

Jewel's development in as i lay dying



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William Faulkner uses multiple narrators in *As I Lay Dying*, a technique that enables him to illustrate different mindsets on events and ethical questions. Some narrators' motivations are clear: Dewey Dell is determined to get an abortion, for example, and Vardaman longs for a toy train and bananas. Jewel is more difficult to understand, and is the only member of the Bundren family who gives no personal narration following Addie's death. Because the reader can only understand Jewel through the accounts of others, she may be particularly confused as to why Jewel would help Anse, a man to whom he has neither biological nor affable ties, by giving up the horse that has long been his only outlet for expressions of love. The explanation is that Jewel realizes he must compromise his principles to achieve anything, and that he becomes increasingly willing to question his immediate reaction to situations. In order to understand Jewel's final decision to help Anse, one must examine the relationship between Jewel and both his mother and horse. The filial relationship between Jewel and Addie is unique both emotionally and genetically. While Cash, Darl, Vardaman, and Dewey Dell are all the children of Anse and Addie, Jewel is the child resulting from the affair between Addie and Father Whitfield. As such, Addie favors Jewel over all the other children. Addie even admits to Cora that Jewel "is [her] cross and he will be [her] salvation. He will save [her] from the water and from the fire" (168). On the other hand, Addie's opinion toward Cash and the rest of her children is made apparent in Addie's own narration when Addie claims, "And when I knew that I had Cash, I knew that living was terrible and that this was the answer to it" (171). Addie considered having children with Anse both punishment and preparation for death as opposed to something from which to derive pleasure and love. Nevertheless, as a mother, Addie knew that she

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had to treat all of her children equally, and hated herself and Jewel in a way for forcing her to deceive the others into thinking she loved them all equally when love was a word she could not even comprehend. In this sense, Addie “whipped” Jewel more, disciplining him to make up for her overly-expressed love toward him. Since Jewel’s only source of love was that disguised by Addie’s anger, Jewel has also learned to love in such a way. To his horse, Jewel’s “tough-love” is reciprocal of his mother’s “teachings.” Jewel’s treatment of the animal that he bought with his own money with curses and pushes mixed with spoils and treats is Jewel’s highest form of expressing love. Jewel’s love for his mother is obvious in his sole narration “dedicated” to Addie. Although Jewel’s hostile proclivity is thoroughly on the surface, his underlying intentions of wanting the best for his mother are obvious. Jewel goes as far as to wish that “it would just be [him] and her on a high hill and [him] rolling the rocks down the hill at [everyone’s] faces, picking them up and throwing them down the hill faces and teeth and all by God” in response to the constant attention by all that Addie is receiving on her deathbed. Furthermore, Jewel, except for “crazy” Darl, is the only one of the Bundren family that goes to Jefferson in order to bury his mother with no selfish side-intentions. Jewel’s love for his mother cannot be explicitly stated, for, like his mother claimed, the word love is only used by those who have never felt it. However, he would do nearly anything for her; Jewel would even break into a burning barn to rescue her coffin. While Jewel’s hostility toward anyone creates uncertainty about his character, he undoubtedly lives by one guiding principle: to do whatever it takes to please his mother. However, when Anse asks Jewel to give up the horse in order to buy another team to continue on the way to Jefferson to bury Addie, Jewel must then decide between the two

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loves of his life: his horse and his mother. For Jewel to choose the horse, his mother would have to be buried near Armstid's house, disregarding her last wish. If Jewel chooses his mother, she could make it to Jefferson, but he would lose the living animal for which he had cared so deeply. Contrary to Armstid's belief, Jewel does not choose to help Anse because Anse just has "something" about him that makes any man want to help him. Jewel does not help Anse for Anse's sake; he merely realizes that the love for his mother, without which he would never have lived to be able to have a horse to love so, is more important than his love for his horse. The entire journey to Jefferson would have been pointless if he refused to relinquish his horse, a disrespect Jewel does not wish to give his mother. Despite his immediate reaction to run away to avoid giving up his horse, Jewel learns a new lesson in giving the horse to Snopes: to consider all the consequences of his actions before they are made. He realizes that his natural inclination to run away contradicted his overall desire to do the best for his mother. At the same time, his demand to put the coffin in the wagon without a balance led to its falling in the river, a complete disrespect of his mother. Thus he begins to question all his reactions to situations. This lesson is exemplified by Jewel reconsidering his anger toward the man whom he thought commented on his mother's smell in Jefferson. Instead of punching the man as he normally would, Jewel goes as far as to apologize for his outburst. With the two he held most dear gone, Jewel realizes that his hostility has not gained him anything, although the losses themselves may not necessarily have been preventable. As such, giving up his horse is perhaps the beginning of a new outlook on life for Jewel, one in which he attempts to act in a loving way. Although Jewel cannot yet stop this aggression, he has undoubtedly begun

an internal conflict in which he must recover from the loss of his two loves and learn a new way to live.