

Great thesis

A cynical spirit?

I like that you classify this as a satire

As I Lay Dying Reading Rehearsal

As I Lay Dying, by William Faulkner, is one of those books that affirms the outlooks of cynics everywhere, because in the end almost everyone has an ulterior motive. Anyone who doesn't is screwed. And it is in that spirit that Faulkner satirically criticizes American culture. ✓+

To start with, Dewey Dell is pregnant and wants an abortion. When her mother dies, she sees the trip to Jefferson as an opportunity to take care of her problem. While her brothers go to buy cement to fix Cash's leg, she goes to the drugstore in the hope of having an abortion. That fails, but at the drugstore in Jefferson the men are more agreeable. So she takes Vardaman with her back to the store that night, has sex with the clerk, and realizes it won't work.

not sure about this sequence of events.

Her ulterior motive just leaves her more screwed! - How is this significant?

On the other hand, there's Vardaman, who is too young to completely grasp what's happened. In one chapter he simply says, "My mother is a fish" (49). While preparing to go into town, Vardaman is excited to see a toy train. "Dewey Dell says it won't be sold because it belongs to Santa Claus and he taken it back with him until next Christmas. Then it will be behind the glass again, shining with waiting" (58). His mother is dead and Vardaman wants to see a toy train. Admittedly, he's still very young and can hardly be blamed. But he is going to Jefferson to see a toy train, not to bury his mother.

↳ And this indicates? Analyze the quote a bit more

Even Addie, the dead woman, has an ulterior motive for going to Jefferson. She says, "But then I realised that I had been tricked by words older than Anse or love, and that the same word had tricked Anse too, and that my revenge would be that he would never know I was taking revenge" (100). And so she asks Anse to bury her in Jefferson with her ancestors. She wants Anse to suffer. At first it would seem that Anse is too dense to consider that Addie planned it this way (but who would consider that anyways?). For that reason, the reader feels bad for Anse, suffering as he and his family do. And every time something goes wrong Anse says that he doesn't "begrudge her it." He doesn't hold any of the hardship against Addie, even though she wanted him to suffer. In the end, "Pa was coming along with that kind of daresome hangdog look all at once like when he has been up to something he know ma aint going to like, carrying a grip in hand..."(149), and Jewel is the first to realize that Anse has the teeth

✓+

↳ did you? Even after he took Dewey's money?

So is her ulterior motive successful?

details feel rushed

So the lazy, manipulative Anse is the only character that gets what he wants - what is the significance of this?

he'd wanted for more than fifteen years. But he has more than just teeth: he returns to his children with a new wife, "...a kind of duck-shaped woman all dressed up, with them kind of hardlooking pop eyes like she was daring ere a man to say nothing" (149). She even has a graphophone to play music, which the Bundren family has never dreamed of having. But that doesn't negate the fact that Anse went to town to buy teeth and remarry, not solely to bury his wife.

✓+ Only three people seem to have gone to Jefferson for the sole reason of burying Addie Bundren, and none of them come out of this story with bright futures. When the cart falls into the river, Cash's leg breaks. Since the cart is mostly full with the coffin, the only place for him to really rest is on top of the coffin, so that's where he spends most of the trip - on top of his dead mother's coffin, under the circling birds. In order to ease his suffering, his family pours cement over his leg. Peabody, the doctor, recognizes the extent of the injury, even if Cash refuses to admit it. "And dont tell me it aint going to bother you to lose sixty-odd square inches of skin to get that concrete off. And don't tell me it aint going to bother you to have to limp around on one short leg for the balance of your life - if you walk at all again" (138). [Cash had no ulterior motive for going to town. He just wanted to bury his dead mother. And now, he may never walk again. So there's one good person screwed.] * nice observation why do you think this is?

Next up is Jewel. Jewel doesn't talk much. After Addie dies, he never has his own chapter again. He does rescue her coffin from the river and the burning barn. Jewel is a difficult character to grasp, but he goes to Jefferson with the sole intention of burying his mother. He even sacrifices his favorite horse, the one he bought with his own money, just so the family can replace their dead mules.

And in the burning barn he plays a bit of a hero, rescuing an animal or two. But when Darl is arrested, he fights back and "...him and Jewel and the fellow, and the other one holding Dewey Dell and

✓ who is he fighting? detail of events is unclear. Vardaman yelling and Jewel saying, "Kill him. Kill the son of a bitch""(137). Although Jewel has no ulterior motives, his dislike for Darl makes him less than likeable. Of course, Darl took him away to make \$3.00 while their mother died. Jewel is a decent person, because he doesn't want everyone to suffer (just Darl), which is more than can be said for Addie. But in the end, Jewel is just a part of the

you like your coordinating conjunctions!
Virginia Woolf would be proud.

I like this claim, but it seems opposed to an earlier assertion.

background, in the poor, unfortunate house of Anse Bundren, who isn't even his real father. And so a second decent person is screwed.

meaning what?

And finally, there's Darl, the object of Jewel's anger. Darl is smart. Dewey Dell says that Darl can speak without talking.

Vardaman looks up to Darl and is unsure how to handle it when Darl is taken to Jackson. "[Darl] had to get on the train to go to Jackson. I have not been on the train, but

Darl has been on the train. Darl. Darl is my brother. Darl. Darl" (145). Even Cash thinks, "...what

a shame Darl couldn't enjoy it (the graphophone) too. But it is better so for him. This world is not his

world; this life his life" (149). Darl is in an insane asylum for trying to end his family's suffering. The

fire would have destroyed the coffin and the body, so their family could have gone home and given up.

But Darl, the smart one, failed and ended up in an asylum, and his decent older brother thinks its best

for him. So Darl's screwed too, and the story is complete.

Is the world really that terrible, that all the decent and good people are just screwed? In The

Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald seems to say the same thing. Jay Gatsby works hard doing illegal things in

order to win a girl who rejected him for his lack of money. He changes himself entirely just so that

she'll like him. And finally the two have a brief affair, but Gatsby wants her to leave her husband for

him. But Daisy Buchanan isn't prepared to do that. She needs the security of her husband's old money,

to be assured that she will be rich tomorrow and everyday to come. And so she rejects Gatsby, kills her

husband's mistress with Gatsby's car, and then allows her husband to lay the blame on Gatsby when his

mistress's husband comes looking for the car. And Gatsby dies. The one person who worked harder

than everyone else to achieve his goal dies, just like Darl, who only wanted to end his family's

suffering. So, Fitzgerald agrees with Faulkner, that society really does screw the good people.

I'd rather be a little more optimistic than that. There are good people who do decent things. Not

every family is as messed up as the Bundren family. And it helps to remember that As I Lay Dying is

considered satirical. In that case, that Bundren family's flaws are most likely being exaggerated to

more clearly show just how unfortunate American society is. At least, that's what I'm going to believe.

could Gatsby also be considered a satire? A satire of the American Dream?

not sure how this quote supports ideas about Vardaman

And yet Cash is close to understanding Darl in that same Chapter.

tone implies Daisy did it intention

I like your varied use of sentence lengths.

like? why do you think literature doesn't address this as much?

Don't watch the news!

