The music was playing in

the house. It was one of them graphophones. It was natural as a music-band" (*AILD* 216), and "He [Pa] pulled up at Mrs Bundren's.... So he stopped there...before that little new house, where the music was. We waited there hearing it....It's a comfortable thing, music is" (*AILD* 217). At this point, the only Mrs. Bundren the reader knows of is Addie Bundren, but this passage occurs after Addie's death, when the Bundren family are finally in Jefferson. Therefore the reader gets confused by the name. Quite soon, though, chapter 59, the last chapter of the novel narrated by Cash, solves the mystery. The day after the burial, when the children wait for Anse in the square, he shows up with a woman who is carrying a little gramophone. Anse introduces the woman to the children with, "Meet Mrs Bundren," which is the very last line of the novel. The reader finally realizes at this point with surprise that the Mrs. Bundren in the passage above is Anse's new wife. Thus in chapter 53, Cash leaks the information to the reader before the story develops. The past tense narration of chapter 53 makes it possible because the present time of the narration is after he has acquired the knowledge of the new Mrs. Bundren.

Cash is often perceived by readers and critics as a dependable, practical, well-balanced character who provides stability and perspective to the family, and acts soberly and stoically in their best interest. He tends to be interpreted sympathetically as the one child in the family who is able to meet his filial obligation to both parents, and even as the sole admirable character in the family. However, the time distortion embedded in the example above reveals another side of Cash's personality. Anse's marriage immediately after the burial of his deceased wife surprises the family and the reader and gives them a great shock, but it does not seem to provoke any resentful or negative feelings in Cash. As he indicates in narrating the scene, his attention has been arrested by the music and the gramophone that his father's new wife carries:

And then I see that the grip she was carrying was one of them little graphophones. It was for a fact, all shut up as pretty as a picture, and every time a new record would come from the mail order and us setting in the house in the winter, listening to it, I would think what a shame Darl couldn't be to enjoy it too. But it is better for him.

This world is not his world; this life his life. (*AILD* 239-40)

We had known previously that Cash wants to get a gramophone and has saved money for one. But it surprises the reader that, as soon as he sees the gramophone, he thinks about new mail-

ordered records and fantasizes over the time when he can listen to it. It seems that having a gramophone at home can give him such an enhancement that nothing else is more important than it. He seems to forget Addie who has loved and cared for him, and is able to banish Darl, who feels closest to him and has to spend the rest of his life in the asylum, from his mind once he gets a gramophone within reach. This disruption of the flow of time, Cash's leak of the information involving access to mechanical music in Cash's monologue in chapter 53, betrays his excitement and joy over his father's marriage with a woman who possesses a gramophone, a delight which he should conceal.

3 Conclusion

This paper has considered the nature and effects of unorthodox language usages in *As I Lay Dying*. In the novel, Faulkner consistently employs idiosyncratic usage of pronouns without antecedents, illogical causal connectors, de-contextualized utterances, and distortions of time. These linguistic practices open portals into the hidden secrets of Bundren family. Through the effects wielded by these unorthodox usages, we understand that Darl has long suspected Jewel's illegitimacy and Addie's adultery. We also realize that Darl feels not only jealousy toward Jewel but also admiration. We grow aware that Addie and Jewel share an incestuous love, as do Darl and Dewey Dell. Dewey Dell feels contradictory feeling on concealing her pregnancy. Cash is not totally warmhearted toward his family. Faulkner, by delaying disclosure of important facts, or secrets, places readers in suspended state. Eventually he uncovers the secrets. But even before any explicit revelation, the existences of the secrets have been communicated to readers through language usages which involve and indicate distortions. In this way, Faulkner involves readers in the novel attentively. When the facts are revealed, readers can see the family's relationships with one another more clearly, comprehensively, and fully, from having worked toward understanding through uncomfortable senses. Faulkner once gave the following answer to the question: "Some people say they can't understand your writing, even after they read it two or three times. What approach would you suggest for them?" "Read it four times" (Stein 76). Anticipating, in many ways, the reader response theory of Iser and others later in the century, Faulkner demands that the reader read and comprehend actively.

The curious language usages in *As I Lay Dying* are nuts and bolts tricks of the trade—

storytelling techniques and practices—which accomplish sophisticated and complex effects. They bring the characters into intimacy with the reader, requiring the reader to interpret, and allow the reader to connect and make relationships with the characters. The interpretation never ends, as Kermode says. Final understanding eludes and is impossible. Through constructing relationships with the characters, the reader derives a fresh perspective on the human. The act of reading and literature is interactive. Improbably, we know the Bundrens, whose life ostensibly varies widely from our own, and whose lives are replete with secrets, through experiencing events with them. This empathetic experience is enabled and created by the wielding of technique and concrete writing craft, the wielding of unorthodox and distorted grammar, syntax, and temporal sense. The novel of rich human relationships and insights into life is built on very specific technique. Reading *As I Lay Dying*, the participant reader, who is dependent on the limited perspectives of the narrators, engages in ongoing interpretation, and becomes one of the characters with partial and blinded understanding who needs to put together a story and version of reality based on the insufficient evidence.

Notes:

- ¹⁾ William Faulkner started writing *As I Lay Dying* on October 25, 1929, the day following the beginning of the Great Depression, and finished writing the manuscript in about six weeks. The novel was published on October 6, 1930.
- ²⁾ William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (Vintage, 2004); hereafter cited in text as *AILD*.
- ³⁾ Ken Bennet suggests that there are three possible referents, the ones which I mention, and argues that the pronoun refers to the fetus itself.

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『死の床に横たわりて』における秘密と関係性

——言語の非伝統的な使用方法についての研究

光永英子

要旨 ウィリアム・フォークナーの『死の床に横たわりて』は、アメリカ南部の貧農家族であるバンドレン家の人々が母親の遺体を遠くの墓地に運ぶ埋葬の旅の物語である。ここでは、モダニスト、フォークナーの実験的ともいえる、言語の伝統的でない使用法が多くみられる。たとえば代名詞でありながら指示対象が不明確な使い方や、因果関係を示す語句でありながら因果関係を不明瞭にする使い方、文脈からは出てこない唐突な文の挿入、時系列を逆転させるような時間の表現方法である。本稿では、読者に違和感を感じさせる、曖昧さへ導くような言語の歪んだ使用方法をテキストから取り出し、そのような語句の意味、効果を検討する。そして、語りには語り手の解釈が反映され言語の歪みの中に語り手の秘密が隠蔽されているというフランク・カーモードのセオリーに依拠し、テキストに見られる言語の歪みに隠された、語り手が隠蔽している秘密と、それを通して読みとれるバンドレン家の人々の関係性を探り出す。