

FLAWED FAMILIES:
WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *AS I LAY DYING*
AND KATHERINE MANSFIELD'S *STORIES*

by
SALLY ANN MCLURG

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Professor Paul Peppis

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Sally Ann McLurg for the degree of Bachelor of Arts

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In William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* and Katherine Mansfield's *Stories*, the authors present the reader with profoundly dysfunctional families. The characters' dysfunctions are shown to be shaped by the flawed societies in which they live and exasperated by their unhealthy family environments. The authors use the relationships between family members, and in particular between parents and their children, in order to make criticisms about the societies in which they live.

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Introduction

In William Faulkner's novel *As I Lay Dying*, Darl Bundren thinks to himself, "If you could just ravel out into time. That would be nice. It would be nice if you could just ravel out into time" (Faulkner 198). Darl's desire to "ravel out into time" is a desire to escape from the world around him, both his dysfunctional family and the Southern society which makes a family like the Bundrens a reality. Darl's reflection also reveals that he does not fully realize that an escape from the constrictions of society and time is impossible without losing himself. To ravel out into time requires that he somehow must "unravel," disengage from everything that has made him Darl Bundren. To escape from these things would be to dissolve into someone else or into nothing at all. Although the possibility of escape is "nice" to Darl it is also the equivalent of death, unconsciousness, or insanity.

Darl's reflection on time foreshadows his family's decision to commit him into an asylum. The family's decision, as the oldest brother Cash implies, is made to avoid being sued by Gillespie, a man whose barn Darl burned. However, as Darl is being taken away, two of his siblings, Jewel and Dewey Dell jump on him, punching, kicking, and swearing at him. This violent physical attack reveals that the family's reasons for committing Darl stem from a much deeper than financial motivation, including hatred and the desire to sever familial ties. Darl's commitment to the asylum is the perverted equivalent of raveling Darl out into time because the family is forcibly ripping him from his natural place in their family and society. It is this forced termination of familial and societal bonds which actually *leads* Darl to insanity. He is sane until *after* he realizes that he has obtained the alienation from his family of which he previously fantasized.

As Vardaman, the youngest Bundren child innocently says to himself, “He went crazy in our wagon” (Faulkner 241). It is his family that is the cause of Darl’s loss of place and his subsequent descent into madness.

What has not been addressed is *why* the Bundren family feels such a deep hatred for Darl. In fact, Cash contemplates that it is Dewey Dell, the sibling who seemed to have the closest bond with Darl, who is most vicious in attacking him: If I’d a said it was ere a one of us she liked better than ere a other, I’d a said it was Darl. But . . . it was Dewey Dell that was on him before even Jewel could get at him . . . She hadn’t said a word, hadn’t even looked at him, but when them fellows told him what they wanted and that they had come to get him and he throwed back, she jumped on him like a wild cat so that one of the fellows had to quit and hold her and her scratching and clawing at him like a wild cat (Faulkner 227).

A number of interpretations can be offered to suggest why Dewey Dell so violently attacks Darl. Possibly Cash’s belief that Dewey Dell and Darl share a special bond is inaccurate, that in fact Darl has given Dewey Dell more reason than any of the other family members to hate him. Or maybe Cash correctly perceives the special bond and it is a *result* of the special bond with Darl that makes Dewey Dell react violently to the prospect of separation from him. Lastly, it is possible that Dewey Dell’s attack is not aimed at Darl in the first place. Recall that she does not *look* at Darl as she attacks him. If this last interpretation is accurate, what is it that Dewey Dell is fighting and why is Darl the target of her, as well as her family’s, displaced aggression?

Dewey Dell’s anger is directed, not at Darl, but at the same environment which Darl once wished that he could “ravel out in time” from: the environment that defines her as Dewey Dell Bundren, a woman who has found herself pregnant out of wedlock, unable to rid herself of her unwanted and unborn child, feeling afraid and isolated. Gwendolyn Chabrier writes that “the Faulknerian universe is a puritan hell in which families are doomed to incomprehension, isolation, rejection, ambivalence, domination, rebellion, and guilt” (Chabrier Preface). Chabrier’s statement implies that there is something about the environment into which Faulkner places the Bundren family that defines them in the

same way that Darl is defined by his family. Unable to escape from her environment, Dewey Dell lashes out at the Southern society that both traps her and defines her.

As Darl is taken away from his family, his brothers and sister react with violence and hatred. His brother Jewel says, “Kill him. Kill the son of a bitch” (Faulkner 227). It seems as if Darl were to have any allies at this moment, it would be from his parents. After all, aren’t parents supposed to love their children unconditionally, no matter what their faults? Yet, Darl’s mother Addie cannot speak in Darl’s defense because she is lying dead in a coffin in the Bundren’s wagon. She cannot stop Darl’s siblings from attacking him, even if she wanted to. Darl’s father Anse, on the other hand, is quite capable of stopping the violent assault because he is a witness to the events as they unfold. However, Anse does not speak a word in Darl’s defense nor does he raise a hand to shield his child from the blows of his other children. In fact, Anse’s reaction to the events is so minimal that Faulkner doesn’t even mention Anse in the scene. The reader simply knows that he has just returned to the wagon with some spades he has borrowed to dig the hole to bury Addie in.

Anse’s detachment towards Darl does not stem from his acknowledgment of Darl’s supposed insanity and his belief that the commitment is the right thing to do for Darl. Nor does it stem from the belief that Darl deserves the punishment of his siblings because of certain negative or unusual traits in Darl. Anse’s lack of familial concern for Darl is found in his relationships with *all* of his children throughout *As I Lay Dying*. For example, after his oldest son Cash breaks his leg while trying to get the family’s wagon and Addie’s coffin across a flooded river, Anse patches Cash’s leg by covering it with cement. A visit to a physician would have been a more costly and time consuming option, but it would have saved his son a lot of unneeded pain and would have lessened the risk of Cash losing his leg to infection.

When Cash is eventually taken to see Doctor Peabody, he is astounded that Cash doesn’t complain. After all, Cash has been riding for six days in a bumpy wagon with a

poorly treated broken leg. Cash says, “‘It never bothered [me] much’” (Faulkner

230). Peabody replies,

“You mean, it never bothered Anse much . . . No more than it bothered him to throw that poor devil [Darl] down in the public street and handcuff him like a damn murderer . . . And dont tell me it aint going to bother you to lose sixty-odd square inches of skin to get that concrete off. And dont tell me it aint going to bother you to have to limp around on one short leg for the rest of your life- if you walk at all again. Concrete. . . God Amighty, why didn’t Anse carry you to the nearest sawmill and stick your leg in the saw? That would have cured it. Then you all could have stuck his head into the saw and cured a whole family. . .” (Faulkner 230).

Peabody compares the uncaring attitude Anse shows while Darl is being dragged to the asylum with the uncaring way he handles the treatment of Cash’s leg. Peabody knows that Cash must be in excruciating pain and that it is not possible Cash isn’t bothered by his broken leg. It is Cash’s father who is not bothered by pain, not hindered by feelings of sympathy towards Cash or any guilt about his shoddy and irresponsible treatment of his children. In Darl’s case, he would rather see his son taken away from him forever than to face a lawsuit.

At the heart of the Bundren family’s dysfunction is Anse’s uncaring attitude towards his children, as Peabody implies with the suggestion that the family could be cured without their connection to him. Clearly there is a problem in a family when the father does not have concern for the other members because of his own materialism and selfishness. Nonetheless, this is a simplification of the Bundren’s problems. In the same way that sticking Cash’s leg in a saw would cure the immediate problem of a broken leg but would create new and more drastic problems, simply eliminating Anse would not solve all of the complex problems that torment the Bundren family. The Bundren children are also profoundly effected by their mother Addie, especially her materialism, possessiveness, and favoritism for Jewel, her illegitimate son from an affair with the Reverend Whitfield. Faulkner creates a family environment in which the faults of the parents are transferred to their children. The children have little choice but to

model the values and vices of their parents. The merging of Anse and Addie's shortcomings therefore become the foundation on which their children's' individual characters are developed. This leads the children to have serious limitations in the ways they interact with each other, develop relationships, and perceive the world. Faulkner suggests that the Bundren children are doomed to follow in the pathway of their parents, unable to rise above the dysfunctional characteristics they are modeled. The Bundren children are likewise destined to propagate their families' limitations if they choose to have families of their own.

As I have emphasized, Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* presents the reader with a family plagued with dysfunction, anger, and isolation so intense that it is capable of turning the members against each other, clawing, and fighting in vain to escape. Katherine Mansfield's short story series "Prelude," "At the Bay," and "The Doll's House" portray a family struggling against many of the same negative forces as the Bundrens. Similarly to Faulkner's Darl, Linda, the mother of Mansfield's fictional Burnell family, fantasizes about an escape from the world around her, in particular her husband, children, and bourgeois life. Rather than describing her escape as raveling out into time, Linda envisions herself sailing away into the distance on a ship that is transformed out of an aloe plant from her yard:

As [Linda and her mother] stood on the steps, the high grassy bank on which the aloe rested rose up like a wave, and the aloe seemed to ride upon it like a ship with the oars lifted. Bright moonlight hung upon the lifted oars like water, and on the green wave glittered the dew. . . [Linda] dreamed that she was caught up out of the cold water into the ship with the lifted oars and the budding mast. . . They rowed far away over the top of the garden trees, the paddocks and the dark bush beyond. Ah, she heard herself cry: 'Faster! Faster!' to those who were rowing. How much more real this dream was than that they should go back to the house where the sleeping children lay and where [her husband and her sister] played cribbage (Mansfield 90).

In Linda's vivid fantasy world she feels *more* real, *more* in control, than she does in her everyday bourgeois life as a wife and mother. For Linda, escaping conventional reality is not connected to death or insanity and does not require that she "lose" herself as it

does for Darl. She stands as the captain of her imaginary aloe boat, directing it to go "Faster!" Linda is unafraid of the consequences of being taken further and further from traditional reality because she feels that her dream brings her closer to a place where she can be strong and in control. While watching her youngest child, Linda thinks to herself,

Yes, that was her real grudge against life; that was what she could not understand. That was the question she asked and asked, and listened in vain for the answer. It was all very well to say it was the common lot of women to bear children. It wasn't true. She for one, could prove that wrong. She was broken, made weak, her courage was gone, through childbearing. And what made it doubly hard to bear was, she did not love her children. It was useless pretending." (Mansfield 113-114).

In Linda's dream, she gains strength and control as she sails *away* from her family and home. In Yet, on the other hand, she feels weak and out of control in the presence of her family. She feels that her weakness is largely a result of having children, an obligation she has as woman and wife. Linda develops her imaginary world partly in response to the societal mandate that she must have a family and must love them.

Linda's loveless attitude towards her children mimics Anse's towards Cash and Darl. Her thoughts too are centered more on her own needs than the needs of her children. Consider the opening scene of "Prelude," when the Burnells are preparing to move to their new home in the country. Linda is sitting in their buggy, surrounded by luggage and boxes, and her two youngest children, Kezia and Lottie, are standing on the grass beside the buggy with the remaining packages. Surveying the children and the packages she says, "These are absolute necessities that I will not let out of my sight for one instant" (Mansfield 51). Then, without specifying whether the "absolute necessities" are the children or the boxes, she says with a little laugh, "We shall just have to leave them. That is all. We shall just have to cast them off." Again, the question remains whether the children or the boxes will be left behind. The two young girls stare at their mother in anticipation. The situation is cleared up when it is decided that the children will be sent later that evening with the store man. The things on the

path are sent on the buggy with Linda, her mother, her oldest daughter, and more assorted packages. Therefore, it turns out that to Linda the packages are more “absolute necessities” than her own children .

Linda seems to think that her dream world could be shared by her mother, Mrs. Fairfield, as revealed in Linda’s question to her, ““Do you feel it, too? . . .Don’t you feel that [the aloe bush] is coming towards us?”” (Mansfield 90). Linda’s belief that her mother might be experiencing the same hallucination as herself reveals that she believes that the factors leading to her desire to escape might also influence her mother. Linda recognizes that she and her mother are both women, mothers, and wives. Although Linda’s question to her mother is not answered directly in the text the lack of an answer indicates that her mother does not sense the aloe’s approach. The answer to the question comes when Linda directly asks her mother what she has been thinking about during their walk in the garden, as Linda was experiencing her escape fantasies.

Mrs. Fairfield answers,
 “I haven’t really been thinking of anything. I wondered as we passed the orchard what the fruit trees were like and whether we should be able to make jam this autumn. There are splendid healthy currant bushes in the vegetable garden . . . I should like to see those pantry shelves thoroughly well stocked with our own jam” (Mansfield 92)

Mrs. Fairfield does not share the escape fantasy with Linda because she is content with her role as woman, mother, and “pantry stocker”; she has no need to escape. Mrs. Fairfield’s thoughts are planted in domestic concerns, a main difference between her daughter and herself.

Mansfield pays particular attention to portraying the ways Linda Burnell’s children react to their mother’s indifference. After all, the Burnell father, Stanley, does not compensate for Linda’s lack of nurturing. He is too busy with work and too caught up with maintaining the superficial illusion of a happy family to be interested in raising his children when his wife fails as a mother. Mansfield most vividly illustrates the effects of the dysfunctional Burnell family on the youngest daughter, Kezia. Yet, Kezia, unlike

Darl does not pay for the problems of her family with her life or sanity. In fact, in "The Doll's House" Kezia reveals that she has an independent and compassionate nature surpassing that of her mother or father. This is witnessed in the way she treats the unpopular and poverty-stricken Kelvey children. The Kelveys are rejected by Kezia's sisters and classmates and she has been warned against associating with them by her Aunt Beryl and other adults because of their poverty. However, Kezia ignores the values placed on wealth and refinement, when she invites the Kelveys to her home to view her and her sisters' new doll's house. The doll's house, a gift given to the Burnell girls, was an item of much awe and admiration for the Burnells' classmates who were all allowed to view the special house, two by two (all except for the Kelveys). When Kezia invites the Kelveys to see the doll's house when no one else would have considered them worthy Mansfield reveals that Kezia has a kind, compassionate, and accepting nature. Kezia is loving and perceptive despite being born into in a family where she is not loved or fully accepted by her parents.

In the conclusion of "The Doll's House," Else Kelvey nudges up against her sister and says, "I seen the little lamp" (Mansfield 321). She is referring to the tiny lamp in the Burnell's doll's house. It is also Kezia's favorite part of the little toy house, the decoration she was particularly enchanted by. It is obvious that without Kezia the Kelveys would not have been able to see the little lamp and in that sense, Kezia is herself a lamp for the Kelvey girls. Like the lamp, she is a precious and delicate figure within the Burnell family that is otherwise an artificial family environment. What allows Mansfield's Kezia to become the optimistic and compassionate figure of a guiding light while Faulkner's Darl becomes a salivating lunatic? After all, both children are born into environments of selfishness, materialism, superficiality, and rejection.

In part, Kezia's ability to rise above the shortcomings of her parents stems from her ability to form meaningful relationships with adults other than her parents, avoiding being influenced solely by the selfishness and materialism they model. Kezia initiates

connections with her grandmother and the Burnell's servants, gaining alternate perspectives and coming to appreciate emotional connections over material possessions and selfish concerns. Kezia has access to other adults who are willing to spend time with and teach her, in part because they work for her parents or they live in the Burnells' home. Kezia's social position gives her an advantage the Bundren children do not have because of their poverty. The Bundrens cannot afford to hire servants. The Bundren children cannot even go to school to learn because they are required to work in Anse's fields for him. The Bundren children are completely isolated from any outside forces and so are fully submerged in Anse and Addie's influence. Anse intentionally discourages his children from interacting with people outside of the Bundren family and from being introduced to ideas or places off the Bundren farm. Anse's motivation for discouraging his children to form attachments with others is that he desires to have full control over his children. He does not want them to leave his farm because he relies on them to do farm work so that he does not have to. Likewise, the Bundren children do not desire to escape from the Bundren household while Addie is alive because each child desperately battles for her love and attention, which to them is worth putting up with their otherwise dysfunctional family environment. While Kezia has opportunities to escape and plenty of people to whom she may turn, the Bundren children do not. Mansfield shows that even a troubled family environment can produce healthy, well-adjusted children under the right circumstances. Faulkner, in contrast, suggests that children raised into a troubled environment are doomed to be riddled with the dysfunction of their parents and to repeat their mistakes.

Taking the family as a metaphor for society at large, these two Modernist authors have very different predictions for the future. There can be little hope for a world in which each generation repeats the dysfunction of its fathers and mothers, societal problems growing and evolving in severity with each subsequent generation. Faulkner suggests that family dysfunction spreads and infects all who come into contact with it

like a disease. Eventually, this sickness will infect an entire society as the members of families intermarry and raise more infected children. On the other hand, Mansfield proposes that positive social changes are possible despite the environment into which the children are born. Occasionally a child is born who is protected from the infection, who can fight against those negative qualities that destroy and weaken everyone else. A basic difference between Faulkner and Mansfield's texts is thus the sense of hopelessness in Faulkner compared to Mansfield's more optimistic tone. For Faulkner, there is no escape from the madness of the modern world. For Mansfield, there is a hopeful light for future generations and the opportunity for great changes.

Chapter 1: Faulkner's Bundrens and the Dying South

William Faulkner (1897-1962) presents the reader of his novel *As I Lay Dying* with the profoundly dysfunctional Bundren family. The Bundrens are impoverished and isolated from the world around them. They are also isolated from each other, unable or unwilling to have successful and loving familial relationships. The Bundren parents, Anse and Addie, do not show normal emotional attachments to their children as would be expected of parents to their prodigy. As well, their children do not have normal emotional or mental connections with their parents or with each other. These family dysfunctions will be shown to be, on one hand, the products of the environment into which the Bundrens are placed. The Bundrens are after all, poverty stricken, uneducated, and living in the post Civil War American South. This environment is one filled with prejudice towards blacks and poor white farmers, it is filled with broken spirited people who still remain fixated on a time when the South was strong and prosperous, and lastly, it is filled with people who are pessimistic and unsure of what the future holds for them. Gwendolyn Chabrier writes, "The Old South is dead, or at least dying, but the New South has barely begun to breathe, and Faulkner's families are caught between these two worlds just as Faulkner himself was caught" (Chabrier 2). Faulkner's choice to place the Bundrens in this Southern environment was largely due to the fact that he was himself born in New Albany, Mississippi. The Bundrens live in a similar time and location to the one in which Faulkner was born and raised. They are faced with similar difficulties to those that Faulkner saw his own family and neighbors struggle against. Faulkner often portrays the poverty and dysfunction of the Bundrens as largely influenced by characteristics specific to their environment. For example, the plot of *As I Lay Dying* centers on the Bundren family's journey to the town of Jefferson to bury their dead mother, Addie. The Bundrens load Addie's homemade

coffin onto their dilapidated wagon for a trip that lasts over eight days. As the family confronts flooded rivers and washed out bridges, the family must work together to continue their journey. At one point, while trying to cross a flooded river, their wagon overturns and the family must work to collect the coffin and other objects that are hurled into the water. Due to the difficulties the family confronts and the length of their journey, Addie's body begins to decay and the smell attracts both buzzards and the disgust of anyone with whom the Bundren's come into contact. The oldest son Cash's leg gets broken when the family attempts to get the wagon across the flooded river and the wagon overturns. During this same mishap, the Bundrens' mules are lost to the raging waters. Later, the third son, Jewel, experiences the loss of his beloved horse when his father, Anse, trades it to buy a team to replace the one that was lost in the river. The difficulties the Bundrens face are intensified by their poverty and their lack of adequate transportation.

On the other hand, the Bundren family's dysfunction is deeper than that of their neighbors or the townspeople with whom they come into contact despite the fact that these others are also poor and trapped in the same Southern environment. As the Bundrens continue to persevere in their journey, ignoring the smell of the corpse that sits in their wagon and disregarding other people's advice to simply get Addie properly buried, the reader senses that the Bundren's difficulties are more complex than mere reactions to a problematic environment. Their motivations to take Addie to Jefferson are influenced in part by a promise made to Addie by Anse that he would bury her in Jefferson, alongside her "people." Addie made her request to be buried forty miles away from her husband and children, we eventually learn, in the hopes of getting revenge against Anse. Crucial to the journey are then, the complex relationships between the members of the Bundren family. Each of Bundrens has complex motivations for wanting to get to Jefferson. Anse claims to be obligated to fulfill the promise he made to his wife, yet it is clear that he is actually motivated to get to town to

buy a new pair of teeth and to find a new wife. The children's motivations include the daughter Dewey Dell's need to get an abortion before it becomes evident that she is pregnant with an illegitimate child, Cash's desire to get a record player, and the youngest son Vardaman's longing for a toy train. The narrative of the novel is divided into fifty-nine sections, each written from the perspective of one of the fifteen main characters of the action. Therefore, the individual motivations and desires of each of the characters are revealed as they make sacrifices, risk personal injury, and endanger their few possessions to guarantee that they get to Jefferson to bury Addie. Faulkner uses modern formal techniques such as stream of consciousness and varied points of view to reinforce the individuality of each of his characters, stressing their individual motivations and concerns relative to their role in the family and in society. Faulkner's stream of consciousness technique directly presents the reader with the thoughts of individual characters, written from his or her point of view and with his or her mental limitations and understanding. This technique enables the reader to see the interactions between characters as the consequence of their unique biases and concerns. Reality is interpreted differently depending on the narrator and his or her perspective. Therefore, the ways that the Bundrens interact, although provoked by environmental factors, are also shaped by their individual personalities, problems, and obsessions.

Faulkner has portrayed this group of individuals, the Bundren family, relative to their society in order to make criticisms about that society. He shows what effects the South has on a variety of different individuals and in particular, on the family structure, which has traditionally played an important role in Southern society. Chabrier writes, "For Faulkner and his Southern compatriots, from long before the Civil War until the present, the family specifically has been the dominant institution in the South. The family can be seen as a reflection of Southern society at large" (Chabrier *Preface vii*). Faulkner chooses to write about the Southern family but to portray it differently than it had previously been portrayed in Southern literature. Following in the footsteps of

Southern writers who attempted to write stories glorifying the Southern way of life and its vitality, Faulkner instead focuses on a profoundly dysfunctional family and their extreme hardships. Often portrayed in previous Southern literature as a source of strength and stability, the family is a group of isolated and disturbed individuals in Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. The Bundren family illustrates Faulkner's view that the South has changed since its days of pre Civil War glory, producing people with broken spirits and families with severe dysfunction.

The Bundrens live in the rural South shortly after World War I, the period of the novel's original publication. The exact dates are never mentioned and without Faulkner's brief references to automobiles, the war in France, and modern appliances such as record players, it would be difficult to place the time period of the novel. The Bundren's poverty and the fact that they do not own any of the modern inventions make it appear that they still live in the period directly after the Civil War. They still travel by horse and wagon, they do not have a telephone, and they do their farming without modern equipment. The changes that have occurred in the modern world do not generally influence the Bundrens who are isolated from news and the town by distance and poverty. The poor who did not have electricity or telephone lines were literally "unconnected" to the rest of the nation, lacking the wires that ran from house to house in other neighborhoods. Events such as World War I that was fought on European soil and did not involve the lives of a large number of American soldiers are not essential to the Bundren's daily lives. Unlike Faulkner, the Bundrens are more concerned with their own survival and daily concerns than world events and conflicts. Faulkner is conscious of the ways that the modern world has changed and the problems that have arisen based on these changes.

The daily activities of the Bundrens are almost completely focused on the family's survival and financial concerns. The children's days are spent working on the Bundren farm and in the cotton fields, with little time for recreation or leisure. For example,

Dewey Dell's time is spent working in the cotton fields, milking cows, helping with food preparation, and nursing her dying mother, Addie. The older Bundren boys, Cash, Jewel, and Darl work in the fields, pick cotton, and do manual labor on the Bundren farm. The youngest son, Vardaman's lot in life will surely also be similar to that of his older brothers and sister when he matures. In the first scene of *As I Lay Dying* Faulkner describes Jewel and Darl as they return from working in the cotton fields. They are described as walking on a path that "runs straight as a plumb line, worn smooth by feet and baked brick-hard by July, between the green rows of laid-by cotton" (3). Their path to and from the fields is narrow, straight, and well-worn because these brothers walk it every day and they do not meander back and forth along the way. Following the path in single file, they do not find joy in this small break between work and home nor with each other's company. They walk quickly and with determination. In addition, the walk is marked by a more complicated motivation to get home, their knowledge that their mother is on her death bed. Their walk takes on the characteristics of a race or a competition, each trying to get home before the other. This competitiveness between the brothers is illustrated when Darl notes, "Although I am fifteen feet ahead of him, anyone watching us can see Jewel's frayed and broken hat a full head above my own" (Faulkner 3). Darl is jealous of the fact that his younger brother is taller than him, acutely aware of rivalry and opposition between them that stems from their respective desires to monopolize their mother's attention. The daily activities of the Bundrens call for hard work with little rest but the fact that they do not find enjoyment and relief in each other's company or in their brief moments of free time has more complicated emotional reasons. Their family, which has the potential to be a source of consolation and security as it is portrayed in other Southern literature is instead responsible for making the Bundrens' lives more burdensome and hopeless. Despite his choice to focus almost exclusively on Southern families in his literature, Faulkner was not only interested in Southern issues and concerns. As Chabrier notes,

“While [Faulkner’s] fiction was always set in the American South, his themes (particularly pertinent for that nineteenth- and early twentieth- century South) were also universal, and this explains to a large extent their immediate recognition and appreciation by foreign audiences” (Chabrier 1). After all, Faulkner first gained popularity in France as early as 1931 but did not really become popular in the United States for over 10 years (Chabrier viii). If Faulkner’s works truly only applied to a small minority of the American public, his success would not have been so appreciated by foreign audiences. Faulkner came to appeal to both European and American audiences because his statements about family, although set in a distinctly Southern environment, can be shown to speak to all people. The dysfunction that Faulkner shows plaguing the Bundren family was also plaguing the modern world as well.

Section 1: Anse, the Flawed Father

Anse, the father of the Bundren family, is a selfish man who has little interest to no concern for the welfare of his children. A dominant factor in the Bundren children's lack of free time to play is due to Anse's insistence that his children work hard on the Bundren farm. Anse feels that it is his children's responsibility to earn money for his family. He selfishly does not allow them to spend their time playing or deviating from the worn path from the field to the house. Even in the sorrowful moments after his wife Addie has just died, Anse expects Dewey Dell to pull herself together and cook dinner for the family. As Dewey Dell lies sobbing over her mother's dead body, Anse says to her, "'Git up, now, and put supper on. We got to keep our strength up. I reckon Doctor Peabody's right hungry, coming this way. And Cash'll need to eat real quick and get back to work so he can finish [making Addie's coffin] in time'" (Faulkner 50). Anse assumes that his oldest son Cash will resume his work on Addie's coffin immediately after dinner. He refuses to allow the children time to grieve, expecting them to return to their chores promptly. He is only concerned with the fact that now that Addie is dead, he will be able to take a trip to Jefferson where he can buy a pair of false teeth. In fact, his first words after Addie's death are, "'God's will be done . . . Now I can get them teeth'" (Faulkner 51). His desire for the teeth is stronger than any emotional connection he felt for his wife, the mother of his five children, or than his concern for the emotional well being of his children. Throughout the novel, Anse ignores his children's emotional and intellectual development, stressing only the importance that they work and be productive so he may get what he wants. He models selfishness and materialism to his children, prompting them to deal with others in the same way he has dealt with them. Anse takes advantage of his gender and the societal belief that as the father he is the head of the household in order to further his own needs

by discouraging the children to have interaction with anyone outside of the Bundren farm. This increases his control over his family and makes it more difficult for them to escape growing up with Anse's dysfunction. Faulkner thus shows that the Bundren children are doomed to follow in Anse's footsteps, perpetuating the same negative qualities that he has passed on to them.

Anse often stresses the importance of hard work; however, this is hypocritical considering that Anse is himself extremely lazy and does not actually do any work on the Bundren farm. Anse's lack of sweat is an obvious indication that he does not do any physical labor. Tull, the Bundren's neighbor describes Anse: "Anse's wrists dangle out of his sleeves: I never see him with a shirt on that looked like it was his in all my life . . . Except for the lack of sweat. You could tell they aint been nobody else's but Anse's that way without no mistake" (Faulkner 30). If Anse worked in the sun like his children, his shirt would be stained with sweat. Anse's laziness is particularly objectionable because of his position as the head of the family and because he has no legitimate reason for not working. As Darl reveals, Anse's reason for not working is quite questionable: "I have never seen a sweat stain on [Anse's] shirt. He was sick once from working in the sun when he was twenty-two years old, and he tells people that if he ever sweats, he will die. I suppose he believes it" (17). Darl's words show that he does not believe his father's justification for not working to be valid. The Bundren's neighbors do not accept Anse's reasons for not working either. However, because of religious notions of charity or out of pity for the Bundren children, they help the Bundren farm survive. As Cora Tull says to her husband, "'If [Anse were] a man, he would a been there instead of making his sons do what he dursn't'" (146). Anse's children and neighbors do what Anse is too lazy to do himself.

When the Bundren children do follow their dreams, it is without financial help or encouragement from Anse. For example, when Jewel is fifteen, he decides that he wants a horse. He knows that it is useless to ask his father for money or for time off from his

chores to earn the money to buy the horse. Therefore, Jewel makes a deal with a neighbor that he will clear one of his fields in return for a horse. Clearing the field is, of course, a strenuous and time consuming task. Anse would not allow Jewel to spend his energy and time clearing a field for another man, especially if the profits were to be spent on something for Jewel rather than for Anse or the farm's needs. For this reason, Jewel decides to clear the field at night, instead of sleeping, while continuing to do his usual chores during the day. Even though Jewel uses his own time and energy to clear the field, when he comes home with his horse for the first time, Anse reacts with anger: "So you bought a horse. You went behind my back and bought a horse. You never consulted me; you know how tight it is for us to make by, yet you bought a horse for me to feed. Taken the work from your flesh and blood and bought a horse with it." (Faulkner 129)

Anse condemns Jewel for *taking work from his flesh and blood* to buy a horse. This statement has at least two meaning. First, Anse criticizes Jewel for using his own body and energy to work for the horse because it left Jewel too weakened to work adequately at home. Anse implies that Jewel has used up his flesh and blood for the wrong purpose, hinting that every ounce of Jewel's body should be used only for Anse's benefit and that he has the right to say what Jewel can and can't use his body for. The statement also means that Jewel took work away from his family, Jewel's flesh and blood. In Anse's view, it is like Jewel had stolen something from his family, by using his time and energy on himself. Anse will not support his sons in actions that are centered on their personal needs. It is for this reason that Jewel does his work at night and does not confide in any of his family members about his plans. Consequently, when Jewel becomes sleep-deprived, he cannot make up for lost sleep by resting or relaxing during his already busy day. Sleeping during the day would arouse Anse's unsympathetic suspicion, possibly resulting in Anse's discovery of Jewel's secret actions and his refusal to allow Jewel to get his horse.

Anse reacts with anger to Jewel's changed behavior and appearance while Jewel is working at nights to buy the horse. Anse sees only that Jewel is unable to work as efficiently as he had before. Anse sees Jewel's lack of productivity as a result of laziness, saying, "He's just lazy, trying me . . . With that whole bottom piece to be busted out . . . If you ain't sick, what's the matter with you?" (Faulkner 122). Anse does not have concern for the health of his child, he is simply angry that Jewel is not being as productive as usual. He continues to unsympathetically wake Jewel up for his chores each morning. Anse ignores that something is wrong with his son's health, even though as Darl says, "But [Jewel] wasn't all right. Anybody could see it. He was losing flesh " (Faulkner 123). Jewel obviously is suffering from more than laziness but Anse won't spend money on a doctor to determine why his son is losing weight and continually falling asleep. Nor will Anse allow Jewel to rest and recuperate from his mystery illness. Darl narrates, "Ma wanted to get the doctor, but pa didn't want to spend the money without it was needful, and Jewel did seem all right except for his thinness and his way of dropping off to sleep at any moment. He ate hearty enough except for his way of going to sleep in his plate, with a piece of bread halfway to his mouth and his jaws still chewing" (Faulkner 123). Anse's reaction confirms that he does not care for the welfare of his child as much as his productivity. If Anse cared about Jewel, he would not continue to wake him up every morning to do his chores when something is clearly physically wrong with him.

Anse attempts to make his children more productive on the farm by isolating them from the influences and the temptations of the outside world and civilization. Anse reasons that if his children only have minimal contact with the town and with other people, they will not be tempted to leave the Bundren farm to pursue jobs and families in the city or surrounding areas. For this reason, Anse builds his farm on a tall hill, which is difficult to climb and far from neighboring towns. Consider how difficult it is for Doctor Peabody to get to the Bundren farm when he is requested to check up on Addie

who is on her death bed. Peabody says, “Me, walk up [the hill to the Bundren house], weighing two hundred and twenty five pounds?” Then he thinks, “Even with the horse it would take me fifteen minutes to ride up across the pasture to the top of the ridge and reach the house. The path looks like a crooked limb blown against the bluff. Anse has not been in town in twelve years” (Faulkner 41). Peabody complains about the difficulty of getting to the Bundren’s house. He also reveals the fact that Anse has not been to town for twelve years. This information reveals how much Anse desires for himself and his family to remain isolated from the outside world.

In one of his chapters, Anse discusses his anger towards roads because he feels that folks are not meant to be “always a-moving and going somewhere else” (Faulkner 35). Anse feels that he and his family should simply stay on their farm, without being drawn away from it or interacting with other people. He irrationally accuses the road of being responsible for Cash’s desire to become a carpenter, for himself having to pay taxes, and for Darl going to war. He thinks, “Putting [the road] where every bad luck prowling can find it and come straight to my door, charging me taxes on top of it. Making me pay for Cash having to get them carpenter notions when if it hadn’t been no road come there, he wouldn’t a got them . . . And Darl too. Talking me out of him, durn them” (Faulkner 35). Anse condemns the road for allowing his children to have interaction with the outside world which can tempt them away from his farm. Without the road, he suggests, Cash would not have wanted to become a carpenter. He would not have known that this occupation existed and he would not have been able to leave the farm for education. Without the road, Anse argues, Cash would not have been drawn off the farm to do carpentry work on other people’s houses and barns. Anse also points out that Darl would not have had to go to war if there wasn’t a road. The road enabled contact with recruiters, knowledge of a draft, and awareness of the world conflict, which all helped to tempt Darl away from the Bundren farm to the war. Both of these situations resulted in his children being less productive on the farm, a source of

concern and discomfort to Anse and his selfish priorities. Anse likewise condemns the road for allowing civilization to find him and for making him pay taxes, a financial burden for those people who are part of an organized society. Anse would prefer living without the road and essentially without contact with other people. Anse's isolation from society is clearly self-promoted and not simply a symptom of poverty.

Although the majority of the time the Bundren children accept the lot Anse has set out for them, to work and to provide for their family, they attempt to rebel and escape from Anse in subtle ways which do not greatly inhibit the family's survival. For example, Cash chooses carpentry as a livelihood. This is a rebellion against Anse because carpentry is not connected solely with farming the Bundren land and cotton picking. Cash's occupation allows him to work on farms or buildings in the neighboring area. Anse not only criticizes Cash's choice to become a carpenter because it prevents Cash from spending all of his time and energy on the family farm, but also resents that it was necessary to give Cash money to learn the trade of carpentry because Anse would otherwise have had the money for himself: "Making me pay for Cash having to get them carpenter notions when if it hadn't been no road come there, he wouldn't a got them; falling off of churches and lifting no hand in six months and me and Addie slaving and a-slaving, when there's plenty of sawing on this place he could do if he's got to saw" (Faulkner 35). In this passage recall that Anse irrationally blames the road for being the reason that Cash decides to become a carpenter. He then refers to the fact that Cash falls off a church that he was doing work on, breaking his leg in the process. Anse's statement that he and Addie had to slave away while Cash's leg was broken is a lie because we know Anse does not do any physical labor. More likely, the burden fell on Addie and the other children. Yet Anse distorts events to make himself appear like a victim. In this case, both the road and Cash are accused of victimizing Anse. Anse does not consider the needs of society or his family to be important compared to his own. What is most enjoyable or satisfying for his son is irrelevant. Even Cash's *name*

suggests that Anse is only concerned with how financially advantageous his children are to him.

As the name of Cash suggests, Anse is extremely materialistic and goes so far as to allow himself to feel validated by his possessions at the expense of acting with kindness or morality. He is the most obsessed with money and possessions of all the Bundrens and also the least willing to work for anything he has. He exploits the charity of his neighbors and the sweat of his children to keep his farm going and his family fed, not hesitating to use dishonest and corrupt methods of acquiring possessions. To get his false teeth, Anse forcibly takes money from Dewey Dell, ignoring her protests that the money isn't hers to give to him. In fact, the money Anse takes from Dewey Dell was given to her by her boyfriend to get an abortion with in Jefferson. Without the money, Dewey Dell's pregnancy will soon be discovered, causing her to be shamed and ostracized by her extremely religious and judgmental Southern neighbors. Anse also steals money from Cash that he was trying to save to buy a "graphophone." Anse stoops so low as to secretly trade Jewel's horse for a new team after the Bundren's team is lost. Anse tries to justify taking Cash's money and trading Jewel's horse by saying:

"For fifteen years I aint had a tooth in my head. God knows it. He knows in fifteen years I ain't et the victuals He aimed for man to eat to keep his strength up, and me saving a nickel here and a nickel there so my family wouldn't suffer it, to buy them teeth so I could eat God's appointed food, I give that money [to buy the new team]. I thought that if I could do without eating, my son's could do without riding." (Faulkner 182)

Anse's justification may appear to make sense. He asserts that the whole family must make sacrifices and give up some of their desires for the sake of the family. Yet, as we find out, Anse *does* get his teeth when the family arrives in Jefferson. He also gets a shave, a haircut, and a new wife. Anse's statement that the family all must sacrifice is inaccurate. He really means that everyone must sacrifice, except for himself.

When Anse returns from buying his new teeth, his whole appearance is different. Cash observes: “[Getting the new teeth] made him look a foot taller, kind of holding his head up, hangdog and proud too” (Faulkner 249). Despite the fact that Anse has had to steal and lie to get them, the new teeth give him a sense of pride and identity that he did not have before he possessed them. He feels that the possession of the teeth makes him a better man, one who can hold up his head, even though in this same scene Anse is returning to the Bundren wagon with a new wife only hours after his previous wife has been buried. His extreme selfishness allows him to consider his appearance and comfort over the needs of his children, who in Dewey Dell’s case needed money for a more important reason. Literally, Anse cares more about false teeth than about real children.

Faulkner criticizes a society in which material possessions can be valued over human life and relationships. The selfishness of characters like Anse makes them withdraw from each other, each intent on his or her own needs, unwilling to reach out to others to help or nurture them. Faulkner shows that although this trait is negative in any person, it is most detrimental when found in a parental figure. It is, after all, the primary duty of a parent to nurture his or her children emotionally and physically. Yet, with Anse, this responsibility is completely ignored. His children are born essentially to be raised on their own, because as will be discussed, their mother does not take an active role in the emotional development of the majority of her children. The Bundren children are doomed to follow in Anse’s footsteps because they are not introduced to anyone else’s perspectives and values.

Section 2: Addie's Silent Rebellion

Addie's presence as a woman and mother is at the center of Faulkner's novel even after her death. Addie's corpse and coffin are continual physical reminders of her to her family as they journey to Jefferson to bury her, fulfilling the promise Anse made while she was alive. Her corpse, despite rotting and stinking, appears to the family so alive that it is capable of movement and action, at one point seeming to carry Jewel from the flames of a burning barn: "Without stopping [the coffin] 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 down and flings him forward and clear" (Faulkner 212). At other times Addie seems to speak from inside her coffin. Her youngest son, Vardaman says "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" (204). His use of the word "she" to refer to the coffin clearly shows his belief that Addie is still present and alive, although in a different form. The most striking example of Addie's enduring presence is Faulkner's placement of her chapter, told in her own words, long after her death. Addie is central to the actions of the characters, their motivations, and their emotional connections to the Bundren family. Despite her death early in the novel, she remains at the core of the text and the family it portrays. She has great influence over the actions and attitudes of her children even though she often does not often consciously make an effort to do so. In some of the children's cases, her influence is directly related to the degree to which she abandons them and neglects her parental responsibilities. Addie's influence on the Bundren children, like Anse's, is extremely detrimental to them. She is also possessive, materialistic, and selfish. Addie passes these traits to her children and they come to merge with Anse's traits to produce children with severe dysfunction.

Addie is the reason that her children stay on the Bundren farm despite the fact that they have a father who places more importance on material possessions and finances than on them. After Anse makes the deal to trade Jewel's horse, Jewel is visibly outraged and jumps on his horse and rides away. Armstid, another farmer from the area, narrates [Jewel tore] away on that horse. And that would be the last they would see of him. And I be durn if I could blame him. Not for wanting to not give up his horse, but for getting shut of such a durn fool as Anse....Well, that'll be the last they'll ever see of him now, sho enough. Come Christmas time they'll maybe get a postal card from him in Texas... (Faulkner 183-184).

Armstid suggests that Jewel will react to Anse's inconsiderate decision by leaving his family and going to Texas on his horse. Surely this is option for a young man in Jewel's circumstances. He could leave his family, find a job, and support himself elsewhere without much difficulty. Armstid even thinks this would be the best option for Jewel, who could start a better life for himself away from his father. However, Jewel does not flee to Texas. Instead, he takes his horse to Snopes's barn, the man with whom Anse made the deal to trade the horse, and he leaves the horse inside. He then returns to the Bundren wagon and his father without another word about the horse or the deal. His return, even when leaving would have been justified and possible, indicates that guiding Jewel's motivation is his consuming desire to make sure that Addie's body is properly buried in Jefferson. Jewel can bear the sacrifice of his horse and can endure Anse, for his mother. In fact, Jewel and Cash's connection to the family's welfare stems almost entirely from their strong emotional connection to Addie.

The relationships that Addie forms with her children are quite complex, unlike Anse's complete lack of emotional attachment to his children. Addie forms extremely intimate relationships with some of her children, while virtually emotionally abandoning others. On one hand Addie is capable of showing extreme support and love for Jewel and Cash, on the other, she can assert coldly that she is giving Darl, Dewey Dell, and Vardaman to her husband because she did not ask to have them and did not want them (Faulkner 166). The most intimate relationship Addie has is with Jewel. During Jewel's "spell of

sleeping,” Addie tries to help him keep his energy up by fixing him special things to eat and hiding them for him to find. She also tells Dewey Dell to do the milking, one of Jewel’s many chores, to lessen his work load. Her affection for Jewel is not dependent on his usefulness to the farm or on the amount of money he contributes to the family. However, there is more to Addie’s affection for Jewel than simple motherly concern. Jewel is, as his name denotes, Addie’s prized child. The reader eventually learns that Jewel is the product of an adulterous affair between Addie and the preacher, Reverend Whitfield, which Addie believed to be a loving, although sinful, relationship. This fact will become crucial in understanding her love for Jewel. Addie’s reaction to Jewel’s sickness illustrates the depth of her emotional attachment. In fact, as Darl reveals, it is the way that Addie treats Jewel during this period which first gives Darl insight into

Jewel’s illegitimacy:

I found ma sitting beside [Jewel’s] 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 him because she had to. And then I knew what I knew. I knew that as plain on that day as I knew about [Dewey Dell’s pregnancy] on that day (Faulkner 129).

The depth of emotion that Addie expresses over Jewel’s sickness illustrates to Darl how much she loves Jewel. Darl also knows that this depth of emotion is not characteristic of what she feels for her other children. What she feels for Jewel is special and somehow secret, somehow shameful to Addie. Putting these clues together, Darl deduces that Jewel is not Anse’s son. Darl also alludes to a hatred that Addie feels for Jewel: “And I knew that she was hating herself for that deceit and hating Jewel because she had to love him so that she had to act the deceit” (Faulkner 123). Addie’s hatred is a result of her anger at herself for sinning and for loving the object of her transgression. Her legal and moral connection to her husband prevents her from openly expressing her sinful love for her illegitimate child and she unreasonably blames Jewel for her own weaknesses. Addie’s love-hate relationship with Jewel is distinct among her relationships with her other children. Darl narrates, “[Jewel] 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 always peakling around the house more. That's why she named him Jewel I told them " (Faulkner 17). Darl alludes to the fact that Jewel is taller than the other Bundrens, doubtless because he has a different father. Darl further reasons that his mother forms a different relationship with Jewel *because of this* difference. His illegitimacy is what makes Jewel her prized child, it is what makes Jewel appear differently than the other children, and it is why Addie loves him more than the other children and expresses herself differently with him. Jewel grows up unable to understand fully his mother's alternating love and hatred for him, unaware of his illegitimacy. He comes to be unable to express love without alternating it with anger or physical harm, as Addie has done to him.

Addie's relationships with her children can partly be explained by the dysfunctional relationship that she had with her own parents. When Anse asks if she has any relatives that he can talk to about marrying her. She responds, "'They might listen, but they'll be hard to talk to . . . They're in the cemetery'." When Anse asks if she has any living kin who could listen to his request for her hand in marriage, she adds, "'I never had any other kind [but dead]'" (Faulkner 163). Yet, clearly, Addie's family has not always been in the cemetery because she repeatedly refers to a comment made to her by her father: "I could just remember how my father used to say that the reason for living [is] to get ready to stay dead a long time" (Faulkner 161). Her father's dismal statement about life refers to his belief that life is suffering, with no other purpose but preparing one for death. Alluding to the Christian notion that one's position in heaven is determined by one's actions on earth, her father's statement implies that joy, love, and life are not the goals of living. Life exists as a preparation for death, not something to be experienced and enjoyed. Addie's assertion that she never had any living kin implies that even while her parents existed on earth, they were not *living*. Her father never deeply experienced or appreciated those things that make life beautiful, such as love,

family relationships, or relaxing, because he was intent on getting past life to death.

Addie comes to believe that her solitude and alienation from the people around her indicates that her father's statement is true. Relationships ought to make life worth living, and make one feel attached to life. Without loving and meaningful relationships, one would naturally be more prepared to give up life and be more desirous of death.

While she is a school teacher, before marrying Anse, Addie watches the children in her

classes, aware that they are alienated from her by their own respective lives:
And when I would have to look at [my students] day after day, each with his or her secret and selfish thought, and blood strange to each other blood and strange to mine, and think that this seemed to be the only way I could get ready to stay dead, I would hate my father for having ever planted me (Faulkner 161-162).

The only way that Addie can get ready to "stay dead" is to acknowledge the lack of connection between herself and those people around her. In particular, Addie feels that she must distance herself from her father in preparation for death. To acknowledge and accept isolation is to prepare oneself for death so Addie distances herself from her father, a person with whom a child is naturally supposed to bond. Death is the epitome of loneliness; each corpse lying in its own grave, separated from the bodies around it, unable to communicate or connect. Forging connections with people is, in contrast, a way of denying death, of becoming eternal by living inside of others. Knowing this, or believing this to be true, Addie tries to rebel against her father's statement. She attempts to disprove her father's statement, using physical pain and sexuality to feel alive. Thus,

Addie beats her students, paradoxically, to achieve intimacy with them:
I would look forward to the times they faulted, so I could whip them. When the switch fell I could feel it upon my flesh; when it welted and ridged it was my blood that ran, and I would think with each blow of the switch: Now you are aware of me! Now I am something in your secret and selfish life, who have marked your blood with my own for ever and ever (Faulkner 162).

Addie whips the children so that she feels she has physically forced her way into their selfish lives. She feels alive by forcing her way "inside" the children through their pain and through her experiencing of their pain. They become aware of her, prohibiting

them from being conscious only of themselves, and in turn, Addie becomes aware of them, prohibiting her from being conscious only of herself. The blood that flows from the children is the obvious indication that they are alive. By making their blood flow, Addie feels that she is reaffirming and reminding them of the life inside of them. She is also reaffirming her "aliveness" by acting upon them and by feeling the pain and movement of her own body. Addie challenges the notion that she must prepare for death and accept it.

Yet, Addie is conscious of her aloneness when her body is tormented by unfulfilled sexual longing. Consequently she imagines sexual relationships as another way of combating her father's statement by developing a connection with another individual. Addie describes how she could hardly sleep at night during the springtime, alone and overwhelmed by sexual longing. She admits that each spring day when she was a teacher, she could barely wait till the last child would leave so that she could go down to the secluded stream to try to give herself some relief:

In the early spring it was the worst. Sometimes I thought that I could not bear it, lying in bed at night, with the wild geese going north and their honking coming faint and high and wild out of the darkness, and during the day it would seem as though I couldn't wait for the last one to go so I could go down to the spring. And so when I looked up that day and saw Anse standing there in his Sunday clothes . . . (Faulkner 162).

When she is alone in bed at night, she can hardly bear her physical torment. Without a man, however, there cannot be full relief for Addie even if she attempts to calm her sexual cravings on her own. She begins to hope that her longing can be pacified if she can find a man with whom to have sexual relations because the sexual act requires two individuals to consummate. Part of Addie's sexual torment is the knowledge that physical longing is another form of loneliness and suffering and therefore an indication that her father's statement is true. Her narrative about her sexual desire blends into a description of how and why she and Anse get married. Her sexual longing plays a large part in why she decides to take Anse as her husband. In the same way that Addie feels

alive by whipping her school children, she hopes that she will feel alive by marrying Anse and having sexual relations with him.

Addie quickly realizes that her relationship with Anse is not capable of violating her aloneness, however. This is largely due to the fact that Anse and Addie do not love each other. They were brought together by sexual longing, not through emotional ties. Therefore, in marriage the sexual act remains virtually the same as masturbation, with both Addie and Anse trying to satisfy their own longing rather than engaging in reciprocity and true intimacy. Addie asserts that her aloneness was never violated, “not even by Anse in the nights” (Faulkner 164). Sexual relations with Anse are not capable of combating Addie’s loneliness. Without love, her marriage seems unreal. Despite the fact that Anse may say that he loves her, she knows that their relationship is superficial and void of true intimacy: “He has a word, too. Love he called it. But I had been used to words a long time. I knew that that word was like the others: just a shape to fill a lack; that when the right time came, you wouldn’t need a word for that anymore than for pride or fear” (164). Addie’s statement refers to her belief that words are incapable of fully describing emotional concepts. In fact, Addie describes language as one means of creating isolation and separation between individuals. Words allow people like Anse to say things such as “I love you” without having to know what love really is and without really feeling love. Addie believes that between two people who have true intimacy words are inadequate as descriptors and, as a result of their deficiency, are abandoned. This reinforces Addie’s belief that the physical realm is the only way through which one’s aloneness can be violated: “[Anse and I] had had to use one another by words like spiders dangling by their mouths from a beam, swinging and twisting and never touching, and that only through the blows of the switch could my blood and their blood flow as one stream” (Faulkner 164). Words are isolated from their true meaning, becoming twisted and tangled by misunderstanding and circumstances; only deeds ensure connection and understanding. Addie’s relationship

with Anse is based on words and therefore they can never violate each other's aloneness, they will never be completely intimate. Actions, on the other hand, Addie feels cannot be misinterpreted. Addie feels that after two people have abandoned words, they can return to the purity of the physical realm where they do not have to speak and they can experience complete honesty and connection. She feels that she has this ability with Cash because of the connection that they form as mother and child in her womb. When Addie has Cash, she asserts that it is the first time that her aloneness has ever really been violated because it is a physical connection and intimacy that she had never felt before: "And when I knew that I had Cash, I knew that living was terrible and that this was the answer to it . . . I knew that it had been, not that my aloneness had to be violated over and over each day, but that it had never been violated until Cash came" (Faulkner 163-164). Opposed to whipping her students when she may have temporarily felt connected to them, Cash's life and growth literally depends on his connection to Addie. She narrates: "Cash did not need to say it [love] to me nor I to him, and I would say, Let Anse use [the word love], if he wants to. So that it was Anse or love; love or Anse: it didn't matter" (Faulkner 164). Addie describes that Cash and she do not need to say that they love each other because they know they do.

But when Addie discovers that Anse is a man who uses words but never acts, she comes to distrust and hate him. Anse, as we have seen, never does anything, yet he always finds words to justify himself with. He can say that he loved Addie and that he is taking her body to Jefferson out of his respect for her and his promise, but his actions reveal otherwise. He does not grieve over her and he quickly replaces her with a new wife the moment that she is buried. He can tell his children that they need to sacrifice and work, and then he can do neither. Addie realizes that Anse's words are deceitful and that her relationship with him is based on falseness. Anse, on the other hand, says he loves Addie because he does not really feel it. She asserts that it does not matter if Anse uses the words because she knows that the words do not mean anything. She just

ignores Anse and Anse's words. In fact, she goes so far as to assert that Anse is dead to her. In the same way that she suggests that her parents never lived, she suggests that Anse is not alive because of his reliance on words: "He did not know that he was dead, then" (Faulkner 165). At least in Addie's mind Anse is dead and although she continues to be his wife and to fulfill her duties, she feels no more attachment to him. This revelation occurs after Addie finds that she is pregnant with her second son, Darl: "Then I believed that I would kill Anse. It was as though he had tricked me, hidden within a word like within a paper screen and struck me in the back through it. But then I realized that I had been tricked by words older than Anse or love, and that the same word had tricked Anse too" (Faulkner 164). She feels tricked by Anse because she is carrying his child, and working to fulfill the duties of a wife for him, when there is no love between them. Love, after all, should be the foundation of family relationships. Yet, Addie also admits that she has not simply been tricked by Anse. She and Anse have both been tricked by a society which has rules for how husbands and wives should act and what their obligations are in marriage. Religious notions of familial duties and obligation cannot explain what love is and they cannot tell people how to connect intimately. When Addie realizes she has Darl she feels hurt that she can be tricked into having a child because societal conventions say she should.

Addie feels anger at Anse and society that she can be forced by duty and deceptive words into a position of such closeness and intimacy as pregnancy. The intimacy with Darl is violating to her aloneness in a way that is horrifying to her, rather than beautiful. For this reason, Addie begins to accept her father's statement as true, living is horrible. She also comes to two more conclusions, first, that even though her father was right, he could not have known he was right because he was a male. He never had to experience being forced into having children and being forced into loving them. Second, she also concludes that she will get revenge on Anse by having him take her to Jefferson to be buried: "My revenge would be that he would never know I was taking revenge. And

when Darl was born I asked Anse to promise to take me to Jefferson, when I died, because I knew that father had been right, even when he couldn't have known he was right anymore than I could have known I was wrong" (Faulkner 165). Anse will never know that Addie is taking revenge on him because Addie will never tell him, making the revenge more real to Addie because of the lack of words. Addie wants to make Anse suffer physically through the hard work of taking her rotting corpse for forty miles. This is the only way that Addie thinks she can get revenge because she knows that there are no words to express what she is feeling. Her revenge on Anse stems from her anger at him but she also knows that she cannot get revenge on him until after she is dead. She does not want to break her alliance with her family through divorce because of the connection that she has formed with her son, Cash, and because of the scandal it would cause. Her only option for true revenge is to have it occur after she is dead and to occur without words.

Addie's extramarital affair with Reverend Whitfield gives her what she believes to be the type of intimate relationship she desired when she first decided to marry Anse: "I believed that I had found [the reason for living]. I believed that the reason was the duty to the alive" (Faulkner 166). She again thinks that she has found the proof that her father's statement is not correct. Addie's belief that her affair with Whitfield is the answer is largely influenced by the fact that the affair is so sinful. Not only is it sinful because she is married, but it is sinful because Whitfield is affiliated with the church. His position as a Reverend makes his actions more deplorable, more unspeakable, because he should be a man of integrity and morality. She says, "The sin [was] the more utter and terrible since he was the instrument ordained by God who had created the sin, to sanctify that sin He had created" (Faulkner 166). It is for the very reason that the affair must not be spoken about and discussed openly, that Addie comes to value it so highly. The affair is completely rooted in the material and the physical realm. Whereas Anse defiled their marriage by his use of abstract terms such as love without

really meaning them, her affair with Whitfield is judged impure from the onset by societal notions of propriety. The lovers made their affair pure by basing their actions solely on their desires and emotions and not on the fact that society deemed their actions appropriate. There were no rules to follow, no obligations, and no need to use words. When Whitfield terminates the affair, Addie acknowledges that she will not “see [Whitfield] coming swift and secret to [her] in the woods” any longer, but she says that to her, the affair is not over “in the sense of beginning and ending” (Faulkner 167). Since she has let Whitfield’s presence get inside of her both emotionally and literally (in the form of Jewel), their affair can never be over for her because it is a part of her. She has found the form of intimacy that she desired to find when she whipped the school children, a type of intimacy that is permanent. Of course Addie would not have believed she found love with Whitfield if she said it out rightly due to her distrust in words but it is clear from her description of the affair that she does indeed love him. This fact becomes crucial in her relationship to her son, Jewel, the product of the affair. Addie says that it is after this affair and after Jewel’s birth that she finally knows what her father meant about getting ready to stay dead. Getting ready to stay dead, she suggests, is a process of finding peace and of making amends for the things one has done in one’s life. As Addie calmly sits nursing Jewel, she knows that her sexual longings are finally pacified and that she is finally at peace. In Addie’s words, “the blood [boils] away.” The fury and longing of previous years dissipates into calmness and her bond with Jewel promises to give Addie peace. After Jewel’s birth Addie is

ready to “clean house” and make amends for her past actions:
 My father said that the reason for living is getting ready to stay dead. I knew at last what he meant himself because a man cannot know anything about cleaning up the house afterward. And so I have cleaned my house. With Jewel- I lay by the lamp, holding up my own head, watching him cap and suture it before he breathed- the wild blood boiled away and the sound of it ceased. There lay only the milk, warm and calm, and I lying calm in the slow silence, getting ready to clean my house (Faulkner 168).

Part of cleaning house involves repaying her debts to Anse and her other children by sorting out her relationships to them. She feels that she must pay Anse back because she does not want to feel that she owes him, or anyone else, anything. She thinks, “I gave Anse Dewey Dell to negative Jewel. Then I gave him Vardaman to replace the child I had robbed him of. And now he has three children that are his and not mine” (Faulkner 168). Addie alludes to her belief that she “robbed” Anse of a child because she claimed Cash as her own. She formed a bond with Cash in childbirth from which she excluded Anse therefore taking Cash from him. Jewel’s birth was also a robbery because Anse was not his father. Believing herself to have an obligation to make reparations for her “thievery,” Addie decides that her only option is to give Anse children in return. She mentally gives Anse Dewey Dell to make up for having Jewel, in essence wiping the slate clean. Then she gives Vardaman to Anse to repay him for taking Cash as her very own. From Addie’s equation, we can logically deduce the identities of the children she has chosen to love and to accept as her own as Cash and Jewel. Yet, Addie concludes with the statement that Anse has *three* children that are his, not hers. The third child she gives to Anse is Darl. She tacks him onto her payment to Anse in part to assure that she has paid her debt and also because she feels no connection to her second born child whom she believes she was tricked into having. It is important to note that Addie’s division of her children and her vocabulary is rooted in materialism. She discusses her children as if they can be stolen or given away. Additionally, her assertion that one child can “negate” another child is more appropriate for someone balancing a checkbook than for someone reflecting on relationships with her children. Addie’s choice of financial and materialistic language shows that she forms emotional ties with her children based on notions of value shaped by her poverty and her obsession with the physical realm. To the children Addie takes as her own, Addie gives her coveted affection. Yet, she also understands the necessity of giving her husband his rightful share of offspring, the duty she has to him as a wife. By

giving certain children back to him, she tries to make them his responsibility to love and care for. Unfortunately for Darl, Dewey Dell, and Vardaman, Anse does not accept the three children who are given to him, essentially making them orphans.

In the same way that Addie's relationships with her husband and her children are shaped by her relationship to her parents, in particular her father, Addie greatly influences her children's' perceptions about love and the way they express their emotions. Addie passes her dysfunction to her children and coupled with Anse's and selfishness, they also develop materialistic, possessive, and selfish qualities. Jewel expresses emotional connection in a similarly physical manner, alternating between gentleness and anger. Cash develops an understanding of emotions and interpersonal relationships based on materialism. Darl becomes extremely possessive. Addie's children each have evidence of being profoundly effected by Addie, modeling themselves after her and developing relationships in similar ways as her.

Section 3: Cash's Materialistic Mind

Cash, the oldest Bundren child, is shaped by Anse and Addie's materialistic natures, and thus places extreme importance on material possessions. Yet, Cash's materialism is unique from the materialism of either of his parents. His materialism influences his relationships and thought processes in ways distinct to him. Faulkner shows that the children are bound to express the characteristics of their parents while at the same time evolving the characteristics and expressing them in particular, unique ways.

Cash's materialism is illustrated when the Bundren's wagon overturns while they are trying to cross a flooded river and his carpenter tools are thrown into the water. Cash is unable to retrieve his tools because his leg has been broken and he has swallowed a great deal of water. However, the other children immediately sense the necessity of retrieving Cash's tools. As they retrieve one after another of the tools, they hold them up for Cash to see, lining them up like offerings beside where he lies on the ground, unable to move. Darl narrates, "Cash has not moved. We stand above him, holding the plane, the saw, the hammer, the square, the rule, and the chalk-line, while Dewey Dell squats and lifts up his head. 'Cash,' she says; 'Cash'" (Faulkner 155). Dewey Dell tries to comfort Cash by helping him see the tools that have been retrieved, knowing that the pain of losing his prized possessions is as great or greater than his physical pain. Cash's tools, the symbols and the instruments of his identity as a carpenter, define him and give his life individual meaning. Later, as the family asks Cash about his injuries, such as where the horse kicked him, Cash attempts a response. Cash does not reveal where he was injured, though. He asks about his tools and Dewey Dell again lifts his head so that he may see them (172-173). Cash's primary concern is for the safety of his tools, without which he would be unsure of himself and his place in society as a carpenter.

Cash not only has an extreme attachment to the few possessions he owns, he also has a desire to acquire more material possessions. In a world where inventions designed for entertainment and leisure are becoming more common in American households, Cash and the other Bundrens, who cannot afford even the bare necessities, are ravaged by longing for material possessions. The Bundrens are also ravaged by emotional longing, yet they all, except Darl, seem unaware of this more insidious deficiency. Material possessions, like radios and record players begin to represent the happiness and security the Bundrens do not have in their lives because of poverty and emotional deprivation. Cash is mesmerized when he hears the sound of a “graphophone” playing

inside a house:

I reckon I wouldn't never get no work done a-tall for listening to it. I dont know if a little music aint about the nicest thing a fellow can have. Seems like when he comes in tired of a night, it aint nothing could rest him like having a little music played and him resting. I have see them that shuts up like a hand-grip, with a handle and all, so a fellow can carry it with him wherever he wants (Faulkner 248).

When Cash considers having a graphophone, he talks of how it would calm him after a hard day of manual work, but ironically it is those people like Cash, for whom the device would be such a comfort, that it is too much of a luxury to own. Even when Cash considers a device of leisure, he must associate it with work, a guiding factor in his life. He does not contemplate the possibility of working less, in fact he feels this would the problem with owning a graphophone, he would not be as productive if he were listening to beautiful music all of the time. Cash is unable to comprehend that there are things missing in his life besides the occasional unfulfilled desire for a material object. He does not suggest that having close emotional connections with his parents would be nice, for example. Instead of wishing that his life were different, he accepts his lot and wishes for a material possession to make things more bearable.

Cash prioritizes the importance of the material world, as is illustrated in his distress over the possibility of loosing his tools. His preoccupation with material objects and money is not simply evident in his actions, however. Materialism comes to shapes the way

Cash acts, thinks, and forms relationships with others. His thought processes are largely influenced by his preoccupation with the material world. In Cash's chapters, his vocabulary and the very structure of his internal narrative is rooted in materialism. In essence, materialism influences not only *what* Cash thinks about, but *how* he thinks as well. In the first chapter he narrates, Cash describes the beveling process by which he made Addie's coffin and why he chooses this technique. Immediately, however, the reader realizes that something is unusual about Cash's narrative. Each statement Cash makes is numbered. His thoughts are essentially structured like a shopping list. The format of Cash's internal narrative stresses the obsessively ordered and linear way his mind works. His stream of consciousness is organized and labeled instead of free flowing and disorganized. Consider the first four lines of Cash's narrative:

I made it on a bevel.

1. There is more surface for the nails to grip.
2. There is twice the gripping-surface to each seam.
3. The water will have to seep into it on a slant. Water moves easiest up and down or straight across.(Faulkner 77).

His narrative begins with the assertion that he has made "it," the coffin, on a bevel.

Cash does not use the word coffin and does not mention his mother or her illness, illustrating his extreme avoidance of the emotional aspects of the job at hand.

Following this simple statement are thirteen reasons why he has made the coffin on a bevel. The first few reasons initially appear to make logical sense and naturally progress from Cash's first assertion. The statements deal with the physical form, design, and shape of the coffin and why the beveling process should be used. For example, reason number 3 is important in the design of a coffin because the corpse will not rot as quickly and will stay better preserved if less moisture is allowed to enter. Cash takes into consideration the gruesome facts about the decaying of a corpse as if he is talking about the weather, not the loss of his mother. Yet, he is nervous about his mother's physical body changing and rotting, wanting to slow the decomposition process, clinging to her material form because he cannot deal with his emotional

connection. Thus he forms his internal monologue in a linear and organized manner that is more appropriate for listing objects than for thinking about the death of one's mother and building her coffin. Objects can be stacked and measured, but feelings cannot be grasped and manipulated physically. Cash's thought processes deny in their very structure the reality that Cash is dealing with the abstract and emotional issue of his mother's death. Cash uses materialism as a strategy of evasion.

As one reads further down Cash's list, it becomes even more apparent that he is hopelessly ill-equipped to deal the death of his mother. Cash's reason number seven is, "7. A body is not square like a crosstie." (Faulkner 77). Cash's assertion is true. However, it has little relevance to the issue of beveling the corners of the coffin. Its inclusion indicates that Cash is attempting to deal with the presence of his mother's body but that he cannot make the leap to using appropriate terminology for what he is discussing (corpse, mother, Addie). He resorts to a discussion of the shape of the body as a means of dealing with its presence in the narrative. Even so, he cannot even make a positive statement about the body (for example, the body is five feet and two inches). He can say what the body *isn't* but not what the body *is*, his mother. The simplicity of Cash's assertion fails to account for the complexity of emotions that must be connected with the events. Any and all acknowledgment of emotional responses, his mother, or her death are missing from a narrative firmly planted in the material realm of angles, boards, and shape. For Cash, materialism becomes a means of understanding and explaining the events that occur in his life. Materialism gives him an alternate way of explaining the world when his emotional responses are too painful or incomprehensible to deal with.

Yet, in the same way that Cash is unable to fully avoid mentioning Addie's body in his description of the events, he is unable fully to avoid acknowledging that there are more than purely materialistic reasons for the care he puts into the coffin's design. This less tangible reason for the special attention he pays to the structural details of the coffin is

that he loves his mother. But when Cash tries to express this feeling, he can only speak of, “8. Animal magnetism” (Faulkner 78). Obviously, this statement at first appears inappropriate for a description of why Cash would bevel the corners of his mother’s coffin because the statement does not deal with dimensions and structure. Neither is the statement an outright assertion that Cash loves his mother. The concept of animal, or sexual, attraction has little to do with the design of a coffin or the love between Cash and his mother. Cash’s introduction of the term animal magnetism is, however, an attempt to introduce the larger concept of love, which he is unable to comprehend because of its formlessness and irrationality. His use of the term “animal magnetism” points to his belief that love is somehow a magnetic or physical attraction between two people. His materialistic mind has heard the term animal magnetism and interprets it literally as a description of the material process that brings bodies together. He then takes the thought one step further to say that this magnetism must be the same thing that he feels for his mother because he feels a connection with her. Adding animal magnetism to his list is Cash’s stunted way of admitting that there is another reason he is taking the time and care to bevel the corners of his mother’s coffin. In the next line, Cash tries to incorporate the term animal magnetism into his discussion of the form of the coffin. He narrates, “9. The animal magnetism of a dead body makes the stress come slanting, so the seams and joints of a coffin are made on the bevel” (Faulkner 78). This attempt at recombining the concept of animal magnetism into his more material reasons clearly makes no logical sense. Bodies do not actually have magnetic properties that make the stress on a coffin “come slanting.” Although for Cash to deal with the presence of the term he must incorporate it into his materialistic discussion thereby convincing himself that animal magnetism interacts with the material world and is a legitimate addition to his list. Cash is unaware, or refuses to acknowledge, that the concept of animal magnetism is inappropriate and inadequate as a reason for beveling the corners of the coffin or that

its presence in his thoughts is an indication that his mother's death provokes emotional responses he is unable to deal with.

Cash chooses materialism as a means of trying to show his affection for his mother because he is more comfortable with carpentry and the material realm than any other method of expression. Peabody reveals that "Vernon Tull says [Cash] brings each board up to the window for her to see it and say it is all right" (Faulkner 42). When Addie is on her death bed, Cash shows his mother each board he is using for her coffin because this is the only way that he knows how to openly express his love. Material objects come to represent the strength of the bond that he has for his mother, explaining why Cash works meticulously on the coffin till it is perfect. Darl also describes: [Cash] looks up at the gaunt face framed by the window in the twilight. It is a composite picture of all time since he was a child. He drops the saw and lifts the board for her to see, watching the window in which [Addie's] face has not moved. He drags a second plank into position and slants the two of them into their final juxtaposition, gesturing toward the ones yet on the ground, shaping with his empty hand in pantomime the finished box. For a while still she looks down at him with neither censure nor approbation. Then the face disappears (Faulkner 47).

Addie understands that this is Cash's way of expressing his love for her as she watches him work. She does not, like Jewel, interpret Cash's dedication for making the coffin to be a sign that he is excited to see her die. Addie shows no censure seeing Cash's excitement over making the coffin because she knows that his excitement is an indication of his attachment to her. The connection between them, despite that no love is directly expressed, is evident in their mutual examination and appreciation of the planks. Yet, the essential problem with Cash's method of developing relationships is exposed after Darl purposefully burns Gillespie's barn near the end of the novel. Cash grapples with his emotional connection to his brother and with his understanding of the events

that occurred, again using an inadequate materialistic explanation: Of course, it was Jewel's horse was traded to get [Addie's corpse] that nigh to town, and in a sense it was the value of his horse Darl tried to burn up. But I thought more than once before we crossed the river and after, how it would be God's blessing if He did take her outen our hands and get shut of her in some clean way, and it seemed to me that when Jewel worked so to get her outen the

river, he was going against God in a way, and then when Darl seen that it looked like one of us would have to do something, I can almost believe he done right in a way. But I don't reckon nothing excuses setting fire to a man's barn and endangering his stock and destroying his property. That's how I reckon a man is crazy. That's how he can't see eye to eye with other folks (Faulkner 223).

First Cash attempts to explain Darl's motivation for burning Gillespie's barn as an attempt to burn up the "value" of Jewel's horse. This statement is at first problematic. After all, Jewel's horse has already been traded by Anse for a team and the horse is not in the barn to be burned up. Besides, Gillespie was not the man involved in Anse's trade. In order for Darl's actions to be an attempt to burn up the "value" of Jewel's horse, there should be some sort of financial connection between Gillespie, his barn, and Jewel's horse. There isn't. The only things with material value involved in the fire are Gillespie's barn and livestock, and Jewel is able to save the livestock. Addie's coffin, which would not have escaped the flames without Jewel's dramatic rescue, of course does not have any monetary value. Therefore, Cash's assertion that Darl was trying to burn the value of Jewel's horse cannot be directly related to value in a material sense. Cash uses the word "value" in a material sense, as something that can be burned or destroyed, to represent the intangible emotional factors such as Darl's motivations. Although Cash is *almost* able understand the complexity of Darl's motivations as he discusses God and the necessity of getting rid of Addie's body in a clean way, he characteristically resorts in the end to a more materialistic conclusion. Even though he can "almost believe [Darl] done right in a way," Cash concludes abruptly that actually, regardless of Darl's motivations "nothing excuses setting fire to a man's barn and endangering his stock and destroying his property." At the moment that Cash is the closest to breaking through his blocks of understanding, he returns to his ingrained and extremely limited way of perceiving reality. Fear and insecurity over the prospect of having to deal with emotional concepts, which he is thoroughly unprepared to reckon with, make him back away from them the moment he is closest to understanding them. Ultimately, Cash concludes, the material realm is what matters most. He thereby denies

his love for his brother; betraying Darl for a barn. Cash reasons that men like Darl who cannot understand the importance of the material realm must be crazy because they cannot see eye to eye with the majority of people whom Cash believes accept this notion of material value.

Cash's denial of Darl for a barn is the ultimate example of the perversion of Cash's prioritization of the material over the emotional realm and the degree to which he has been affected by the dysfunction of his parents. The image of Darl being dragged away from his family and then, the image of the Bundrens sitting around the house in winter listening to their record player, are the images that Faulkner leaves the reader with, at the end of *As I lay Dying*. These bleak images, of the family enjoying material comforts untroubled by the injustice that they have done to their own flesh and blood, are what Faulkner leaves the reader to absorb. The image suggests the most extreme consequence of materialism.

Section 4: Jewel; The Treasured Child

As Addie's illegitimate and favored son, Jewel holds an unusual position in the Bundren family. He is the recipient of the love the other children strive desperately to obtain from their mother. Therefore, he is also the object of their hatred and is alienated from them. Unable to comprehend why he is treated differently from his siblings because he does not know about his mother's affair with Whitfield, Jewel is riddled with confusion and anger, along with love, towards Addie. On one hand, Jewel loves Addie; on the other, he hates her for setting him apart from his siblings. One thing Addie has given to Jewel that is not evident in the other children and is a direct response to Addie's affection for him, is Jewel's desire for a horse. This desire is so strong that he is willing to let his body be tortured by exhaustion to possess the horse. In part, Jewel's driving desire to possess the horse is, like Cash's choice to become a carpenter, a rebellion against his father and an attempt to define himself outside of his role in the Bundren family through acquiring personal possessions. However, that Jewel chooses a horse as the object of his desire, rather than an inanimate object, such as record player, is significant in understanding Jewel's unique character. The horse is not only a possession, it is a living and breathing animal with which Jewel develops a close emotional bond. Jewel, unlike his siblings, is able to form emotional bonds with living beings because he is the only Bundren who has been shown how to form emotional bonds. He desires a horse so that he can develop a connection with another living being as Addie has done with him. The horse provides a way for him to express the love he has been given in an open and mutual way. Jewel cannot express love with his siblings because he has been set apart by Addie's love for him.

Jewel makes sure that his horse is very well treated, giving it extra feed despite the fact that he has so little money of his own to spare. In fact, Jewel shows more compassion

and affection for his horse than for the people he meets, his neighbors, and even his siblings. With people, except his mother, Jewel is quick to become angry and violent. For example, when Darl is being dragged to the mental institution, Jewel jumps on his own brother and attacks him violently, saying, “Kill him. Kill the son of a bitch” (Faulkner 227). In another scene, Jewel physically attacks a stranger who expresses disgust over the smell of Addie’s corpse as the Bundren’s wagon passes him (Faulkner 219). In Jewel’s chapter, it is clear that his mind is occupied with hatred and violent thoughts towards other people. He imagines himself sitting on a hill with his mother, throwing stones at anyone who tries to come near them: “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 by God until she was quiet and not that goddamn adze going One lick less” (Faulkner 15). He desires to have his mother’s complete and undivided attention and affection. He sees anyone, including his siblings, as threats to his relationship with her. They might, he feels, be given some of Addie’s love which he wants solely for himself. He has this destructive fantasy about anyone who attempts to approach Addie, in part because he feels that Addie’s love is finite, a non renewable resource which must be fought for. His anger toward Cash’s

attempts to win some of his mother’s love is typical:
 It’s because he stays out there, right under the window, hammering and sawing on that goddamn box. Where she’s got to see him. Where every breath she draws is full of his knocking and sawing where she can see him saying See. See what a good one I am making for you. I told him to go somewhere else . . . It’s like when he was a little boy and she says if she had some fertilizer she would try to raise some flowers and he taken the bread pan and brought it back from the barn full of dung (Faulkner 14).

Since childhood, Jewel watched as Cash tried to please Addie and gain her affection. In the scene that Jewel describes, Cash is again bringing a physical object, in this case fertilizer, as an offering and symbol of love to his mother. Jewel resents Cash’s attempts at connecting with Addie. He fears that Cash’s attempts to win Addie’s love threaten his connection with her and to his portion of her love. As was revealed in the

section on Addie, Jewel's fears that Addie's love is finite are valid. Addie is not a woman who loves her children equally.

Jewel's understanding that his mother's love is finite leads him to be extremely possessive of her attention and also to view others as threats. Similarly, Jewel exhibits extreme possessiveness over his horse. He wants the bond between his horse and himself to be exclusive in the same way that his love for his mother is. When Jewel brings his horse home for the first time, he says to Anse, "'He wont never eat a mouthful of yours. Not a mouthful. I'll kill him first. Dont you never think of it'" (Faulkner 129). Jewel would rather kill his horse, the object of his affection, than have his horse's care shared or aided by another. Jewel, who likes to give his horse extra feed, an indication of his affection towards his animal, refuses to take free feed from Samson when the Bundrens stop at his house. Jewel says, "'[My horse] aint never been beholden to no man . . . I rather pay you for [the feed]'" (Faulkner 110). Of course, it is not the horse that minds being beholden to another man, it is Jewel who is deeply disturbed by this prospect. His possessiveness over his animal is so extreme that he does not even want it to be connected to another by a grain of feed or a piece of straw.

Jewel's relationship with Addie also causes him to express affection in a very physical, violent manner, mirroring the way Addie whips the school children and forges connections through her body. Darl reveals that Addie also whips her own children, in response to the degree that she loves them:
 [Jewel] 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 always peakling around the house more. That's why she named him Jewel I told them (Faulkner 17).

Addie shows her favoritism through both whipping and petting Jewel more. She alternates her contact with Jewel from the violent whipping and forceful connection she associates with living, to a more natural maternal expression of love; caressing. This

alternating expression of her attachment to Jewel is also the result of the guilt she feels over his legitimacy. Addie expresses her attachment for Jewel in extremely physical ways. Her tears and more emotional outpourings for Jewel are done in private, as when she sobs by Jewel's bedside while he is sleeping. Therefore, Jewel learns to show emotional attachment in similar ways. This is evident in his possessiveness for his

horse and in the way that he treats it. Darl describes their relationship: The horse enters the stall. Jewel following. Without looking back the horse kicks at him, slamming a single hoof into the wall with a pistol-like report. Jewel kicks him in the stomach; the horse arches his neck back. crop-toothed; Jewel strikes him across the face with his fist and slides on to the trough and mounts upon it . . . 'Eat,' he says. "Get the goddamn stuff out of sight while you got a chance, you pussel-gutted bastard. You sweet son of a bitch," he says. (Faulkner 12)

The horse kicks Jewel. Jewel retaliates by kicking the horse. Yet, Jewel also strokes the horse and caresses it. Jewel's role is neither master nor servant, the horse is neither dominant nor submissive. Sometimes Jewel follows his horse or is physically hurt by it, at other times, Jewel initiates physical or verbal aggression towards the horse.

Physical intimacy is clearly part of the way Jewel expresses affection for his horse and how he forms a connection with it. The element of reciprocity and mutuality is also important to the relationship. Darl's use of sexual language reinforces that the bond between Jewel and his horse is extremely physical. The fact that Cash and Darl believed that Jewel was having sexual relations with a woman at nights, when in actuality he was working to buy the horse, shows that the horse satisfies or replaces Jewel's sexual needs. Considering the importance that the Bundren family places on the material realm, the physical contact between Jewel and his horse is particularly important as an indication of their closeness and as a gauge of the importance of Jewel's horse to him. Addie's love for Jewel influences as greatly as her emotional neglect of the other children influences them. The factor of parental love is crucial to the development of children and in Jewel's case, even love can be a source of anguish, confusion, and suffering to him. Even the favored child in the Bundren family is severely

dysfunctional, unable to embody the hope that children can evolve past the problems of their parents.

Section 5: Darl, The Experienced Victim

The Bundrens isolate themselves physically from the outside world by remaining cooped up on their farm, with the exception of Darl who goes to France to fight in World War I. Yet, the fact that Darl served in the war is not revealed to the reader until the last pages of the novel. Until Darl is being dragged to the mental institution, not one of the Bundrens, including Darl, mentions the fact that he left the farm to fight, an event that surely influenced his life greatly. Darl and his family block his war experience from all conversation and even their thoughts, essentially trying to deny that Darl left the farm or had experiences not directly tied to it. However, the text provides clear evidence that Darl's war experience had a profound effect on him and the way other characters relate to him. Darl is continually viewed as a threat, an outsider, different from everyone else. Throughout the novel, many characters describe Darl as having eyes that seem to see through them and they refer to Darl's ability to know intuitively what they are thinking or feeling. When Dewey Dell becomes pregnant out of wedlock, she tells us Darl knows about it intuitively: "and then I saw Darl and he knew. He said he knew without the words like he told me that ma is going to die without words, and I knew he knew. . . And that's why I can talk to him with knowing with hating because he knows" (Faulkner 26). Darl is frequently able to narrate events in detail at which he was not present, such as Addie's death. He also knows things which the other characters do not, like Jewel's illegitimacy. This special ability results in part because Darl pays more attention than those around him. He sees the small signs of pregnancy in Dewey Dell that the others miss because they are caught up with their own problems and obsessions. When Darl observes that, "[Dewey Dell] sets the basket into the wagon and climbs in, her leg coming long from beneath her tightening dress" (Faulkner 97), he alludes to the physical changes that are occurring in Dewey Dell's body, her breasts

and stomach are enlarging. Later he similarly narrates, “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” (Faulkner 156). To Darl, the changes in his sister are obvious and he thinks that the other men’s eyes must be dead to miss these distinct signs. The men appear blind to Darl, unable to see what he sees so clearly. So, while Darl does seem to have an ability that borders on the supernatural or the psychic, part of his ability is simply that he is more fully aware and alert. Darl appears to have a worldliness that surpasses that of other characters because he exists in a world wherein the others walk around as if their eyes are closed. Darl’s greater experience, travel, and contact with the world outside of the deep South has in essence, opened his eyes. Yet, his experience is also what alienates him from others and in particular, his own family. As Dewey Dell reveals through her statement about “hating [Darl] because he knows,” Darl’s ability to understand her threatens her. His worldliness, his greater perception, violates her. Instead of bringing her closer to Darl, she feels hatred for him because he knows about her pregnancy and her private concerns: “The land runs out of Darl’s eyes; they 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 above the unhurrying mules, above the travail . . . I rose and took the knife from the streaming fish still hissing and I killed Darl” (Faulkner 115). She describes herself as feeling exposed and naked in Darl’s presence. Essentially, his eyes can see parts of her that she wishes to hide, her vulnerabilities and secrets. Dewey Dell describes Darl’s perception in terms that bring up images of rape, so strongly does she feel violated by Darl. For this reason, Dewey Dell imagines herself violently stabbing her brother and killing him. She wishes to destroy him to regain autonomy from him. Her description of the land running out of Darl’s eyes also reaffirms that his war experience plays a role in his increased perception, as if Darl’s eyes are cups that were originally filled with Southern land and experience which blinded him like the other characters. The experiences he gains in the

war do not fill up Darl's already full eyes; they instead enable him to see clearly by dislodging the Southern land and experience that previously filled his vision. In an almost incoherent narrative, Anse suggests that there is a difference between the way Darl's eyes are originally filled with the land and how they are filled with the land after Darl has been convinced to go to the war: "I says to [the recruiters], [Darl] was all right at first, with his eyes full of the land, because the land laid up-and-down ways then; it wasn't till that ere road come and switched the land around longways and his eyes still full of the land, that they began to threaten me out of him, trying to short-hand me with the law" (Faulkner 36). The road, which brings men to convince Darl to join the war, changes the *way* that Darl's eyes are filled with land. He sees longways, into the distance, to different places and experiences. Darl's eyes are filled with France and the world at large. Anse suggests that it is all right if Darl's eyes are filled with land only as long as it is the Bundren land. The Bundrens' neighbor, Tull, also describes Darl's eyes; yet Tull erroneously asserts that it is *not* what Darl has said or done that makes

him different from everyone else:

[Darl] is looking at me. He dont say nothing; just looks at me with them queer eyes of hisn that makes folks talk. I always say it aint never been what he done so much or said or anything so much as how he looks at you. It's like he had got into the inside of you, someway. Like somehow you was looking at yourself and your doings outen his eyes (Faulkner 119).

Tull describes Darl's ability to see the inner parts of people, to know as much about a person as he or she knows about him or her self. He indicates that this is why people 'talk' about Darl. Tull states that it is not Darl's war experience that makes him different, but how Darl looks at people. Yet, the fact that Tull needs to mention that it *isn't what Darl has done*, shows that Tull has considered the possibility that Darl's war experience does play a role in his ability to see things clearly. Like all of the characters, however, Tull concludes by denying the war's role in developing Darl into the person he is, attributing it instead to something strange about Darl. The characters cannot accept that Darl's war experience has made him the perceptive person he is because if they did,

they would also have to acknowledge the degree to which they are themselves trapped in their limited environment and blinded by their lack of worldly experiences.

But Darl's war experience plays a large role in his ability to perceive his family and neighbors with such accuracy. The war gives Darl the ability to see the South, his family, and his neighbors in the context of a larger world. He can see that their problems and concerns are trivial and insignificant compared to the horrors of war. He can see the dysfunction in his family that was previously only evident to his neighbors and the dysfunction in the South that is clear to readers but unnoticed by the Bundrens and their neighbors. When, for instance, the Bundrens first pile into the wagon to make a forty mile journey with their mother's corpse which has already been above ground for three days, Darl justifiably sees the situation as absurd. Anse is more loyal to Addie's corpse than he ever was to her while she was living. Darl also sees that Addie's body should be buried, not carted around the country, rotting. None of the other Bundrens see the situation as anything but normal, however. Anse narrates, "we hadn't no more than passed Tull's lane when Darl begun to laugh. Setting back there on the plank seat with Cash, with his dead ma laying in her coffin at his feet, laughing. How many times I told him it's doing things like that that makes folks talk about him" (Faulkner 99). Anse refuses to acknowledge that he and his children, other than Darl, are the ones people talk about. Anse will not admit that there is something perverse in the Bundrens' mania to get Addie's corpse to Jefferson. He is too preoccupied with the prospect of getting his new teeth to be concerned with people's criticisms. Likewise, Anse is capable of justifying anything he does, through his manipulation of words. Since Anse says he is going to Jefferson because of his promise to Addie, he assumes that other people will believe him. However, Darl sees the situation for all its perversion. His ironic laughter confirms his acknowledgment and understanding.

As Darl is being dragged away from the Bundren family to spend the rest of his life in a mental institution, he first acknowledges the role the war and his experience abroad had

in allowing him to gain new insights and perspectives on his situation and family.

Unfortunately for Darl, those experiences first set him apart from his family and later gave him the insight to see how he had been set apart and why. The Bundren family decides to place Darl in the mental institution after he purposefully burns down Gillespie's barn, endangering his livestock and property. Motivated by the desire to destroy Addie's rotting body which had been above ground for almost ten days, Darl believed he was committing a reasonable and compassionate action towards his mother's corpse and his family members who were being destroyed in the process of the trip. Yet, the Bundrens, faced with a law suit from Gillespie, decide to have Darl committed to an institution forcibly. They choose to avoid financial loss rather than to support their flesh and blood or acknowledge that his actions were even remotely justified. Of course, the Bundrens' decision to commit Darl is the supreme indication of the dysfunction, blindness, and materialism that plagues them. Realizing this, Darl is thrown into a state of complete understanding, seeing the perversity of his family's priorities. This overwhelming insight and clarity causes Darl to foam at the mouth and to rant, in essence going crazy. Darl rambles to himself, in third person, "'Darl had a little spy-glass he got in France at the war'" (Faulkner 244). The spyglass that he got in the war can be read metaphorically to mean that Darl's war experience gave him the ability to see more clearly, a figurative spyglass that allowed him to spy on his family and see them for who they really are.

Since Addie gives Darl to Anse, denying him as her child, and Anse does not acknowledge or care for him in a loving way, he is essentially an orphan. Although Darl attempts forging connections with others through his eyes and through paying close attention to them, these attempts are largely unsuccessful. Recall that Dewey Dell actually feels hatred for Darl's intimacy with her and his knowledge of her pregnancy. Similarly, Darl's unsuccessful attempt at burning Addie's coffin is also an endeavor to force a bond between Addie and himself. Darl recognizes that Addie expresses her love

for Cash and Jewel in physical ways. She whips and pets Jewel and she admires the planks for her coffin with Cash because of what these *acts* mean to her and her sons. After her death, Addie continues to reach out to Cash and Jewel in physical ways through her coffin. Cash breaks his leg recovering the coffin from the river and Jewel is burned recovering it from the burning barn. None of the “unloved” Bundren children are hurt by Addie’s coffin during the journey. She only reaches out to the children she loves, by wounding them and making them aware of her after her death as she also did in her lifetime. Darl’s attempt to burn Addie’s coffin, is in part an act of compassion because it potentially rids the Bundrens of the rotting corpse. Yet, Darl’s act is not completely altruistic. It goes against the wishes of his family who need Addie’s burial as an excuse to get to Jefferson for their respective selfish reasons. Trying to burn Addie’s corpse is therefore partly a punishment to the Bundren family, and in particular Jewel who is so dedicated to seeing Addie properly buried that he saves her coffin from water and fire, risking his life. Furthermore, burning the barn is Darl’s way of trying to force Addie to be aware of him in a way that he couldn’t do in his lifetime. Destroying Addie’s body is the supreme form of connection with her. Unfortunately for Darl, this attempt fails when Jewel saves the coffin from the flames. During Jewel’s rescue, he is burned and therefore bestowed with the intimacy with Addie that Darl was striving to achieve.

Darl’s anger towards his family and their dysfunction is also evident in the extremely vindictive and emotionally abusive ways that he interacts with his siblings. In particular, Darl is unremittingly jealous of Jewel because of the close bond Jewel has with his mother and later, the bond Jewel forms with his horse. Yet, Darl understands that his mother’s love is finite and that he will never get a fair share of it regardless of what he does. So he focuses his energy into hating and tormenting Jewel, the object of Addie’s affection. He frequently makes cold and calculated verbal attacks designed to hurt Jewel emotionally. When Darl intuitively knows that Addie has died, he says to Jewel,

“Jewel . . . she is dead, Jewel. Addie Bundren is dead” (Faulkner 51). He knows that this statement will hurt Jewel and that Addie’s death will be difficult for Jewel to absorb because of his closeness to his mother. Instead of softening his message, trying to comfort Jewel, or waiting till Jewel finds out on his own that Addie is dead, Darl delivers the message tauntingly and abruptly. His use of both Addie’s first and last names is an attempt to make it seem as if he is not bothered by the sorrowful news he delivers. In another scene, when Cash mentions to Darl that Addie’s body is going to begin smelling in a few days, Darl says, “You might tell Jewel that” (Faulkner 102). Darl wants the disturbing information to be relayed to Jewel because he knows that it will torment him. When Cash adds that the coffin isn’t balanced right for a long journey, Darl says, “Tell [Jewel] that, too” (102). He is more concerned with harassing Jewel than tending to the problems at hand. When Darl notices a buzzard has begun to follow them because of the smell of Addie’s corpse, Darl says, “Look Jewel” (Faulkner 116). Again, Darl taunts Jewel by pointing out something to him that Darl knows will be especially disturbing for him. Dewey Dell observes Jewel’s reaction to Darl’s comment, “Jewel sits on his horse like they were both made out of wood, looking straight ahead” (116). Jewel ignores Darl’s malevolent comments the best that he can. Yet, in some instances, Jewel cannot disregard Darl’s verbal attacks and a verbal confrontation between the brothers ensues. For example, when Darl says to Jewel, “Jewel, whose son are you? . . . Your mother was a horse, but who was your father, Jewel?” Jewel cannot hold his anger inside. Darl raises the possibility of Jewel’s illegitimacy, a painful subject which Jewel cannot ignore. “You goddamn lying son of a bitch,” Jewel responds. When Darl says to Jewel, “Don’t call me that,” Jewel again responds by calling him a “goddamn lying son of a bitch” and Darl again says, “Don’t you call me that, Jewel” (202-203). In this, like all other confrontations between Jewel and Darl, the brothers do not work through their negative

feelings nor do they come closer to an understanding of the other person's perspective. Their jealousy and competitiveness prevents them from having any form of closeness. Most of Darl's attacks against Jewel do not overtly mention Addie, despite the fact that she is the underlying reason for Darl's anger towards Jewel. Addie and her lack of affection are difficult subjects for Darl to handle emotionally. It is difficult for Darl to disparage that which he so desperately craves. Only Darl knows the real value of love because only he is fully aware of what it is like to be without it. It is easier for Darl to ridicule Jewel's relationship with his horse which becomes symbolic for Darl of the relationship between Jewel and Addie. Darl often describes Jewel's relationship with his horse using poetic language and vivid imagery. Describing Jewel and his horse as if they are mythological beings endowed with magical abilities, such as flight, Darl

appreciates the importance and beauty of their relationship:
 When Jewel can almost touch him, the horse stands on his hind legs and slashes down at Jewel. Then Jewel is enclosed by a glittering maze of hooves as by an illusion of wings; among them, beneath the upreared chest, he moves with the flashing limberness of a snake. For an instant before the jerk comes into his arms he sees his whole body earth-free, horizontal, whipping snake-limber, until he finds the horse's nostrils and touches earth again (Faulkner 12).

Darl describes Jewel and his horse as appearing to fly through the air, free of the earth. Horse and rider both take on surreal characteristics, the horse almost growing wings and Jewel almost becoming a snake. Darl's close attention to the details of their relationship indicates the importance he assigns to it. Darl recognizes that the relationship between Jewel and his horse is more complex and significant than Cash's desire for a record player or Anse's desire for teeth. This is why Darl is so jealous of the relationship between Jewel and his horse. Darl is aware that his life is sorrowfully lacking in any type of bond like that between Jewel and his horse or Jewel and Addie, and Darl, more than any other Bundren, understands the importance of emotional closeness and suffers most from its absence.

Even though Darl privately admires Jewel and his horse's relationship, he verbally condemns their relationship when Jewel is present. These attacks are intended to hurt Jewel and to devalue the intimacy Jewel has and Darl desires. Darl says frequently to Jewel, "'Jewel's mother is a horse'" (Faulkner 95). This comment, which is designed to infuriate Jewel, has at least two meanings. First, it is designed to devalue the relationship between Jewel and Addie by implying that Jewel cares more about his horse than his mother. By saying that Jewel's mother is a horse, Darl tries to deny the crucial role that Addie plays in Jewel's life as a mother. This interpretation is reinforced as Jewel rushes inside Gillespie's barn to save Addie's coffin from the flames, and Darl says to Jewel, "'Quick, the horses'" (Faulkner 209). Darl describes that Jewel glares at him in response, clearly angered by the implication that he cares more about horses than his mother. Yet, despite his anger, Jewel does turn away from the coffin and saves the horses before he removes Addie's coffin. In fact, Jewel is angry in part because Darl knows he would be unable to let the horses burn to death. Jewel is angry that Darl knows him so well, just like Dewey Dell. Jewel's admiration for horses and the intimate bond he has formed with his own horse does not permit him to let live horses burn for the sake of his dead mother's coffin. This is crucial in understanding the influence Addie's love has on Jewel. Her love teaches him to value the living over the inanimate, something the other characters cannot grasp. However, Jewel's first instinct is to run towards his mother's coffin to save her, not to the livestock. Jewel's emotional connection is clearly stronger to his mother, drawing him to her despite the fact that it is reasonable to try to save the living before the dead. Darl's comment is then designed to suggest that Jewel prioritizes his relationship with his horse over the one with Addie but is only partially accurate to Jewel's true emotions. Darl says to Jewel, "'But it's not your horse that's dead,'" implying that Jewel should not be upset about Addie's death because at least it wasn't his horse who died. Predictably, Jewel responds by saying, "'Goddamn you. . .Goddamn you'" (Faulkner 88). Darl's statement also insists that

Jewel's mother is not Addie, implying that Jewel is illegitimate, that one of Jewel's parents is not who people believe. Darl knows that Jewel's father is not Anse. By choosing Addie as the target of the taunt, however, Darl devalues the intimacy between Jewel and his mother, implying that there is no hereditary bond between them. Darl's taunt also devalues Addie by comparing her to an animal, or livestock when Darl tells Vardaman that "*Are* is too many for one woman to foal," he overtly refers to the fact that horses do not often have more than one foal at a time. Twins occur rarely with horses. This metaphor, further comparing Addie to a horse, also exposes Darl's understanding that Addie does not love any of her children except for Jewel. Like a horse that cannot have more than one child at a time, Addie gives away three of her children, Dewey Dell, Vardaman, and Darl because she cannot love them. Even Cash, whom Addie forms a bond with and claims as her child, is not loved like Addie's favored Jewel. The close bond between Jewel and his horse comes to symbolize for Darl the bond between Addie and Jewel. Many of his verbal attacks on Jewel deal with this relationship as a substitute for dealing openly with the relationship between Jewel and Addie which is more painful to him.

Clearly, the lack of parental love has profoundly detrimental effects for Darl. Of all of the Bundren children, Darl is the most aware of the Bundren family's dysfunction, however, despite this fact he is still unable to escape jealousy, competitiveness, and selfishness. He cannot escape these negative qualities because they are deeply entwined into his mind and the way that he forms relationships with others. Regardless of his knowledge and greater understanding, Darl does not have the tools nor the strength to use his knowledge to benefit his siblings or to teach himself to form healthy relationships.

Section 6: Vardaman; Hopelessly Lost in the Modern World

As the youngest child, Vardaman often remains outside of the conflicts between the older Bundren children and their parents. Indeed, he is often ignored by the rest of the family, left to make sense of the world on his own without their help. Recall Addie “gives” Vardaman to Anse, therefore she does not take on parental responsibilities for Vardaman. Likewise, Anse does not make up for Addie’s lack of nurturing. Consider a scene in which Vardaman proudly brings home a fish he has caught. Tull narrates, “That boy comes up the hill. He is carrying a fish nigh long as he is. He slings it to the ground and grunts “Hah” and spits over his shoulder like a man. Durn nigh long as he is” (Faulkner 29). Vardaman is proud of the accomplishment of catching a large fish all by himself. Tull recognizes that this event is important to Vardaman and sportingly jokes with him, asking if the fish is a “hog” and inquiring where he caught it. Anse on the other hand says, “Are you aiming to leave it laying there?” Anse has no words of encouragement or praise for Vardaman. He is only concerned with the possibility that the fish will be in the way and cause more work to be done. Vardaman replies, “I aim to show it to ma’.” He desires to show the fish to Addie so that he may gain her respect and praise, similar to the way that Cash would bring gifts to Addie when he was a child. Vardaman is uncertain about what his father’s reaction to his idea will be as evidenced by the way he nervously kicks his fish, looking from the door to Anse. Vardaman knows that he wants to pick up his fish, taking it to Addie, but he also knows his father well enough to expect him to thwart his efforts. Tull narrates: He says nothing, watching the door. Then he looks down at the fish laying in the dust. He turns it over with his foot and prods at the eye-bumb with his toe, gouging at it. Anse is looking out over the land. Vardaman looks at Anse’s face, then at the door. He turns, going towards the corner of the house, when Anse calls him without looking around. “You clean that fish,” Anse says (Faulkner 30).

Anse thwarts Vardaman's efforts to take the fish to his mother by ordering that Vardaman clean it. Anse's orders transform the fish from something special and worthy of Vardaman's pride into work and an inconvenience for him. Likewise, Anse criticizes his son and his efforts rather than making him proud of his accomplishment. The fish becomes simply a dead thing, dirty and seemingly ashamed of itself.

Vardaman displaces his anger at his father onto the fish: Vardaman comes back and picks up the fish. It slides out of his hands, smearing wet dirt onto him, and flops down, dirtying itself again, gapmouthed, goggle-eyed, hiding into the dust like it was ashamed of being dead, like it was in a hurry to get back hid again. Vardaman cusses it. He cusses it like a grown man, standing a-straddle of it (30).

The fish that Vardaman had previously held with pride becomes a burden to him. He cusses at the fish even though beforehand he desired to show it boastfully to his mother. He is described as standing over the fish like a grown man, the youthful exuberance that had characterized him as he walked up destroyed by Anse's insistence that he work, the reality of men and older boys. He is forced to grow up prematurely, denied the joys associated with youth.

More often, Vardaman is ignored by Anse because he is too young to work, the primary reason Anse values his children. Vardaman's care therefore becomes the older Bundren children's responsibility. They must make sure he is fed and safe because Anse does not. Most of this responsibility is heaped on Dewey Dell, as the only woman in the family after Addie dies. Yet, the sons also take on some of this responsibility. When the Bundrens are struggling to get the wagon across the raging river, for example, Jewel reminds Anse to watch out for Vardaman: "You better call Vardaman back here" (Faulkner 150). Anse is too preoccupied with assuring the safety of the material possessions to consider Vardaman's safety. It is necessary for Jewel to remind Anse of Vardaman's presence.

Even though the Bundren children pay attention to Vardaman's basic needs, they are unwilling and incapable of taking care of his emotional and intellectual needs. They

have their own problems and work to attend to. After Addie's death, Vardaman is left to deal with his sadness on his own. None of the Bundrens explain to Vardaman what death means or what has happened to his mother. For this reason, Vardaman comes to the conclusion that Dr. Peabody is responsible for Addie's death. After all, Vardaman reasons, Addie is alive before the doctor comes to the Bundren farm, and she dies shortly after he arrives. Of course, there is no causal connection between the events except that they illustrate Anse's inconsideration for his wife and her health. Anse does not call for the doctor until Addie has no chance of getting better and there is nothing Peabody could do to help her. Yet, Vardaman cannot comprehend that Peabody's presence is not related to or responsible for his mother's death nor can he understand the process of death. His sadness over losing his mother turns to anger, directed at Peabody. In his rage he attacks Peabody's horse, striking them with sticks causing them to bolt away into the night, still attached to Peabody's buggy. Vardaman again displaces his anger onto an inanimate object, as he did with the fish. Then, crying, Vardaman rushes to the barn to hide and to cry by himself. He speaks to the animals there, rather than turning to his family and his home in his confusion and despair. Even when he hears Dewey Dell calling for him, he is quiet and does not go to her (55). When Dewey Dell goes to the barn to do the milking and give herself a moment to absorb her own sorrowful situation of finding herself pregnant out of wedlock and her mother dead, she runs into Vardaman. Her first instinct is to accuse him of spying on her and she is angry he is in the barn where she has gone for privacy. She holds him by the shoulders, shaking him, lashing out in her pain in the same way that Vardaman attacked Peabody's horses, the same way the Bundren children usually deal with emotional pain. Then, she stops shaking, realizing Vardaman is just a child afraid of being punished for hurting Peabody's horses and confused about his mother's death. He attempts to communicate his fears and sorrows to her but she responds by telling him to hush, trying to silence him. She does not explain to Vardaman that his

assumption that Peabody killed Addie is incorrect and she does not try to explain what really occurred to Addie. She tells him to go to the house to have dinner, ignoring his emotional needs and refusing to give him the comfort he needs. Dewey Dell is too overwhelmed by her situation to have patience with Vardaman, and she begins to shake him again, eventually resorting to verbal threats that if he doesn't behave, the family will abandon him while they go to Jefferson to bury Addie. He leaves the barn after this threat, no more pacified than when he entered. His attempt to reach out to Dewey Dell is unproductive and unrewarding emotionally.

Vardaman's attempts at understanding his mother's death becomes more complicated and bizarre as time passes because none of the Bundrens correct his mistaken assumptions or give him realistic alternative explanations. One mistaken belief builds on the next, stemming from his limited understanding of the world. He first thinks that after Addie dies, she is not like the Addie he knew as his mother. He grapples with the question of where the real Addie has gone and what it is she has been replaced with. After all, his family members intend to nail whatever Addie has been replaced with into a coffin where it will not be able to breathe. Vardaman's narrative is confusing and disjointed as he draws from his limited experience and understanding, trying to

formulate a coherent picture of what has occurred:

It was not [my mother]. I was there, looking. I saw. I thought it was her, but it was not. It was not my mother. She went away when the other one laid down in her bed and drew the quilt up. She went away. "Did she go away as far as town?" "She went further than town." "Did all those rabbits and possums go further than town?" God made the rabbits and possums. He made the train. Why must he make different places for them to go if she is just like a rabbit? . . . 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 she lets him it is not her. I know. I saw. They think it is and Cash is going to nail it up" (Faulkner 63).

Vardaman mentions that once he accidentally got stuck in a crib and could barely breathe, concluding that Addie would not be able to breathe if she were nailed into the coffin. He also assumes that Addie would not allow herself to be placed in the coffin

where she could not breathe, drawing from what he knows of his mother. Vardaman then tries to deal with the question of where the real Addie has gone, if she is not what is going to be placed in the coffin. He draws on an answer, from an unnamed source, to his question, “Did she go as far as town?” The vague response he is given is woven into his narrative, along with his personal experience and observations, to form an incoherent and fragmented patchwork explanation. Later, Vardaman asserts, “My mother is a fish” (Faulkner 79). This bizarre conclusion is the only sentence uttered in one of his chapters and is the culmination of Vardaman’s previous reasoning. Since the fish he caught on the day Addie died was dead also, he draws comparisons between the two trying to formulate a picture of what death is. The fish is dead. Addie is dead. Therefore, removing death from the equation, Vardaman concludes that his mother is a fish. It is for this reason that Vardaman repeatedly says, “Cooked and et. Cooked and et” (Faulkner 55). He is deeply concerned that his mother will be eaten if she is a fish because this was the fate of the fish he caught. Later, when crossing the river Addie’s coffin is flung into the water and Vardaman is extremely concerned that his mother will swim away. He frantically yells to Darl to catch Addie before she swims away because he reasons that “in the water she could go faster than a man or woman” (Faulkner 144). His disappointment is evident when Darl does not catch her. He says, “Where is ma, Darl? You never got her. You knew she is a fish but you let her get away” (144). Again, building from his knowledge of fish and elaborating on his premise that his mother is a fish, Vardaman interprets events in the context of his metaphor. Later, when Addie’s corpse begins to smell, Vardaman concludes that it is also because she is a fish. He thinks, “My mother does not smell like that. My mother is a fish” (Faulkner 187). Vardaman’s deductions, based on his limited and erroneous knowledge, are usually quite reasonable and are at least an attempt at logical thinking. Vardaman should not be misread as borderline mentally retarded because of his inability to comprehend things like death. His inability to understand these concepts is the fault

of the family environment in which he is raised, with no intellectual guidance, forced to make sense of the world on his own. Had one of his siblings or his father taken him aside and explained Addie's death or bothered to tell him that his deductions were incorrect, Vardaman would have had a more realistic understanding of the events.

Darl is the Bundren who most frequently talks with Vardaman and therefore offers the possibility of becoming a parental figure to him. Yet, Darl's motivation for talking with Vardaman is not to instruct him or out of concern for his intellectual or emotional development. Darl generally humors Vardaman in his misperceptions, supporting the inaccurate conclusions that Vardaman makes rather than teaching him more objective and realistic viewpoints. When Vardaman concludes that his mother is a fish, Darl responds by asserting that Jewel's mother is a horse. Darl's statement complicates Vardaman's assertion because Vardaman must now reckon with the fact that if Jewel is his brother and Jewel's mother is a horse, then Vardaman's mother must also be a horse. However, Darl then points out that as long as Jewel and Vardaman have their father in common, their mothers can be different, alluding obliquely to Jewel's

illegitimacy. Vardaman narrates:

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?" (Faulkner 95).

Darl's agenda is not to instruct Vardaman or he would not complicate his mind with symbolism and the subject of illegitimacy that are clearly above and beyond Vardaman's understanding. If Darl had Vardaman's interests in mind, he would point out Vardaman's erroneous thinking instead of compounding his misperceptions. Darl's aim in the conversation with Vardaman is to attack Jewel. He asserts that Jewel's mother is a horse because he wants to attack Jewel and can do so under the guise of a conversation with Vardaman. Darl's motivation is selfish and vindictive, and

is not based on Vardaman's emotional needs. If Vardaman ends up more confused and misinformed after the conversation, Darl does not care, as long as his own goals were met and he succeeds in making Jewel hurt or angry. In his attempts to hurt Jewel, Darl victimizes Vardaman.

Vardaman desperately craves the attention and affection the Bundrens are too selfish to give. The Bundren's neighbor Tull, offers Vardaman the friendship and intimacy he craves. Recall that when Vardaman catches his fish, Tull jokes around with him, admiring the size of the fish. He says, "'What's that? A hog? Where's you get it?'" (Faulkner 29). Compared to Anse's criticism and disapproval, Tull's minor comment is very meaningful to Vardaman. Tull also suggests that his family, which is inside the Bundren's house visiting Addie, would enjoy seeing the fish also (Faulkner 30). This comment reinforces the possibility that Vardaman's fish is an accomplishment worth praise and admiration. Vardaman's own family, in contrast, does not think so.

Vardaman says nothing to Tull's praise, looking at the door of the house and considering taking the fish inside to be admired. Yet, it is then that Anse suggests Vardaman clean his fish, turning it from a prized possession into a dead and bloody chore. Vardaman comes to desperately clings to Tull because Tull shows him minimal appreciation and affection. When Addie dies, Vardaman is struck with grief and confusion and he turns to Tull for support. Since Vardaman is confused by the relationship between the fish he killed and mother's death, he runs to Tull's house for answers. After all, Tull was there when Vardaman brought home his fish. Vardaman narrates, "[The fish] was laying right yonder on the ground. I can get Vernon [Tull]. He was there and he seen it, and with both of us it will be [true]" (Faulkner 64).

Vardaman wants Tull to validate his beliefs about the relationship between this mother and his fish. The significance is that Vardaman does not turn to his own father, who also was a witness, when he brought home his fish. Anse could also verify the fact that the fish was lying in the dust and then was cooked and eaten, yet, Vardaman does not

consider this possibility. Only if Tull confirms his beliefs, will they be true. Vardaman runs, in the rain and darkness of night, to Tull's house and says to him, "'You was there. You seen it laying there. . . You seen it. You seen the mark in the dirt'" (Faulkner 67). Tull cannot understand the significance of this or Vardaman's ramblings about seeing the fish. Tull and his wife, Cora, take Vardaman back to the Bundren house in their wagon, comforting him by their presence. Although Cora is concerned only with her religious zeal and the prospect of ministering to the Bundren family as part of her Christian duty, Tull meditates on Vardaman's suffering. He thinks, "I be durn if [Vardaman's ramblings] didn't give me the creeps. Now and then a fellow gets to thinking. About all the sorrow and afflictions in this world; how it's liable to strike anywhere, like lightening" (Faulkner 67). Although Tull cannot help Vardaman, he commiserates with him and is with him in his suffering. Tull provides the best option for Vardaman to turn to, however unable he is to adequately comfort and guide the boy.

The bond between Tull and Vardaman is apparent during the dangerous and stressful river crossing. Whereas most of the Bundrens forget about Vardaman during this time, Tull does not. They cross the unstable and hazardous bridge together. Tull admits that he was afraid of crossing the bridge himself and probably would not have done it even once, if it had not been for Vardaman and the necessity of getting him across it. Tull describes that he holds onto Vardaman's hand as they cross. He admits that he feels comfort by holding onto Vardaman's hand , allowing him to confront the treacherous

bridge:

I just couldn't think of anything that could make me cross that bridge ever even once. Yet here I was, and the fellow that could make himself cross it twice, couldn't be me . . . It was that boy. I said 'Here; you better take a holt of my **Error! No index entries found.**hand' and he waited and held to me. I be durn if it wasn't like he come back and got me; like he was saying They wont nothing hurt you (Faulkner 132).

Vardaman returns the comfort to Tull that he has also sought from him. Their bond is mutual because they are both concerned with the safety of the other and find strength in their relationship. Later, the bond between them is also evident as they try to save Cash's tools from the water. Vardaman is absorbed with Tull and does not let him out of his sight as Tull stands in the water, trying to catch Cash's tools. Tull also directs Vardaman to the safety of the tree and trusts him to help hold the rope he is connected to in the water. Darl narrates:

At the edge of the stream, knee-deep, Vardaman stands, bent forward a little, watching Vernon with rapt absorption. . . Vernon is at the end of the rope, shoulder deep in the river, looking back at Vardaman. 'Further back than that,' he says. 'You git back by the tree and hold the rope for me, so it cant slip.' Vardaman backs along the rope, to the tree, moving blindly, watching Vernon. When we come up he looks at us once, his eyes round and a little dazed. Then he looks at Vernon again in that posture of rapt alertness (Faulkner 150-151).

Darl notes that while Vardaman is completely engrossed in protecting and watching Tull, he barely looks at his own family members as they approach him. Vardaman is not concerned with the Bundrens when Tull's safety is in question. His own family appear like strangers to him and he looks at them dazed, almost not recognizing or remembering them, as he focuses on Tull. Vardaman has formed an emotional bond with Tull that he has not been able to form with the members of his own family.

Through Vardaman's stream of consciousness and the way that his internal narrative is structured, however Faulkner shows that Vardaman indeed has connections with the other Bundrens. Faulkner illustrates that dysfunction can be passed along by family members in the very ways that they think and make sense of the world. Vardaman's vocabulary and the way that his mind processes information is similar to those of his family members. At times, Vardaman's chapters sound like they are written from Cash's perspective because they are extremely ordered and linear. At other times, Vardaman's chapters are full of complex ideas and insights, like those of Darl. Still, at other times, Vardaman's chapters contain speech that is uniquely his own, the thoughts of a young, profoundly confused child trying to make sense of the world. Comparing

the internal dialogues of the siblings illustrates that although they are extremely isolated from each other emotionally, each obsessed with his or her own life and concerns, a family bond still exists between them. After Addie dies, Vardaman attempts to come to terms with her death and to reason out what has happened to her. The procedure that Vardaman uses is similar to the process Cash uses when he attempts to justify why he has beveled the corners of Addie's coffin. Vardaman lists evidence and observations, combining the evidence into his final assertion that his mother is a fish. In a similar way, Cash asserts that he has made Addie's coffin on the bevel based on his list of observations about the world, his experiences, and through his attempt at logic.

Although Vardaman's statements are not numbered like Cash's but they are formed into a paragraph that reads similarly to a list. Vardaman's statements deal with the material realm and experiences, rather than his emotional responses. His emphasis is on coming to a conclusion and organizing the information he has about his mother into a compact, logical statement. Like Cash, Vardaman often does not know what information should be used in developing his conclusion, drawing from information that is irrelevant

or misinterpreted. Consider Vardaman's following narrative:
 [Addie] went away. "Did she go as far as town?" "She went further than town." "Did all those rabbits and possums go to town?" God made the rabbits and possums. He made the train. Why must He make a different place for them to go if she is just like the rabbit. . . And so if Cash nails the box up, she is not a rabbit. And so if she is not a rabbit I couldn't breath in the crib and Cash is going to nail it up. And so if she lets him it is not her. I know. I was there. . . It was not her because it was lying right yonder in the dirt. And now it's all chopped up. I chopped it up. It's laying in the kitchen in the bleeding pan, waiting to be cooked and et. Then it wasn't, and now it is and she wasn't. And tomorrow it will be cooked an et and she will be him and pa and Cash and Dewey Dell and there won't be anything in the box and so she can breathe . . . My mother is a fish (63-64 & 79).

Vardaman draws his final conclusion about his mother based on his observations about the fish and other animals he has killed which, like Addie, he knows are dead. He also draws on evidence from his past experiences such as being locked in a crib where he couldn't breathe, reasoning that in the coffin, Addie must not be able to breathe.

Vardaman also incorporates answers to the questions he asks. Although there are many pieces of information missing and there are extraneous variables which make his conclusion difficult to formulate, such as his irrelevant statement that God made the train, Vardaman is intent on drawing a conclusion. Like Cash, Vardaman cannot deal with abstractions or his emotional responses, making it necessary for him to rationalize and organize information into concise statements. Yet, Vardaman also has the ability to formulate narratives that utilize advanced vocabulary and deal with abstractions that rival

Darl's. After Addie's death, as Vardaman sits in the barn crying to himself, he narrates: It is dark. I can hear wood, silence: I know them. But not living sounds, not even him. It is as though the dark were resolving him out of his integrity, into an unrelated scattering of components- snuffings and stampings; smells of cooling fish and ammoniac hair; an illusion of a co-ordinated world of spotted hide and strong bones within which, detached and secret and familiar, an *is* different from my *is*. I see him dissolve- leg, a rolling eye, a gaudy splotching like cold flames- and float upon the dark in fading solution; all one yet neither; all either yet none. I can see hearing coil toward him, caressing, shaping his hard shape- fetlock, hip, shoulder and head; smell and sound. I am not afraid. 'Cooked and et. Cooked and et' (Faulkner 55).

This passage, in contrast to the one that mimics Cash's speech, is so abstract that it is virtually impossible to comprehend. Primarily a description of a cow in the barn, the passage is extremely complex. Even Vardaman himself cannot fully understand his statement, illustrated by the fact that at the end of his passage he rambles, "Cooked and et. Cooked and et." This final statement, using improper grammar and repeated hysterically and childishly, follows directly after his highly poetic and descriptive narrative. In his speech, Vardaman resorts to his juvenile ramblings, while his internal monologue is complex and mimics Darl's eloquence. Vardaman cannot understand or digest the complex narrative that seemingly pops into his head, therefore he resorts to his childlike speech with which he is more comfortable. The fact that the complex speech enters his head is evidence of a complicated connection between he and Darl. Vardaman, after all, is incapable of having come up with the concepts and speech of the prior passage without his relationship to Darl because the other Bundrens and their

neighbors do not model this form of speech to him. The Bundrens do not pass on thought processes, vocabulary, and methods of mental organization through any conscious effort or through conversations with each other. Darl does not consciously *teach* Vardaman to think like him. Yet, because of their lack of communication they remain unaware of their similarities. Only the reader, who may openly compare the narratives of each of the characters, witnesses the links between the Bundrens.

Faulkner pays attention not only to the portrayal of how individuals comprehend the world, but how families pass along their thought processes and how thought patterns are proliferated. Dysfunction is not only passed in physical, material, ways. A more detrimental way that dysfunction is passed is through the very way that families members *think*.

Vardaman, as the youngest Bundren, represents the extreme dysfunction of the Bundren family. He is the product of the dysfunction of his parents combined with the dysfunction of his siblings, influenced in their own respective ways by Anse and Addie. Vardaman, who often appears to be mentally retarded, is the end result of a family environment defined by selfishness and materialism in which none of the family members have the capability to care for a child in the way he or she deserves. Vardaman is not mentally disabled because of biology or any physical reason, he is retarded because he has grown up in a deficient familial environment. There is no hope that Vardaman will be able to break away from the Bundren family, to become someone better than them because he does not have the tools required to do so. His dysfunction exists on the very level of his thoughts and how he perceives the world. Vardaman is doomed to have priorities as skewed as Cash and the rest of the Bundren family. Even though he has some of Darl's capabilities of language, he lacks the insights that have come from Darl's greater experience. For this reason, when Vardaman has moments where his thoughts mimic Darl's, he cannot comprehend their meaning or digest them

and resorts back to his childlike or flawed thinking. He is doomed to perpetuate the dysfunction of his parents and siblings.

Section 7: Conclusion

William Faulkner's Bundren family is plagued by materialism, selfishness, jealousy, and miscommunication. Faulkner witnessed such negative traits in the people and the Southern society in which he grew up. His Bundren family serves as a warning of the dangers of allowing these traits to proliferate in a society. Faulkner suggests that if these traits are not monitored closely, they could evolve into the devastating proportions embodied in the Bundren family. After all, simply within a few generations, passed from Addie's parents, to herself, to her own children, these traits intensified to the point that the Bundrens could send one of their own to a mental institution to avoid a lawsuit. Faulkner suggests that with each further generation, society would become *more* damaged by such traits. He does not offer much hope that people will be able to rise above the dysfunctional families and society in which they are born. The youngest son, Vardaman, is destined to be as diseased as his brothers and sister, and will ultimately pass on these qualities to his own children. Faulkner therefore portrays people as destined to flounder hopelessly in isolation, unhappiness, and materialism until they die. This pessimism is largely the result of Faulkner's experiences living in the American South. Faulkner felt that the South was on a path similar to the Bundren family's. Caught in a cycle of weakness, hopelessness, prejudice, and darkness, the South seemed to Faulkner to be through with its days of glory and inadequately prepared to start again.

Chapter 2: Mansfield, the Burnells, and the Guiding Light

In her series of short stories, “Prelude,” “At the Bay,” and “The Doll’s House,” Katherine Mansfield Beauchamp (1888-1923) presents the reader with the Burnells, a bourgeois family riddled with dysfunction, selfishness, and materialism. Beauchamp, who uses the pen name Mansfield, based her fictional Burnell family largely on her memories of her own family and childhood. The stories are set in New Zealand, where she was born, and occur around the time that she grew up. Like the Burnell family, Mansfield grew up with the financial security of living in a bourgeois household and her father was a respected businessman. Between 1903 and 1906, Mansfield’s family moved to London, allowing her and her three sisters to enter Queen’s College, the first English college developed for the purpose of giving women a higher education. She was, for this reason, better educated than many women of her time. During these years, Mansfield began to write a number of poems and short stories. Yet, upon returning to New Zealand, Mansfield felt constricted by her bourgeois life and became determined to escape from the “restrictions of family, colonial life, and bourgeois social conventions” that she had known in her childhood (Kaplan 5). In 1908, Mansfield returned to London, never to return to New Zealand again. Her life from this point was colored with numerous love affairs, a marriage that lasted one day before she left her husband, a pregnancy out of wedlock which resulted in a miscarriage, and the eventual marriage to the critic John Middleton Murry. Mansfield’s first book of short stories, *In a German Pension*, was published in 1911. This volume, like those that followed, was greeted with enthusiasm by her contemporaries. Sydney Janet Kaplan writes, Unlike some of the female modernists who are currently being reclaimed by feminist scholars- writers whose highly experimental work was published by small presses and avant-garde journals and never reached a large public readership- Mansfield developed a huge following, which began to take on the features of a cult by the 1930’s . . . Her stories were included in most college

anthologies of fiction; if anything, Mansfield was the anthologist's 'token' woman (Kaplan 3).

In particular, her experimentation with form and style was praised. Many of Mansfield's techniques were quickly heralded as innovative and revolutionary, such as her use of the "plotless" story, her incorporation of "stream of consciousness," and her emphasis on the psychological "moment." Mansfield uses the plotless story because it enables her to focus more on the interactions between characters and their thought processes than on the specific events of their lives. Stream of consciousness is a way of providing the reader with the direct, unedited, thoughts of her characters. Mansfield's use of these techniques often preceded Virginia Woolf's use of these techniques (Kaplan 3). If it were not for her early death from tuberculosis, surely Mansfield would have continued to revolutionize Modern fiction.

Mansfield first began to remember and write about her family and childhood in New Zealand after her beloved and only brother was killed in World War I in 1915. After this traumatic event, her first collection of short stories about a fictional family that resembled her own, was published in 1922. These stories became a way for Mansfield to deal with her disillusion after World War I and a way of coping with her brother's death. She suggests in her journal, for example, that she intends for her story "Prelude" to be an elegy for her brother and that she is going to end the story with the birth of the Burnell son, representing her brother's birth (Kaplan 111). Although Mansfield does not end up including the birth of the son till the second story in the series, "At the Bay," it is evident that when she began writing "Prelude," her brother was foremost in her thoughts. Mansfield realized that the war had profoundly affected those families who had, like her, lost children, parents, or siblings. She saw that Europe was likewise severely altered after the war. Vincent O'Sullivan writes, "Mansfield was among the group of writers who understood early on how the First World War brought a permanent fragmentation of what living in Europe implied . . . Europe no longer meant

what it had, and traditional values no longer held” (O’Sullivan 16). No one knew quite what the new European order would be like after the death of Queen Victoria, the passing of an era of family stability and traditional values, and World War I. Mansfield incorporated autobiographical information from her childhood with the concerns and fears about the modern world that she had gained in adulthood. Gillian Boddy writes, For the most part, [Mansfield] was referring to her earliest past, her Wellington childhood. Writing about New Zealand from the other side of the world and from a quarter-century later made it, of course, a ‘dream’ country, as she herself admitted. Her memory was extraordinarily acute, her recall for small detail phenomenal. But Mansfield was writing fiction, not autobiography. Art always transcended reality, and real, remembered people were shaped and manipulated to fit the impression she wished to create (Boddy 180).

Mansfield creates an environment in her stories wherein she can combine her reactions to the modern world and traditional values with regionalism and nostalgia. Her characters are drawn from real people but are also fictitious, designed to cope with or aggravate the problems Mansfield saw in her society.

Much of Mansfield’s writing deals with *women’s* struggles and concerns. The majority of the characters in “Prelude,” “At the Bay,” and “The Doll’s House” are women. Mansfield pays much more attention to her portrayal of the inner thoughts of these women characters. In “Prelude” and “At the Bay” women’s domestic concerns and activities are a predominant theme. In these stories, Mansfield’s female characters fight against the same traditions and prejudices that she faced in her own life and from which she desired to escape when she left New Zealand. Since Mansfield was well educated for a woman of her time and felt on an intellectual level with her peers, she did not focus her writing on combating notions of women’s intellectual insufficiencies or their need for education. Instead, she combated the notion that women must be mothers and wives. Janet Kaplan writes, “Mansfield did not have to undo Victorian conventions about the passivity of women as embodiments of spirit rather than mind, even if she needed to fight against Victorian bourgeois conceptions of women as wives and mothers foremost” (Kaplan 15). In “Prelude” and “At the Bay” Linda Burnell,

the mother figure, questions traditional values and desires to escape from her marriage and motherhood. Mansfield makes women and their concerns a prominent issue in her writings because this subject is of utmost importance to her. As a woman living in a time when women's roles were being questioned and revised along with the social order, Mansfield was clearly invested in portraying women's concerns in her writing because they were concerns in her life.

The relationships between characters and their thoughts about the world are more important than the plot in Mansfield's stories. The stories are not centered around particular events, except in "The Doll's House" wherein the Burnell daughters are given a beautiful doll's house as a gift. Mansfield is known for her technique of writing seemingly "plotless stories," focusing on the development of the characters more than the development of action. Her stories are therefore a glimpse into the daily lives and minds of her characters. In "Prelude," the reader is introduced to the primary characters, Stanley and Linda Burnell, and their three daughters, from oldest to youngest, Isabel, Lottie, and Kezia. Also introduced is Beryl, Linda's beautiful unmarried sister, and Linda's mother, Mrs. Fairfield, who both live with the family. In this story, the Burnells adjust to moving from the city to a new house and a different way of life in a more rural setting. In "At the Bay," the reader observes the Burnells as they spend the day swimming at the bay, among other summer activities. Also in this story, the Burnell's first and only male child is introduced. He has been born in the months between the first and the second stories. The final story, "A Doll's House" describes the Burnell daughters' reaction to an expensive doll's house that they receive as a gift. This story serves to develop the characters of the Burnell girls and to further address class issues that are central to all of the stories in the series.

The Burnell family enjoys privileges and financial security as a bourgeois family living in New Zealand. They have servants, drivers, and gardeners who work for them. They can afford to move to the country, to a large house with extensive gardens that is

walking distance to a bay. The Burnell children spend their time playing and going to school. They are not required to do chores because there are servants to do the work for them. When the girls do chores, it is by choice, such as when the girls carry a porridge plate to the dining table. Mansfield writes, “But they were taking the very greatest care. They loved being allowed to carry things” (Mansfield 102). Chores are not required or expected of the children and therefore they take pride and enjoyment in these activities. As Beryl, Linda’s sister, says happily, ““Oh, what joy, what bliss it [is] to be young”” (Mansfield 109). Childhood for the Burnell children is a magical and happy time. They have freedom to play games, go swimming, and develop friendships with children from the area. Mansfield often gives intimate details of the children’s games and activities. For example, in one scene, the children play a card game in which they must all pretend to be particular animals. In another scene, the children debate whether to play doctor or house. Playing house, or as the oldest Burnell girl, Isabel, calls it, “playing ladies,” is an enjoyable game for some of the children. Yet as Kezia says, ““I hate playing ladies . . . You always make us go to church hand in hand and come home and go to bed”” (Mansfield 81). For Kezia, playing house is a boring game because the Burnell’s bourgeois life is so calm and peaceful. She does not see adventure in going to church and spending one’s time in leisure and therefore she does not want to repeat these games in her free time. Isabel and Kezia differ in their enjoyment of certain childhood games and activities. Differences in these girls’ acceptance of domesticity and traditional concepts of women and family can be deduced by their desire either to enforce or to rebel against these values during play. Through the children’s games, they have the freedom to develop an understanding of who they are and their place in the world without the supervision of parental figures. Even in choosing which animals to represent themselves for a card game, the children’s individual differences are evident. The older, arrogant Isabel chooses to be a proud rooster, the timid Lottie can’t decide what to be and asks someone to choose an animal

for her, and Kezia chooses to be a bee. Kezia's choice to be a bee is representative of her because she maintains her position as this animal even after the other children try to convince her that she can't be a bee because they are not animals. Kezia asserts that a bee is appropriate for the game illustrating that she is steadfast in her beliefs and is not easily swayed into conforming to peer pressure. Likewise, the Burnell's bold cousin, Pip, chooses to be the strong and dominating character of a bull while his more nurturing brother, Rags, chooses to be a gentle sheep. Mansfield writes, A strange company assembled in the Burnell's washhouse after tea. Round the table there sat a bull, a rooster, a donkey that kept forgetting it was a donkey, a sheep, and a bee. The washhouse was the perfect place for such a meeting because they could make as much noise as they liked, and nobody ever interrupted (Mansfield 121-122).

The children's meeting is private from the eyes and ears of adults. They are able to abandon the manners and calmness of their daily routine and become what they choose to be rather than who they are expected to be. For the Burnell children's' parents, however, there is not the same degree of freedom. The parents have demands on them and responsibilities that prevent them from slipping out of the character that has been chosen for them to be who and what they would like to be. The parents are shackled by traditional gender roles and convention as are most of the characters in Mansfield's short stories. Through the simultaneous examination of the parents and their children, the reader is able to see how certain characteristics of the parents are passed onto their children and how the environment that traps the parents in turn shapes the personalities of their children. The children are either raised like Kezia, to rebel, like Lottie, to accept passively, or like Isabel, to conform actively to the values and characteristics of their parents.

While Mansfield's portrayal of the Burnells is based on her own family and childhood, they are also fictitious, produced by Mansfield in response to her changing world. By studying how Mansfield's characters react to their environment, one can deduce how Mansfield reacted to her own environment. Her characters' rebellions and desires are in

essence her own rebellions and desires. Mansfield's Burnells are products of their New Zealand environment but are also embodiments of Mansfield's vision of the modern post-World War I generation as a whole. The Burnell family serves as a metaphor for society and the characters represent how Mansfield believes that people like she and her contemporaries respond to the modern world. The faults that prevent the Burnell family members from finding happiness and fulfillment, such as selfishness and materialism, are faults that Mansfield sees in her contemporaries. Her short story series is therefore a warning to her contemporaries. Yet, her addition of the kind and generous Kezia adds a positive element to her story series. Despite that Isabel and Lottie are content to follow in the same path as their parents, Kezia is not. Mansfield provides hope, through her representation of Kezia, that the new generation has the potential of becoming better than the limiting environment which it comes from. Kezia develops the characteristics which set her above and beyond her parents and sisters through her relationships with the other characters and by modeling herself after some of their personality traits. The next sections discuss the characters of the Burnell family, their limitations, and their relationships with one another. This leads to an understanding of how and why Kezia is for Mansfield the hope for the modern generation and a model for how Mansfield believes people, and in particular women, should be.

Section 1: Beryl: The Predicament of an Unmarried Woman

Katherine Mansfield develops the character of Beryl Fairfield to illustrate the constrictions that exist in the lives of unmarried bourgeois women and the ways that they are trapped by the traditional values and expectations placed upon them. Beryl's preoccupation with finding a husband, her obsession with her appearance, and her overall superficiality are shown to be largely the result of her fear of remaining unmarried. Being unmarried in Mansfield's time means that Beryl is forced to depend on her extended family, in Beryl's case she is supported by her brother in law, Stanley, until she finds a husband to support her. It was unacceptable for her, as a woman, to hold a job of her own. Therefore, it was virtually impossible for her to have any form of financial independence or authority without first finding a husband and breaking away from the limitations of Stanley's household, in which she has little to no power. Beryl desperately searches for a husband, gearing her actions towards gaining the attention of men and receiving their favorable attention. Unfortunately, this leads Beryl to act superficially because she acts in a way that she believes will increase her odds of finding a husband rather than how she truly desires to act. Mansfield shows that inwardly Beryl condemns her superficiality and desires to act more honestly and openly in her dealings with other people. Beryl searches for relationships with people in which she may act less reserved. She also creates a fantasy lover with whom she may act completely like herself, without regard to societal expectations or gender restrictions. Despite these ways of coping with her position as an unmarried woman, Beryl's unhappiness and rebellion is largely hidden from those around her. She does not openly share her dissatisfaction with others, even her sister and her mother. In fact, her actions model for the Burnell children the same prejudices and values that she loathes and desires inwardly to escape from. Through Beryl, Mansfield shows the constrictions

on unmarried women's lives and more importantly, she shows how these unfavorable values are passed from one generation of women to the next. Beryl represents the status quo because rather than openly rebelling she models bourgeois values for other young women to imitate. Mansfield clearly sympathizes with Beryl's suffering, yet she also criticizes her inability to rise above her troubled environment and her failure to find adequate ways of coping with her position.

The majority of Beryl's attention is directed towards making herself desirable to potential husbands and to other men on whom she has to depend. This leads her to feel that she is superficial and that she is not able act like she really is inside. Even when Beryl writes a letter to a supposedly close female friend, she is angry with herself because she feels that she does not write what she is really feeling but instead what she thinks her friend expects her to write. Beryl is so accustomed to acting superficially in her dealings with men that she cannot even interact with other women in a more intimate, honest, manner. In her letter to her friend, Beryl describes her reactions to moving from the Burnell's house in town into the country with Stanley and Linda. She lightheartedly pokes fun at her new neighbors and she expresses disdain for the ugliness of potential beaux that Stanley brings home from the office to play tennis with. Beryl also discusses her clothing and her appearance in a flighty and superficial manner. Though her letter is light hearted and jovial on the surface, inwardly, Beryl suggests that what she writes in the letter is not a true picture of what she really feels about her new living situation. Her innermost fears that living in the country will decrease her odds of finding a husband are only addressed briefly and jokingly mentioned:

It's pretty certain nobody will ever come out from town to see us . . . It's a sad ending for poor little B. I'll get to be a most awkward frump in a year or two and come and see you in a mackintosh and a sailor hat tied on with a white china silk motor veil. So pretty. (Mansfield 93)

Although she addresses her fear of living in the country, she does not go into the issue on a deeper level. She does not discuss her frustration at being a woman

who must depend on living wherever her sister and her husband live because she does not have money of her own or means of supporting herself. Her letter turns to the superficial aspects of her fear, like what she will look like in a few years and what she will be wearing. This ignores the extremely emotional aspects of her situation. Beryl acknowledges the discrepancy between what she writes in her letter and what she really feels:

In a way, of course, [what she wrote in her letter was] all perfectly true, but in another way it was all the greatest rubbish and she didn't believe a word of it. No, that wasn't true. She felt all those things, but she didn't really feel them like that ... "Oh," she cried, "I am so miserable- so frightfully miserable. I know that I am silly and spiteful and vain; I'm always acting a part. I'm never my real self for a moment." (93 & 95).

Beryl does not feel that how she acts and what she says around other people is truly representative of who she is *inside*. There is an inner part of her which she does not know how to show to others because she has kept it hidden from them for so long. Beryl cannot even admit her fears and frustrations to her sister or her mother, people who might even have been able to sympathize with her as women who have faced similar circumstances. When Linda asks Beryl how she likes living in the country, Beryl answers,

"I like the house immensely and the garden is beautiful, but it feels very far away from everything to me. I can't imagine people coming out from town to see us in that dreadful jolting bus, and I am sure there is not anyone here to come and call. Of course it does not matter to you because . . ." (Mansfield 70)

Beryl intends to finish this statement by saying, "because you are married," however she is interrupted by Linda. Beryl was about to point out that it is less important for Linda to live in a place where callers may stop by easily because Linda is married and has gotten the husband that Beryl can only hope to find if she has contact with potential beaux. Beryl stops short of sharing her fears with Linda because she knows that Linda can no longer fully commiserate with her about what it is like to be an unmarried woman, her primary reason for wanting visitors. Beryl feels a degree of jealousy of her

sister and her position which prevents her from opening up emotionally with her. In addition, Beryl simply lacks the skills necessary for sharing her inner concerns with other.

Beryl's inability to address her innermost fears and concerns is largely due to her dependence on others and her fear of losing the favor of the people on whom she must rely. She thinks to herself, "There came the old thought, the cruel thought- ah, if only she had money of her own" (Mansfield 62). If she had money of her own, Beryl could do and say whatever she wanted because she would not have to worry that her security could be taken away from her. Until she is able to gain financial independence, she is unable to act freely. If Beryl had money of her own, she would not have to gear all of her actions and movements towards gaining the attention of males, nor would she have to obsess over her physical appearance as a means of getting men's attention. When Beryl feels that she looks attractive, her first thoughts are, "How beautiful she looked, but there was nobody to see, nobody" (78). She treasures her beauty, less because it makes her happy about herself, more because she knows that it is a powerful tool that she may use to gain the attention and appreciation of others. It is for this reason that when she knows that she looks attractive, she wishes there is someone, hopefully a prospective husband, around to admire her. Consider Beryl's following

description of herself:

And plainly, plainly, she saw her false self running up and down the stairs, laughing a special trilling laugh if they had visitors, standing under the lamp if a man came to dinner, so that he should see the light on her hair, pouting and pretending to be a little girl when she was asked to play the guitar. Why? She even kept it up for Stanley's benefit. Only last night when he was reading the paper her false self had stood beside him and leaned against his shoulder on purpose. Hadn't she put her hand over his, pointing out something so that he should see how white her hand was beside his brown one? (Mansfield 95)

She admits that she stands in particular places designed to make her look more attractive and she consciously tries to make her physical beauty get noticed, such as when she places her hand beside Stanley's so that he will have to admire its delicacy. Despite the

fact that she spends great energy on these techniques, Beryl is angry with herself for acting in such a superficial and demeaning manner, like pretending to pout and act like a little girl when she is asked to play the guitar. However, Beryl has not learned any alternative techniques for relating to people, and in particular men. This is why she continues to act flirtatiously around Stanley even though as a married man he is incapable of giving her what her actions are designed to acquire: the security of marriage and a home and family of her own. After all, Stanley is already married. Beryl does not know why she acts the way that she does as evidenced when she asks herself, "Why?" Beryl's way of relating to people has been ingrained into her by society since she was young as the only appropriate behavior for women and the only means of getting those things that she has been told to desire. This form of behavior replaces and inhibits her from interacting with others on another level.

Beryl flirts with men out of desperation and fear of being alone and destitute. She feels the need to act politely and properly all of the time for the same reason. She thinks to herself, "You see, it's so frightfully difficult when you've nobody. You're so at the mercy of things. You can't just be rude" (Mansfield 132). Beryl cannot act like her real self, she cannot have mood swings, or act unhappily around other people, because she feels that this might alienate her from those people on whom she depends financially. If she were married, she would have more freedom to be rude, because her position as a wife would give her some connection to her husband's money and a little power. It is clear that Beryl's fear that she will alienate people if she is rude or she complains is justified. Even if she is only slightly unobliging, for example, Stanley reacts with bewilderment and annoyance. He expects, of course, that because he supports Beryl financially, the least she can do is act obligingly and courteously to him. He thinks, "The heartlessness of women! The way that they took it for granted it was your job to slave away for them while they didn't even take the trouble to see that your walking stick wasn't lost" (Mansfield 104). Stanley feels he deserves courtesy and

respect from the women he supports financially. He feels that it is necessary that the women he supports have him and his needs first and foremost in their minds. For this reason, when Stanley's walking stick is lost, even though he has misplaced it himself, he feels that the women should immediately know where it is. They should anticipate that he may need his stick, and make it a priority to know where it is. At tea, Stanley likewise expects that Beryl and her mother serve him, even if he is capable of serving himself. When, as in the following scene, Beryl pours tea for him, he expects not only that she carries out this act, but that she remember such details as the fact that he likes sugar:

[Beryl] sat down at the table and poured out [Stanley's] tea.

"Thanks!" Stanley took a sip. "Hallo!" he said in an astonished voice, "you've forgotten the sugar."

"Oh sorry!" But even then Beryl didn't help him; she pushed the basin across. What did this mean? As Stanley helped himself his blue eyes widened; they seemed to quiver. He shot a quick glance at his sister-in-law and leaned back.

"Nothing wrong, is there?" he asked carelessly, fingering his collar.

"Nothing," said her light voice. Then she too looked up, and smiled at Stanley.

"Why should there be?"

"O-oh! No reason at all as far as I know. I thought you seemed rather-" (Mansfield 102)

Stanley is confused when Beryl pushes the sugar bowl towards him, rather than putting sugar in his tea for him. He expects her to complete the tea service for him and when she does not, he immediately assumes that something must be wrong with her. He is accustomed to her acting obligingly and feels inconvenienced and hurt when she does not, even if her thoughtlessness is very slight. Beryl is aware of Stanley's displeasure but flirtatiously pretends to be oblivious of it, smiling and lightheartedly replying to Stanley. She gets away with her rudeness by utilizing the charms that she often deploys, masking her rudeness with cheerfulness. Beryl asserts that she does not like to be dependent on people because then she cannot be rude, even for a moment, and her complaint is confirmed by Stanley's displeasure when she does indeed act slightly rude. Beryl realizes that her position as an unmarried woman is precarious and she does not

want to test her luck to see what would happen with a greater insult to Stanley than forgetting the sugar for his tea. The only way that she may be rude without suffering any consequences is if the rudeness is slight and if it is not obvious that the rudeness is deliberate. Mansfield bemoans the environment which limits and defines the way that women may express themselves, placing expectations on how they feel they can act. Mansfield's tone in the previous passage implies that she feels it is absurd of Stanley to expect extreme compliance from Beryl and it would be equally absurd for Beryl to conform to his wishes without a degree of rebellion.

Beryl attempts to feel some control and power in her life through her handling of the servants. She makes it her responsibility to pay close attention to how the servants perform their chores, pointing out to them when they do things incorrectly or requiring that they do things differently simply so she can criticize them. Unable to act rudely around men and women of her own social class or above because of her dependence on them and her desire to remain in their good graces, Beryl unloads her negativity on the servants. The servants cannot complain without risking their positions in the Burnell household much in the same way that Beryl cannot complain about or criticize Stanley.

In the following passage, Beryl gives orders to a maid named Alice about how she should serve their tea for company, complaining about how Alice did the tea the day

before:

"There's [a guest] to tea, so heat a plate of yesterday's scones, please. And put on the Victoria sandwich as well as the coffee cake. And don't forget to put doyleys under plates- will you? You did yesterday, you know, and the tea looked so ugly and common. And, Alice, don't put that dreadful old pink and green cozy on the afternoon teapot. That is only for the mornings. Really, I think it ought to be kept in the kitchen- it's so shabby, and quite smelly. Put on the Japanese one. You quite understand, don't you?" (Mansfield 86).

Beryl talks condescendingly to Alice. Beryl asks her if she understands after giving her straightforward orders, as if Alice is not intelligent enough to grasp her directions without further explanation. Beryl's desire to feel in control of her own life transfers into snobbery and prejudice towards those who are in a less powerful situation than

herself. Her disdain for the fact that the tea “looked common” without doyleys further enforces that Beryl has contempt for servantry and those of lower social status than herself. She does not want to be associated with common things because without them existing beneath her, she would feel as if she has no power or control. The servants notice this condescension and resent the way Beryl treats them. Mansfield describes

Alice’s reaction to Beryl’s orders,
 [Alice] wasn’t one to mind being told, but there was something in the way Miss Beryl had of speaking to her that she couldn’t stand. Oh, that she couldn’t. It made her curl up inside, as you might say, and she fair trembled. But what Alice really hated Miss Beryl for was that she made her feel low. She talked to Alice in a special voice as though she wasn’t quite all there . . . (Mansfield 87).

After Beryl talks to Alice, she feels more aware of her own powerlessness and her status as a servant. She describes herself as feeling “low.” Alice feels that there is something unique about the way that Beryl talks to her that reinforces her position as a “common servant girl as doesn’t know how to play the guitar [like Beryl]” (Mansfield 87). Alice feels a degree of disgust for her position and class after having contact with Beryl because Beryl intentionally speaks in a tone that makes the servants feel low and stresses that she holds a social position that is better than theirs. Beryl stresses the difference between her position and the servants largely because her own position is so precarious and she longs to grasp any security and power that she is able. Mansfield does not condone Beryl’s method of coping with her feelings of powerlessness because Mansfield sympathetically shows the devastating effects that her actions have on the servants’ self esteem. Mansfield shows that classism and condescension are negative ways of dealing with a troubled environment because they simply perpetuate the very problems they aim to reduce. Through people like Beryl, the unhappiness of the bourgeois class is funneled down to the lower classes, contributing to a general societal atmosphere of dysfunction.

Mansfield illustrates that by ordering around the servants with condescension and arrogance, Beryl is actually accepting the same bourgeois notions that trap her as a

woman and prevent her from being financially independent. Although ordering around the servants helps Beryl cope with her position, it does not help her escape from it. On the other hand, Mansfield more positively portrays Beryl's interaction with a woman who has found ways of subverting traditional roles for women rather than enforcing.

Mrs. Harry Kember, one of the women who lives by the bay near the Burnells, offers

Beryl an alternative to bourgeois notions of propriety for women:
 [Mrs. Harry Kember] was the only woman at the Bay who smoked, and she smoked incessantly . . . The women at the Bay thought she was very, very fast. Her lack of vanity, her slang, the way she treated men as though she was one of them, and the fact that she didn't care twopence about her house and called the servant Gladys "Glad-eyes," was disgraceful . . . It was an absolute scandal! True, she had no children . . . (Mansfield 110).

Mrs. Harry Kember is scandalous because she does not act, dress, or talk the same way as the other women from the Bay. She acts as if she is an equal of the men, doesn't have children, and partakes in unladylike activities. Noteworthily, Mrs. Kember does not condescend to her servant woman but instead interacts with her on an equal, intimate, level. Mrs. Kember's relationship with Gladys is rebuked because it eliminates the distance between the classes that women like Beryl need in their lives to avoid feeling powerless. Mrs. Kember's intimacy with her servant reveals that she feels more in control and happier with her life than the more traditional women who are drawn into prejudice.

Beryl, who herself does and says what she believes others want her to do and say, is intrigued by Mrs. Kember because Beryl feels that with her she is able to act less reserved than usual. Beryl chooses to bathe with Mrs. Kember despite the fact that she knows the other women from the Bay do not approve of Mrs. Kember or Beryl's association with her. Yet, even Beryl's rebellion of bathing with Mrs. Kember does not go against all bourgeois notions of propriety because Mrs. Kember clearly has wealth and good financial standing despite her "fast" reputation. Beryl is not able to rebel in a way that would seriously jeopardize her relations with her peer group, Mrs. Kember

satisfying her need to rebel without endangering her position in that same environment from which she desires to rebel against.

Nevertheless, Beryl likes to spend time with Mrs. Kember. With her, Beryl may act less reserved than usual. For example, when Mrs. Kember and Beryl are preparing for their swim, Mrs. Kember openly compliments Beryl's body and physical appearance. Mrs. Kember also tells Beryl that she doesn't need to be shy undressing around her, as she would around "those other ninnies" from the Bay who would find it shocking or improper:

[Beryl] never undressed in front of anybody. Was that silly? Mrs. Kember made her feel it was silly, even something to be ashamed of. Why be shy indeed! She glanced quickly at her friend standing so boldly in her torn chemise and lighting a fresh cigarette; and a quick, bold, evil feeling started up in her breast. Laughing recklessly, she drew on the limp, sandy-feeling bathing-dress that was not quite dry and fastened the twisted buttons (111).

There are two crucial elements to Mrs. Kember's appreciation of Beryl's body. First, Mrs. Kember appreciates Beryl's body without being a male suitor. This experience is valuable for Beryl because generally her appearance is linked with gaining the attention of male suitors and is seldom appreciated without regard to its functional value. Second, Mrs. Kember's blunt vocalization of admiration is uncommon in the reserved company with which Beryl usually associates. Beryl feels liberated by her association with Mrs. Kember because she calls traditional values and priorities into question. Beryl feels free to be reckless with Mrs. Harry Kember and to rebel against social guidelines of propriety that she follows when she is around other men and women of her social class. Beryl finds Mrs. Kember dangerous because she makes Beryl question everything she has grown up accepting as real and true: "Beryl felt that she was being poisoned by this cold woman, but she longed to hear. But oh, how strange, how horrible!" (111). On one hand, Beryl longs to learn how to be more liberated like Mrs. Kember because she feels that she is herself unable to be free and act like her real self. On the other hand, because Beryl was raised with certain notions of how women should act, she is

equally repulsed by and afraid of Mrs. Kember who is so different from what she has been told women should be. Beryl does not want to be exactly like Mrs. Harry Kember even though she enjoys associating with her. There is a difference between desiring to spend time with Mrs. Harry Kember and actually emulating her. Beryl after all still maintains secret desires to find a “prince charming” and to be his princess, something she could not do if she were *too* like the rather unattractive, harsh, and unfeminine Mrs. Harry Kember.

A less frightening way for Beryl to deal with her position than associating with Mrs. Harry Kember, is to develop a fantasy world. Beryl frequently day dreams, creating an environment in which she is happier and more in control than in her real life. To combat her loneliness and the sensation that she is not acting like her real self with the people she knows, Beryl creates fantasy lovers to keep her company and to be “real” with. Beryl talks with her imaginary lover, imagining him holding her. Mansfield writes from

Beryl’s perspective:

It is lonely living by oneself. Of course, there are relations, friends, heaps of them; but that’s not what she means. She wants some one who will find the Beryl that none of them know, who will expect her to be that Beryl always. She wants a lover. “Take me away from all these other people, my love. Let us go far away. Let us live our life, all new, all ours, from the very beginning . . .” And the thought was almost, ‘Save me, my love. Save me!’ (131-132).

Beryl desperately asks her imaginary lover to save her from herself and from everyone she cannot be her real self around. Although Mrs. Kember momentarily offers Beryl the ability to act freely, even with her Beryl cannot be her real self completely. Mrs. Kember serves as a model for Beryl, a woman who follows her whims and desires over societal values yet Beryl does not want to be *like* Mrs. Kember. Beryl wants to be free, but free in her own way. Beryl has not been able to find someone with whom she can be this “real” Beryl except with her imaginary lover. With a lover, Beryl thinks that she wouldn’t have fear or uncomfortability in acting contrary to societal values because at the end of the day she wouldn’t have to associate with those people whom she cannot

act real around. Beryl cannot be totally free with Mrs. Kember because she knows that after their swim she must return to her life with her mother and Linda wherein she continues to act superficially and continues to search desperately for a husband. With an imaginary lover, Beryl has the ability to escape the demands of others and the need to depend on them without offending anyone or ruining her chances of finding a real lover. If Beryl acted like Mrs. Kember and let Mrs. Kember influence her too greatly, Beryl would not be able to find a husband. Having an imaginary lover is a way for Beryl to be herself without wrecking her chances of finding someone with whom she can really be herself. Yet, this strategy is only fantasy.

Beryl is a victim of the bourgeois environment in which she is raised. She is not allowed to learn the skills that she needs to survive on her own, making her fully dependent on men for financial support and security. Beryl's talents and skills are connected to her sexuality and prepare her for finding a husband. Even her escape fantasies involve finding the man whom Beryl has been told she needs to find. Her rebellions mainly occur inside her head and in her fantasy world. Her revolt is therefore almost undetectable to the other characters as she flirts, dresses up, and writes letters using a superficial and flighty tone. Since Beryl's subversive tendencies are internal while outwardly she models bourgeois values, she sets an example for her sister's children that will continue the same cycle that has trapped her. Her actions teach the Burnell girls to accept bourgeois values and mannerisms. When in "The Doll's House" Kezia rebels against her family and their warnings not to associate with the Kelvey daughters because of their poverty and poor social standing, Beryl yells at Kezia and calls her a "Wicked disobedient little girl!" (Mansfield 321). Beryl who wishes she herself could rebel criticizes Kezia when she succeeds in thinking for herself and acting contrary to social norms. Through her criticism of Kezia, Beryl reinforces social norms and propagates prejudice and conformity. The reader witnesses Beryl's unhappiness and desire to escape but for the Burnell daughters this unhappiness is

hidden. Beryl is not concerned with the effects that hiding her unhappiness and modeling those values that constrict her will have on the Burnell daughters. Instead, Beryl feels happiness, rather than guilt, after she scolds Kezia. Scolding Kezia serves to build her confidence in the same way as scolding the servants. Her happiness is placed above the Burnell girls' feelings or their enrichment. Mansfield paints a bleak picture of the modern bourgeois class through characters such as Beryl who are both victims of their positions in society but are also too selfish to help protect others from becoming victims as well. Mansfield portrays bourgeois society as one that promotes selfishness and the internalization of one's problems with the consequence that the system continues to repeat itself with each generation even though the people who promote the system know that it is unsatisfactory.

Section 2: Linda; The Rebellion of the Bourgeois Wife

Although it has been shown that Beryl is an inadequate role model for the Burnell daughters, it is not her job nor her responsibility to guide and protect her nieces in the same way that it is Linda and Stanley Burnell's responsibility. The job of raising children is ultimately the job of the parents. Yet, unfortunately, the job of educating and nurturing the Burnell children is not embraced either by Stanley or Linda. Linda Burnell is too selfish and superficial to be concerned with her own children's welfare. Likewise, she does not value her position in their lives as their mother because she resents that as a woman she has been trapped into the domestic, parental role. Linda resents the position as wife and mother even as her sister Beryl desperately craves it. Linda learns to escape her unsatisfactory reality by developing a fantasy world where she can be happy and in control. At the same time, Linda also withdraws from her children, her husband, and any form of activity or duty. She becomes frustratingly passive about the direction in which her life is taken, choosing to spend her time laying around and complaining about her poor health, which she blames on child birthing. Mansfield portrays Linda in part as a victim of bourgeois values towards women, and in part as a woman who exploits her social position by not working around the house or making any effort to raise her children, her jobs being delegated to her servants. While Mansfield is sympathetic to Linda's plight, she does not advocate that women model themselves after Linda. Linda is more of a victim than an example of strength or rebellion against the bourgeois values that Mansfield longs to subvert. Much of Mansfield's attention is also spent portraying the consequences that Linda's neglect of her children has on them and the example that she sets for her daughters. Mansfield recognizes that the women of her generation, particularly from the bourgeois class, have opportunities for freedom which did not previously exist. Yet, Mansfield also examines

the consequence that these women's' freedom and new independence have on the children they birth who are essentially the first generation being raised with mothers resisting their traditional duties. Although Mansfield does not advocate that women should be forced into motherhood, she does not feel that women should neglect their children or emotional relationships. Mansfield wavers between sympathy for Linda and disapproval of the way Linda focuses on her self, material objects, and her comfort at the expense of her children.

Linda Burnell has more control over her life and freedom than her unmarried sister Beryl due to her social position as Stanley's wife. Yet, Linda also feels quite constricted by her position as mother and wife. In fact, Linda finds that there is a new set of restrictions and restraints on women that exist after marriage and are not present when one is single, such as the obligation to have children. Linda wishes for a way to escape from her situation and she feels trapped in the role that society has defined for her as a woman. As a wife, Linda knows that she is obligated to have children for her husband and to act like a mother to them. She admits, however, that she cannot love her children

or the role of being a mother even though this is expected of her as a woman: Yes, that was [Linda's] real grudge against life; that was what she could not understand. That was the question she asked and asked, and listened in vain for the answer. It was all very well to say it was the common lot of women to bear children. It wasn't true. She for one, could prove that wrong. She was broken, made weak, her courage was gone, through childbearing. And what made it doubly hard to bear was, she did not love her children. It was useless pretending. Even if she had had the strength she never would have nursed and played with [her] little girls . . . As to the boy [her son]- well, thank Heaven, mother had taken him. She had hardly held him in her arms. She was so indifferent as he lay there . . . (113-114).

Linda does not understand why it is so commonly believed that women's purpose and greatest desire is to bear children. She feels that having children has made her physically weak and emotionally unstable. She also notes that no "maternal" instinct has kicked in which to make her love her children or want to nurture them. If it were true that women are biologically predisposed to have children and to be mothers, surely, Linda feels, she would not hate being a mother so much and it would come to her

without so much strain. Linda questions the basic premise behind bourgeois society that asserts that women are intended to be mothers and men are intended to be providers because they are intellectually and physically superior. Linda uses her body as a judge of her suitability for childbirth rather than blindly accepting the common notion that she was intended to be a mother because she is a female.

Linda feels an intense desire to escape from her position as a mother and wife, not to embrace this role as she is expected to do. Like Beryl, Linda uses fantasy to create a world in which she is not so constrained. This fantasy world is very vivid and real to Linda. She imagines herself riding away from her family and husband on an

aloe plant which has been transformed into a boat:

As [Linda and her mother] stood on the steps, the high grassy bank on which the aloe rested rose up like a wave, and the aloe seemed to ride upon it like a ship with the oars lifted. Bright moonlight hung upon the lifted oars like water, and on the green wave glittered the dew. . . [Linda] dreamed that she was caught up out of the cold water into the ship with the lifted oars and the budding mast. . . They rowed far away over the top of the garden trees, the paddocks and the dark bush beyond. Ah, she heard herself cry: 'Faster! Faster!' to those who were rowing. How much more real this dream was than that they should go back to the house where the sleeping children lay and where [her husband and her sister] played cribbage (Mansfield 90).

Linda asserts to herself that it seems as if her imaginary boat ride is more real than the life she actually leads. This shows that Linda is so detached from her family that she feels more emotional connection to a fantasy than to them. Linda hears herself calling to those who are rowing to go faster, so eager is she to get away from her home and her family. On the imaginary boat Linda feels she has control, such as over the speed and the direction she escapes. She yells, "Faster! Faster!" assertively controlling her situation. She feels her real life, on the other hand, is not the result of conscious effort and that she does not have control over it. Others have chosen what path she will take in her real life. Beginning when she was young and her father teasingly whispered suggestively in her ear "Linny's beau" when Stanley Burnell walked by their house, a life raveled out in front of Linda and she lived it because it was expected of her. So,

even though Linda thinks, ““Oh, papa, fancy being married to Stanley Burnell,”” after he walks past, suddenly she finds herself married to him and having his children even though she had no intention of doing so. After recalling this scene between herself and her father, Linda thinks, “Well, she was married to him” (Mansfield 113). By leaving out any of the details of Stanley’s courting, Mansfield implies that Linda is not sure how she went from that moment on the porch with her dad when Stanley walks by, to being Linda Burnell. Linda believes that her marriage exists because it was expected of her, not because of any effort or engagement by her. When she was young Linda could more easily imagine herself sailing on boats in China with her father than she could believe she would become Stanley’s wife. Her dad promised her, moments before Stanley Burnell walked by, that they would “cut off somewhere, [they’d] escape. Two boys together . . . [sailing] up a river to China” (Mansfield 112). Mansfield writes, “Linda saw that river, very wide, covered with little rafts and boats. She saw the yellow hats of the boatmen and she heard their high, thin voices as they called” (112). Clearly her dad’s suggestion was an impossibility for both of them, they would never be “two boys together.” Nor would they ever be able to escape the fact that they have obligations and that there are societal expectations for how both men and women should act. However, Linda does learn from her father how to use imagination and fantasy as a means of coping with reality. From an early age, the dream world that her dad offers her is more appealing and believable to her than her actual life. Linda continues to use the fantasy world after her marriage, finding it to be comforting.

Linda’s unhappiness and her sensation of being trapped in a life that she has not chosen for herself is enough to make her wonder why she is even living at all: How absurd life was- it was laughable, simply laughable. And why this mania to keep alive at all? For it really was a mania, [Linda] thought, mocking and laughing. ‘What am I guarding myself for so preciously? I shall go on having children and Stanley will go on making money and the children and the gardens will grow bigger and bigger... (Mansfield 91).

Linda does not see a way for she and Stanley to escape the track they are on as a socially advancing married couple. She predicts that in the future, Stanley will continue working and advancing at his job, they will get more land and money, and their children will grow up. This expected future looks dismal to Linda. She does not know why she forces her frail body, weak from childbearing, to fight to stay alive when the future waiting for her looks so unappealing. Death, like her fantasy world, represents a way out of her position as wife and mother. But for Linda, the view of death as an escape for her is also a fantasy. She does not attempt suicide and is it unlikely she would do so because there is a side of Linda that is actually very content with her life and who loves Stanley despite his weaknesses.

Linda's relationship to her husband as is complex as is her view of life. She views Stanley both as the means by which she has been trapped into marriage and childbearing but she loves and admires him for his positive qualities. When Linda contemplates her frail body, recognizing the role that childbearing has had on her ill-health, she blames Stanley and concludes that she hates him. She describes how, after they have sexual relations, Stanley is very kind to her, and acts as if he would do anything for her. Linda knows it is through the sexual act that she is forced to have the children who are breaking her spirit and harming her body. She says to her mother, "“You know I'm very delicate. You know as well as I do that my heart is affected, and the doctor has told you I may die at any moment. I have had three great lumps of children already”" (Mansfield 91). Then Linda's voice trails off, Yes, yes, it was true. Linda snatched her hand from her mother's arm. For all her love and respect and admiration she hated him. And how tender he always was after [sexual intercourse], how submissive, how thoughtful. He would do anything for her; he longed to serve her . . . (Mansfield 91).

Linda feels that if Stanley truly loved her and longed to serve her, he would not be so eager to make her have the children which she feels are destroying her. Since it is Stanley, through the sexual act, who is responsible for her children, she feels anger and

hatred towards him. Linda also loves Stanley, however. Despite the role that he plays as her husband and father of her children, Linda sees positive qualities in him as an individual. Her greatest regret is that the Stanley whom she loves is mingled with the Stanley who goes to work, who obsesses over social status, appearances, and finances, and who desires a perfect family and a male heir. She abhors these qualities in Stanley because they are the qualities that trap her into her role as a wife and because they prevent Stanley from being what she considers his “real self” more often, the Stanley she loves. Linda describes sadly that she feels as if she is constantly trying to save the Stanley she loves from the Stanley, the world, and the values she hates. She feels that Stanley cannot see how he is caught dangerously in the grips of societal values and superficial concerns, and she feels her job is to try constantly to protect the small part of

Stanley that is his genuine self:

And what was more [Linda] loved [Stanley]. Not the Stanley whom everyone saw, not the everyday one; but a timid, sensitive, innocent Stanley who knelt down every night to say his prayers, and who longed to be good . . . But the trouble was- here Linda felt inclined to laugh, though Heaven knows it was no laughing matter- she saw her Stanley so seldom. There were glimpses, moments, breathing spaces of calm, but all the rest of the time it was like living in a house that couldn't be cured of the habit of catching on fire, on a ship that got wrecked everyday. And it was always Stanley who was in the thick of the danger. Her whole time was spent in rescuing him, and restoring him, and calming him down, and listening to his story. And what was left of her time was spent in the dread of having children (Mansfield 113).

Linda feels that if Stanley's real self were lost forever, it would cause her to suffer. She would no longer have anything about Stanley to love and would be left simply with the dread of her children and her unpleasant bourgeois life. Loving Stanley, trying to protect his real self, is one of Linda's few pursuits and purposes. Frustratingly passive with her children and with her life in general, Linda at least professes to fight the flames and water to protect Stanley. Yet, Linda's motivation for saving Stanley is self centered, more concerned with helping him to protect her own sanity than for his benefit. She does not consider it hypocritical to criticize Stanley's superficiality, materialism, and acceptance of bourgeois societal standards when she has these same faults. Linda

construes her marriage to make herself out to be a martyr and a hero, with everyone but her being in the wrong. She views herself as a victim but does not consider that she makes victims of her own children by neglecting them emotionally. Her own needs are the only ones that she feels it is necessary to satisfy.

Interpreting Linda as purely a victim of society is inaccurate even though this is how she perceives herself. Compared to the life of her sister and her mother, Linda has an easy life. Her children are taken care of by servants, she doesn't have to do any work at all, and she is able to spend her days laying around in bed daydreaming, the activity she most enjoys. Linda is continually described as resting in chairs with blankets over her legs or lying in bed while the world goes on around her. As Beryl and Stanley play cards in the evening, she sits "in a long cane chair, with her feet on a hassock, and a plaid over her knees, lay before a crackling fire" (58). Although Linda suggests that she is inactive and weak due to birthing children, there is also evidence that she is inactive due to laziness and simply because she *can* lie around all day, a benefit of being a bourgeois wife. The Burnells can afford servants to clean the house, cook, and garden and do all the things Linda would be expected to do if she were a woman of lower social class. If Linda had married into poverty, she would not be able to lie around all day regardless of her ill health and would have to work until she became overcome by exhaustion. The life she leads is very devoid of work or stress: "In a steamer chair, under a manuka tree that grew in the middle of the front grass patch, Linda Burnell dreamed the morning away. She did nothing" (111). This slothful life is appealing to a woman who has developed a love of day dreaming early in childhood and Linda's frailty provides her with the perfect excuse to sit around, doing nothing but dreaming. It is likely that Linda exaggerates the extent of her frailty so that she can avoid doing those things that she does not want to do, such as raising her children. When Stanley offers her a piece of meat, she replies, "'The very thought of it is enough'" (59). She overemphasizes the severity of her frailty, implying that even eating is too much for her too

handle. Yet, even after she suggests that the doctor told her she “may die at any moment,” she is able to birth her son and continue living as before (Mansfield 91). Linda exaggerates her frailty to justify her idle and self-centered way of life and to avoid responsibilities. She is thus allowed to spend time in the imaginary world she prefers *due to* the marriage that she believes limits her freedom.

Despite the fact that Linda criticizes Stanley’s materialism, she is herself infatuated with the material realm and enjoys the luxuries that come from her social position. This is another indication that Linda’s complaints about being trapped in her bourgeois life are exaggerated. After all, it does not make sense for her to complain about her bourgeois life and Stanley’s obsession with his work if she enjoys the benefits and privileges that come with this lifestyle. If Stanley did not work at the office, she would not be able to live in a beautiful house with servants, she would not be able to lie around doing nothing. In the opening scene of “Prelude” Linda exposes the degree to which she values material possessions over human feelings or relationships. In this scene, Linda and Mrs. Fairfield are in the Burnell’s buggy, preparing to move to their new house. Kezia, Lottie, and a few pieces of luggage remain outside the buggy, waiting to be loaded. Linda says, surveying the children and the boxes, “‘We shall simply have to leave them. That is all. We shall simply have to cast them off’” (Mansfield 51). With this statement, Linda laughs, knowing that it is unclear to the other characters if her statement refers to the boxes or her children. Her own children, after all, look at her with wide solemn eyes and then at the luggage which Linda refers to as her “absolute necessities.” They know that their mother might choose the luggage over them and they are afraid to be cast away for the boxes and packages. Linda ultimately chooses to take the packages with her rather than her children, illustrating that the packages are more important to her than the feelings of her own flesh and blood. Linda’s laughter as she makes her comment about the boxes shows that she feels some degree of pleasure as she makes her children uncomfortable. Her behavior is an attack on her defenseless

children, victimizing them as she herself feels victimized; This dynamic resembles that of Beryl's victimizing treatment of the servants.

Linda makes comments designed to hurt Stanley also. She is able to be rude to Stanley and inconsiderate of his needs unlike Beryl who is dependent on him without the security of marital status. When, for instance, Stanley runs about the house, demanding his walking stick, Linda responds to him by saying, "Stick, dear? What stick?"

Linda knows that Stanley is looking for his walking stick but she avoids having to look for it by feigning that she does not know what he is looking for and by acting too frail to get up and search for it. By making Stanley guilty about the role he plays in her frailty because he is the reason she has had children, Linda manipulates her husband into doing things for her. Though Stanley thinks, "Linda's vagueness on these occasions could not be real" (Mansfield 103), he tolerates Linda's inconsideration because she is his wife. After Stanley and Linda engage in sexual intercourse, Stanley is particularly attentive to Linda because she has drilled into him the idea that this act and the children that come of it are responsible for her ill health. Linda describes that after physical intimacy Stanley would "do anything for her; he longed to serve her" (91). She asks Stanley to light a candle and he jumps up immediately to do so. By feigning weakness and by making Stanley feel guilty about his role in her frailty and the sexual act, Linda gains control over Stanley. She is able to do whatever she wants with her time by pretending she cannot do anything. In this sense, Linda uses the stereotypes about women being weak and powerless as a tool to get the control she wants to have.

Despite the fact that she is herself a mother, Linda acts frustratingly like a child herself. She avoids responsibility and work and escapes to an imaginary world whenever possible. Her relationship to her mother, even after her marriage to Stanley, is very similar to what it likely was when she was a child. Her mother continues to cook for her and take care of her. Linda clearly relishes having her mother around, taking care of

her. Regardless of the fact that Linda does not desire to be a mother herself, she is

comforted by the valuable role her mother has in her life:

Linda leaned her cheek on her fingers and watched her mother. She thought her mother looked wonderfully beautiful with her back to the leafy window. There was something comforting in the sight of her that Linda felt she could never do without. She needed the sweet smell of her flesh, and the soft feel of her cheeks and her arms and shoulders still softer. She loved the way her hair curled, silver at her forehead, lighter at her neck, and bright brown still in the big coil under the muslin cap. Exquisite were her mother's hands, and the two rings she wore seemed to melt into her creamy skin. And she was always so fresh, so delicious" (Mansfield 70).

Even though Linda knows the importance her mother has to her, she does not consider it important to her own daughters to have her presence in their lives. She is too absorbed with her own needs to consider the needs of her daughters. Mrs. Fairfield comes to be more of a mother to Linda's children than Linda is herself, and the children become more hers than Linda's: "Old Mrs. Fairfield, in a lilac cotton dress and a black hat tied under her chin, gathered her little brood and got them ready" (Mansfield 108). Mrs. Fairfield tries to get Linda to take some responsibility for her children but is

unsuccessful:

"Isn't there anything for me to do? asked Linda.

"No, darling. I wish you would go into the garden and give an eye to your children; but that I know you will not do" [Mrs. Fairfield replies]

"Of course I will, but you know Isabel is much more grown up than any of us"

"Yes, but Kezia is not," said Mrs. Fairfield.

"Oh, Kezia has been tossed by a bull hours ago," said Linda, winding herself up in her shawl again."

Linda suggests that her children are more grown up than the adults. Yet, she really means that the children are more mature than *herself*. She uncaringly suggests that Kezia has been tossed by a bull, illustrating the degree to which she lacks any regard for the safety of her children or any feeling of obligation to watch over them. She wraps herself up in her shawl again, obviously not about to go check up on her children's' welfare even after suggesting that they may potentially be in dangerous situations. Even though Linda's mother is herself a good mother, and tries to get Linda to take some parental responsibility, Linda does not take care of her own children. She is influenced

more by the escapist and dreamlike attitudes modeled by her father than by her more traditional mother. Beryl, in contrast, is more affected by Mrs. Fairfield's values therefore Beryl adopts more of the domestic ideals and work ethics of her mother. Mansfield presents the reader with a family system where the attitudes of the parents are passed along to their children. She illustrates that Beryl and Linda are influenced by the attitudes of their mother and father respectively. Beryl comes to internalize the bourgeois values that her mother embraced. Linda, on the other hand, learns to romanticize an escape from these values as she sits daydreaming with her father. Through her dreams, Linda comes to question her bourgeois reality as she compares it to the fantasy world she creates and finds it less appealing and more constricting. Through the characters of Linda and Beryl, Mansfield portrays two bourgeois women and how these women came to be. Showing the women to be selfish, superficial, materialistic, and prejudiced, Mansfield criticizes contemporary women who are like Beryl and Linda and the society from which they come. Yet, Mansfield's text also makes predictions based on her observations of bourgeois women. She suggests, through her detailed analysis of Linda's children, how the next generation of women may act. Will they follow in the footsteps of their fathers or their mothers? Will they embrace their same values? Mansfield is interested in whether future women will rise above a poor social system, plagued by superficiality and prejudice, or whether they will become saturated by it. She criticizes Linda's neglect of her children largely because her neglect increases the chances that her children will not be given the attention that they require to become better women than the generation before. While Mansfield criticizes Linda's neglect of her children, she more forcefully criticizes the bourgeois society that forces women like Linda into marriages in which they will be unhappy and unable to give their children love and encouragement. Mansfield does not want to see the bourgeois cycle continue but believes that as long as it produces women like Linda, there is little hope that their children will be much different from them.

Section 3: Stanley; The Superficial Father

Stanley Burnell, the father figure, is the only male in the Burnell family until the birth of his fourth child, his first son. Stanley's perspective is therefore one of the few male perspectives that Mansfield gives to the reader, focusing her text largely on point of view of women and children. In addition, the majority of the action of "At the Bay" takes place at the Burnell household while Stanley is in town at work. Stanley's business world, his office, and his business associates are alien to the female characters who spend their days at the Burnell home. Likewise, the domestic realm of the women is unfamiliar to Stanley whose thoughts center on his job, how much money he makes, his home, and his other possessions. Unlike Linda who rebels against bourgeois notions mentally, Stanley embodies bourgeois notions. Stanley's thoughts are influenced almost entirely by traditional values and roles. He is the head of the household, a provider, and he revels in his physical strength and dominating qualities. Much of his attention is spent thinking about the things that he owns, his wife, or his growing family. He is much more pleased with having a family than Linda and he is especially intent to have a male heir to carry on his name. Although it is positive that Stanley, in contrast to Linda, desires the family that he has, his motivation for wanting the family is superficial. He has so fully internalized bourgeois values that he believes he wants a family because has been shown that as a man he *should* have a family. He follows along with bourgeois notions of propriety and value without any desire to escape from them largely because he is placed in a powerful position within the family because of the notions. Of course, no real emotional connection is formed between Stanley and his children or his wife because he does not have his own reasons for desiring them short of believing that he should. Mansfield portrays Stanley with less sympathy than she shows for Beryl and Linda who are more trapped into their domestic roles. She portrays him largely as

foolish, egotistical, and shallow. He is also shown to be responsible for promoting and maintaining bourgeois values and criticizing questioning of traditional roles. Since Stanley appreciates and adopts the bourgeois values, judging his self worth and success based on them, it is crucial to him that these values be maintained. He desires to pass bourgeois values to his children and he models them in his daily activities.

The female characters are aware of the difference between Stanley's world and their own. They perceive Stanley's presence as a disruption to their realm and they realize they act differently and have different demands placed on them when Stanley is around. The female characters feel relief when Stanley leaves for work in the morning because they may settle into their own routines and activities without the hindrance of Stanley's

male influence:

Into the living-room [Beryl] ran and called "He's gone!" Linda cried from her room: "Beryl Has Stanley gone?" Old Mrs. Fairfield appeared, carrying the boy in his little flannel coatee. "Gone?" "Gone!" Oh, the relief, the difference it made to have the man out of the house. Their very voices were changed as they called to one another; they sounded warm and loving and as if they shared a secret. Beryl went over to the table. "Have another cup of tea, mother. It's still hot." She wanted, somehow, to celebrate the fact that they could do what they liked now. There was no man to disturb them; the whole perfect day was theirs' . . . Even Alice, the servant girl, washing up the dishes in the kitchen, caught the infection and used the precious tank water in a perfectly reckless fashion (Mansfield 104).

Mansfield describes the way that the women act after Stanley leaves with comedy as they rush about the house, calling to each other gleefully to be rid of the male influence in the house. Far from feeling left out of the women's lives, however Stanley recognizes and revels in the fact that his world is different from that of the females. His actions often center on promoting or reinforcing the differences between the females' domestic role and his own role as man and provider. He takes great pride in his position as the head of the family; Stanley even performs the act of cutting meat at the

dinner table as a demonstration of his masculinity:

Burnell ran his eye along the edge of the carving knife. He prided himself very much upon his carving, upon making a first-class job of it. He hated seeing a woman carve; they were always too slow and they never seemed to care what the

meat looked like afterwards. Now he did; he took real pride in cutting delicate shaves of cold beef... (Mansfield 87).

Stanley feels that women cannot do the task with the same quality of workmanship as himself. His ability to cut the meat is therefore the result of his masculinity and his gender is largely responsible for his success. Likewise, the meat represents his competence as a man and husband because he earns the money to buy the meat. As he cuts the meat, he asks, “Is this the first of the home products?” (87). He already knows the answer to his question is yes, that the duck is the first animal they have eaten that was raised on their new country estate. Stanley asks the question because he is wants to delight in the fact that he is carving an animal raised on his property. He feels that the duck is the direct result of his work at the office and is therefore proof of his ability as a man, husband, and father.

Stanley feels it is important that he has a male heir to carry on as his name and fortune.

A son could be introduced into his male realm, unlike his daughters. Stanley

contemplates his desire for a male child:

Isabel and Lottie sat one on either side of the table, Kezia at the bottom- the place at the top was empty. “That’s where my boy ought to sit,” thought Stanley. He tightened his arm round Linda’s shoulder. By God, he was a perfect fool to feel as happy as this! (Mansfield 76).

He imagines his son at the head of the table, the place of honor. He imagines his son embracing the role as the head of the family, like he himself has done. When Linda does birth a male child, Stanley takes keen interest in his welfare. His first statement to his mother in law in the morning is, “Morning, mother! How’s the boy?” (Mansfield 102). Stanley does not even say his child’s name, reinforcing that Stanley’s inquiry about the child is due to its sex. The interest he shows in the male child is greater than that he shows for his daughters, stressing that he will give his son more attention than he gives to the girls. He will encourage his son to follow in his father’s footsteps, as his daughters are encouraged by default to follow in their mother’s footsteps.

Even though Stanley takes interest in having a son and someone to follow in his footsteps, he still does not take an active role in raising his son. The job of raising the children is reserved for the servants or Mrs. Fairfield. After all, as a male, it is not traditionally his job to take an active role in nurturing and raising the children. When Stanley returns from work in the evenings, his thoughts center on his possessions, his happiness in owning them, and those things that he wishes to obtain. His primary concerns are with material objects, rather than human relationships. In fact, he often

conceives of human relationships as if they are material possessions:
 He wanted to be home. Ah it was splendid to live in the country- to get right out of that hole of a town once the office was closed; and this drive in the fresh warm air, knowing all the while that his own house was at the other end, with its garden and paddocks, its three tip-top cows and enough fowls and ducks to keep them in poultry, was splendid too. . . On Sunday morning they would go to church- children and all. Which reminded him that he must hire a pew, in the sun if possible and well forward so as to be out of the draught from the door. In fancy he heard himself intoning extremely well: "When thou didst overcome the Sharpness of Death Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers." And he saw the neat brass-edged card on the corner of the pew- Mr. Stanley Burnell and family (Mansfield 74).

His wife and children are not the primary reasons that he is glad upon returning home. The house and gardens, like the duck he carves at the dinner table, all represent to Stanley his adequacy as a male and are the center of his attention. Likewise, when Stanley considers going to church, he does not have his or his family's' salvation in mind. He is concerned with where they will sit and how *his* name will look on the name plate on the pew. Stanley also imagines how he will sound repeating lines during the ceremony. He is less concerned with what he says than how "extremely" well he says it. He feels that having a brass name plate and his ability to intone are examples of his merit and are more important than spiritual growth and purity. Stanley's materialism is so great that he even has the irrational feeling that he can buy good weather: "He was enormously pleased [with the deal he got on his new house]. Weather like this set a final seal on his bargain. He felt, somehow, that he had brought the lovely day too- got it chucked in dirt cheap with the house and the ground" (Mansfield 64). Stanley

perceives the day as something that was designed just for him, rather than a random and unrelated circumstance, thereby placing himself and his needs at the center of his thoughts as well as at the center of world events. With such a comfortable and important position, there is little reason why Stanley would question whether he deserves to be placed in this position and many reasons why he would want things to remain as they are.

Stanley tries to convince himself that his obsession with the material world stems from his extreme attachment to and affection for his family and his wife so that he will not feel he is shallow or superficial and therefore can maintain a positive image of himself. It is evident that his familial concern is superficial, however. His family, like his house or his pew in the church, make Stanley feel good about himself. Stanley cares about these things because of how they make him feel about himself, not because of any true love that he feels for them. Consider the following scene between Stanley and his wife. Stanley returns home after work in a fit, asking for Linda's forgiveness. However, Linda doesn't have any idea what Stanley is apologizing for. Stanley blurts, "You can't have forgotten. I've thought of nothing else all day. I've had the hell of a day. I made up my mind to dash out and telegraph, and then I thought the wire mightn't reach you before I did. I've been in tortures, Linda." When Linda again professes not to know what Stanley did wrong, he explains that he "went away without saying good-bye to [her]" that morning before work and that he had suffered for all day from guilt and regret (Mansfield 129-130). Stanley implies that his concern for his wife is so deep that he can be in absolute anguish over something as little forgetting to say good bye to her. Yet, the reader senses, as does Linda, that Stanley's anguish is more melodramatic than truly heartfelt. Linda, who is not worked up over Stanley's forgetfulness, notices something in Stanley's hand and inquires what it is it. Stanley reveals that the object is a new pair of gloves that he bought for himself after work. He adds that he had seen another man wearing them that morning in the coach and had

decided to buy some for himself as he passed the shop. It is clear that Stanley's anguish was not severe enough to prevent him from observing someone's gloves or deciding to buy them. Stanley is so "distraught" that he postpones getting home to his wife in order to buy a cheap pair of gloves, even though he professes to have been in a great hurry get home to her. Obtaining the gloves is a priority over returning to his wife, even on a day that he protests to be extremely anxious to get home to apologize to her. Stanley's superficiality, his obsession with the material world, is also evidenced in his fixation on his body and his appearance. As Stanley rides towards home, Mansfield writes that "He stretched out his right arm and slowly bent it, feeling the muscle" (Mansfield 74). He admires his muscles with pride. When he exercises, he delights in feeling his own body and admires his strength and shape: "Back came Stanley girt with a towel, glowing and slapping his thighs . . . He was so delighted with his firm, obedient body that he hit himself on the chest and gave a loud, 'Ah'" (64). In the same way that Stanley feels validated by his material possessions, he feels that his healthy physique is an example of his self worth. For this reason, he fears becoming fat and loosing the muscular physique that he values so highly. When Linda says jokingly that Stanley looks like a big fat turkey, Stanley replies, "'Fat. I like that . . . I haven't a square inch of fat on me. Feel that . . . You'd be surprised at the number of chaps at the club who have got a corporation [have gained weight]. Young chaps, you know- men of my age . . . I must say I've a perfect horror'" (65). Stanley feels the need to prove to Linda that he is not fat, having her feel his muscle. He compares himself to the men he works with who are becoming fat themselves. He feels that it is proof of his superiority over them because he has muscles and can control his own weight but they cannot. Describing his muscle as "obedient" reinforces that Stanley feels a sense of control and power in having a healthy body.

Stanley enjoys feeling superiority over other men and women. He judges his own success by how well he does in comparison to others:

A figure in a broad-striped bathing suit flung down the paddock, cleared the stile, rushed through the tussock grass into the hollow, staggered up the sandy hillock, and raced for dear life over the big porous stones, over the cold, wet pebbles, on to the hard sand that gleamed like oil. Splish-splosh! Splish-splosh! The water bubbled round his legs as Stanley Burnell waded out exulting. First man in as usual! He'd beaten them all again. And he swooped down to souse his head and neck (Mansfield 100).

Stanley rushes over rocks and hills at top speed towards the water, engaging in an imaginary race against his neighbors to be first to the swimming hole. Surely, the neighbors are not aware of the race to be first to the water, yet to Stanley winning over them is of the utmost importance. In fact, when Stanley discovers that another man is already there, he feels his bath has been ruined. Stanley's happiness is connected to feeling superior to those around him and he has decided that being first to the Bay in the mornings is a test of superiority. Whether through winning a one man race to the water or by accumulating piles of material objects, feeling like he has more than others or that he is superior to others is crucial to Stanley's identity. These superficial interests take precedence over everything else in his life, even emotional connections to his wife and children.

Through her portrayal of Stanley, Mansfield illustrates that bourgeois values are not simply passed down because women like Linda and Beryl do not openly rebel against them. There are also men like Stanley who are actively cling to and promote these values. Stanley promotes traditional values because these things give his life meaning, give him power, and place him in a desirable position. If these values changed, Stanley would have nothing left to cling to. Though Mansfield criticizes the values Stanley promotes, she does not construe Stanley as an evil individual or full of malice. He is unaware of the unhappiness inside of his wife and sister-in-law because he has not been taught to truly consider female needs in opposition to his own. Mansfield knows that men will not work to change society as long as they are validated and strengthened by the system.

Section 4: Isabel; The Proud and Proper Daughter

Isabel, the oldest Burnell daughter embraces the values modeled by her parents and bourgeois society. She desires to act in accordance with the desires of her parents and to have their approval. She asks permission before doing anything that might be improper, saying “Do you think we ought to go? . . . We haven’t asked or anything. Have we?” (Mansfield 82). She feels that it is very important to get their opinion on whether an activity is appropriate for her to participate in. In addition, Isabel chooses to play games and do activities aimed at preparing her to be a wife and mother like Linda and Mrs. Fairfield. Isabel’s favorite game is to pretend she is grown up and raising her own children. When faced with choosing a game to play, Isabel says, “Well, let’s play ladies . . . Pip can be the father and you can be all our dear little children” (Mansfield 81). Her use of the term “dear children” emphasizes that Isabel feels it is a positive thing to be a parent and that when she becomes a mother she will love and cherish her children. Isabel will likely become a woman who focuses her attention on familial concerns and propriety, content to live the life of domesticity that is expected of her. Isabel will likely not feel the disharmony and anger Linda feels over being a mother because she accepts and looks forward to this responsibility. In addition, Isabel finds a large degree of control in connection to motherhood and marriage that Linda is unable to find, therefore making Isabel more confident and satisfied over the prospect of motherhood. Isabel comes to associate feelings of power *in connection to* the parental role and therefore looks forward to coming to this stage in her life. She revels in the rules she makes for the other children, enthusiastically teaching them and trying to punish them when she feels they are out of line. The fulfillment Isabel finds within the parental role is connected not to a desire to be nurturing or to selflessly give of herself for the benefit of her children, but to a desire for control and power.

Even when Isabel is not officially playing “ladies,” she still takes it upon herself to take on a motherly role with the younger Burnell children. She makes it her job to set a good example for her younger sisters and to teach them, as if she herself is their parent, “And Isabel, repentant, said exactly like a grown up, ‘Watch *me*, Lottie, and you’ll soon learn’” (Mansfield 123). When Lottie says that she wants to say her prayers in bed one night, Isabel says firmly, “No you can’t, Lottie . . . God only excuses you saying your prayers in bed if you’ve got a temperature” (Mansfield 61). Isabel doesn’t doubt that her advice to Lottie is incontestable and also in Lottie’s best interests. She expects Lottie to follow her advice as she herself would have followed the advice if it were given to *her* by an authority. Isabel even implies that she has been given special information concerning when it is all right to say one’s prayers directly from God. Of course, Isabel probably made up the at that moment but she places such importance on her rules and their merit that she has no qualms blurring the line between herself and God. On one hand, Isabel has respect and obedience for rules, indications that she will be easily molded into adopting the set societal values, taking on the traditional role for women and passing traditional values onto her children. Yet, on the other hand, Isabel finds ways of manipulating the traditional role so that it suits her selfish purposes and grants her control in a way that Linda and Beryl fail to do.

By directing her sisters around, Isabel feels more important because she can manipulate them into doing what she wants them to do and take charge of the environment around her. Mansfield describes that Isabel asks Kezia where she is going simply so that she can find some way of controlling her: “‘Where are you going to, Kezia?’ asked Isabel, who longed to find some light and menial duty that Kezia might perform and so be roped in under her government” (Mansfield 66). Isabel is not, at this moment, looking after the welfare of her sister. Isabel instead desires to find some kind of control over Kezia’s affairs to bolster her own self worth. Isabel’s attraction to motherhood is not because of any desire to be nurturing and to provide care to her children, the appropriate

and expected reasons to be drawn to motherhood. Although Isabel does not question whether or not to become a mother, she does not fully understand what motherhood means or the responsibilities to the emotional development of the children. This is the result of not having been given emotional support by her own selfish parents or provided with an environment in which children are raised with their best interests in mind.

Unfortunately for Isabel, she finds that ordering around her sisters does not provide her with the degree of control she desires. When Kezia senses that Isabel's question is designed in order to control her, Kezia replies to the question of where she is going by saying, "Oh, just away." Kezia does not feel it is necessary to answer Isabel if she does not want to. After all, Isabel doesn't have any right to boss her sisters except for the fact that she is the eldest. Unlike the servants who Beryl bosses around, Isabel is not in a position to force obedience from her sibling. Lottie, the youngest, is still fairly easily manipulated by her, but Kezia is already beginning to question Isabel's right to power. For this reason, Isabel resorts to tattling and appealing to the authority of her parents for more control over Kezia. Isabel says to Linda, "I don't want to tell you, but I think I ought to, mother . . . Kezia is drinking tea out of Aunt Beryl's cup" (Mansfield 60). Isabel hopes that Kezia will be reprimanded, therefore making herself feel elevated in contrast to Kezia. She tries to mask her tattle by implying that she does not really *want* to tattle, but feels that it is important information, Kezia requiring punishment or guidance. Openly acting as if she desires power is improper for a young lady so Isabel must mask her hidden agenda.

Isabel also adopts the same prejudices Beryl shows towards the lower class and servants for the same purpose of making herself feel elevated. Mansfield suggests that Isabel will not rebel against societal values and prejudices because she does not witness her female role models rebelling against them. Isabel in fact continues the narrow minded thinking of the adults by subscribing to their philosophies. When she becomes

a mother, she will be the type to model traditional values, not because she believes in them necessarily, but because it is through setting an example and being a model that she feels powerful. Her motivations for motherhood and for supporting societal values are self-centered and will ultimately be detrimental to her children, ignoring their emotional needs. To this extent, she will perpetuate the poor parenting she is learning from her dysfunctional parents.

Section 5: Timid Little Lottie

Mansfield spends less time developing the character of the youngest Burnell daughter, Lottie, in comparison to her sisters. This is partly because Lottie is very quiet and passive compared to Isabel and Kezia and is therefore easily overlooked or ignored by the other characters. Another factor influencing the lack of development of Lottie's character is Mansfield's clear favoritism for characters who have individuality and assertiveness, traits of which Lottie is deficient. Mansfield, like the characters of her stories, easily forgets about Lottie. Lottie, is herself much like Linda in the moments where Linda wonders how or why she ever married Stanley, leaving decisions to be made by others. Mansfield does not spend time describing Lottie's character largely because there is no real character to develop. Like a boat that is left to float where the current takes it, Lottie is influenced by the environment in which she is placed. It is this Burnell family environment that Mansfield is more intent on describing because through describing it one can deduct the factors that contribute to the development of girls like Lottie. Only partly due to her young age, Lottie's meek characteristics are evidence that she is following in the footsteps of her unassertive mother, Linda. Lottie is influenced by the weakness and passivity which Linda models as she lays languidly on couches "doing nothing." Mansfield, by refusing to spend a great amount of time developing Lottie's character, stresses that she does not favor or approve of Lottie's character, especially in comparison to the favored Kezia or the more assertive, albeit selfish and egocentric, Isabel. In leaving out Lottie as a primary character, Mansfield is essentially making a statement about what happens to those women who cannot speak for themselves: the world ignores them and passes them by. Mansfield does not want the female voice to be ignored, the horrible consequence of a society that raises women such as Lottie and Linda who will never openly rebel or learn to fight for themselves.

When a decision of importance presents itself to Lottie, such as when she must decide on what animal to choose to represent her in a game, she turns to the other children for help and guidance: “ ‘What shall I be?’ Lottie asked everybody, and she sat there smiling, waiting for them to decide for her” (Mansfield 123). Lottie is content to let others make her decisions for her. She becomes flustered and confused when she must solve problems on her own. When she is left alone to figure out how to climb over a stile, she becomes desperate. She calls to her sisters for help the moment she senses difficulty rather than trying to figure her own way to get across:

There was poor little Lottie, left behind again, because she found it so fearfully hard to get over the stile by herself. When she stood on the first step her knees began to wobble, she grasped the post. Then you had to put one leg over. But which leg? She could never decide. And when she finally put one leg over with a sort of stamp of despair- then the feeling was awful. She was half in the paddock still and half in the tussock grass. She clutched the post desperately and lifted up her voice. ‘Wait for me!’ (Mansfield 105).

Lottie’s continual reliance on others mimics Linda’s passivity over decisions effecting her life. Recall that Linda suggests that she does not know how she went from dreaming on the porch with her father to being the wife of Stanley Burnell. Lottie will likely find herself in a similarly unhappy married position one day if she continues to let others make decisions for her and if she remains content to follow along blindly with what others want her to do. Like Isabel, Lottie will likely continue to accept societal values blindly, in Lottie’s case because she has not developed a strong sense of individuality to enable her to question traditional values or to come up with her own explanations. While Beryl and Linda rebel against traditional society mentally, Lottie does not even seem to rebel mentally. Mansfield does not endow Lottie with an imaginative world, subversive questions, or individual hopes and dreams. For Mansfield, Lottie may represent the most tragic consequence for females growing up in her time, a life where one does not even rebel on the conscious level.

Section 6: Kezia; The Guiding Light

Mansfield develops the character of the middle Burnell daughter, Kezia, markedly more than her two sisters. Mansfield's "A Doll's House" focuses largely on Kezia and the other two stories also give much more attention to Kezia's point of view and actions than to those of her sisters. Kezia, Mansfield's favorite character, is more inquisitive, less willing to blindly accept societal values and conventions, and more compassionate towards others than either of her sisters. She is neither selfish nor materialistic, highly valuing close emotional relationships with others. Kezia is an alternative to the other more selfish and passive female characters. Kezia offers hope that the cycle of bourgeois traditions can be broken and that society can become better if it can produce women like Kezia.

Kezia does not enjoy reinforcing traditional values in play, as does Isabel. In fact, when Isabel suggests that they play "ladies" Kezia says, "I hate playing ladies . . . You always make us got to church hand in hand and come home and go to bed" (Mansfield 81). Kezia does not find the game enjoyable because she finds the domestic activities prescribed for bourgeois women boring. When the Burnell's have company, Isabel and Lottie become excited like Beryl at the prospect of dressing up and entertaining the guests while Kezia does not. The pleasure of company, of being a hostess, and obsessing on appearance are not exciting to Kezia. She resists conforming to and internalizing ideals of bourgeois femininity. Unlike her bubbling sisters, Kezia remains in the yard instead of running happily upstairs to change clothes to greet the guests. Kezia has more important, less superficial activities to occupy her time and attention.

Kezia remains in the yard to wait for guests of her own:
 There were visitors. Isabel and Lottie, who liked visitors, went upstairs to change their pinafores. But Kezia thieved out at the back. Nobody was about; she began to swing on the big white gates of the courtyard. Presently, looking along the road, she saw two little dots (Mansfield 319).

Kezia remains outside because she is expecting guests who do not require her to change into fancy clothes. These guests would not even be allowed into the Burnell house by Kezia's parents. The two black dots that Kezia sees approaching are the Kelvey sisters whom Kezia has been forbidden to associate with because of their poverty and poor social standing. Kezia ignores the commands of the adults and invites the Kelveys to her back yard to view an expensive doll's house that the Burnell girls were recently given by a family friend. The doll's house is the main subject of conversation in the school yard after the Burnells receive it because it is large and very well furnished. The Burnell daughters are told that they may show the exotic treasure to every girl in school, except the Kelveys. Still, Kezia asks Linda if she can invite the Kelvey girls over "just once" to see the doll's house. Linda replies, "Certainly not." Kezia then asks Linda *why* she cannot ask them. Linda replies, "Run away Kezia; you know quite well why not" (Mansfield 318). But Kezia does not accept the factors which supposedly make it impossible for the Kelveys to be included like everyone else. She does not see the Kelveys as less valuable because of their poverty. She does not feel that they have less right to experience the joy of viewing the Burnell's treasured toy, especially when they are likely to appreciate it more than any of the rich girls because the Kelveys do not have their own fancy toys or dolls. Kezia invites the Kelveys to her home, trusting her own heart that tells her the Kelveys deserve to see the doll's house like all of the other children. The contrast between Isabel and Lottie's gaiety over receiving "respectable" guests and the two black dots that approach Kezia is striking and serves to reinforce the differences between Kezia and her sisters. Isabel and Lottie embrace traditional values in their actions the way that Beryl, Linda, and Mrs. Fairfield all do in their own ways. Kezia does not embrace these values. To Kezia, human relationships are more important than convention. Following her heart is more important than following orders.

Kezia learns to value close relationships largely through her connections with the adult figures she interacts with, other than her parents. Like her sisters, Kezia does not have a close relationship with Linda or Stanley because they are too busy and self absorbed to have time for her or to develop a close relationship with her. Yet, instead of simply modeling herself after her aloof parents as do Lottie and Isabel, Kezia searches for closeness with other more accessible adults, in essence adopting them as her new parental figures when her own parents fail to be adequate. When Linda and Mrs. Fairfield drive away in a buggy, Kezia chases the buggy crying, “I want to kiss my granma good-bye again” (Mansfield 52). Kezia does not run after the buggy requesting to kiss her own mother one more time because she feels more closeness with her grandmother than with Linda and knows that Linda would not reciprocate this affection even if Kezia tried to reach out to her. Kezia also feels closer to Mrs. Fairfield because Mrs. Fairfield has done more to raise the children than Linda, acting more as a mother figure than Linda is willing to be. Unlike Linda, Mrs. Fairfield enjoys motherhood and relishes in traditional domestic activities, such as cooking, cleaning, and watching the children. These activities dominate Mrs. Fairfield’s mind and energy, and give her life meaning and happiness. When Kezia has questions or concerns, Mrs. Fairfield is the person she turns to because Kezia knows she will listen to her with patience and understanding. Mrs. Fairfield first introduces Kezia to the subject of death, giving her knowledge about the world and life that Linda would not have taken the time to explain. Mrs. Fairfield tucks Kezia in at night, giving her emotional support and closeness. Kezia appreciates and loves her grandmother because of the attention and instruction her grandmother gives to her. She turns to her grandmother instead of her mother because she feels close to her grandmother in a way that she does not with Linda. Even though Kezia knows that her grandmother is not her real mother, her relationship with Mrs. Fairfield takes on the characteristics of a parent child relationship.

Kezia is shown to have a closer connection with Mrs. Fairfield than either of the other Burnell girls. At night Kezia sleeps in bed with her grandmother, but the other girls do not: "Isabel and Lottie lay in a room to themselves, Kezia curled in her grandmother's soft bed" (Mansfield 60). Kezia and her grandmother joke with each other, share meaningful moments of conversation, sleep in the same room, and exchange gifts with each other in a way that Mrs. Fairfield and the other children do not. A large factor in the closeness between Kezia and her grandmother is due to the fact that Kezia takes a great deal of initiative in promoting relationships with her unlike Lottie and Isabel.

Kezia is affectionate and generous with her grandmother. She makes her grandmother special presents, taking great care in their design and putting a lot of her time in their construction. These gifts are symbols of her affection for her grandmother and she

presents them to her grandmother lovingly, with no ulterior motives: [Kezia] decided to go up into the house and ask the servant girl for an empty match-box. She wanted to make a surprise for the grandmother . . . First she would put a very small leaf inside with a big violet lying on it, then she would put a very small white picotree, perhaps, on each side of the violet, and then she would sprinkle some lavender on top, but not to cover their heads. She often made these surprises for the grandmother, and they were always most successful" (Mansfield 72).

Mrs. Fairfield understands the importance of the gifts that Kezia gives to her and the fact that they are representations of Kezia's affection. The grandmother accepts the gifts lovingly, reciprocating the affection Kezia gives to her. Mrs. Fairfield is not self absorbed, like Linda, and so she is able to return love, time, and energy to Kezia.

Reciprocity is essential to Kezia and Mrs. Fairfield's relationship because their connection does not allow them to focus entirely on their own needs and desires like the other Burnells. Their bond prevents Kezia from falling prey to the selfishness that tragically keeps the other Burnells at arms length from each other. Kezia also learns that emotional rewards are more satisfying than material ones, therefore she comes to value people and relationships more than possessions. In the case of the doll's house, Kezia focuses less on the physical or monetary value of the house compared to the value

it has for promoting relationships and sharing happiness with the Kelveys.

Relationships with her grandmother and other parental figures teach Kezia the value of human interaction over the material world, a lesson her sisters do not seem to absorb.

Initially Kezia develops bonds with alternative parental figures because of her individual personality characteristics . She is generous, trusting, and appreciative. In turn, Kezia's independent, kind, and compassionate nature is promoted and affirmed by the bonds she develops with others.

Kezia forms connections with other adults besides her grandmother, such as the Burnell's servants. The fact that the Burnells are wealthy enough to have servants is a predominate factor in the number of options for alternative parental figures that Kezia has. Had Kezia been born into a poor family coupled with a mother and father as detached as Linda and Stanley, Kezia would perhaps have had no one to turn to to substitute for her lack of parental attention. Yet, Kezia grows up in an environment rich with options for emotional connection. Having servants to speak with, as well as having her grandmother living in the home with her, allows Kezia the option of forming emotional connections with people who reciprocate her affection and attention, something her biological parents refuse to do. Mansfield describes how Kezia snuggles up to a storeman when he takes she and Lottie to the Burnells' new home: "Kezia edged up to the storeman. He towered beside her big as a giant and he smelled of nuts and new wooden boxes" (Mansfield 55). Kezia takes pleasure in sitting next to this man, and snuggling up to him as if he is her father or a friend. She reaches out to the storeman innocently, looking for warmth, protection, and closeness and she receives it from him. The storeman, like her grandmother, is affectionate with Kezia and talks to her after Kezia initiates contact with him. Likewise, when the Burnell's servant Pat lets the children watch him as he cuts the head off a duck for dinner, Kezia turns to him for emotional support and an explanation of the bloody events while the other children do not, "When [Pat] stooped to move [Kezia] she would not let go or take her

head away. She held on as hard as she could and sobbed: 'Head back! Head back!' until it sounded like a loud strange hiccup" (Mansfield 84). The other children are absorbed in the physical world and the gore and blood of the duck's slaughter. Kezia, however, understands the value of life and is therefore sympathetic to the duck and horrified by its murder. Kezia turns to Pat for an explanation of the murder, allowing herself to be soothed by Pat's presence and his words. He says to her soothingly, "'There now. There's the grand little girl'" (84). Then, as Kezia becomes distracted and soothed, Mansfield writes that Kezia "put up her hands and touched his ears. She felt something. Slowly she raised her quivering face and looked. Pat wore little round gold ear-rings. She never knew that men wore ear-rings . . . 'Do they come on and off?' she asked huskily" (84-85). The moment of fear and shock that occurs after the duck is killed quickly turns to happier thoughts as Kezia allows herself to become distracted by Pat. Kezia is drawn to Pat's earrings, jewelry that is usually associated with femininity. Pat represents a merging of the feminine and masculine worlds and of the father and mother roles. His strength, size, and killing of the duck illustrates his more traditional masculine side, while his earrings, compassion, and nurturing capabilities illustrates his more traditionally feminine side. Kezia's lesson about life and death is successfully carried out by Pat, perhaps even unknowingly. Pat is both an example of an alternate parental figure to Kezia and Mansfield's new vision of what a parent can be. Pat represents an ideal parental figure because his nurturing is not specifically tied to his gender as parental responsibilities generally were in Mansfield's time. Alternate parental figures have the double benefit of providing Kezia with emotional support and modernizing her definition of the parental role. Hopefully Kezia will not associate parenting solely with women so that she does not feel that she must be a mother because she is a woman, coming to resent her lack of freedom to decide the events of her life as did Linda.

Kezia's relationships with alternate parental figures are not to be taken as absolute substitutes for her parents, however. There is clearly a connection between Kezia and Linda that is unique because of their bond as child and parent. The bond between Kezia and Linda is different from the bonds Kezia develops with her alternate parental figures, stressing that there is something special between a parent and child which occurs naturally or instinctively. Even though Linda spends little to no time with her children, Kezia is still influenced by Linda. Linda's influence over Kezia is most evident in their similar thought processes, the way that they look at the world, their dreams, and their fears. Kezia and her mother do not discuss these internal emotions which therefore occur, not through conscious learning, but through their bloodline. For example, the imaginary world is a large influence in Linda's life as well as Kezia's despite the fact that neither of them discuss this world with other people. Linda reveals to the reader that she is plagued by an invisible presence that she calls *THEY*. This presence is

frightening to Linda. She reacts to the *THEY* by trying to escape from them: Sometimes, when she had fallen asleep in the daytime, she woke and could not lift a finger, could not even turn her eyes to left or right because *THEY* were there; sometimes when she went out of a room and left it empty, she knew as she clicked the door to that *THEY* were filling it. And there were times in the evenings when she was upstairs, perhaps, and everybody else was down, when she could hardly escape from them. Then she could not hurry, she could not hum a tune; if she tried to say ever so carelessly- 'Bother that old thimble'- *THEY* were not deceived. *THEY* knew how frightened she was . . . (Mansfield 66- 67).

Linda does not share her fears of the *THEY* with anyone, perhaps believing that no one else would understand her imaginary world. When Linda asks her mother if she feels the aloe bush rushing towards them, it is clear that Mrs. Fairfield does not share her fantasy. Mrs. Fairfield's thoughts are planted firmly in the material and domestic realm. Since Linda realizes that her mother does not share her feelings about the aloe, she does not tell her what *she* feels about the aloe. Linda neither bothers to ask her own daughters if they experience her same fears, nor considers the possibility that they can understand her in a way her mother cannot. Therefore Linda never learns that Kezia

shares her fantasy world, also feeling a presence that follows her and chases her. Kezia describes this presence to herself as IT. This term is similar to Linda's THEY. Kezia describes how the presence makes her feel and the description is also similar to Linda's: Kezia was suddenly quite, quite still, with wide open eyes and knees pressed together. She was frightened. She wanted to call Lottie and to go on calling all the while she ran downstairs and out the house. But IT was behind her, waiting at the door, at the head of the stairs, at the bottom of the stairs, hiding in the passage, ready to dart out at the back door (Mansfield 55).

Like Linda, Kezia does not share her fear of this presence with anyone else. When she comes across Lottie, she does not explain what she has just been feeling or the presence that she was fleeing from. It is because Linda and Kezia do not discuss this very personal experience that it is all the more shocking that they both have it and that their fantasy has such similarities.

Linda and Kezia also share another fear with each other that is not evident in the other children or in Mrs. Fairfield. They share a strong fear of animals that "rush" at them. This fear manifests itself in dreams, on the unconscious level. Kezia reveals to the storeman, "I hate rushing animals like dogs and parrots. I often dream that animals rush at me- even camels- and while they are rushing, their heads swell e-enormous" (Mansfield 57). Linda reveals that this fear has been present in her life ever since she was a child. Linda does not like it when Stanley rushes at her like the animals used to do in her dreams showing that the childhood dreams continue to influence her into adulthood: "If only Stanley wouldn't jump at her so loudly, and watch her with such eager, loving eyes. He was too strong for her; she had always hated things that rush at her, from a child" (Mansfield 91). Linda's childhood fear of rushing animals goes so far as to influence the way she perceives her relationship with Stanley. It is also clear that Linda has similar dreams into adulthood: "[Linda] dreamed about birds last night . . . What was it? She had forgotten. But the strangest part of this coming alive of things was what they did. They listened, they seemed to swell out with some mysterious important content" (Mansfield 66). Even the manner in which the animals seem to

assault Linda and Kezia is similar. They both describe the animals growing to a large size, swelling and becoming more intimidating by their increasing dimensions and importance. Again, Linda and Kezia do not describe this fear to each other, although Kezia does mention her fear to the storeman. The similar fears are to be taken as something that occurs between the mother and the daughter spontaneously, without verbal discussion or any outside influence. It is unfortunate that Linda never takes the time to discuss her fears with Kezia because of the possibility that they could help each other work through them. That the two never openly discuss these vivid fears and their fantasy worlds is an indication of the degree of the dysfunction in their relationship and an example of how little interaction Linda has with her children. The lost potential for bonding between Kezia and Linda is all the more tragic given the similarities and connections they have in their minds without even being aware of them.

Linda and Kezia also both have an immediate appreciation for and awe of the aloe bush in the Burnell's yard. It is this aloe plant that Linda imagines turning into a boat, allowing her to sail away from her family forever. When Kezia sees the aloe, she is likewise mesmerized by it. Kezia asks Linda what it is, through her question attempting

to connect with her mother:

Whatever could it be? [Kezia] had never seen anything like it before. She stood and stared [at the aloe]. And then she saw her mother coming down the path.

"Mother what is it?" asked Kezia.

Linda looked up at the fat swelling plant with its cruel leaves and fleshy stem. High above them, as though becalmed in the air, and yet holding so fast to the earth it grew from, it might have had claws instead of roots. The curving leaves seemed to be hiding something, the blind stem cut into the air as if no wind could ever shake it.

"That is an aloe, Kezia," said her mother.

"Does it ever have any flowers?"

"Yes, Kezia," and Linda smiled down at her, and half shut her eyes. "Once every hundred years." (Mansfield 72-73).

Linda responds to Kezia's question about the aloe plant with the fantastical statement that the tree only blooms once every hundred years. Although it is true that aloe plants bloom infrequently, Linda's response to Kezia is based more on her dreamlike fancies

than on scientific knowledge. Linda is not interested in teaching Kezia about the aloe in any realistic or informative manner. However, Linda's response to Kezia is spoken with a dreamy *smile* towards her daughter rather than her usual indifference or anger. Linda is content during this encounter with her daughter, at least somewhat aware of the mutual appreciation of the aloe that she and her daughter share. They are both drawn towards the aloe, showing that they have similar natures. For this reason, Linda can share her appreciation of the aloe with Kezia in a way that she cannot do with others, connecting on the fantastical or dreamlike level. It is no coincidence that Mansfield makes the aloe plant a symbol of the connection between Kezia and Linda. Her description of the aloe as something "holding fast. . . seem[ing] to hide something . . . as if no wind could shake it" is a metaphor for the intense individualism of many of the characters in Mansfield's short stories. They hide their secret thoughts and dreams from one another, clinging onto their independence with clawlike ferocity, refusing to form meaningful connections with others or to let go of their selfishness. In essence, the characters refuse to let themselves "bloom" by refusing to interact with others, a flower being the beautiful product of reproduction and connection between plants. The fact that the aloe rarely blooms is correlated with the fact that there are not many individuals like Kezia who express their beautiful nature with others, willing to show their delicate, personal side with others.

Kezia is shown to have a special bond with her mother that is largely the result of heredity and that never evolves into a deeper bond largely because of Linda's selfishness. The bond exists unconditionally and regardless of the amount of time spent between mother and daughter. But they do not realize the degree to which they have similar thoughts, fears, and appreciations except in the brief exchange about the aloe. Kezia must turn to other adults to find connection, something that she has naturally with her mother but is not fully aware of. She turns largely to her grandmother and male servants who reciprocate her affection. Kezia is herself shown to

be more caring and more individualistic than her sisters who do not seek out or find alternate parental figures or have as much mental connection with Linda. Mansfield suggests that the children like Kezia who are able to form strong mental and emotional attachments with adults are the ones who will grow up to be the most confident, happy, secure, and kind to others.

Kezia offers to the reader hope for the modern generation. Despite growing up in a household riddled by selfish desires and materialism, Kezia is able to flourish. She proves to be independent, caring, and unsuperficial. In "The Doll's House," Kezia secretly invites Else and Lil Kelvey to see her beautiful miniature house, even though she has been told that the girls are not worthy of seeing the gift. When Beryl sees that Kezia has invited the Kelveys over, she slams the doll's house closed, scolds Kezia harshly, and sends the Kelvey girls home immediately. Beryl's angry reaction to seeing the Kelvey girls in the yard is largely due to the fact that she received a threat from a lover that morning requiring her to meet him that evening or he would come to the door asking where she was, thereby revealing their affair: "That afternoon had been awful [for Beryl]. But not that she had frightened those little rats of Kelveys and given Kezia a good scolding, her heart felt lighter. That ghastly pressure was gone. She went back to the house humming" (Mansfield 321). Beryl makes herself feel better about her problems by hurting Kezia and the Kelvey girls. She places her needs and feelings before theirs. Kezia, on the other hand, risks getting in trouble and losing favor with her family and friends by associating with the Kelveys. Kezia thoughtfully points out to them the aspects of the doll's house of which she is especially fond. Even though the adults set the example of prejudice and selfishness, Kezia is not tainted by their faults. The story ends with Else nudging up to her sister, saying softly, "I seen the little lamp" (Mansfield 321). Else refers to the miniature lamp in the doll's house that Kezia had continually referred to as her favorite piece of the miniature furniture. Through Else's statement, Mansfield suggests that Kezia is herself a light because if it were not for

Kezia's kindness, Else would not have been able to see the little light. Like the little lamp that lights up the doll's house, an environment of wood and false appearances, Kezia can bring light to the Kelveys in an environment of prejudice, selfishness, and materialism, such as the Burnell household. Mansfield suggests that there is hope for the modern generation, despite its dysfunction and disillusion, if more children like Kezia are born and become lights unto others.

Section 7: Conclusion

Katherine Mansfield's Burnell family is marked by selfishness, materialism, and superficiality. Mansfield witnessed such traits in her contemporaries in bourgeois New Zealand where she was raised. She illustrates the danger of a society in which these values are esteemed at the expense of human relationships and familial bonds. Likewise, Mansfield warns that greater individuality for women could negatively effect the next generation if the responsibility of raising children is not taken up by their fathers, the servant class, teachers or extended relatives. By no means does Mansfield suggest that liberation for women is in itself negative, but she acknowledges that there will be a transition period in which changing gender roles may cause confusion and unhappiness as they have done for Linda, who is unable to find ways to express herself as an individual except in her imaginary world. Yet, Mansfield offers hope that the transition period will ultimately yield new, expanded boundaries to the roles for women in European society. Mansfield predicts that young girls, like Kezia, will be born with senses of individualism and abilities to express themselves as women have never done before. Kezia speaks her mind, rebels against traditional notions of propriety, and has a compassionate nature. Mansfield offers hope to her readers that the societal changes she is witnessing in post-Victorian Europe are going to bring about positive reform to a constricting and materialistic society. She views the future in a positive light, optimistic that beauty will come from the ashes. In addition to looking with sympathy at women still constricted by marriages they had not wanted or values they did not support, Mansfield introduces Kezia and her new definition of what she feels it means to be a woman.

Conclusion

If William Faulkner's Bundrens and Katherine Mansfield's Burnells are symbols of the modern world, both Faulkner and Mansfield paint a bleak picture of their generation. Both authors criticize the materialism and selfishness that they witness in the people around them. Yet, in comparing the *children* of the two families, all born into dysfunctional family environments, one would much rather have Kezia as a model for the modern individual than Vardaman. Vardaman, the youngest Bundren son, is not the hope for the modern individual. He is a victim of the Bundren family. He is mentally disabled due to the neglect of his parents and siblings and he is left unable to comprehend many situations emotionally or logically. His brother Darl is led to insanity because of the neglect that he faces into adulthood. Darl's awareness of his alienation from his family and their inability to love him drives him into a rage of madness. Faulkner suggests that the future that would exist with men like Vardaman and Darl as the heads of families would be incomprehensible. These Bundrens have not been taught to form meaningful relationships, or to value family and love. As the heads of households, they would surely pass their inadequacies to their children, as Anse and Addie have done to them. Faulkner suggests that if the next generation has individuals like Vardaman and Darl raising the children, there is no hope for future generations or the South. Essentially, each new generation would be doomed to repeat and to add to the deficiencies of its parents. Kezia, in contrast, rises above the superficiality and selfishness of her family to become compassionate and independent. She is an example of what Mansfield believes the post-Victorian era woman can be like. Mansfield's text offers hope that the cycle of dysfunction in families such as the Burnells can be broken, and that this can bring about changes that are felt by other families, like the Kelveys, changing the very foundation of society.

Mansfield's comparative optimism to Faulkner is greatly influenced by her gender. Her short stories are concerned primarily with women and their reactions to changing gender roles. As a woman, Mansfield witnessed more opportunities being opened up for women of her time, and she saw less definition of appropriate behavior for women. For this reason, Mansfield sees hope for the little girls like Kezia who are being born into this transitional period between the World Wars. She sees the potential for Kezia to become an individual without sacrificing her happiness or her ability to connect with others. Mansfield makes a distinction between being *selfish* and being *independent*. Although Mansfield does not support Linda's idle and self-serving behavior, she praises Kezia's fresh individuality because it is coupled with compassion and emotional receptivity. Faulkner, in contrast, does not illustrate that men and women's confining roles are openly being expanded. Addie is tricked into her marriage to Anse by societal pressures that she find a man, get married, and raise a family. Addie's spirit and body is made weak from continual labor and raising children, leading her to an early death. Faulkner's novel focuses less on changing notions of gender and more instead on what he sees as a movement towards individualism and autonomy from others. He shows his characters as intensely independent and oftentimes selfish, placing their needs before others, without correlating this independence with positive improvements in men or women's rights. He sees that a self-centered way of perceiving the world comes at the expense of emotional closeness and connection between individuals. While Mansfield sees that individualism is the first step in improving gender roles and peoples' happiness, Faulkner sees it as a primary reason for the isolation that plagues the Bundrens. It is for this reason that Mansfield closes her short story series with an image of the Kelveys sitting together, reaching out to one another, happy because of the connection they have formed with Kezia. Faulkner, on the other hand, concludes with Anse's introduction of his new wife to the Bundren clan, a woman whom Anse chooses for his mate because of convenience, rather than love. With his new wife, Anse will

continue to put his own needs before hers or the rest of their family. For Faulkner's Bundrens, there is no isolation from the dysfunctional paths on which they are headed. For Mansfield's Burnells, in contrast, there is a guiding light.

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