Title: "Literary Form and Life Itself in *As I Lay Dying* and *Getting Mother’s Body*"

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| Preface |
| Students will read both novels and consider how Parks’s work speaks both back to and alongside Faulkner’s, particularly in terms of questions regarding family, obligation, identity, and the possibilities of love amid material and social marginalization. |

**Activities**

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| After reading *As I Lay Dying* and *Getting Mother’s Body*, consider how each novel dramatizes how one’s sense of self and identity depends upon our connections with others, and upon how we make sense of our lives, especially when they feel most out of our control. Listen to audio clips of Faulkner’s discussion with UVA students regarding As I Lay Dying as a *tour de force*, and consider how his stated aim for his novel both resonates and gets transformed through Parks’s re-imagining of this family saga. |

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| Study (Whenever a student is asked to read or watch it’s a ‘study’ task. | |
| **Instructions**  1. As you read *As I Lay Dying*, consider it not only as a story unto itself, but also as an experiment in the implied rules (and rule-breaking!) of how one “should” write fiction. Pay attention to the kinds of formal elements Faulkner employs that draw our attention to it as a novel: e.g., first-person point-of-view techniques; unreliable narrators; non-verbal signifiers (e.g., drawings, numbered lists); use of visual space on the page; etc.  2. Afterwards, listen to the DY audio clips indicated below, and consider what his higher aim seemed to be, as far as telling a story about what it means to be a human being in a world of fellow human beings.  3. Next, as you read *Getting Mother’s Body*, consider how Parks speaks both against, but also alongside, the chief thematic and artistic aims of *As I Lay Dying* considered above. Consider how and where the story changes, and how and where it stays the same, as we see similar themes through different eyes and under different circumstances. | **Media Component (optional)** |

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| Explore | |
| **Walkthrough**  1. Click on Indexes from the DY homepage.  2. Click on Audio Clips from the drop-down menu.  3. Click on the *As I Lay Dying* link.  4. Listen to “Fire and flood, folly and courage” and “As *tour de force*.” | **Walkthrough video** |

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| Respond (Whenever a student is asked to respond to something) | |
| **Questions**  1. From *As I Lay Dying*, choose a few scenes from Dewey Dell’s experiences of life—told either from her perspective or from that of other characters—that resonate with you as examples of someone caught in life circumstances that feel outside of their control or choosing.  2. Choose a few scenes from *Getting Mother’s Body* that seem to be “speaking back” to these same aspects of Faulkner’s novel. You might, for example, consider scenes regarding unwanted pregnancy as dramatized through what Billy Beede goes through, and what we learn about Willa Mae’s life and death.  3. From this comparison, develop an analysis that shows how each author used techniques of novel-writing to dramatize ways that human beings can try to make sense, or *meaning*, out of circumstances outside of their control.  *Note*: if there is another pairing of characters that you would prefer, you are free to choose another set. | **Media component (optional)** |

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| Final Product |
| The final product will be a literary analysis paper that compares the narrative arcs and formal techniques of two novels, one that speak back to the other in terms of both theme and form. |

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| Resources |
| 1. Audio Clips from DY |

**Metadata**

Since some data can be displayed in a standard manner, we can simply store it into a generic file. Please fill in the fields below. Whenever there are multiple pieces of text you want to use put it in square brackets, with each individual piece of text separated by commas.

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Pilot Classroom: “In-Person”;

Learning Goals: [“Learning Goal 1: formal literary analysis”, “Learning Goal 2: compare two formally and thematically related novels”, “Learning Goal 3”];

Instructor: “Rachel Watson”;

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Notes: [“Paired Author: Suzan-Lori Parks”]

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