FOURTEEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT A BLACKBIRD

Point of View in *The Sound and the Fury*

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an intensive analysis of *The Sound and the Fury*, focussing on Faulkner's treatment of point of view. The novel is examined as an exploration of the act of perception, reflecting the author's Bergsonian view of consciousness. Faulkner's statement that every reflector sees one aspect of the truth and that the writing of the novel is an attempt to achieve a comprehensive overview is used as a focal point for the thesis. In the introductory chapter I state my basic approach: to discuss the validity and distortion of each point of view as conveyed by the rendering of authorial involvement and distance from the presented perspectives. Before applying these criteria to the reflectors of the novel, I briefly discuss *The Sound and the Fury* in relation to *As I Lay Dying*, *Light in August*, *Absalom,Absalom!* and *Go Down,Moses*.

The four subsequent chapters are close analyses of each section of the book. I emphasize Benjy's function as a literal embodiment of the Compson dilemma. In Chapter 3 I stress the relationship of Quentin's monologue to Benjy's as a reflection of the growth of consciousness. I also explore the significance of incest and the quixotic aspects of Quentin's character. The focus of Chapter 4 is upon
Jason as a reflector who fully expresses the negative impulses to renounce responsibilities and withdraw from human involvement. I suggest that Part Three is simultaneously a realization of destructive possibilities and a kind of comic relief. The likelihood that Joyce's use of perspective in the Cyclops episode of *Ulysses* was a precedent for this horror-comedy is explored. In Chapter Five I examine the narrative point of view and the way the language of Section Four reflects the process of perception. I study the interrelationship of the various parts of this section to each other and to the monologues of the Compson brothers. I assert that there is a sense of affirmation, stemming from the author's and audience's ability to comprehend the significance of experience, that is not embodied in any characters in the novel.

The final chapter contains some general conclusions about the book and a discussion of the "Appendix" written in 1945. By intensively analyzing aspects of the novel such as the use of multi-perspectives, the function of a character who begins and ends the book, and the anti-climactic ending, I have striven to achieve two goals. First, I have attempted to gain a full understanding of *The Sound and the Fury*. Second, in exploring distinctive and essential features of Faulkner's novels I have sought to gain insight into his works as a whole.
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CHAPTER 1

FOURTEEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT A BLACKBIRD
On May 8th, 1958, the following exchange took place between William Faulkner and a student at the University of Virginia:

Q. Mr. Faulkner, in *Absalom, Absalom!* does any one of the people who talks about Sutpen have the right view, or is it more or less a case of thirteen ways of looking at a blackbird with none of them right?

A. That's it exactly. I think that no one individual can look at truth. It blinds you. You look at it and see one phase of it. Someone else looks at it and sees a slightly awry phase of it. But taken all together, the truth is in what they saw though nobody saw the truth intact. . . . It was, as you say, thirteen ways of looking at a blackbird. But the truth, I would like to think, comes out, that when the reader has read all these thirteen different ways of looking at the blackbird, the reader has his own fourteenth image of that blackbird which I would like to think is the truth.¹

I intend to elaborate upon the multiple implications of this statement in my introduction and then apply them to an intensive study of *The Sound and the Fury* in subsequent chapters. The purpose of this thesis is not only to conduct a thorough exploration of *The Sound and the Fury*, but to provide an understanding of how essential characteristics of Faulkner's fiction, such as his multiplex focus and his immersion within the consciousness of his characters, reflect his underlying conception of existence. In my first chapter I will suggest how I feel this particular novel should be viewed, and seek to establish it in the context of Faulkner's works. More specifically, I will regard it within the context of the five novels in which I consider Faulkner achieves his fullest immersion within the
consciousness of his characters. They are *The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying*, *Light in August*, *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Go Down, Moses*.

Faulkner's answer to the question quoted above provides a key to understanding his vision of reality. The "truth" is beyond the comprehension of any one individual. This explains why his novels present the consciousness of a number of people, rather than focusing on one individual as, for example, Joyce does in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In Faulkner's view, no one character has a sufficiently comprehensive grasp of reality to merit exclusive focus. One of the most distinctive characteristics of his longer fiction is that no single protagonist emerges. His mode of presentation, as Walter Slatoff says, "prevents us from organizing our impressions about any single center."²

It is possible to argue that various characters do become protagonists in the five novels that I am going to deal with in this chapter. But these arguments are always subject to qualification. I will attempt to show that a case can be made for each of the four Compson children as being most central to *The Sound and the Fury*. The multiplicity of perspectives and lack of any single center of consciousness is most evident in *As I Lay Dying*. The focus is narrowed down in *Light in August* to three main characters; but their diversity of background and outlook maintains the
sense of diffuseness, as does the slight interconnection of
the plot sequences. From one point of view, Thomas Sutpen
is most certainly the protagonist of *Absalom, Absalom!*
Faulkner, himself, suggests this, although he qualifies the
point.

Q. Who is the central character of *Absalom, Absalom!*? It seems so obviously to be Sutpen, yet
it's been said that it's also the story of Quentin, and I was wondering just who is the central character?

A. The central character is Sutpen, yes. The
story of a man who wanted a son and got too many,
got so many that they destroyed him. It's incident­
ally the story of Quentin Compson's hatred of the
bad qualities in the country he loves. But the
central character is Sutpen . . .

Paradoxically, Sutpen is both more central and more remote
than the protagonists in the previously mentioned novels.
He is the initiator of all the action and is always present
in the minds of the narrators. But we are never allowed a
direct view of Sutpen's consciousness and are in one sense
more distant from him than we are from the narrators. As
Wayne Booth says,"If granting to the hero the right to
reflect his own story can insure the reader's sympathy,
withholding it from him and giving it to another character
can prevent too much identification." 4

In contrast, Isaac McCaslin is both a participant in
the action and a center of consciousness in *Go Down, Moses*.
The tone poem at the beginning of the novel suggests the
importance of past events ("Was") in forming his sensibility,
and establishes him as the dominant consciousness. Never-
theless, Isaac is not directly present in four of the seven stories, including those which begin and end the novel. The technique of framing Ike in the center of the work reflects the fact that Faulkner portrays a large, complex cosmos, which while centering on Isaac ultimately expands far beyond him. The necessity for this expansion is shown in "Delta Autumn." Isaac McCaslin is, in my opinion, the most comprehensive reflector of consciousness of any character in Faulkner. Yet, his limitations are made startlingly clear when he says to his niece in "Delta Autumn," "You're a nigger!" , and when she later rebukes him as follows: "Old man... have you lived so long and forgotten so much that you don't remember anything you ever knew or felt or even heard about love?" (Go Down, Moses, p. 363). It becomes painfully clear in this story that even as sensitive an observer as Isaac McCaslin distorts truth in responding to it.

Ike's limitations reflect the basic human dilemma. Every human being is bound ultimately within the limitations of his own point of view. No matter how much a person expands his sensibility through experience, through empathy, through whatever education he is able to acquire in the woods, on the road, or through reading books, distortion is inevitable. In Faulkner's own words: "I think that no one individual can look at truth. It blinds you." Implicit in this comment is the metaphor of truth as the sun, the source
of the light by which we all see; but each person is enclosed within his own earthbound angle of vision. If a man sees the sun directly above his head, this is true for him, yet at the same moment the sun may be in the Eastern horizon for another man, and in the Western horizon for still another. The dilemma, then, is that what we perceive is both true and not true simultaneously. Olga Vickery's comment that each of the first three sections of The Sound and the Fury "is at once the truth and a complete distortion of the truth" is applicable, with some qualification, to all human beings, as portrayed by Faulkner. The distortion of Isaac McCaslin's perspective is significantly less than that of Jason Compson. But Jason, despite his narrow biases, sees some things accurately. Whereas Ike, despite his profound insights, sees some things falsely. This is because every man "seizes upon some fragment of the truth as though it were the whole truth, and elaborates it into a total vision of the world."

The concept of a reliable narrator (and of reliability itself) "presupposes that something objectively true can be said about actions and thoughts." This idea has been challenged, not only by Faulkner, but by modern novelists such as Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and James Joyce, all of whom experiment with multiple points of view. According to Charles Feidelson, the impossibility of being objective is suggested as far back as 1851 by Herman Melville in Moby Dick.
The pattern of "The Doubloon" is the scheme of the book: under the overhanging consciousness of Ishmael, with Melville looking over his shoulder, the several characters envisage the meaning of the coin. As the various meanings multiply, we hear the chant of Pip: "I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look."¹⁰

There is an analogue between the characters of Moby Dick looking at the gold doubloon and Faulkner's metaphor of people gazing at different phases of the sun of truth. Both stress the act of looking, which is a symbol of the process of human perception. It is as true for Faulkner as for Melville that "the significance is in the world and the significant world is generated by looking."¹¹ Neither would subscribe completely to the theory that the individual creates the meaning of life in responding to it, precisely because "the significance is in the world." Strangely enough, the significance is both realized and distorted by the individual response. "The meaning suffers a fragmentation as it comes into being and Pip's comment ['I look, you look' . . . etc.] is an assertion of real multiplicity."¹²

This belief that "the significance is in the world and the significant world is generated by looking" is reflected in Faulkner's vivid rendering both of the external world and of the inner realms of human consciousness.

Hence no matter how psychological the story's material, Faulkner never falls into the mere enumeration which in much stream-of-consciousness writing dissolves all drama and reduces the narrative to a case history without the shaping framework of analysis, or even to an unmapped anachronistic chaos of raw consciousness. Faulkner is always a dynamic story-teller, never just a
reporter of unorganized phenomena. His most drastic, most dream-like use of stream-of-consciousness, for instance, in *The Sound and the Fury*, is not only limited to the first two sections of the book, but it sketches a plot which in the lucid sections that follow gradually emerges clear-cut.

As clear-cut, at least, as Faulkner's stories can be.13

Like Melville, Faulkner is able to convey the introspective world of the mind and the world of matter, including within the range of his novels exploration of the psyche and narrative action. What distinguishes him from the earlier writer is the totality of his commitment to the view of life as process and of the inevitability of fragmentation as the process of perception occurs. Despite the multiplicity of vision in "The Doubloón", everything does take place "under the overhanging consciousness of Ishmael."14 In a novel such as *Absalom, Absalom!* it is as if the characters are looking at the doubloon equivalent (Sutpen being the observed reality) without the overhanging consciousness of an Ishmael. No character is the "delegated vision"15 of the author. Instead of the gold doubloon, which has a fixed external reality, no matter how fluid the perspectives, the symbol of truth is Sutpen, himself as subject to the process of change as his interpreters. Thus, he is an even more elusive reality than the gold coin, which does not decay or change. Most important, instead of brief soliloquies, Faulkner presents intense renderings of the innermost beings of the observing characters through his use of stream-of-conscious-
ness techniques. If "the significant world is generated by 'looking'", the author can best render this by immersing himself in the consciousness of his characters, looking at life through their eyes. This is one reason why Faulkner realizes his artistic potential rather suddenly in *The Sound and the Fury*. In his three previous novels the author's point of view is external to the characters. He is not able to convey his sense of the individual's perception being at once intensely true and radically distorted. The multi-focus of *Soldiers' Pay*, *Mosquitoes*, and *Sartoris* reveals the limitations of each individual perspective by showing diverging and contrasting views. But the characters are seen from so great a distance that their views have only slight validity. As a result the distortion is emphasized. The effect is not so much "satire" or "caricature" as a sense of the grotesque.

In *The Sound and the Fury* Faulkner is able to fully render the simultaneous truth and distortion of human perspective for the first time. As in the previous novels, the multiplex focus helps to convey the limitations of each individual point of view. By immersing himself in the consciousness of three people, he resolves the problem of artistic distance, conveying the validity of his characters' perceptions as well as their aberrations. Wayne Booth helps to clarify this point about distance in a discussion of Jane Austen's *Emma*. 
The solution to the problem of maintaining sympathy despite almost crippling faults was primarily to use the heroine herself as a kind of narrator, though in third person, reporting on her own experience. By showing most of the story through Emma's eyes, the author insures that we will travel with Emma rather than stand against her.\textsuperscript{18}

Faulkner's vision is too complex to allow us to simply "travel with" or "stand against" his characters. It would be more accurate to say that we do both simultaneously, because each of the conflicting perspectives has some validity. But Booth's insight that identification with the point of view of the character leads to sympathetic understanding is directly relevant to Faulkner. It provides an astonishingly simple answer to the question of why one may feel ambivalent toward a character as destructive as Jason Compson, who does have "crippling faults." By making the first person narrator function as Jane Austen had used the third person narrator, Faulkner has gone one step beyond not only Jane Austen, but also Henry James. He renders life through the eyes of an insensitive, unsympathetic observer. Faulkner has been able to identify sufficiently with Jason to present reality from Jason's own point of view. As Booth remarks, "Perhaps the most important effect of travelling with a narrator who is unaccompanied by a helpful author is that of decreasing our emotional distance."\textsuperscript{19} In other words, such a technique tends to increase our emotional involvement. This identification with Jason enables us to understand him; and the under-
standing engenders sympathy, despite his many obnoxious traits.

Through empathy, Faulkner is able to draw himself and his readers close to his characters, creating a feeling of intense involvement. According to Henri Bergson, this ability to achieve empathy is what distinguishes the great novelist from the inferior one.

Consider, again, a character whose adventures are related to me in a novel. The author may multiply the traits of his hero's character, may make him speak and act as much as he pleases, but all this can never be equivalent to the simple and indivisible feeling which I should experience if I were able for an instant to identify myself with the person of the hero himself. Out of that indivisible feeling, as from a spring, all the words, gestures, and actions of the man would appear to me to flow naturally. Bergson's term for this act of sympathetic identification is "intuition." It is the act of empathy and is opposite to "analysis" which is knowledge from an external point of view. "By intuition is meant the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible." It has been recognized by a number of critics that Faulkner has this capacity. In Elizabeth Kerr's view "Faulkner illustrates the artist who uses private feelings chiefly as they illuminate human nature and may be projected in characters essentially unlike himself." This projection (or 'empathy') is achieved most fully in his stream-of-consciousness novels and is one reason for
And Faulkner's sense of ironic tragedy, though powerful often in such novels as Sanctuary and The Hamlet, reaches the credibility necessary for the sharpest effectiveness only in his stream-of-consciousness novels in which psychic drama prevails over grandiose rhetoric.  

Robert Humphrey's observation is essentially correct, even though his terms are somewhat vague. He defines stream-of-consciousness novels as "a type of fiction in which the basic emphasis is placed on exploration of the prespeech levels of consciousness for the purpose, primarily, of revealing the psychic being of the characters." This is an adequate, though not totally satisfactory, definition of the term. Humphrey states that in contrast to the "intelligence" of a character "the prespeech levels of consciousness are not censored, rationally controlled, or logically ordered." This distinction helps to clarify his definition. I would add that the rendering of prespeech levels is structured on the associative principle by which the consciousness moves from one perception to another rather than on the more logically ordered principle of spoken speech. Humphrey says that:

Henry James has written novels which reveal psychological processes in which a single point of view is maintained so that the entire novel is presented through the intelligence of a character. But these, since they do not deal at all with prespeech levels of consciousness, are not what I have defined as stream-of-consciousness novels.  

Unfortunately, Humphrey fails to specify exactly which works of Faulkner he considers stream-of-consciousness
novels. This distinction is not self-evident, since Faulkner frequently combines the intensive rendering of prespeech levels of consciousness with a coherent plot and distant narrator, features usually associated with narrative fiction. Using these features as a criterion, it might plausibly be argued that there are strong narrative elements in all of Faulkner's novels. Moreover, it could be asserted that sections of *The Mansion* and *The Hamlet*, a novel Humphrey obviously considers to be a narrative, do fit his definition of stream-of-consciousness fiction. I will refer to the five works included for discussion in this chapter as "Faulkner's stream-of-consciousness novels." There are narrative elements in all of them; but in these works Faulkner most fully depicts the innermost flow of the characters' thoughts and feelings on a prespeech level to reveal their psychic beings. It is important to bear in mind, however, that the term is a useful convenience, rather than representing a hard and fast definition.

I have stated that a relatively full sense of imaginative identification takes place between the author and character in Faulkner's stream-of-consciousness fiction; I also suggest that the relationship between the reader and the character is altered in these works. Leon Edel's statement about this relationship is helpful.

Once the attempt is made to render a certain mind, there ensues the meeting of that mind with the mind of the reader. There can follow a merging of the two mental atmospheres.
In the old novels this was not the case. The reader was being told a story. He listened. He was drawn into it primarily through identification with one or another of the characters... If the author succeeds in drawing the reader into this single consciousness, he should be able to make the reader feel with the character: and the reader does this only if proper identification... is achieved. He may then... allow his own smell memory to come into play when Benjy... tells him that Caddy smelled like leaves or that Versh smelled like rain.27

Edel suggests that Faulkner, in rendering the process of perception of various characters, forces the reader to bring into play his own process of perception. Faulkner's own words support this statement.

Remember all Tolstoy said about Anna Karenina was that she was beautiful and could see in the dark like a cat. That's all he ever said to describe her. And every man has a different idea of what's beautiful. And it's best to take the gesture, the shadow of the branch, and let the mind create the tree.28

The technique of encouraging the reader to create his own image is more than a literary device. It reflects the underlying concept that life itself is process. This view is increasingly prevalent in the twentieth century and is attributable to a wide variety of influences including thinkers such as Darwin, Freud, Bergson, William James, and Whitehead, to name but a few. It is most succinctly stated by Whitehead, as reported by a friend: "He had been telling us in simple terms that our judgments are sharply conditioned by time and space but that the actualities are outside of both, and that change is the process and is itself the actuality."29 This concept is clarified in
Henri Bergson's *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, an essay which Faulkner acknowledges having read.³⁰

There is no state of mind, however simple, which does not change every moment, since there is no consciousness without memory, and no continuation of a state without the addition, to the present feeling, of the memory of past moments. It is this which constitutes duration. Inner duration is the continuous life of a memory which prolongs the past onto the present.³¹

In other words consciousness, itself, is a process in continuous flux.

Bergson is one of the direct influences on Faulkner. "In fact, I agree pretty much with Bergson's theory of the fluidity of time. There is only the present moment in which I include the past and the future."³² Faulkner's characteristic method of beginning a novel in the present and then, through the use of flashback, showing it to be the cumulative influence of the past reflects this concept. He is essentially in agreement with Bergson that consciousness is a state "which changes and endures . . . [a state of] perpetual becoming,"³³ i.e., a constantly changing process, rather than a fixed state. Slatoff has observed that Faulkner is like Bergson in that "he often tends to view experience as a state of the whole being or of the self and to conceive of the self as an indivisible internal process which can only be intuited."³⁴

The sense of process is rendered most fully in Faulkner's stream-of-consciousness novels. It is dramatized in the characters portrayed and generated in the reader.
Since explicit authorial comment tends to be absent or minimal, the reader is forced to rely more on his own process of perception in order to make sense out of the experience. The less the author comments directly, the more the reader is forced to draw his own conclusions. This explains a key question raised by Wayne Booth about Faulkner's work. "Why should explicit judgment be banned from The Sound and the Fury and allowed in "Barn Burning." In the short story we witness the boy's struggle from a greater narrative distance than in the novel. The author poses a problem for his character and resolves it. The following passage from "Barn Burning" occurs after young Sartoris Snopes has decided to act against his own father:

Father, my Father, he thought. "He was brave!" he cried suddenly aloud, but not loud, no more than a whisper: "He was! He was in the war! He was in Colonel Sartoris' cav'ry!" not knowing that his father had gone to that war a private in the fine old European sense, wearing no uniform, admitting the authority of and giving fidelity to no man or army or flag, going to war as Malbrouck himself did: for booty--it meant nothing and less than nothing to him if it were enemy booty or his own.

The information provided makes it clear that the boy, despite his remorse, did make the correct decision. The knowledge available to the reader enables him to admire and pity the boy from a position of certainty. This is because the boy can not know how correct his decision is. The reader has no doubts about the correctness of the decision, because he has been provided with information that is not available to Sartoris Snopes. As a result, he
is a witness to the boy's struggle, rather than a participant in it. The reader is in the secure position of having seen a problem posed by the author and then satisfactorily resolved; whereas in The Sound and the Fury explicit value judgments are absent from the first three sections and minimal in the fourth. The reader is thus closer to the situation of the characters who are forced to grope for meaning in a world of uncertainty. The result is that the reader, like the character, is subjected to the process of perception and forced to make his own synthesis.

Thus, "Barn Burning" functions more on the level of a narrative, in which the author, certain of his judgments, passes them on to the reader. In The Sound and the Fury, characters, author, and audience must all seek meaning in a world which is confusing, because the very act of seeking brings distortion as well as clarification. It is for this reason that explicit judgments are minimal in the novel.

I have suggested that Faulkner's stream-of-consciousness fiction is his most successful for three interrelated reasons: he is able to achieve the greatest extent of empathy in these works. Through empathy, he is able to explore the innermost psychological workings of his characters. In dramatizing their inner lives, he is able to convey their processes of perception, rendering his vision that life is process. The total effect is toward intense involvement.
Strangely enough, this intense involvement does not preclude distance between the reader and the character; rather it seems to co-exist along with it. As previously mentioned, the shifting perspectives of a Faulkner novel make us aware of the limitations of any single view. It is necessary for the reader to grope somewhat in order to determine whether the perspective of a narrator such as Stephen Dedalus is distorted in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Faulkner's novels are more like Joyce's *Ulysses* in the use of multiple viewpoints, each of which is implicitly compared and contrasted to the others. As a result these novels provide a context beyond each individual perspective. This context is lacking in novels which rely on a single angle of vision.

Each change in point of view shifts our focus, not only from one character to another, but also from the character to the author. The greater the number of shifts, the more we become aware of the artist who is doing the manipulation. This awareness tends to evoke distance and limit involvement. One reason for the special intensity of *The Sound and the Fury* is that the point of view does not shift until we have become thoroughly immersed in the consciousness of the main characters. Each of the Compson brothers is allowed to have his full say, before receding to the background. The changes of perspective are more frequent in *Light in August* and far more numerous in *As I Lay Dying*. 
The involvement between the author and reader with the character is in inverse proportion to the number of shifts: greatest in *The Sound and the Fury*, less in *Light in August* and significantly less in *As I Lay Dying*.

It should be noted, however, that this is not to be taken as a mathematical equation or a new theorem. The technique of changing focus is only one of the factors affecting involvement and distance. The stance that the author takes in relation to his characters is of the utmost importance. In *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner presents his information without authorial comment, as if he were directly rendering the consciousness of his characters (the concluding section of *The Sound and the Fury* is the exception to this). In *Light in August*, *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Go Down, Moses*, a third person author-narrator is established in the opening passages and maintained throughout the novels. The difference in effect may be seen in a comparison of the opening sections of *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August*.

Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting. They were coming toward where the flag was and I went along the fence. Luster was hunting in the grass by the flower tree. They took the flag out and they were hitting. Then they went to the table, and he hit and the other hit.38

Sitting beside the road, watching the wagon mount the hill toward her, Lena thinks, I have come from Alabama: a fur piece. All the way from Alabama a-walking. A fur piece.' Thinking although I have not been quite a month on the road I am already in Mississippi, further from home than I have ever been before. I am now further from Doane's Mill than I have been since I was twelve years old.
She had never even been to Doane's Mill until after her father and mother died. . . .39

In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner immerses himself within the consciousness of Benjy Compson, limiting his presentation of the first section to Benjy's responses. The sense of involvement is intense because the reader is forced to see life through Benjy's eyes. The sense of distance is also strong because the reader is thrust suddenly into an unfamiliar and bewildering world. Without explicit authorial assistance he must deduce that the narrator is a thirty-three year old idiot named Benjy and that a game is taking place. It is the reader, not the narrator, who must first question what is happening and then attempt to decipher it. This is remote from the experience of Benjy who is incapable of focussing on a question and of making an intellectual synthesis. As one critic notes:

> it would seem that Faulkner intended to indicate something about the quality of Benjy's perception of the world about him by uniformly omitting the question marks in the questions that are asked in the dialogue of his section of the novel.40

The incapacity of Benjy to formulate questions distances him from the reader.

In *Light in August* the author-narrator alternates the rendering of the flow of Lena's consciousness with his own observations about her. Though unobtrusive, the author's presence is directly felt. He conveys information that is not in the consciousness of any of his characters. The alternation of perspective in Lena's passage seems to shift
the focus slightly from the character toward the author. The italics of the quoted passage serve quietly to emphasize this point. The change of focus is similar to but less than in the major shifts of point of view in the novel. The reason for this is that the changes of angle of vision are subtle and unobtrusive in the quoted passage. Whereas when Faulkner shifts from Benjy to Quentin or from Lena to Joe Christmas, he seems to deliberately omit smooth transitions. The effect is to emphasize the juxtaposition of perspectives and to remind us of the author who is doing the juxtaposing.

The sense of involvement is more complete in The Sound and the Fury because the reader is immersed within the consciousness of the character, whereas in Light in August he is a kind of spectator in close association with the character's consciousness. The narrative stance in the latter novel enables Faulkner to convey the intensity that stems from close identification with a character, even though it is less than what he achieves in The Sound and the Fury. Distance from the characters is evident in both works, but it is different in kind. In The Sound and the Fury the reader is distant because the necessity of making his own synthesis removes him from the experiences of the character. This is less true of Light in August, where the author provides information more explicitly. But in that novel the reader has the distance of a knowledgeable onlooker. In the passage quoted from the Lena section, the angle of vision
shifts slightly and the presence of the author as a commentator is directly felt. Both of these factors contribute to a sense of distance. They are in contrast to the Benjy passage where the angle of vision remains constant and the author's presence is indirectly felt. One must not make the mistake of assuming that a writer is not evident, simply because no explicit authorial comment is given. As Wayne Booth lucidly puts it: "we must never forget that though the author can to some extent choose his disguises, he can never choose to disappear."  

I suggest that the change of technique from The Sound and the Fury to Light in August reflects a basic alteration in Faulkner's perception of experience. No such change occurs in As I Lay Dying where Faulkner directly presents the consciousness of his characters as he had previously done in The Sound and the Fury. Domestic difficulties, friction between children of the same family, confrontation of the knowledge of death, and the loss of virginity have all been explored intensely and relatively fully in the earlier novel. They are treated with comic distance in As I Lay Dying. The novel's title and the revealing soliloquy of Addie Bundren indicate her central importance. Her death generates the action in the novel and her attitude toward the children is a crucial factor in their development of character. But the large number of reflectors creates a sense of diffusion and works against intensive focus.
Although the author's immersion within the consciousness of his characters encourages involvement, the shortness of the captions and frequency of the shifts evoke distance, preventing depth exploration of any one reflector. Faulkner felt that the sense of discovery was "missing from *As I Lay Dying* because he had known so much about that book before writing it."\(^2\) This is why he speaks of the novel as a "tour de force."\(^3\)

In *Light in August* the presence of a third person narrator suggests a vision of a universe far more under control than the one presented in *The Sound and the Fury*. Although it is unobtrusive the narrative consciousness of the author is present as a guiding force from beginning to end. Coleridge's comment on "Venus and Adonis" is, in my opinion, applicable to *Light in August*.

> It is throughout as if a superior spirit more intuitive, more intimately conscious, even than the characters themselves, not only of outward look and act, but of the flux and reflux of the mind in all its subtlest thoughts and feelings, were placing the whole before our view;\(^4\)

In both *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August* the reader must immerse himself in experience before clarification is achieved. But *Light in August* begins and ends in clarity. It is reflected both in the lucidity of Lena's perceptions and the reader's awareness of what is happening. Whereas the initial focus in *The Sound and the Fury* is the angle of vision of a bewildered reflector, and the reader is placed in a position of confusion. It is only after intense struggle through two sections that experience begins
to clarify. The possibility of clarification is problematic throughout the first part of *The Sound and the Fury* but implicit from the start of *Light in August*.

In *Absalom, Absalom!* the struggle to understand the nature of experience is as difficult and as intense as in *The Sound and the Fury*. Although the novel similarly moves from confusion toward greater clarity in the final two narrations, the understanding achieved is more tentative. In this novel Faulkner fully confronts both the difficulties and advantages of exploring past experience, taking his profoundest look at the ruthless forefather who attempted to found a dynasty in Mississippi. Other examples of this recurrent figure in Faulkner's fiction are Colonel Sartoris, Jason Lycurgus Compson, and Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin. The young men who attempt to understand the nature of Sutpen have never met him personally and must rely for their information on written documents and hearsay. The difficulty of comprehension in the novel is reflected in the texture of the rhetoric and the suppositions that Quentin and Shreve are forced to make about the nature of Sutpen and his family. Paradoxically, a clarity of perspective is achieved that one can not attain in evaluating immediate experience. This insight is expressed by Quentin when he is picturing Sutpen, Judith, and Clytie. The narrator says of Quentin, "he could see it; he might even have been there. Then he thought *No. If I had been there I could not have seen it this plain.*" Events are perceived only as filtered
through the consciousness of the various reflectors. Rosa Coldfield "is the only one of the narrators who was an actual participant in the drama, and even her role was a limited and minor one which ended forty-three years earlier with her sudden departure from Sutpen's house."  

In *Go Down, Moses*, on the other hand, the focus is far more external. Depth immersion within a turbulent, struggling consciousness is conveyed only in Part Four of "The Bear." In that story Faulkner renders an external metaphor representing the process of perception in Isaac's search for Old Ben in the forest. It is only after immersion in the woods that clarification of vision takes place with the emergence of the animal that incarnates the spirit of the wilderness. "The Bear" functions more as a traditional narrative than the novels previously discussed. I see it as balancing the immersion in consciousness of Faulkner's stream-of-consciousness fiction with narrative elements. The sense of a third person narrator in control is even more evident than in *Light in August*. The rhetoric, with the exception of Part Four, reflects this sense of control. The long sentences are characteristic of Faulkner's attempt to reach out for an understanding of the complexities of experience. But the tortured quality of the language, indicating the difficulty of this struggle for characters such as Quentin Compson and Gail Hightower, is absent here. The reader is more of a witness to Ike's struggle to find himself than he is a
participant. Although the sense of involvement is strong, the narrative angle of vision is more external than in the works previously discussed. This evokes distance.

The dual sense of involvement and distance is the essence of the response, not only to a Faulknerian novel, but to any work of art. As a critic of Joyce insists, "The artist must balance our sense of the reality of his world ... against our sense of it as an artifact." Involvement depends upon what Coleridge has termed "that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith." The absence of it precludes response to art. It occurs even in the reading of so limited a popular art form as the newspaper comic strip. The reader of Donald Duck, for example, temporarily suspends his disbelief to accept the convention that ducks can talk English. Nor is he surprised to observe a duck walking a dog down the street. The fact that the comic strip is read in several seconds works against a strong sense of involvement; but the sense of involvement does take place to a limited extent.

I believe that a sense of distance is also inevitable in the response to art. I disagree with critics such as Richard Rovere on this point. In discussing Gail Hightower of Light in August, Rovere asserts that "we are momentarily so immersed in this seedy, unfrocked and defeated old clergyman that, in fact, we become him." He would apparently dispute Wayne Booth's point that the artist is evident in
the details he has selected to render and can not choose to disappear. I believe that Booth's contention is a valid one. No matter how intense our involvement, there co-exists always a sense of detachment, an awareness of the work of art as an artifact, which prevents us from becoming the character. I suggest that the involvement of author and reader with a character is similar to the identification of a child with a role he is playing in a game. The child may become extremely involved in the role he assumes. Yet, as Johan Huizinga points out in *Homo Ludens*, "Genuine play possesses . . . the consciousness, however latent, of 'only pretending.'"\footnote{Cervantes'}

I realize that this point can not be proven, but would like to cite one example to support my contention. The complete lack of this sense of detachment is portrayed as a kind of madness by one of Faulkner's favorite authors, Miguel de Cervantes.\footnote{Don Quixote, lacking all sense of critical distance, fails to distinguish between life and art. Cervantes informs us that "all the Fables and fantastical Tales which he read, seem'd to him now as true as the most authentic Histories."\footnote{The inability to make this distinction, evident throughout the work, is most vividly illustrated by the episode in which Don Quixote is watching a puppet show. Incensed by a threat of one of the puppet villains, he charges at the show, sword in hand, cutting and slashing at the villainous marionettes.}}\footnote{Cervantes'}
point is that the puppet show is art, a representation of life, rather than life itself, and that only a madman would fail to know the difference. Even Don Quixote, over-involved as he is, does not become the characters in the works of art he observes, though he does try to enter their world as savior.

What is unique about the work of Faulkner then is not that involvement and distance exist, since these factors are present in all works of art; rather it is that in his most successful novels the sense both of involvement and of detachment is extremely intense. The result is what Peter Swiggart has called "a kind of double vision" in which we see the world simultaneously from the point of view of the character and from our own critical distance. The involvement conveys to us the validity of each perspective, while the detachment enables us to judge its limitations. Thus, Faulkner is able to render what I have referred to as "the basic human dilemma": that what we perceive is at once a truth and a distortion. I will refer to Faulkner's awareness of this dilemma that each individual is inevitably locked within the limitations of his own point of view as his sense of cosmic irony. In the following chapters I will analyze closely The Sound and the Fury, stressing Faulkner's treatment of involvement and distance. I will show that these factors, though essential in any work of art, assume a heightened significance when the act of perception (i.e.,
how we look at experience) is a central concern. I will also examine how the process of writing (and of reading) the novels is an attempt to cope with the dilemma of the inevitable distortion of human perspective. The quotation from *Faulkner in the University*, which I have taken as central to this thesis, again provides the key.

I think that no one individual can look at truth. It blinds you. You look at it and you see one phase of it. Someone else looks at it and sees a slightly awry phase of it. But taken all together, the truth is in what they saw though nobody saw the truth intact... It was, as you say, thirteen ways of looking at a blackbird. But the truth, I would like to think, comes out, that when the reader has read all these thirteen different ways of looking at the blackbird, the reader has his own fourteenth image of that blackbird which I would like to think is the truth.\(^{56}\)

Faulkner is suggesting that the author and reader must become immersed in each of the perspectives until they are able to comprehend an overview which includes all the various angles of vision. The resultant point of view will be more comprehensive than those expressed by any individual within the novel. Walter Slatoff, despite a brilliant analysis, errs seriously in failing to comprehend this point. He states that "Our tense condition very much resembles the characteristic state of Faulkner's characters, a state we also share through empathy. *No more than they are we permitted to achieve final resolution or release.*"\(^{57}\)

Faulkner's art does not leave the reader in the same position as his characters. It encourages the reader to use his own process of perception to strive for an integrated
vision of reality, based upon the assimilation of various and conflicting versions of experience. Faulkner is quite explicit about this in *Knight's Gambit*. He states that "it is only in literature that the paradoxical and even mutually negativing anecdotes in the history of a human heart can be juxtaposed and annealed by art into verisimilitude and credibility.""^58 "Anneal" is the key word here. It is defined by Webster as "to heat, as glass, in order to fix laid-on colors." This is especially interesting in view of the fact that Faulkner originally wished the different sections of *The Sound and the Fury* to be printed in different color ink. ^59 He at one time felt that different color ink would be an effective indicator of the diverse consciousnesses of the characters. ^60 The implication of the quotation from *Knight's Gambit* is that literature involves the patterning of different and often contradictory sections into a coherent whole.

This is not to say that art is the perfect solution to the contradictions of life. No such solution exists. An excessive love of art can lead one away from life rather than into it, as any ardent admirer of *Don Quixote* knows. Moreover, the resolution must of necessity be imperfect, because the novel is written and read by individuals, themselves subject to the inevitable distortion of experience as they respond to it. Faulkner is well aware of this, as indicated by the qualification in his statement at the University of Virginia. "But the truth, I would like to
think, comes out . . . " It is the brilliance of Faulkner's achievement to be able to render in his art both the possibilities of human comprehension and the limitations inherent in any such endeavor. In the following study I will examine how Faulkner conveys both the possibilities and limitations in *The Sound and the Fury*. 
CHAPTER 2

TRYING TO SAY
In my introductory chapter I suggested that by immersing himself within the consciousness of his characters, Faulkner is able to convey the intensity of their perceptions, resolving his handling of the problem of point of view. The suddenness of the resolution may be illustrated by a comparison of the opening passage of *The Sound and the Fury* with one from *New Orleans Sketches*, written approximately three years before.

The car came swiftly down Decatur Street and turning into the alleyway, stopped. Two men alighted, but the other remained in his seat. The face of the sitting man was vague and dull and loose-lipped, and his eyes were clear and blue as cornflowers, and utterly vacant of thought; he sat a shapeless, dirty lump, life without mind, an organism without intellect. Yet always in his slobbering, vacuous face were his two eyes of a heartshaking blue, and gripped tightly in one fist was a narcissus.  

Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting. They were coming toward where the flag was and I went along the fence. Luster was hunting in the grass by the flower tree. They took the flag out, and they were hitting. Then they put the flag back and they went to the table, and he hit and the other hit. Then they went on, and I went along the fence. Luster came away from the flower tree and we went along the fence and they stopped and we stopped and I looked through the fence while Luster was hunting in the grass.

"Here, caddie." He hit. They went away across the pasture. I held to the fence and watched them going away.

"Listen at you, now." Luster said. "Ain't you something, thirty-three years old, going on that way. After I done went all the way to town to buy you that cake. Hush up that moaning. Aint you going to help me find that quarter so that I can go to the show tonight."

They were hitting little, across the pasture. I went [back] along the fence to where the flag was. It flapped on the bright grass and the trees.
Faulkner's development in this three year period is astonishing. The first description, as the title of the volume implies, is simply a sketch. The narrative point of view is external to the subject being rendered and tends to evoke distance from the idiot who is described as a "shapeless dirty lump." Abstractions are awkwardly mingled with precise renderings, weakening the effect of vivid pictorial details such as the fact that the man's mouth is "loose-lipped." The concreteness of the description that "his eyes were clear and blue as cornflowers" is offset by the narrator's proclaiming that the eyes were "utterly vacant of thought." The description of the man as "life without mind, an organism without intellect" is almost clinically abstract. Bergson has suggested that on the deepest level of consciousness man perceives in terms of images rather than statements. The former are concrete embodiments of perception, while the latter are generalizations one step removed from the act of experiencing. In Bergsonian terms the passage from *New Orleans Sketches* is ineffective because it functions primarily as statement rather than image.

There is an imperfectly controlled ambivalence in the passage that is evident in much of Faulkner's early writing. The concluding sentence of the paragraph begins, "Yet always in his slobbering, vacuous face were his two eyes of a heart-shaking blue . . . ." It is as if the author is telling the
audience that despite the repulsive qualities of this vacant, slobbering organism "yet" there is something appealing about him; but the author is not able to make this point convincing. The description of the idiot's eyes is not enough to offset the sense of repulsiveness suggested by the other details. The total effect is to evoke the distance one feels when staring at a person who is badly deformed.

In The Sound and the Fury passage Faulkner is able to render the specific perceptions of the idiot-child, rather than making general observations about him. Instead of providing an external description of Benjy, the author conveys what it might be like to see life through his angle of vision. He thus succeeds in showing what Benjy is like rather than telling the reader what to think. He has advanced from the abstract and proclamatory statements of his earlier work to the direct presentation of images as rendered through the consciousness of Benjy. It is not until the reader is well into the novel that he is aware that this tale is being told by an idiot. By the time Faulkner gives an external description of him in Part Four (290), he has forced the reader to acknowledge the humanity he shares with Benjy. The sense of intense involvement that the author achieves is explained by Leon Edel as follows:

In accepting the material in a scrambled state and seeking to understand it, we are invited by Faulkner to place ourselves within the angle of vision or perception of Benjy. . . . We are manoeuvred by the novelist into taking over all of
Benjy's senses: his eyes become our eyes, his sense of smell is ours, his unique experience of the world around him is ours for the duration of the book [section]. We are, so to speak, on the inside of an idiot--looking out--even though we retain, at the same time, our own reason and our awareness. A peculiar empathy is asked of us [:]

'The room went away, but I didn't hush, and the room came back and Dilsey sat on the bed, looking at me.'

One advantage of viewing life through Benjy's eyes is that he sees existence with clarity and directness. When he states that "They were hitting little" he is describing the act of putting. Because he has no knowledge of what it means to play golf, he describes the action itself, rather than using the word "putt" which represents the concept of "hitting little." The result of this technique is to give to the narrative of Benjy a precision and a literalness of observation which are manifestations of his simple, direct response to life. The technique also induces the reader to undertake what Wayne Booth terms "the pleasure of deciphering," which is the good feeling one gets in comprehending the significance of a literary pattern or allusion. Booth suggests that this pleasure is especially evident in works where an unsympathetic narrator is used, such as the speakers in A Modest Proposal, the Cyclops episode of Ulysses and the Jason section of The Sound and the Fury. But the pleasure of deciphering is not restricted to the ironic parts of these two novels. It is "virtually unlimited" in Ulysses and The Sound and the Fury because
the process of understanding the complexity of experience is the essence of both books. I feel it is as true of Faulkner's novel as it is of Joyce's *Ulysses* that the theme is the "activity of the human spirit through which, in which, life continually seeks to understand itself and in understanding to recreate."\(^7\)

The pleasure of deciphering is initiated in the opening passage of *The Sound and the Fury*. It is manifest in the reader's realization that the people Benjy watches through the fence are playing golf; it is most evident when we comprehend that his moaning stems from the fact that the cry "Here, caddie" (23) reminds him of his departed sister. This realization can not be made at first, since the reader does not have sufficient information at the time he first witnesses Benjy moan. The reason for the idiot-child's conduct becomes clearer as the Benjy section circles back toward the opening episode in which golfers walk beyond the fence. The following passage takes place after Luster, having lost the golf ball that he hoped to sell for a quarter, vents his frustration on the helpless Benjy:

"'Beller. You want something to beller about. All right then. Caddy.' he whispered. 'Caddy. Beller now. Caddy'" (74). By this time the cause of Benjy's conduct in the opening scene has become clarified. The reader is now able to comprehend and take pleasure in the author's method of presenting experience.
Faulkner has chosen to begin his presentation through the eyes of an innocent. I believe that both the validity and limitations of Benjy's point of view are implicit in the first sentence of the novel: "Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting" (23). He looks at life directly and clearly, seeing the fence, the curling flowers, and beyond the spaces the golfers. But he sees life through narrow chinks, i.e., "between the curling flower spaces." I take this to be symbolic of the limitations of innocence. Benjy's angle of vision is simultaneously clearly focussed and highly restricted.

It is no coincidence that the novel begins with a reference to sight, since the way each individual sees existence is of central significance. Sight is a symbol of the process of perception throughout The Sound and the Fury, which may be regarded as four distinct ways of looking at the blackbird of reality (in this instance the experience of the Compson family). In Section Three Jason says,"By the time I got the car stopped and grabbed her hands there was about a dozen people looking. It made me so mad for a minute it kind of blinded me" (206). It should be clear to everyone except the myopic Jason that this reflects the way his anger limits and distorts his perspective. Likewise, the reference to the fact that Mrs. Compson's "eyes are giving out" (234) suggests her literal and spiritual shortsightedness. In contrast, Dilsey's statement that "I've
seed de first en de last" (313) suggests the magnitude of her vision, as well as the wide range of her experience with the Compsons. The first sentence of the book thus initiates a crucial and recurrent motif. It presents a factual description, the implications of which will become evident in the context of the novel as a whole.

Being innocent, Benjy is unable to repress and distort experience. Howe explains that "Because he cannot color or shape his memories, his mind serves the novel as an entirely faithful glass." Michael Millgate is in agreement with Howe, stating that "what Faulkner does in this [Benjy's] section is to establish a convention of objectivity . . . a kind of camera eye." Although I agree with these critics that Benjy's perspective is less distorted than Quentin's and Jason's, I do not fully concur with the opinion that Benjy is objective. In my introductory chapter I suggested that all human perspectives, as portrayed by Faulkner, contain elements of distortion. A study of Phenomenology by Colin Wilson supports this contention. Wilson makes the following observations:

Freud suggested . . . that a man who left his umbrella behind might actually want to return to the house, and so have subconsciously willed himself to forget it. That is to say the oversight was intentional yet not consciously so.

Consciousness itself . . . is intentional. It is not a plane mirror, merely reflecting the world. It makes its own distortions quite apart from our natural human tendency to distort the world through our emotions and prejudices.
An example of the distortion of consciousness itself is provided by the Muller-Lyer illusion in which one line seems longer than another of the identical length

![Muller-Lyer illusion diagram]

Wilson's distinction between kinds of distortion is helpful in understanding Faulkner's handling of point of view in *The Sound and the Fury*. I suggest that the distortion of the two older brothers exemplifies the kind illustrated by Wilson's first example, whereas Benjy's perspective reflects the distortion of consciousness itself. His reaction to Caddy's developing sexuality which poses a threat to his own security might be termed "natural", but it is certainly not objective. In proceeding from Benjy to Quentin to Jason, Faulkner moves from a narrator who is unrepressed to one who is almost completely repressed. The greater the repression of consciousness, the greater is the element of distortion in *The Sound and the Fury*. The metaphor of Benjy as a "faithful glass" or "moral mirror" is useful, since Faulkner employs Benjy's consciousness to project a basically accurate remembrance of events and conversations that have taken place. But it is important to remember that Benjy is not a purely objective narrator.

A collation of the manuscript of *The Sound and the Fury* and the first edition indicates that Faulkner was
conscious of this lack of objectivity. Emily Izsak observes that "Negro speech in the first section of the novel was revised so as to reduce somewhat its colloquial character."\textsuperscript{13} This type of revision was made only in Part One. It serves to distinguish speech as perceived by the innocent Benjy from that directly rendered by the narrator in the last section of the novel. Miss Izsak concludes

Benjamin's mind thus appears to reshape the speech he hears according to a comparatively impersonal pattern of diction. Faulkner has taken care not to denature Negro speech, but merely to subordinate somewhat its regional qualities to the consciousness constructed for Benjamin.\textsuperscript{14}

Because he is innocent Benjy responds to stimuli instantly and with total involvement. Being fully involved in the present instant he has no concept of oppositions. He has instead a sense of intense joy in responding to pleasurable stimuli and grief in reacting to their loss. It is the lack of tension in Benjy which enables his consciousness to flow unrestrainedly from one scene to another. This sense of unrestricted movement has two key functions in \textit{The Sound and the Fury}. It conveys the lack of inhibition which is part of the joy of innocence. The flowing from episode to episode is also useful to Faulkner as a device for introducing virtually every motif of the novel in his first section.

Faulkner has referred to the Benjy section as the "groundwork"\textsuperscript{15} of the book. The idiot-child's literalness of observation enables the author to render in concrete
detail the world (i.e., 'ground') in which the story takes place. Another implication of this rich image is that the metaphorical resonances of the novel are grounded in the concreteness of literal experience. Michael Cowan explains it:

Most of the symbols in *The Sound and the Fury* begin as literal referents. . . . When water first appears in Benjy's section, it is literally water; shadows are literally shadows; flowers, rain, and trees, dirt and mud, fire and sunlight, mirrors and slippers, money and golf balls all appear to Benjy as actual phenomena. The metaphorical resonances of these and other key words and images do not begin to appear until we have struggled a good way into his section, and such resonances do not acquire their full range of implication until we experience new contexts for these words and images in the remaining sections of the novel. Guided by Faulkner, the reader must move gradually from concrete experiences to complex implications, from confusion to tentative understanding.  

The initial passage of *The Sound and the Fury* contains several illustrations of Cowan's point. The fact that Benjy is thirty-three years old is conveyed in the first lines spoken by Luster. This concrete bit of information assumes increasing significance as the associations between Benjy and Jesus Christ are developed. The full resonance of this fact emerges only near the end of the book when Dilsey says to Benjy: "You's de Lawd's chile, anyway. En I be His'n too, fo long, praise Jesus" (333).  

Benjy is presented within the confines of the Compson domain looking through the fence at a game in which he can not participate. His restriction and separation from the activities of human existence are emphasized when Luster says to Benjy "You
can't play no ball" (51). This remark takes on added significance when the reader learns that Benjy has literally lost his balls, having been castrated after frightening two young girls. In the very first page of his novel Faulkner is thus able to render a number of facts which will continue to resonate throughout the book. Without giving the appearance of compression, the author succeeds in presenting several significant images in a few short lines.

In rendering the associational flow of Benjy's consciousness, Faulkner is able to move from one important scene to another, avoiding transitional passages which might diminish the novel's intensity. He succeeds in introducing a large cast of characters and a great number of events, as well as initiating all the major motifs in the novel. As noted by Maurice Coindreau, these include "visits to the cemetery, castration, Caddy's misconduct, the father's drunkenness, Jason's brutality, Quentin's rendezvous and her escape down the window, etc." Excerpts from the first part of the novel serve as preludes to Sections Two and Three. This is illustrated by the following passage:

"'Of course.' Father said. 'Bad health is the primary reason for all life. Created by disease, within putrefaction, into decay'" (63). The nihilism of Mr. Compson will become dominant in the consciousness of Quentin. The passages in which Jason and Miss Quentin squabble at the dinner table, with the latter attempting to throw a glass at her uncle,
serve even more explicitly as a prelude of what is
to come. Because the innocent Benjy does not dwell on
scenes obsessively, as do Quentin and Jason, and because
this episode is juxtaposed with Benjy's memories of the
past, it remains unobtrusive in Section One.

Juxtaposition is the essential technique not only in
Part One but within the novel as a whole. By juxtaposing
past and present scenes, Faulkner is able to evoke a
poignant and immediate contrast between a grim present and
a happier past. The contrasts begin on the second page of
the novel, continuing throughout the Benjy section.

"Wait a minute." Luster said. "You snagged
on that nail again. Can't you never crawl through
here without snagging on that nail."
Caddy uncaught me and we crawled through.
Uncle Maury said not to let anybody see us, so
we better stoop over, Caddy said. Stoop over,
Benjy. Like this, see.

The tenderness of Caddy is shown in the first memory
of the past that Faulkner dramatizes. It is Caddy who tries
to protect the helpless Benjy from the snags of existence
that he can not cope with. The first image of his sister
shows her rescuing him. Her concern is shown through her
kindness, her patience and the use of the affectionate nick-
name "Benjy" which contrast to Mrs. Compson's cold and formal
"Benjamin." Caddy's concern for her brother is contrasted with
that of the less patient Luster. The juxtaposition of these two
characters occurs several times in the opening pages of the
novel, with each instance reinforcing and clarifying the
contrast. The following instance is the third example of this particular counterpoint:

Caddy knelt and put her arms around me and her cold bright face against mine. She smelled like trees.

"You're not a poor baby. Are you. You've got your Caddy. Haven't you got your Caddy."

"Cant you shut up that moaning and slobbering, Luster said. Aint you shamed of yourself making all this racket."

Caddy's sympathetic understanding is in direct contrast to the irritability of Luster, who wishes to search for his lost quarter without being hindered by a moaning and slobbering idiot. The warmth of Caddy's feelings are thus effectively juxtaposed against the perfunctory relationship with Luster.

This is but one of a series of comparisons and contrasts that help to clarify the nature of experience in *The Sound and the Fury*. The attitudes toward Benjy of Caddy, Luster, Uncle Maury, Mrs. Compson and Versh are portrayed in the opening pages of the book. As the novel proceeds the responses of other characters are brought in. It has been recognized by a number of critics that Benjy serves as a touchstone or "moral mirror."¹⁹ Lawrance Thompson explains this function:

Repeatedly Ben is represented as having the instinctive and intuitive power to differentiate between objects or actions which are life-encouraging and others which are life-injuring, and these are used by Faulkner to symbolize the antithesis between good and evil. In this limited sense . . . Ben serves as a kind of moral mirror, in which the members of his own family may contemplate reflections of their own potentialities, their own moral strengths and weaknesses."²⁰
One way of evaluating the characters in the novel is by observing how they treat Benjy and his instinctive response to them. He responds affirmatively to the love of Caddy and Dilsey, and negatively to the frigidity of Mrs. Compson and to the calculated meanness of Jason, who as a child cuts up Benjy's dolls and as an adult has him castrated. Those who care for Benjy love him unselfishly, since his incapacity prevents him from doing anything for people. Conversely, his vulnerability makes him a readily available scapegoat, since people can take advantage of him without fear of retaliation.

Although Thompson is essentially correct in his observation, the process of evaluation is not as clear-cut as his above statement implies. Luster's response to Benjy, for example, seems impersonal when compared to Caddy's. In this juxtaposition his boredom, his impatience and his occasional outright taunting of the idiot-child are emphasized. From this perspective Luster is a disruptive force. Yet, when his treatment of Benjy is compared to Jason's, it seems relatively compassionate. When his reactions are compared to Mrs. Compson's response to her own child, Luster appears to be a person who can handle a difficult situation competently, while only infrequently losing his patience. From this angle of vision Luster may be regarded as a boy who copes well with a difficult task. On the other hand, he seems a more disinterested and less
sympathetic attendant than Versh, who occasionally threatens to spank Benjy, but never taunts him. Versh shows a certain insight which Luster appears to lack, saying to the idiot-child "You's born lucky and dont know it" (88-89).

Walter Slatoff provides the key to understanding Faulkner's juxtaposition of perspectives. He says that "when viewed in total context, his characters seem to exist in a loose suspension rather than in fixed relationships to one another." This statement is crucial to understanding Faulkner's novels, explaining the fact that they can not be reduced to a single angle of vision. The Benjy section contributes to the fluidity of perspectives in two important ways. First, by immersing himself within the consciousness of his character, Faulkner is able to avoid explicit authorial comment. Second, because Benjy is an innocent with no concept of good or evil, he registers his impression of experience, making no explicit moral judgments. The reader is thus encouraged to assimilate what is being presented and draw his own conclusions.

Benjy's perspective itself is fluid, moving by association back and forth from present incidents to occurrences in the past. Having no awareness of chronological time, he does not differentiate between what is and what was. Events which happened in 1898 are as vividly rendered as those of 1928 for this reason. In conveying his consciousness Faulkner is freed from the limitations of having to
present events in their chronological sequence.

In my introductory chapter I cited the following passage as evidence of Faulkner's Bergsonian view of time: "In fact I agree pretty much with Bergson's theory of the fluidity of time. There is only the present moment in which I include the past and the future." Benjy is essentially Faulkner's dramatization of the Bergsonian concept of duration. The author assumes "that the mind of an idiot, like the unconscious self, is timeless." One of Faulkner's comments on Benjy is similar to his statement about Bergson's theory. He says "To that idiot, time was not a continuation, it was an instant, there was no yesterday and no tomorrow, it all is [now] to him." Memories of the children's past are thus as immediate to Benjy as present occurrences.

In the Benjy section the author most powerfully evokes happy memories of the childhood world of innocence. The sense of the loss of that happiness, portrayed through juxtaposition with the present, becomes increasingly poignant as the section progresses. The joy that Benjy feels in his childhood is focussed primarily on Caddy and the innocent love of brother and sister. Few things evoke one's own lost innocence more vividly than the contrast between the way one regarded Christmas as a child, and one's perspective of it now. The first rendered memory of the past takes place on December 23. It conveys the excitement that a child feels
during the Christmas season.

"What is it." Caddy said. "Did you think it would be Christmas when I came home from school. Is that what you thought. Christmas is the day after tomorrow. Santy Claus, Benjy. Santy Claus. Come on, let's run to the house and get warm." She took my hand and we ran through the bright rustling leaves. (27)

The anticipation and excitement conveyed in Caddy's exclamation are the essence of the joy of innocence. The children's spontaneous exuberance contrasts to Mrs. Compson who says "Nobody knows how I dread Christmas. Nobody knows" (28). This contrast will assume heightened significance when the reader realizes that Caddy, who is capable of love, partakes of the spirit of Christmas, while the frigid Mrs. Compson can only regard the celebration of the birth of Christ with dread. The implications of this juxtaposition become evident in Section Four, where Dilsey's capacity for love is manifest in her response to the vision of Christ at the Easter service. Jason and Mrs. Compson, both of whom are unable to partake of the spirit of love, regard Easter as an inconvenience.

The humor of children is a recurrent motif throughout Benjy's section that helps to evoke the world of childhood joy. The two following examples take place in 1898 and 1910 respectively. In the latter the drunkenly exuberant T.P. is the speaker.

"The one [room] next to it is where we have the measles." Caddy said. "Where do you and T.P. have the measles, Frony."
"Has them just wherever we is, I reckon."
Frony said.

Come on, les drink some more sassprilluh
... We better get one more bottle or we both be hollering. We can say Dan drunk it. Mr. Quentin always saying he so smart, we can say he sassprilluh dog, too.

Other episodes containing humor involve comic treatments of serious themes. The enmity between Jason and Caddy is present in their early years, but has not yet hardened into irrevocable hatred.

"You're a skizzard." Jason said. He began to cry.
"You're a knobnot." Caddy said. Jason cried. His hands were in his pockets.
"Jason going to be a rich man." Versh said. "He holding his money all the time."

Caddy and Jason will continue their name calling in later years, but with a bitterness that is not evident in this instance. Still other passages reflect the whimsical nature of Caddy revealing her assertiveness, her acuteness of perception and her affection for Benjy.

Mother lay crying against the red and yellow cushion.
"Hush, Mother." Caddy said. "You go up-stairs and lay down, so you can be sick."

Faulkner's sense of humor is not confined to the Benjy section, being manifest in all parts of the novel, as I will attempt to show in later chapters. But the author does convey a world of childhood humor and whimsey which dissolves away as he moves into subsequent sections, and the implications of the Compson experience become more serious.

The rendering of humor is only one factor in Faulkner's
presentation of the joys of innocence. Benjy's sensuous response to phenomena such as the curling flower spaces, the bright grass, the red flag flapping in the breeze and the bird upon it conveys a pastoral-like world. A kind of harmony is suggested by the correspondence of Benjy's reactions to the people he observes. This is illustrated by the following passage: "Then they went on, and I went along the fence. Luster came away from the flower tree and we went along the fence and they stopped and we stopped" (23). The implications of these lines becomes clearer later in Section One.

They moaned at Dilsey's house. Dilsey was moaning. When Dilsey moaned Luster said, Hush, and we hushed, and then I began to cry and Blue howled under the kitchen steps. Then Dilsey stopped and we stopped.

(52)

In the first excerpt Benjy's physical movement corresponds to those of the people he watches, and in the second he shares Dilsey's grief. The passages suggest the way a child responds directly to his environment, laughing when adults laugh at something he can not "understand" or crying because another child is crying. This immediacy of response is suggested in the way Benjy's consciousness flows uninhibitedly from one scene to another. He has the total involvement of a child who can be happy playing in one instant, can bump himself and be wholeheartedly crying the next moment and can be instantly made happy again by a toy (or in this case by the slipper of a departed sister).
The flow of Benjy's consciousness is primarily reflected through the rhythm of the prose of his section. Faulkner is able to identify with Benjy on so intense an imaginative level that he is able to convey the rhythm of the idiot-child's consciousness. Edel recognizes that the joy of innocence is evocatively rendered through the flow of the language, referring to the movement as "a dance of the senses."^2^5 Interestingly enough, Henri Bergson uses the same metaphor in his essay "Laughter." His comment describes what Faulkner is doing in the first three sections of *The Sound and the Fury*.

Others delve yet deeper still. Beneath these joys and sorrows which can, at a pinch, be translated into language, they grasp something that has nothing in common with language, certain rhythms of life and breath that are closer to man than his inmost feelings, being the living law—varying with each individual—of his enthusiasm and despair, his hopes and regrets. By setting free and emphasizing the music, they force it upon our attention; they compel us . . . to fall in with it, like passers-by who join in a dance. And thus they impel us to set in motion in the depths of our being, some secret chord which was only waiting to thrill.^2^6

Joyce had used verbal and musical motifs to reflect the different consciousnesses in the Sirens chapter of *Ulysses*. In *The Sound and the Fury* the rendering of the characters' life-rhythms is less of a device and more of an integral part of Faulkner's conception of them. In the first three sections of the novel he conveys three different rhythms which reflect the innermost beings of the Compson brothers.

Although I agree with Bergson that this kind of
achievement is essentially beyond words and logical analysis, I would nevertheless like to examine several of Benjy's passages in an attempt to clarify Faulkner's rendering of the idiot-child's consciousness.

It was red, flapping on the pasture. Then there was a bird slanting and tilting on it. Luster threw. The flag flapped on the bright grass and the trees. I held to the fence. (24)

Versh set me down and we went into Mother's room. There was a fire. It was rising and falling on the walls. There was another fire in the mirror. I could smell the sickness. It was a cloth folded on Mother's head. Her hair was on the pillow. The fire didn't reach it, but it shone on her hand, where her rings were jumping. (80)

In the first passage the lack of "connective tissue between his sentences" reflects Benjy's inability to understand cause-effect relationships. Everything is in motion: the red flag is flapping, the bird is slanting and tilting. Luster, who is often a disruptive force for Benjy, throws, the bird disappears and the flag flaps as it did before. It is generally accepted that participles convey the strongest sense of action, that "It is flapping" is more vivid and immediate than "It flaps." Participles are prominent in the cited passages and throughout Section One. The simplicity of the syntax suggests the directness and lack of complication of Benjy's responses. The concreteness of each line reflects his inability to abstract. Each sentence is clear and contained, manifesting the way Benjy gives total concentration to whatever impression he is rendering at the time. This concentration is evident in the clarity of focus and
unity of perception conveyed in each sentence. Benjy's emotions are as clear as the details rendered in these passages because they are pure like the laughter and grief of a child.

Sickness is not something abstract to Benjy but is smelled and even seen. The synesthesia Faulkner uses throughout the first section reflects the intensity of uninhibited sensuous responses. The fire is rendered by his consciousness not as a static picture, but as something rising and falling. When looking at Mrs. Compson, who is stagnant, he sees rings jumping in the reflected fire light. The sense of motion conveys the fact that "everything appears to him in dramatic terms." It also renders the movement which is the flow of his consciousness. Though completely passive on a physical level, Benjy has an active sensibility. This is because he has no preconceptions, no repression that erects barriers between the external world and his perception of it.

The variety of Benjy's responses is illustrated in the third passage I have selected for analysis. In some respects it serves as a microcosm of the entire section.

Caddy was walking. Then she was running, her book satchel swinging and jouncing behind her. "Hello, Benjy." Caddy said. She opened the gate and came in and stooped down. Caddy smelled like leaves. "Did you come to meet me." she said, "Did you come to meet Caddy. What did you let his hands get so cold for Versh."
"I told him to keep them in his pockets." Versh said. "Holding on to that ahun gate."
"Did you come to meet Caddy." she said, rubbing my hands. "What is it. What are you trying to tell Caddy." Caddy smelled like trees and like when she says we were asleep.

The three basic modes of Benjy's perception are evident in this excerpt. There is an alternation of the idiot-child's description of events with his recording of conversations, and his rendering of his own sense-impressions. By employing this principle of alternation Faulkner avoids the danger of monotony inherent in a point of view which precludes reflection. Variety is conveyed both through the use of this principle and because of the fact that Benjy's consciousness is receptive to experience, capturing the different speech patterns and mannerisms of each person. This sense of variety is absent from the consciousness of a reflector, such as Jason, who perceives all men as fools and all women as bitches. Unlike Quentin and Jason who live in a world of concepts which distort and mute their perception of the outside world Benjy responds openly to experience. The variety reflects the fact that life is always new and exciting to the idiot-child, who is in a constant state of stimulation.

In this instance the stimulation is intensely pleasurable. The sense of motion manifest throughout the section is especially strong in this passage. Faulkner suggests on a number of occasions that he equates life with motion and death with immobility. The eagerness of Caddy to greet Benjy is conveyed through her sense of movement.
This is evident in the first two sentences where the words "walking," "running," "swinging" and "jouncing" contribute greatly in rendering her motion. Benjy's feeling of security is suggested by his perceiving his sister in harmony with nature: "Caddy smelled like trees." He is comforted by the pleasant sensation of having his hands warmed. This gesture is an external manifestation of the warming effect that her love has upon him.

Although the author conveys a strong sense of childhood joy and harmony, he does not idealize the state of innocence. In Faulkner's own words Benjy represents the "blind self-centeredness of innocence." He is unable to conceive of Caddy as a person who must grow up and respond to life and whatever love she can find outside of the Compson household. He instinctively protests her developing relations with young men. His moaning during Caddy's adolescence is his equivalent of Quentin's protest against time and change, since Benjy has no concept of time as an entity, but merely the feeling of loss that time brings. His inability to consider others is rendered in the following lines:

Luster had some spools and he and Quentin fought and Quentin had the spools. Luster cried and Frony came and gave Luster a tin can to play with, and then I had the spools and Quentin fought me and I cried.

"Hush." Frony said, "Aint you shamed of yourself. Taking a baby's play pretty."

"You have to keep him down here." Frony said. "He fighting these babies again." (49-50)

John Hunt acutely observes of Benjy that "his self-centered
idiocy effectively undercuts any tendency that the reader might have to exalt his nonrationality."

Faulkner treats innocence as an ambivalent state of consciousness. The lyric beauty of many of Benjy's passages presents his instinctive responsiveness to life and his capacity for joy. But Faulkner reminds us, as Evelyn Scott noted, that "Innocence is terrible as well as pathetic." Erich Neumann discusses the limitations of innocence more fully. He observes that:

the total reactivity of primitive man is no subject for romanticism. We must realize that, like the child, he was forced into total reaction by any and every content that emerged, and overpowered by his emotionality and the underlying images, acted as a totality, but without freedom.

Thus, an event such as an eclipse might overwhelm primitive man, stampeding him into committing a human sacrifice. Likewise, a ride around a Confederate War monument in an unaccustomed direction might cause a primitive consciousness to panic.

Despite his limitations Benjy is extremely important in The Sound and the Fury. In an interview in Japan Faulkner suggests that the germ of the book lay in his conception of Benjy. Having conceived of him, the author began to speculate "where could he get the tenderness" he needed. Although this statement should be viewed as but one of a number of Faulkner's conflicting versions of the origins of The Sound and the Fury, it is an interesting one. It shares with the version of the novel beginning "with the picture of
the little girl's muddy drawers" an emphasis on the importance of Caddy, since it is she who is the chief provider of the tenderness needed by the idiot-child. Caddy's warm spontaneous love of Benjy and his positive response to it are the most important factors in determining the reader's perception of her. Through Benjy's perspective Faulkner is able to convey a lasting impression of her vitality. This impression, though somewhat modified by other perspectives, is never negated.

The question of where Benjy would get the affection necessary to sustain him is the key to the touchstone aspect of the first section. It most clearly illuminates the affirmative qualities of Caddy and Dilsey and the lack of compassion in Mrs. Compson and Jason. Quentin, though fond of Benjy, has little to do with him. His displays of affection are rare compared to those of Caddy and Dilsey. When he does show concern, Benjy observes that "Quentin smelled like rain" (85). Mr. Compson's affectionate referral to his idiot-son as "old fellow" (81) reveals the more positive side of his nature; whereas Uncle Maury's self-centered use of people and his desperation are manifest in his employment of Benjy as a messenger to Mrs. Patterson.

In addition to serving as a touchstone and providing the "groundwork" for implications to be developed in subsequent sections, Benjy has another major function in *The Sound and the Fury*. He may be regarded as an image of the
basic condition of the Compson brothers. He is essentially passive and totally unable to control his own fate. As Faulkner says, "God had stricken him blind at birth . . . there was nothing he could ever do about it." He thus becomes a symbol of the Compson brothers who are beset by forces beyond their control. This does not negate the fact that Quentin and Jason have more resources at their disposal and hence more responsibilities for their destiny than Benjy does.

Contradictory patterns exist within the Faulknerian novel. Their presence is a manifestation of the author's belief that the nature of "the truth" is complex and shifting and can not be reduced to any single pattern. Thus, from one point of view the Compson brothers are different from each other, as manifest by the fact that the two elder ones bear some responsibility for what happens to them, while the youngest does not. From another angle of vision Benjy is a symbol of the victimization which besets all three brothers who are unable to cope with their overwhelming problems. In his inability to adjust to changing circumstances he dramatizes the Compson dilemma. Their feeling of being trapped is reflected in Benjy's literal confinement within the family gates.

I suggest that Benjy is not only one version of the Compson brothers' dilemma, but is a kind of objective correlative dramatizing in externalized and ultimate terms the
situation that confronts all of them. The crisis of identity, reflected in Quentin's inability to uphold an idealistic tradition and in Jason's renunciation of the Compsons, is manifest in Benjy's literal change of name. The Compsons are obsessed by remembrances of supposedly happier times. Benjy is an image of a consciousness engulfed by the past. Present events continually release a flood of memories for him. Whereas all three brothers fail to communicate, Benjy literally cannot talk. Quentin, though capable of being articulate, has little dialogue with the outside world, being overwhelmed by memories of the past. Jason, though he quibbles with everyone unfortunate enough to cross his path, has no real communication with anyone; he talks more to himself than he does to others. Benjy, though responding intensely to the world around him, totally lacks the ability to articulate.

His inability to communicate is suggested in the opening lines of the novel, when he can only moan after hearing the golfer's cry of "Here, caddie." At this point the reader can not comprehend the reason for Benjy's moaning, and is thus made to partake in the non-communication that characterizes Benjy's relationship with the outside world. Though evident throughout the book, this failure of communication is most vividly illustrated in the passage describing Benjy's bursting out of the Compson gates in his futile attempt to break through the barriers that confine him.
"I'm scared."
"He won't hurt you. I pass here every
day. He just runs along the fence."

They came on. I opened the gate and they
stopped, turning. I was trying to say, and I
caught her, trying to say, and she screamed and I
was trying to say and trying and the bright shapes
began to stop and I tried to get out. I tried to
get it off my face, but the bright shapes were
going again. They were going up the hill to where
it fell away and I tried to cry. But when I
breathed in, I couldn't breathe out again to cry,
and I tried to keep from falling off the hill and
I fell off the hill into the bright, whirling shapes.

Here, loony, Luster said. Here come some.
Hush your slobbering and moaning now.

Benjy's failure in his attempt at communication is
intensely rendered through the sentence fragment "trying to
say." The incompleteness of his effort is conveyed through
the incompleteness of the sentence. The failure operates on
the sexual level as well as the verbal one. What Benjy
actually does is left ambiguous, but there can be no doubt
that his response is basically sexual. He is seeking the
comfort and warmth that he once found in Caddy, who used to
meet him at the gate on her return from school. His action
is not made explicit, since the section reflects the con­
sciousness of Benjy, who has no knowledge of sex.

By rendering the scene from the idiot-child's point
of view, Faulkner is able to convey both Benjy's lack of
malice and the terror of the girl who screamed. Presented
from the perspective of the idiot-child the episode becomes
a central symbol of the failure of humanity to communicate.
The scene portrays the urgency of the need for human under­
standing and the inability to achieve it. It is interesting
to note that in discussing his own failure to communicate fully his vision in *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner again uses the expression "trying to say." 37

Benjy's thoughts flow from the episode itself in which he "caught her" to the subsequent castration where he can only remember trying to avoid the anesthetic for the operation. "I tried to get it off my face. . . . But when I breathed in, I couldn't breathe out again to cry" (72). In respect to the gelding, Benjy again becomes the objectification of a situation which applies to the Compson brothers and resonates outward to imply a condition of Twentieth Century man. All of the brothers fail in sexual relations with women. Quentin dies a celibate, lamenting the fact that it is Caddy, rather than he, who is not a virgin. Jason does have a relationship of sorts with a prostitute named Lorraine, but keeps it on a business-like basis in which he gets what he pays for. The three brothers are all in effect sterile, but it is Benjy who is literally castrated. Being a victim of forces beyond his understanding and control, he can do no more than moan about the loss. "I got undressed and I looked at myself, and I began to cry. Hush, Luster said. Looking for them aint going to do no good. They're gone." (92)

The loss of sexual powers is both crucial in itself and part of the larger pattern of dispossession and loss. This motif, like so many others, is initiated in the first scene where the golfers, after hitting the ball, "went away
across the pasture" (23). People and objects are constantly disappearing from Benjy, seemingly of their own volition. I cite two instances which reinforce the sense of loss:

I tried to pick up the flowers. Luster picked them up, and they went away. I began to cry. (73)

A long piece of wire came across my shoulder. It went to the door, and then the fire went away. I began to cry. (76)

The room, the fire, the flowers, his testicles, his sister Caddy, the pasture he loves, all disappear from Benjy. His moaning or "bellering" about his losses forms a kind of refrain in Part One, expressing the idiot-child's sense of the disruption of his world. Michael Cowan has pointed out that a wedding and four deaths (Damuddy, Quentin, Mr. Compson, and Roskus) are rendered in the first section and that a sense of loss is felt in all five events.38 The sudden movements from one scene to another suggest the way people and objects are constantly disappearing from Benjy. The movement thus reflects both the pleasure of an uninhibited flow of consciousness and the pain of sudden inexplicable loss. The feeling of pain does not negate the fulfillment in Benjy's life but co-exists with it; in reliving his pleasant memories he relives their loss, as well. The literal way in which things seem to disappear conveys the sense of lost opportunities in the lives of Quentin, Jason and all the Compsons. This motif, strongly felt in Part One, will emerge into full focus in the Quentin monologue of The Sound and the Fury.39
The whole Benjy section suggests implications that will be amplified and further clarified throughout the novel. The fact that so much is inferred rather than stated serves paradoxically to heighten both the reader's involvement and distance from Benjy. The reader is forced to identify with the idiot-child's perspective in order to understand what is happening. This enables him to appreciate the validity of the instinctive perceptions of an innocent. Yet the very act of understanding does distance the reader from Benjy who can not comprehend what is happening to him. The sense of distance serves to make us aware of Benjy's limitations.

The more the reader becomes aware of the devices and techniques of the author, the more the focus is shifted away from the character toward the creator who is performing the manipulations. To interpret the description of Benjy's eyes, for example, as part of the motif of sight in *The Sound and the Fury* is to emphasize what the author is doing and distance oneself from the story being told. In this respect the "pleasure of deciphering" contributes to a sense of distance between the reader and the characters. S.L. Goldberg suggests,"The artist must balance our sense of the reality of his world . . . against our sense of it as an artifact." In discovering significant patterns in the novel and in recognizing artistic devices, the reader becomes more aware of the work as artifact.

The fact that the point of view is not in accordance
with a standard of "strict verisimilitude" further distances the reader from the character. Swiggart has noted that despite what seems to be a direct, straightforward rendering of Benjy's perceptions, "Faulkner avoids any direct statement of his one clearly defined emotion, his love for Caddy." This is "realistic" enough since Benjy would understand the emotion without having understood the concept as expressed by the word "love." It might plausibly be argued that Benjy has no concept of innocence precisely because he is innocence itself. It is only after innocence has been lost that the consciousness is able to conceptualize it. But when Benjy burns his hand in the fire, we might, judging by a standard of strict verisimilitude, expect him to utter some direct exclamation of pain such as "ow" or "ouch." Instead Faulkner renders the scene as follows:

I put my hand out to where the fire had been. "Catch him." Dilsey said. "Catch him back."

My hand jerked back and I put it in my mouth and Dilsey caught me. I could still hear the clock between my voice. Dilsey reached back and hit Luster on the head. My voice was going loud every time.

"Get that soda." Dilsey said. (78)

Faulkner's technique of handling point of view here is most accurately described by John Hunt, who states that "Benjy's section does not give an actual reproduction of his mental processes; rather, an illusion of verisimilitude is created dramatically by the objectification in language of his interior life." Emotions are inferred from scenes such
as the one quoted above. In fact, all of Benjy's emotions are inferred, including his love for Caddy which is rendered through statements such as "Caddy smelled like trees" (26). One effect of this technique is to achieve a detached and impersonal manner of rendering Benjy's pain, love and other emotions.

The sense of involvement and distance are both intense in Part One, rendering the simultaneous validity and distortion of the idiot-child's perspective. Benjy is both an extremely helpful and a highly limited reflector of consciousness. Seeing life solely through his eyes the reader cannot possibly have a clear understanding of the Compson situation. The first section partially reveals the nature of experience and partially evokes bewilderment. In order to understand the complexities of experience one must first become immersed in it, lost in it as Isaac McCaslin becomes lost in the wilderness, and then struggle to emerge and achieve clarity. Having rendered a thorough look at the Compsons from the perceptive but limited view of innocence, Faulkner is now ready to move on to a new angle of vision. Like all perspectives it will contain its distortions as well as its validity. But it will move the reader one step closer to the overview which will be his perception of the truth.
CHAPTER 3

A LONG CORRIDOR OF GREY HALFLIGHT
Having presented the virtues and limitations of a consciousness unable to conceptualize in Section One, Faulkner dramatizes in Part Two the validity and distortions of a consciousness given to intellectualizing. Quentin's monologue, like Benjy's, begins with a reference to sight which reflects the nature of his perception of reality.

When the shadow of the sash appeared on the curtains it was between seven and eight o'clock and then I was in time again, hearing the watch. It was Grandfather's and when Father gave it to me he said, Quentin, I give you the mausoleum of all hope and desire; it's rather excruciatingly apt that you will use it to gain the reducto absurdum of human experience which can fit your individual needs no better than it fitted his or his father's. (95)

The validity of Quentin's perspective stems from his critical intelligence, which enables him to reflect upon the significance of experience. He has a knowledge of family history and relevant events that makes his consciousness far more comprehensive than Benjy's. In regarding the Compsons from Quentin's more knowledgeable perspective the reader undergoes an expansion of consciousness, since he is able to view the Compson dilemma from two points of view, rather than one, and since the second angle of vision contains a penetrating analysis which is lacking in the first presentation.

The chief limitation of Quentin's point of view is that he is locked within a world of his own concepts and hence cut off from the immediacy of experience. Whereas Benjy looks at life through curling flower spaces, Quentin does not see through the window, beholding instead the shadow of the sash. Like Gail Hightower of Light in August he is
cut off from the world outside of his own room and outside of his own consciousness. Both characters live in shadowy worlds removed from the light of the sun. In both instances Faulkner is presenting the image of an ego locked within itself, unable to communicate with the outside world. The result is a feeling of claustrophobia objectified in the image of the character dwelling within a small, enclosed room, unable to see beyond it.

Quentin's response is so indirect that it comes as a surprise for the reader to realize that Section Two begins on a bright summer morning. Quentin's failure to look directly at experience is suggested in his statement that "If it had been cloudy I could have looked at the window" (96). Instead of the apprehension of sunlight, green grass and birds that are presented through the consciousness of Benjy, we see through Quentin's eyes only "the shadow of the sash." Although the shadow is a fluid symbol with many resonances in The Sound and the Fury, one meaning is clearly suggested in the first sentence of Part Two. It reflects the way Quentin perceives life indirectly, responding to the shadow caused by the sun, rather than to the sun and the object itself. Hunt states that for Quentin "External reality in the final stage is oblique, shaded, and mirrored, not directly and immediately experienced."¹ He further notes that

The images of obliquity are for Quentin the entire content of his experience... Only
by an overinterpretation of reality, the product of a precious intellectualization where an object is less real than its shadow, where events reflected and reflected upon are more actual than they are in their full immediacy, is Quentin able to maintain a coherent experience at all.  

I suggest that Quentin's residence at Harvard symbolizes both the acuteness of his intelligence and his distance from the immediacy of experience. In this respect it is a part of the larger pattern of the book in which external landscapes reflect inner states of mind. The location of the Negro church at a distance from the white section of town and the "railed enclosure cluttered with shelves and pigeonholes" (12) where Jason conducts his business are two other examples of this pattern. Quentin is an intellectual residing at what has traditionally been considered as the intellectual center of the United States. He is the eldest son and the hope of the family to affirm its tradition of "gentility." His attending an expensive and prestigious university would support the family's claim of stature. The cost to the Compsons is emphasized by the sale of the pasture to finance Quentin's expenses.

The fact that Section Two takes place in Cambridge, Massachusetts, indicates that the novel expands geographically from Section One where Benjy is confined within the ever-shrinking Compson domain. The literal expansion of the landscape reflects the expansion of consciousness that takes place. But the setting of Part Two reflects the limitations as well as the validity of Quentin's view, which is both an
expansion and a contraction from Benjy's section. Quentin is an uprooted Southerner wandering around aimlessly in alien New England. The very meagerness of the Massachusetts landscape compared to the luxuriant growth of the South conveys his sense of loss, even though a part of him shrinks from the fecundity of his homeland. The literal distance between Harvard and Jefferson may be regarded as a symbol of Quentin's alienation. He is cut off from his own past and from a tradition which once gave meaning to the lives of his ancestors. Having partaken of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, he dwells in the world of Experience and looks back on what he imagines to have been the happy state of Innocence. This is the basis of his feelings of exile which are given external manifestation in Quentin's dwelling in a college dormitory far from home.

His loss of innocence is first suggested in the Benjy section. Of the four children Quentin is the only one who understands that his grandmother has died. At a time when Caddy still thinks that "White folks dont have funerals" (52), he has already gained knowledge of death. This is implied in the following passage: "Quentin and Versh came in. Quentin had his face turned away. 'What are you crying for.' Caddy said" (92). Although the loss of innocence is always painful, it is especially so in Quentin's case, because he becomes aware of the disintegration of his family which seemed to function well in the past. His longing for
innocence reflects his desire for the security that stems from the unquestioning faith of childhood. But Quentin's nostalgic view of his own youth is a refusal to accept the inevitable alterations brought about by time and change. It is no less than a refusal to accept life itself, since the life-cycle is not stasis, but recurrence within an ever-changing movement. The only alternatives to growing up are early death or to remain forever locked in childhood as Benjy does. But Faulkner has already shown in Section One that to remain an eternal child is an unsatisfactory situation. It is one of the novel's pungent ironies that Quentin desires and idealizes a state of consciousness embodied by Benjy. He is never able to acknowledge to himself the ambivalence of innocence.

Quentin yearns for the unity perceived in the State of Innocence which contrasts with the disunity that takes place after the Fall. Erich Neumann discusses this change of perception in terms of the development of the individual consciousness.

Gradually, with the growth of consciousness things and places were organized into an abstract system and differentiated from one another; but originally thing and place belonged together in a continuum and were fluidly related to an ever-changing ego. In this inchoate state there was no distinction between I and you, inside and outside, or between men and things, just as there was no clear dividing line between man and the animals, man and man, man and the world. Everything participated in everything else, lived in the same undivided and overlapping state in the world of the unconscious.
This passage focusses on the unity perceived in the State of Innocence. In the following excerpts Neumann describes the movement from the state of primal consciousness to the next stage:

Only in the light of consciousness can man know. And this act of cognition, of conscious discrimination, sunders the world into opposites, for experience of the world is only possible through opposites.4

Not only do day and night, back and front, upper and lower, inside and outside, I and you, male and female, grow out of this development of opposites . . . but . . . "sacred" and "profane", "good" and "evil", are now assigned their place in the world.5

The fragmentation in Quentin's section reflects the fact that his knowledge has sundered the world into polar opposites. Trapped in a world of duality he desperately longs for the unity he felt as a child. Through Quentin, Faulkner is able to portray the dangers inherent in the growth of consciousness. As the intellect develops it tends to classify and conceptualize. Conceptualization can simultaneously clarify and distort perception and is rendered as doing both in the Quentin section. The growth of consciousness is evident in Quentin's providing evaluations of experience such as his comment that Negroes "come into white peoples lives . . . in sudden sharp black trickles that isolate white facts for an instant in unarguable truth like under a microscope" (189). These judgments, totally lacking in Section One, help the reader in the process of evaluating experience.
The limitation of the impulse to classify is best described by Henri Bergson, who terms it "analysis." He contrasts it to the act of intuition which he defines as "the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible." Bergson suggests that consciousness is a constantly changing process which can best be apprehended through intuition. He sees analysis as an attempt to apply fixed concepts to that which is essentially fluid. The limitations of analysis, summarized by Thomas A. Goudge in the introduction to Bergson's Essay on Metaphysics apply remarkably well to Quentin.

1. The intellect apprehends the world externally as a collection of things in space . . .
2. The intellect deals with the world by means of discrete units capable of being counted or measured. . . .
3. The intellect treats the world as though it were fundamentally static and immobile. This is for Bergson the most serious limitation of all. For it means that the intellect is bound to misunderstand the fact of motion and change.

Quentin can not accept the changes in his sister Caddy as she develops from a child to an adolescent and into a young woman. Despite his sympathetic nature he is unable to provide the compassionate understanding that she needs in a time of trouble. This is because Quentin is bound by his concepts of how a woman should act. He does "misunderstand the fact of motion and change" in idealizing the past and deprecating the present. He also manifests the danger that in apprehending the world in terms of units one tends to lose
the primal sense of unity. Benjy embodies this unity while
Quentin is the manifestation of its loss. Acutely aware of
minutes and hours he is cut off from the cycle of life
itself.

It seems as if Quentin is aware of time throughout
every minute of his day. Because he is listening for them
he constantly hears the ticking of clocks and watches, the
ringing of bells at fifteen minute intervals and the sound
of factory whistles. Quentin's agonized awareness of the
passing of time is expressed throughout his section from the
first sentence of his monologue when "it was between seven
and eight o'clock" (95) to the final paragraph when "The last
note sounded" (197). Faulkner's beginning and ending the
monologue with a reference to time suggests not only a
recurring motif but a metaphor of enclosure. It reflects
the fact that Quentin is never able to transcend his aware-
ness of chronological time. Thus his thoughts and feelings
take place within the enclosed limits of this awareness.

Quentin is oppressed by being in time, as if it were
a prison confining and restricting him. It is a prison in
the sense that Quentin desires eternal values and feels
trapped in the temporal world. His tearing the hands off
the watch suggests his refusal to accept time, the present,
change and life itself. He is most deeply troubled by his
father's opinion that his agitation over Caddy's loss of
virginity will be modified by the passing of time. The
thought that it will no longer seem of paramount importance is more unbearable to him than the grief itself. His suicide may be seen as an act to prevent this change from taking place. Quentin is, in Frederick Hoffman's words, "in love with stasis, represented variously by the place of the Compson home, by Caddy's virginity and eventually by death itself."

Faulkner has dramatized in Section One the perception that chronological time is an illusion because consciousness, on the deepest level, does not apprehend it. Minutes, hours, days and weeks are rational concepts designed by the human imagination to measure out time. The very fact that Quentin feels trapped within chronological time suggests that his problems stem from his conceptualizations and intellectuality. It is the relativity implied by time and change that Quentin is unable to accept. This is indicated in his visit to the jeweller when he asks, "Would you mind telling me if any of those watches in the window are right?" (103). The man answers "No. But they haven't been regulated and set yet."

The implication of the jeweller's reply is that the clocks and watches can be regulated sufficiently to provide a useful standard. But Quentin is not really listening to the jeweller. His question is a rhetorical one which manifests his desire to have his own opinions confirmed, rather than to openly explore the nature of experience. Ignoring the jeweller's reply, he notes that "There were about a dozen
watches in the window, a dozen different hours and each with
the same assertive and contradictory assurance that mine
had" (104). This symbolizes to Quentin the multiplicity of
human perspectives, each asserting its own validity and
contradicting the others.

I have suggested, in my introductory chapter, that the
relativity of all perspectives is a concept at the core of
Faulkner's view of existence. It seems to me that Quentin
Compson embodies the negative reaction to this realization.
Benjy does not have this problem, since he exists on a level
of consciousness precluding intellectual awareness. He has
the unquestioning faith of a child, never doubting that what
his imagination perceives as reality is the truth. In
contrast, Quentin is acutely aware of the limitations of all
human perspectives, but is unwilling to accept their
relativity.

Although Faulkner believes that individual perspectives
are limited, he also thinks that there is a "truth" about
experience and that a person can approach an understanding
of it. In the author's view, this comprehension must
inevitably be tentative and incomplete. Quentin is unable
to accept this tentativeness. He longs for absolutes,
desiring the certainties that all men experience in child-
hood. His awareness of limitations leads him, not to accept-
ance of common human frailty, but to a state of paralysis,
based on the assumption that, because they are relative, all
human endeavors are futile. The lack of faith and the resultant inability to act are diagnosed by Friedrich Nietzsche in the following passage from Beyond Good and Evil:

For skepticism is the most spiritual expression of a certain . . . physiological temperament which, in ordinary language is called nervous debility and sickliness . . . everything is disquiet, derangement, doubt, and tentative; the best powers operate restrictively, the very virtues preventing each other growing and becoming strong, equilibrium, ballast, and perpendicular stability are lacking in body and soul. That, however, which is most diseased and degenerated in such nondescripts is the will . . . Paralysis of will; where do we not find this cripple sitting nowdays! . . . it is worst and most varied where civilization has longest prevailed.\(^{11}\)

The images of stasis throughout Section Two strongly contribute to rendering this condition of paralysis. It is conveyed, on the deepest level of consciousness, through the rhythm of Quentin's language. The effect is heightened by the implied contrast with Part One. The fast-moving quality of Benjy's prose is in counterpoint to the long, slow-moving sentences which reflect Quentin's brooding sensibility. The lack of flow in the rhythm of Quentin's language suggests the fact that his is a blocked consciousness. Whereas the spontaneity of Benjy's response to experience is conveyed through the flow of his prose, the reverse is true of Quentin; his slow-moving lines suggest deliberation and lack of spontaneity.

I would like to examine an excerpt from Quentin's monologue to demonstrate how the texture of the language
reflects his tormented consciousness. The following sentence is a culminating expression of his agony:

Sometimes I could put myself to sleep saying that over and over until after the honeysuckle got all mixed up in it the whole thing came to symbolize night and unrest I seemed to be lying neither asleep nor awake looking down a long corridor of grey half-light where all stable things had become shadowy paradoxical all I had done shadows all I had felt suffered taking visible form antic and perverse mocking without relevance inherent themselves with the denial of the significance they should have affirmed thinking I was I was not who was not was not who. (188)

"Lying neither asleep nor awake" suggests Quentin's passivity and lack of motion. This impression is augmented by the absence of action verbs throughout the passage. The phrase indicates the nervousness and disquiet of a person so agitated that he is unable to sleep. It implies that Quentin dwells in an in-between state of nothingness which is neither living nor real death. The imagery of twilight, indicating neither darkness nor light but a confused mingling of the two, reinforces the impression of a consciousness in a state of limbo.¹²

In the context of Section One, "saying" reflects an active sensibility. Benjy's "trying to say" is an attempt to communicate, breaking down the barriers that exist between people. But Quentin is not trying to communicate with others. He is saying the same thing over and over to himself. His life, as dramatized on June 2, consists largely of dialogue with himself, external conversations being flat and uncommunicative. The absence of external dialogue suggests
Quentin's self-absorption and his inability to express his feelings. His saying the same thing over and over is an obvious image of non-progression.

Quentin is not looking down a real corridor. Earlier in the day he has seen a railroad train going through a tunnel. In the passage quoted above this experience becomes translated into an image of viewing his own past, "looking" suggesting the act of perception, as it does throughout the novel. Instead of the active movement of the train progressing through the tunnel, Quentin renders an image implying passivity and lack of progress. Instead of a vividly pictorial scene there is a murky picture in "grey halflight." This image reflects the fact that Quentin exists in a shadowy world in which form and clarity have lost their significance. It also suggests his removal from the immediacy of concrete experience. Variations of the image of removal from the light recur throughout Section Two, beginning with the opening sentence of the monologue. Quentin later visualizes his parents in "a dark place into which a single weak ray of light came slanting upon two faces lifted out of the shadow . . . and us lost somewhere below even them without even a ray of light" (191). All these images suggest that Quentin's conceptualizations cut him off from experience, distancing him from the sun of truth.

If Benjy had seen the train he would have rendered a graphic picture of its appearance and movement. Quentin scarcely notices the actual locomotive and tunnel. When
the image does appear in his consciousness it has become internalized and abstracted. This transformation of experience illustrates Cowan's point that "Quentin cannot keep his mind on the literality of [his own] sensations." In his consciousness substance is constantly being transformed into shadow. The fragrant smell of honeysuckle becomes converted in his mind into a symbol of what he considers to be Caddy's sexual fall. A beautiful, sweet tasting flower becomes for him not a manifestation of life, but a symbol of death. A living sea gull able to poise and hover in the currents of air likewise suggests death to Quentin. He thinks of existence as "A gull on an invisible wire attached through space dragged" (123). The inversion of the words from the more natural order of "dragged through space" slows the sentence down to an almost excruciating crawl, rendering Quentin's endless brooding.

Not only does he transform substance into shadow, but shadow into substance. The ticking of his watch reminds Quentin of a "parade of time" (94). He says of the jewellry store that "The place was full of ticking, like crickets in September" (102). Abstractions become realized in concrete terms for Quentin, indicating that concepts of people and objects have become more important to him than the things themselves.

The sense of abstraction is strong in the sentence I have quoted to illustrate Quentin's consciousness. It is
not certain exactly what the pronouns refer to. "That" suggests what Quentin says to himself to induce sleep, but it is never made clear what the words are. Quentin's statement "after the honeysuckle got mixed up in it" also lacks clarity. The reference may be to the smell of honeysuckle, associated in Quentin's imagination with nature, fecundity and Caddy's sexuality, becoming mixed in with the smell of water; or the pronoun "it" might refer to his thoughts. One might speculate about the nature of the "stable things" that have become shadowy paradoxical. It is not specified exactly what they are. What does Quentin mean by "all I had done"? What is the shape of "visible form antic and perverse"? Leaving this question open to speculation can stimulate the reader to use his own process of perception, imagining for himself what these antic forms look like. It is equally important that the abstract quality of the passage suggests Quentin's distance from the concrete particularity of experience. The abstraction results in a certain vagueness indicating Quentin's loss of clear vision. Just as the flow of smooth, bright shapes is a manifestation of Benjy's consciousness, so the murkiness reflects Quentin's.

The blurring of vision is emphasized by the construction of the sentence, in which loosely associated fragments are thrown together. The lack of symmetry reflects the disorder of Quentin's perceptions. The effect of packing many loosely-related elements together in a non-syntactical
relationship is to render an impression of being cluttered which reflects the spiritual claustrophobia of Quentin. The diverse elements in his consciousness are all crammed together, unable to distil and clarify. The sense of fragmentation is augmented by the incompleteness of the sentence which ends as follows: "thinking I was I was not who was not was not who." The repetition of the phrase "was not" emphasizes the death orientation of Quentin. By ending with "who" Faulkner stresses the sense of incompleteness which reflects the fact that for Quentin everything is tentative and unfulfilled.

Swiggart suggests that "the tortured quality often present in the author's rhetoric is related to the efforts of such figures as Quentin Compson . . . to find meaning . . . through a definition of past and present experiences . . . in a shifting temporal world." As he becomes increasingly overwhelmed in his attempt to find stability in a world of constant flux, Quentin's language becomes more disjointed. The prose near the end of his monologue suggests a complete breakdown of order; this is indicated by the omission of punctuation and of capitalization of all words including the pronoun "i." The ego loss and disintegration of personality are manifest in the long, fragmented sentences which suggest a consciousness out of control. The confusion contrasts vividly with the unity of perception implied in Benjy's short clear lines.
The counterpoint between the short, lyric sentences of the idiot-child and the complex, philosophical ones of Quentin makes a valid pattern, but it should not be overstated, since the latter is also capable of lyricism. The following passages illustrate this point:

At last I couldn't see the smoke stack. The road went beside a wall. Trees leaned over the wall, sprayed with sunlight. The stone was cool. Walking near it you could feel the coolness. Only our country was not like this country . . .

We went on in the dappled shade. We came to an orchard, pink and white. It was full of bees; already we could hear them.

"Let's go to the mill and go swimming," the third said. A lane turned off beside the orchard. The third boy slowed and halted. The first went on, flecks of sunlight slipping along the pole across his shoulder and down the back of his shirt.

The first excerpt contains short evocative sentences recording sense impressions. It might have been from the Benjy section, except for the final line in which Quentin begins to compare his homeland to New England. In the second passage Quentin presents the direct, sensuous rendering of a scene that we associate with the idiot-child. But whereas Benjy perceives life through an unchanging angle of vision, Quentin's perceptions are far more varied. As Hunt observes, Quentin's experience is "more rich, complex, and various" than that presented in Section One. The alternation of long and short sentences in Part Two is a manifestation of the variety within Quentin's angle of vision.

Quentin is, in rare moments, able to respond directly
to experience, although his being locked within a world of his own concepts is more prevalent. There are a few occasions, however, when Quentin is able to make a direct response to the external world of color and sunlight. He observes that "Yellow butterflies flickered along the shade like flecks of sun" (141). In this instance Quentin is not abstracting and distorting his perception of nature. The original capacity for direct response has been overwhelmed and subordinated, but not entirely lost. It is as if, despite his death-orientation, life impulses remain within him, continuing to assert themselves.

In addition to reflecting moments of lyricism, the shorter sentences in Part Two serve at least three other functions. They are illustrated in the following brief passage:

The car stopped. I got out, with them looking at my eye. When the trolley came it was full. I stopped on the back platform. "Seats up front," the conductor said. I looked into the car. There were no seats on the left side. "I'm not going far," I said. "I'll just stand here." (189)

The mechanical nature of Quentin's joyless and routine activities is in evidence here. The flatness of his dialogue with the outside world is also demonstrated. This passage comes shortly after the nightmarish one in which Quentin visualizes himself looking down the "long corridor of grey halflight" (188). Its lack of intensity suggests, not only non-communication, but the fact that Quentin's energy lies
in reminiscence alone. The focus of his perception is on the past that haunts him rather than on the present. Quentin generally displays a lack of interest in people and events at Harvard. His boredom reflects his loss of purpose and his joyless existence. Boredom is the one emotion that Benjy is incapable of feeling, since he retains the child's capacity for wonder. The loss of this capacity is rendered in the excerpt quoted above.

The passage also illustrates Cowan's point that Quentin's "frenetic mental pace" is "belied by his deliberate external actions on June 2." The disparity between Quentin's outer actions and inner thoughts manifests a fragmented consciousness divided against itself. His actions, instead of being in harmony with his true feelings, are in counterpoint to them. This reflects the "state of unreleased tension" that Slatoff feels is inherent in many of Faulkner's characters. There is a sense of "forces pushing and being blocked by some kind of restraint."

One way in which this sense of division is rendered is through fragmented phrases such as "My little sister had no. If I could say Mother. Mother" (114). The first fragment forces the reader to speculate on what its completion might be. Among the more plausible possibilities are "My little sister had no (1) sister, (2) virginity, (3) mother." The second fragment, which is related to the first by Quentin's thought that he and Caddy lack an understanding mother, has
something of the intensity of Benjy's "trying to say" passage. In both instances the reflector is unable to say what needs to be communicated. In both examples the linguistic manifestation of the lack of fulfillment is the incomplete sentence.

The sentence fragments contribute to the sense of disjointedness which reflects the consciousnesses of both Benjy and Quentin. In Part One the fragmentation illustrates Humphrey's point that "discontinuity . . . is a quality of consciousness" itself. The unity of Benjy's perception is juxtaposed with the fragmentation stemming from his inability to synthesize. In Quentin's monologue the heightened discontinuity is a reflection of a blocked sensibility, divided against itself. This inner division is indicated by the fact that Quentin's section is more disjointed than Benjy's. Cowan has noted that there are approximately two hundred time shifts in Quentin's chapter as opposed to one hundred in Benjy's. He suggests that the shifts and fragments manifest Quentin's "frenetic mental pace" which makes the second part of the novel "in one sense more difficult to understand" than the introductory section.

The difficulty is functional because the struggle to comprehend the complex and shifting nature of experience is dramatized within the consciousness of Quentin. He is the only one of the three brothers who attempts to understand and hence confront the Compson dilemma. The reader's
struggle in Part One is in counterpoint to Benjy and is thus a factor distancing the reader from him. In Part Two a different effect is achieved. The difficulty that Quentin has in striving for understanding is analogous to that of the reader, thus encouraging us to identify with him. Like Quentin, the reader must face the painful and bewildering realities of a complex universe. The dilemma of how one is to find meaning in a world where all human perspectives are different from each other and in a state of constant flux is most fully confronted in Section Two. The dangers of reflection, dramatized here, are related to this struggle. Modern man must attempt to comprehend his experience in order to cope with it, but the very attempt may result in alienation and estrangement from life rather than clarification and immersion in it.

In the sense that he, of all the characters in the novel, most fully dramatizes the problems of modern existence, Quentin is the protagonist of *The Sound and the Fury*. Melvin Backman correctly observes that "The anguish of the novel is centered in Quentin Compson." In noting that the second section "creates a narrow obsessional world" that is a contraction and yet an expansion, Backman acknowledges the ambivalence of Faulkner's rendering. He avoids the errors of earlier critics who have seen Quentin as a "twentieth century hero" or, at the other extreme, as a boy with "a problem that is 'special' in a clinical sense." These
viewpoints ignore the simultaneous validity and limitations which Faulkner visualizes in all human perspectives, including Quentin's. I suggest that the authorial sense both of distance and involvement is stronger with Quentin than with Benjy. Visualizing Quentin as a hero ignores the critical detachment in the presentation, while seeing him as a clinical case overlooks the involvement.

In Chapter Two I suggested that Quentin's view of Caddy is more distorted than Benjy's and less distorted than Jason's. From this perspective the three brothers are treated increasingly ironically; the more distorted the character's perspective, the greater is the distance of author and reader from him. Faulkner himself has said that Quentin was "too sensitive" to face reality. He also remarks that "in Caddy's opinion he was such a weakling that even if they had been no kin, she would never have chosen him for her sweetheart. She would have chosen one like the ex-soldier she did. But never anybody like Quentin."

An author's comments on his own works are not necessarily more valid than anyone else's. But I feel that Faulkner's critical statements reflect his extraordinary intuitive sense and almost always contain acute perceptions. The remark quoted above reflects one perspective of Quentin that is implied in *The Sound and the Fury*. This statement, like his other comments in lectures and interviews, should be regarded as one interesting and useful way of looking at
the work of art, rather than as "the truth" from an all-knowable author. In discussing Quentin as a narrator of *Absalom, Absalom!* Faulkner makes an explicit statement on the limitations of Quentin's point of view. Having been asked if Quentin is the same character in that novel as he was in *The Sound and the Fury*, the writer replies:

To me he's consistent. That he approached the Sutpen family with the same ophthalmia that he approached his own troubles, that he probably never saw anything very clearly, that his was just one of the thirteen ways to look at Sutpen, and his may have been the — one of the most erroneous. Probably his friend McCannon [Shreve] had a much truer picture of Sutpen from what Quentin told him than Quentin himself did.  

Ophthalmia is an inflammation of the eyeball. I believe the metaphor suggests the way in which Quentin's personal agitation colors and distorts his vision. Perhaps it is not necessary to belabor the fact of Quentin's distortion since it is fairly evident; but to see him as sensitive hero is to overlook this point.

The author has not only a healthy critical distance from Quentin but a strong sense of involvement with him. "As a boy Faulkner matches rather closely the picture of Quentin that we get in *The Sound and the Fury*. . . . a quiet, observant, serious, somewhat introverted and thoughtful child who had no really close friends outside the family."  

Cowan has observed that Faulkner, like Quentin, was the eldest of four children with a grandmother referred to as "Damuddy."  

He mentions the sense of family decline from a more colorful
past and the similarity of Dilsey's character to that of "Mammy" Callie Barr (the woman to whom Faulkner dedicates Go Down Moses) as further parallels. Cowan states that "Though such fragments of Faulkner's youth do not make The Sound and the Fury a covert autobiography, they do help account for part of its emotional strength."²⁹ I am in agreement with Cowan and will bring in biographical information about Faulkner when it seems to me there is a plausible connection, effecting the author's sense of involvement with his character.

John Faulkner's account of his older brother's departure from Mississippi at the time of his childhood sweetheart's engagement and wedding is somewhat reminiscent of Quentin.

Bill left town. He wouldn't stay around to see someone else claim Estelle.

Phil got Bill a job in a bookstore in New Haven. . . . That's where Bill went to get as far away as possible when he found he'd lost Estelle. He must have gone through torment in that strange land with his whole world gone to pot. He counted the days as Estelle's wedding approached, and when that deed was accomplished he joined the Royal Flying Corps.³⁰

Quentin also goes through torment in a strange land "with his whole world gone to pot." Admittedly, this is not overwhelming evidence of a connection between the author's life and his art; but it is interesting to note that although Faulkner did not go to Cambridge, he did reside in New Haven during this period of personal crisis, working at the Yale
bookstore, rather than attending Harvard. It is also interesting to note that Faulkner's enlistment in the Air Force coincides with Estelle's wedding. Although the decision may be regarded as the perfectly natural choice of a patriotic and physically active man, it is frequently depicted in Faulkner's fiction as a reckless courting of death to escape from the problems of existence.

There is a special intensity about the following two exclamations in the Quentin section: "Mr. and Mrs. Jason Richmond Compson announce the marriage of" (96). "Mr. and Mrs. Jason Richmond Compson announce the marriage of their daughter to Mr. Sidney Herbert Head on the twenty-fifth of April, one thousand nine hundred and ten at Jefferson Mississippi" (112). I do not wish to equate Faulkner with any one of his characters since I believe that the consciousness of the author flows through and beyond his created projections, making them alive and achieving a kind of dramatic impersonality. I would, however, suggest the likelihood that Faulkner has projected the despair of his own adolescence and young manhood into the consciousness of Quentin Compson. It is in his section that the problems of the displaced sons of a failed aristocracy are intensely confronted; but whatever personal turbulence the author felt has been fully transmuted into his art.

Accordingly the intensity of the wedding announcement is explainable within the context of the novel. Caddy's wedding represents to Quentin his final, irrevocable loss
of the only woman he has ever been able to care for. The contrast between the formality of the wedding announcement and the agitation the event causes in Quentin's consciousness evokes a state of tension. This reflects the difference between the external appearance of events and their inner reality. The contrast is poignant because the formal announcement suggests somehow that a wedding should be a fulfillment, and that the Compsons are trying to act as if that were the case; but in this instance it is an act of necessity for Caddy and a death warrant for Quentin. When Shreve sees Quentin dressed in a suit he asks, "Is it a wedding or a wake?" (101) Though unobtrusive, the question is a resonant one. It suggests that the wedding of his sister means death for Quentin. It also implies that Quentin's only fulfillment will be the negative one of his own death, as he plunges down into the river bed.

Unable to believe in the Christian faith of his ancestors, Quentin can find no satisfactory alternative to sustain himself. The following statement which occurs near the end of his monologue is the culminating expression of his agony of disbelief:

... but Father said ... he certainly could board and lodge Uncle Maury now and then and lend him a little money who kept his Father's belief in the celestial derivation of his own species at such a fine heat then Mother would cry and say that Father believed his people were better than hers that he was ridiculing Uncle Maury to teach us the same thing she couldn't see that Father was teaching us that all men are just accumulations dolls stuffed with sawdust swept up from the trash heaps where all
previous dolls had been thrown away the sawdust
flowing from what wound in what side that not for
me died not.

In this passage Quentin expresses a climax of negation. His father is nihilistic and embittered, his mother querulous and self-pitying, his uncle weak and parasitic. There is no strength within the family to sustain him; nor is Quentin able to find strength within himself. It is significant that the only reference to belief in the quoted passage is an ironic one, reflecting the mocking tone of Mr. Compson. There is a lack of belief in mankind (human beings are visualized as mere "dolls stuffed with sawdust"), in growth or progress of any sort, in death and resurrection, and in Jesus. In *The Sound and the Fury* the absence of Jesus implies not only the lack of belief in Christian doctrine, but the absence of love. In the concluding section of the novel Faulkner will implicitly contrast this passage to the Easter service with its theme of death and resurrection and with its focus on Dilsey who is a believer and is able to love.

The intensity of the passage quoted above suggests that Quentin has vitality. Unfortunately his energies and intellectual resources are directed self-destructively, so that his potential is never realized. Richard Adams suggests that "Quentin's section is the most intense of the four in its technical containment of . . . energy."³² This is because Quentin is the only one of the three brothers who has the
potentiality to bring order to the chaotic Compson world. Benjy is physiologically incapacitated, whereas Jason, as I will later show, is psychologically incapable of growth. Quentin alone has the capacity to learn from experience and to act accordingly. What distinguishes Quentin's section from those of his brothers and generates the energy within Part Two is the fact that the struggle for meaning takes place within his consciousness. The battle is lost when the only brother capable of making a choice is overwhelmed by despair and chooses suicide.

The image of an intelligent person, painfully aware of what is wrong with the world around him, but too sensitive and self-conscious to make a significant effort to change it, is a recurrent one in twentieth century literature. Nathanael West's Miss Lonelyhearts, Eliot's Prufrock, and Salinger's Holden Caulfield are notable examples. There are two characteristics which distinguish Faulkner's treatment of this motif from his contemporaries. Whereas Miss Lonelyhearts and J. Alfred Prufrock are presented as representatives of modern man, Faulkner, in keeping with his refusal to organize around any single center, presents Quentin as one of a number of possibilities. This is reflected in the fact that Quentin's section is but one of four. Moreover, within the second section itself there are a number of alternatives. Adams says that "If Quentin could successfully emulate either Spoade's confidence or Shreve's flexibility he might be able
to survive." Adams is correct in suggesting that the two students are opposites, though his terming of Shreve as "flexible" seems imprecise to me.

Spoade is a Southerner in his senior year who has a reputation for remaining unruffled. He is the envy of the pretentious Mrs. Bland "for having five names, including that of a present English ducal house" (110-111). Although Spoade is a descendant of an aristocratic family, he appears to be able to adjust to diverse circumstances. The following passage suggests his motion as he strolls to chapel, while Shreve rushes to it and Quentin stays behind: "Spoade was in the middle of them like a terrapin in a street full of scuttering dead leaves, his collar about his ears, moving at his customary unhurried walk" (98). Spoade always seems to be in control of a situation. His restraint and sardonic wit are in contrast to Shreve who is a Canadian, a freshman and a frank straightforward person. The contrast is made clear in the town court, when Shreve indignantly protests the fine and Spoade insists that Quentin play the game and pay up. The Southerner has social grace and a mode of behavior which enables him to function successfully. His sardonic wit is evident in his comment to Quentin after the latter's fight with Bland. "Oh," Spoade said, "the champion of dames. Bud, you excite not only admiration, but horror." (185). Shreve, though lacking the Southerner's social grace also functions satisfactorily. Thus Spoade, through
restraint and distance from people, and Shreve, through his ingenuous involvement, seem able to cope with life whereas Quentin can not. Faulkner's sense of the range of human possibilities distinguishes his presentation from Eliot's in "The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock," where no alternative is visualized [in contemporary life] to the sterility of the protagonist.

The other distinguishing characteristic in Faulkner's treatment is the irresolvable ambivalence in Quentin, conveyed through the simultaneous sense of involvement and detachment from him. Whereas Prufrock and Miss Lonelyhearts ultimately become pathetic caricatures of their own ideals, Quentin does "excite both admiration and horror." Adams suggests that though Quentin's shortcomings are evident we care for him "because he is so sensitive, so naively innocent, so intelligent, and so completely and inevitably doomed. He is driven to suicide by his inability to accept the illegitimate pregnancy of his sister Caddy, and more generally by his revulsion from any kind of mature sexual activity."  

Caddy's sexuality is as much a threat to Quentin as it is to Benjy. The idiot-child protests against it "because it threatened to deprive him of Caddy's love. When Caddy smelled like trees he could return to the security of their childhood years." Quentin's relationship to Caddy is parallel but more complicated. He too protests against his
sister's sexuality, longing for the certainties of childhood. I have suggested that one reason for his longing is that he yearns for the natural faith of the innocent. His desire to return to a childhood state is also a manifestation of his inability to confront sex, which "throughout the novel is a threat to security and peace." Like other Faulknerian idealists, including with some variation Byron Bunch, Isaac McCaslin, and Gavin Stephens, Quentin is sadly celibate. Adams says that "Faulkner's male characters generally fear and avoid the 'terrible' commitment" which is to life, and more specifically to sex. It is more accurate to say that Faulkner's idealists fear making love and usually find it difficult to attract women; often they watch with chagrin less sensitive rivals who lack both the idealism and the difficulty in having relationships with women. In several novels Faulkner portrays a triangle in which two men compete for a woman whose natural inclination is to prefer the less sensitive and more physical man. Quentin Compson-Caddy-Dalton Ames, Byron Bunch-Lena Grove-Lucas Burch, and Gavin Stephens-Eula Varner-Manfred De Spain are three examples of this kind of interrelationship. The problem of the idealist is explored most fully within Quentin's consciousness. Tormented by thoughts of his virginity and Caddy's promiscuity, he longs for the days when neither was a problem. In Volpe's words, "He finds comfort only in the thought of childhood sexlessness." This explains why Quentin says to the
little Italian child, "Poor kid, you're just a girl" (157). The remark comes after they have been splashed by the three young boys who have been swimming in the nude and are annoyed by the presence of a girl. The hostility from boys who had been friendly earlier in the afternoon suggests the fragility of human relationships. The vulnerability of the child and Quentin's association of sex with water remind him of the time when he and Caddy fought. "We lay in the wet grass panting the rain like cold shot on my back" (157). Quentin's comment to the child indicates that he sees her as being in the unfortunate situation of having to grow up (as Caddy has done), inevitably losing her innocence and her virginity.

It is clear from this reaction that Quentin is rejecting nothing less than life itself. To be "just a girl" is after all to be blessed with life. To move from childhood to adolescence and to adulthood is to experience both gains and losses. But Quentin fails to see ambivalence in the development of consciousness. His perspective is distorted because he sees only the negative aspects of the change. An irony of The Sound and the Fury is the fact that Quentin is himself the embodiment of the ambivalence of the growth of consciousness. His angle of vision is both more distorted than Benjy's and more comprehensive. His knowledge results in a feeling of isolation. Yet it could lead to the understanding necessary to cope with the decline of the Compsons.
Quentin is more cut off from people than Benjy, but he is also capable of acting with generosity and compassion toward people such as the little Italian girl. Benjy, in his blind self-centeredness, lacks this capacity since he cannot conceive of other people apart from himself. Strangely enough, Quentin is the embodiment of an ambivalence which he, himself, can not recognize.

Quentin's failure of understanding leaves him unbalanced on the level of consciousness. Nietzsche has said that for the nervous, over-sensitive intellectual "equilibrium, ballast, and perpendicular stability are lacking in body and soul." There is a literal physical symbol of this imbalance in Section Two. It is commented on by John Hunt who states that "Quentin's prostration at crucial moments" is a recurrent symbol evident in the episode with Caddy at the hog wallow (in which sex and the stain of excrement are associated). Quentin also lies prostrate after the fight with Bland and the encounter with Dalton Ames. Hunt perceptively notes that all these events are forerunners of Quentin's death leap. In the Appendix Faulkner compares Quentin's concept of Compson honor to a ball resting temporarily on the nose of a trained seal and doomed to come crashing down. This suggests that in 1945 the author still thought of Quentin's consciousness in terms of a lack of balance.

His lack of physical and psychic balance is contrasted
to the equilibrium of the trout in the river and the mayflies in the currents of air (136). This particular contrast is part of a larger pattern of oppositions in the novel. The trout embodies motion and stillness, moving easily in the current of the Charles River, which suggests the stream of life in the context of the book. Quentin drowns in the same river that sustains the trout. In the following passage Quentin is watching the fish, while he visualizes himself burning in eternal flames with Caddy:

then I saw a shadow hanging like a fat arrow stemming into the current. Mayflies skimmed in and out of the shadow of the bridge just above the surface. If it could just be a hell beyond that: the clean flame the two of us more than dead. Then you will have only me then only me then the two of us amid the pointing and the horror beyond the clean flame. The arrow increased without motion, then in a quick swirl the trout lipped a fly beneath the surface with that sort of gigantic delicacy of an elephant picking up a peanut. The fading vortex drifted away down stream and then I saw the arrow again, nose into the current, wavering delicately to the motion of the water above which the Mayflies slanted and poised. Only you and me then amid the pointing and the horror walled by the clean flame. The trout hung, delicate and motionless among the wavering shadows.

(135-136)

The trout, in its combining of motion and tranquility, is an image of life. So graceful and effortless is its motion that it scarcely seems to be moving. Yet it is here pictured as making the movement necessary to sustain itself. Quentin is exactly the opposite. Although he is sometimes portrayed through images of stagnancy he is also rendered as walking, riding in a trolley, and sitting in the back seat
of a car driven by Gerald Bland. His mind is constantly mulling over experience. Yet Quentin does not get anywhere in the sense of making progress. This is indicated by the repetition of the thought italicized in the passage cited above. Whereas the fish progresses without seeming to move, Quentin seems to move but fails to progress.

It is also possible to draw a contrast between the circular motion of the trout and of Quentin. In my opinion, the vortex-like movement of the trout suggests that it is in harmony with its environment and with the life-cycle itself. Duncan Aswell has noted that all the Compson brothers travel in circles. He observes that Quentin's "aimless, compulsive wandering and the scrupulous attention to petty detail on which his monologue closes mock his desire for a confrontation with eternity, a way out of the circle." The contrast is between the life-cycle which involves harmonious and continuous movement from one phase to another and the vicious circle which may be taken as a metaphor of being imprisoned within one's own ego and cut off from life.

The following statement by Melvin Backman helps to establish the connection between Quentin's obsessions and the metaphor of the vicious circle:

At the same time that he struggles against certain memories, as if he wished to obliterate them from his consciousness, he seems compelled to relive them. The broken sequence of his memories and thoughts conveys a sense of disintegration as well as a reluctance to recall painful memories; their repetition and circling movement suggest a compulsive return to the source of a deep-rooted frustration.
Quentin keeps circling back to the same memories of Caddy because he has been unable to satisfactorily cope with what he thinks of as her promiscuity. His consciousness is like a stream that has encountered a barrier it cannot surmount. Instead of flowing on, it whirs around repeating the same pattern in ever constricting circles. Norman O. Brown terms the resultant behavior "the repetition compulsion," which he defines as the repeating "of an activity that once brought pleasure, in the hope of duplicating the original pleasure." He states that "Under conditions of repression the repetition-compulsion establishes a fixation to the past, which alienates the neurotic from the present and commits him to the unconscious quest for the past in the future." Quentin's failure to cope with his problems leads him to withdraw into an imaginary world of idealized childhood. This withdrawal results in a further failure to cope which leads to further withdrawal, etc. The vicious circle may be regarded as a metaphor reflecting a death-oriented consciousness. Its culmination is the nothingness of obliteration, the circle of zero.

In later works, such as *Light in August* and *The Bear*, Faulkner develops the contrasting metaphor of the circle of life that is everything and the circle of death that is nothing more fully and perhaps more consciously. It may be that the pattern becomes more explicit in works that come after his depth exploration in *The Sound and the Fury* because
the author has become more conscious of the nature of his
own perceptions. The meaningless circling of the clocks,
for example is not as explicitly related to Quentin's
consciousness as the image of the urn is to Lena Grove. The
circular pattern of his meandering is not made as clear in
his section as it is in the case of Joe Christmas in *Light of
August*, whose external wanderings also reflect the circle of
death within which he is trapped.

The metaphor is traditional and is fully developed in
a work such as *King Lear*, where the circle represents the
shape of the universe, the sun, Lear's golden crown, his
head (referred to as his "bald crown"), the eye-ball and
the shape of the tornado-like storm. Faulkner's treatment
of the metaphor differs in two ways from the more tradi­
tional treatment in *King Lear*. In Shakespeare's works the
circle as a symbol of perfection and negation is based on
society's belief that the microcosmic unit of man reflects
the macrocosm of the universe. It is, in other words, a
symbol based on a concept that members of society share in
common with each other as an assumed truth. The movement of
the planets in the heavens and the shape of the Inferno were
both thought to be circular. In contrast, Faulkner's novels
are an attempt to deal with the basic human dilemma that all
individuals perceive truth differently, not sharing any
foundation of belief in common with each other. There are
consequently no given symbols, but only those which are
discovered by the perceiver in the texture of the work. The circle is not a given symbol as in the play but one that unfolds from the deepest level of the author's consciousness. The result is to emphasize the process of perception of the author and reader.

The second difference in the treatment of the circle from traditional works is the emphasis on consciousness that distinguishes the functioning of the circular motif in *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August* from that of *King Lear*. I believe that this distinction is in degree rather than in kind; the life-cycle of sunshine and rain is associated with Cordelia as the storm is with the violent passions of Goneril and Regan. In the play the metaphor reflects the nature of the characters. In the Faulknerian novels the metaphor is more directly related to the way characters perceive existence. The emphasis has shifted somewhat from character portrayal toward exploration of consciousness. Whereas in *Lear* the motif of sight suggests whether a character sees well or sees badly, in *The Sound and the Fury* it indicates how and from what angle of vision a character sees. In the book the vicious circle is a manifestation of the way Quentin's obsessed consciousness returns to the same thoughts without ever achieving a breakthrough into self-insight.

As Quentin watches the trout, he visualizes himself burning in Hell with Caddy for having committed the sin of incest. The imagined stasis of the Hell fires is in contrast
to the flowing waters of the river which is always in flux and yet a constant. Incest, in Quentin's consciousness, is associated with suffering and with death. It is the central manifestation of his thwarted development.

The first thing to be noted is that the incest is symbolic rather than literal. Quentin is incapable of committing the act of incest with his sister. Like Prufrock, he is unable to "murder or create." The performance of either a creative act or a destructive one would be an assertion of himself. Eliot has remarked that to do a destructive act is, in one sense, better than to do nothing at all. Quentin holds a knife to Caddy's throat, contemplating murdering both her and himself. Although she offers no resistance he fumbles his penknife at the crucial moment (170-171). He never makes love to a woman, brooding instead "Why couldn't it have been me and not her who is unvirgin" (97).

As Caddy has grown up she has become independent of Quentin. The focus of her love has shifted from her brother toward a whole series of boyfriends culminating in Dalton Ames. This change can be seen as part of the natural development of a girl into a woman. I would like to suggest that Caddy's promiscuity is also in part a revolt against the strictures of the frigid and self-righteous Mrs. Compson. Caddy finds a vitality in some of the town boys that is lacking in her own family with its aristocratic pretensions and its Puritanic rigidities. While never losing her affec-
tion for Quentin, she does fall in love with a man who in many ways is the antithesis of her brother. Dalton Ames is an ex-soldier, portrayed as a man of action rather than of words. His belief that women are "all bitches" (179) is in direct contrast to Quentin's idealization. Ames' casualness and ease in having sexual relations with women contrasts to Quentin's high seriousness and his virginity. Caddy's boyfriend is as physical as her brother is cerebral.

Quentin's idealization of women and his virginity are interrelated. The impulse to idealize may be seen as one way of escaping from the realities of existence. Being in love with the idea of bare white arms, Prufrock manifests flesh revulsion at the thought of arms "downed with light brown hair." Backman argues convincingly that Quentin's association of sex with imagery of swine is evidence of a similar feeling. He observes that it is at the hogwallow where Quentin lies with Caddy befouling both her and himself (155-156). He also cites the following passage in which Quentin visualized Caddy copulating with Dalton Ames:

"Did you ever drink perfume?" Spoade said. with one hand he could lift her to his shoulder and run with her running Running

"No," Shreve said. running the beast with two backs and she blurred in the winking oars running the swine of Euboeleus running coupled within how many Caddy

"Neither did I," Spoade said. I dont know too many there was something terrible in me terrible in me Father I have committed (167)

Backman points out that it is the swineherd, Euboeleus, who witnesses the rape of Persephone. "The beast with two
backs." is Iago's cynical reference to love making. Backman states that this passage reflects "a feeling of sexual nausea and suggests that Quentin was experiencing a deep-rooted revulsion from sex."48

The flesh revulsion is manifest in Quentin's obsession with the idea of incest. It is the idea that Quentin is in love with, not the act itself. In other words, he is in love with his own concepts. His feelings lead, not toward relations with Caddy or anyone else, but to withdrawal into his own fantasies. Thompson is thus correct in stating that Quentin's "incestuous attitude toward Caddy can be taken symbolically as an expression of his peculiar self-love, or narcissism."49 It is theoretical sex that fascinates Quentin, drawing him further and further away from reality until the death leap which is his ultimate narcissistic withdrawal.

Walter Brylowski has cited a passage from the novelist Andrew Lytle that clarifies the connection between incest and withdrawal. Although the quotation refers to Lytle's own book, entitled The Velvet Horn, it applies well to The Sound and the Fury.

The brothers and sister, under the guidance of the eldest, withdrew from the stresses of formal society in an effort to return to the equilibrium of innocence and wholeness. This is an habitual impulse, the refusal to engage in the cooperating opposites that make life. It is also as illusory as any Golden Age, and forbidden by divine and human law . . . . The symbol for this is incest. It need not be fact, but it is symbol . . . .50

Erich Neumann in The Origins and History of Consciousness
also suggests the connection between incest and withdrawal. Because his study focuses more on incestuous relations between the son and the mother figure it applies less directly to *The Sound and the Fury* than the passage cited above. It is nonetheless pertinent. Neumann states that "Mother, sister, wife, and daughter are the four natural elements in any relationship between men and women . . . . each has its legitimate place in the development—and misdevelopment—of the individual." Neumann sees the sister figure as a potential soul-mate and the relationship as a transition between the son-mother and husband-wife relationship. He suggests that adolescence is a precarious time because the adolescent's ego is not fully developed. He asserts that there is a temptation at this time to regress to a stage where the female is dominant, complete domination being death for the individual consciousness. He further asserts that an integral part of the adolescent's sexual drive is the desire to be overwhelmed by the female. Critics, such as Thompson, have noted Quentin's masochistic strain and his "erotic lust for his own death" without really explaining them. I find the following comments of Neumann of great help in explaining this aspect of Quentin's consciousness, even though the context is somewhat different from that of *The Sound and the Fury*.

For the youthful god, with his feebly developed ego, the positive and negative aspects
of sexuality are dangerously close to one another. When intoxicated, he surrenders his ego and returns to the womb of the Great Mother, regressing to the pre ego state. . . . Sexuality here means losing the ego and being overpowered by the female, which is a typical, or rather archetypal, experience in puberty.  

Mother, womb, the pit, and hell are all identical. The womb of the female is the place of origin from whence one came, and so every female is, as a womb, the primordial womb of the Great Mother of all origination, the womb of the unconscious. She threatens the ego with the danger of self-noughting, of self-loss—in other words, with death and castration. We have seen that the narcissistic nature of the phallus-obsessed adolescent constellates a connection between sexuality and the fear of castration. The death of the phallus in the female is symbolically equated with castration by the Great Mother, and in psychological terms this means the ego's dissolution in the unconscious.  

Neumann is suggesting that incest is a withdrawal from life, since the underlying impulse is to surrender one's ego to a stronger being. He suggests that this is the core of masochism and that the ultimate giving in to this drive is symbolic castration and death.  

Quentin's desire for castration is made quite explicit at the point in the novel where he thinks about the man who mutilated himself, cutting off his own testicles with a razor. The connection between this desire and sexual escapism is evident in Quentin's saying to himself "But that's not it. It's not not having them. It's never to have had them" (135). Quentin's masochism is also reflected in the way his consciousness is constantly circling back to the memories that bring him the most pain. It is further demonstrated in his losing fights against Dalton Ames and Gerald
Bland. In both instances Quentin provokes a fight with a person he has no chance of beating. The following conversation between Shreve, Spoade, and Quentin hints that Quentin is aware that he can only lose against Bland. The first speaker is Shreve who is referring to Bland. He is answered by Spoade.

"Do you have to be drunk to want to hit that son of a bitch?"
"Well, I think I'd have to be pretty drunk to try it, after seeing how Quentin came out. Where'd he learn to box?"
"He's been going to Mike's every day, over in town," I said.
"He has?" Spoade said. "Did you know that when you hit him?"
"I don't know," I said. "I guess so. Yes." (184)

The culmination of Quentin's self-destructiveness is of course the leap that submerges him beneath the waters. Just prior to this action he cleans himself up and puts on his best suit, as if he were going to meet a lover. Unable to find fulfillment in life, he looks forward to the release of death. He thinks "A quarter hour yet. And then I'll not be. The peacefullest words. Peacefullest words. Non fui. Sum. Fui. Non sum" (192). His death in the river bed symbolically reflects the surrender and dissolution of his ego into the dark forces of the unconscious.

When the Compson children were younger, Caddy was able to comfort Quentin. At times she seems to assume the role of mother-comforter to him. This is not surprising since Mrs. Compson is incapable of fulfilling the role. Caddy is the source of whatever feminine strength exists
within the Compson family. As a child she is active and aggressive, whereas Quentin tends to be passive and aloof. In the childhood games she insists upon being king, the role of queen not being good enough for her. Quentin muses as follows, recalling the words of his sister: "You know what I'd do if I were king? she never was a queen or a fairy she was always a king or a giant or a general" (191). There is a hint of a reversal of sexual roles. Quentin says of himself that he "passed out like a girl" (181). Spoade refers to Shreve as Quentin's husband (97). To overstate this pattern would be to lose the subtlety and complexity of the novel. But it is evident that when Quentin says to Caddy "I'm stronger than you" (181) that the reverse is true. Caddy's strength makes her dominant. This is an essential part of her appeal to Quentin who is unable to find strength within himself.

The exploration of the psychological implications of Quentin's relationship to Caddy is especially useful because of the complexity of Quentin's consciousness. In my opinion the portrayal of Quentin is the most complex character study that Faulkner achieves in all his works. Quentin's perspective is at once intensely valid and radically distorted. The psychological study of him tends to emphasize his distortions and to assume the high seriousness of a case study. But in *The Sound and the Fury* there is a comic element that counterpoints the seriousness and works against the assumption of
any single perspective that precludes it. Faulkner discusses this element in the following interchange with a student:

Q. Mr. Faulkner, the fight that Gavin has with DeSpain in *The Town* reminded me in some ways with the fight that Quentin had when he was in Cambridge. They both seemed a little bit like Don Quixote—

A. Yes.

Q. --fighting for the honor of a lady. Is there any such similarity there, in character, between the two men at that time?

A. No, that's a constant sad and funny picture too. It is the knight that goes out to defend somebody who don't want to be defended and don't need it. But it's a very fine quality in human nature. I hope it will always endure. It is comical and a little sad. And Quentin and Stephens were that much alike.\(^5\)

The Quixotic nature of Quentin is first suggested in a passage from Benjy's section. The episode, like many in Part One, serves as a prelude of a motif to be expanded later in the novel. It is a conversation between Quentin and his father about a fight that Quentin had in school. The first speaker is Mr. Compson.

*Hello, he said. Who won.*

"Nobody." Quentin said. "They stopped us. Teachers."

"Who was it." Father said. "Will you tell."

"It was all right." Quentin said. "He was as big as me."

"That's good." Father said. "Can you tell what it was about."

"It wasn't anything." Quentin said. "He said he would put a frog in her desk and she wouldn't dare to whip him."

"Oh." Father said. "She. And then what."

"Yes, sir." Quentin said. "And then I kind of hit him."

We could hear the roof and the fire, and a snuffling outside the door.
"Where was he going to get a frog in November." Father said. (86-87)

The echoes of *Don Quixote* in Section Two suggest the ambivalence of Quentin's character which is reflected in a serio-comic perspective. His very real shortcomings are inseparable from his idealism. Like Don Quixote, he feels that he has been born into an iron age and that it is his duty to restore the golden age. Both characters live for concepts which tend to isolate them from the world of reality. The separation of the spiritual from the physical is reflected in the fact that both men are celibate. Both lament the inconstancy of women, constancy being a part of their idealization. In his preface to *Don Quixote* Cervantes comments on the limitation of aim and ambition, because "nature will have its course." His protagonist is as unaware of this truth as the Quixotic Quentin. Mr. Compson's remark to Quentin that "it's nature is hurting you not Caddy" (135) is reminiscent of Cervantes' statement.

It is the quality of wonderful folly that becomes overshadowed when one emphasizes the psychological interpretations of Quentin's character. I believe that Faulkner found in Cervantes a rich understanding of how the virtues of idealism and human weakness are inextricably connected. Through the characters of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, Cervantes portrayed the inevitable fragmentation of human existence. The most obvious dichotomies drawn are between body and spirit, the real and the ideal. Cervantes suggests that the
idealistic is separated from reality as the man who lives in the real world is separated from the ideal. Thus, ironically, the person who is most able to conceive of perfection is least able to achieve it. The idealists fare poorly in the physical world. In a Shakespearian play it is a convention that the morally superior individual wins the fight. Unlike Shakespeare's characters, the ones in Cervantes who are morally superior usually lose their battles. In a Faulknerian novel the idealist inevitably loses in physical combat. Gavin Stephens is defeated by De Spain in *The Town*, Byron Bunch is knocked down by Lucas Burch, while Quentin is floored on the last day of his existence by Julio and Gerald Bland. When Quentin, inquiring about Bland asks, "Did I hurt him any?" Shreve replies "You may have hit him. I may have looked away just then or blinked or something" (183).

Quentin is equally unsuccessful in his battle with Dalton Ames. After issuing a grand challenge he faints. The "comical and a little sad" quality that Faulkner finds in *Don Quixote* is especially strong in the Dalton Ames episode. The sadness is perhaps self-evident. Quentin is as unsuccessful in physical combat with men as he is in love relations with women. This incident is a climax of intensity for Quentin. It shows him losing the struggle to Dalton Ames as he is losing his battle to impose order on existence. His defeat may be regarded as symbolic of his whole life which
ends in failure. This is more than "a little sad."

Yet the underlying humor of the situation must not be overlooked. Quentin has earlier been referred to by Shreve as "Young Lochinvar" (112) and by Sidney Herbert Head as a "half-baked Galahad" (129). In this episode he appears in the role of that American equivalent of the knight, the Western hero. The dialogue which might be taken from a grade B Western reflects Quentin's melodramatic playing of the role of hero who avenges the wronged girl. Approaching Dalton Ames he begins the following conversation:

I've been looking for you two or three days you wanted to see me I'm going to see you

(177)

In his subsequent encounter he says to Dalton "I'll give you until sundown to leave town" (178). The only problem is that while it is Quentin who assumes the role, it is Dalton Ames who has all the attributes of the Western hero, right down to the name. The names of Faulkner's minor characters often verge on caricature. The timid librarian Melissa Meek, the dull Gerald Bland, and the rather heartless Sydney Herbert Head are other instances of this tendency in *The Sound and the Fury*. Ames is an appropriate name for an excellent marksman; Dalton may have been picked simply for sound, though it might suggest the Dalton brothers. At any rate we are informed that he "was made out of bronze" (177), can roll a cigarette quickly "with about two motions" (177), and even puts on a shooting exhibition, holding Quentin's
wrist with one hand while he shoots bark floating in the river with the other. This incident is rendered in the following passage. Quentin is the first speaker.

you can't hit it now
no'
it floated on it was quite still in the woods
I heard the bird again and the water afterward the pistol came up he didn't aim at all the bark dis­appeared then pieces of it floated up spreading he hit two more of them pieces of bark no bigger than silver dollars

The confrontation ends with Quentin fainting and Dalton rather chivalrously pretending that he hit him; the pretence is in order to make Quentin feel better. Although Quentin assumes the pose of the Western hero who confronts the villain menacing the maiden, it is Dalton Ames who in his self-control, his strength, his marksmanship, and his refusal to take advantage of a weaker foe, fulfills the role. Caddy is not a maiden, Dalton no villain, and Quentin certainly not a hero.

The portrayal of Quentin as a mock-hero and mock-knight is especially interesting in view of Neumann's interpretation of the dragon slaying myths in terms of the growth of consciousness. In discussing the hero's victory over the forces of darkness and his rescue of the captive maiden (who is frequently disgorged from within the dragon or within a cave) he makes the following comments:

suffice to say that the hero unites himself with the woman he has set free, and founds his kingdom with her.  

Thus, the hero's rescue of the captive corresponds to
the discovery of a psychic world . . . . a portion of alien, hostile feminine world of the unconscious enters into friendly alliance with the man's personality, if not actually with his consciousness. 61

Quentin's fainting at the moment of confrontation implies that he is a kind of parody of the conquering hero. In the light of Neumann's interpretation his defeat may be viewed as a failure to transcend his own limitations by integrating the conscious and unconscious part of himself. This is indicated in Quentin's feeling of being yoked and yet separate from his shadow which, on one level, may be regarded as the symbol of the unconscious. Quentin does not merge with it until his death leap when he is absorbed in his shadow. If the triumph over the foe represents rebirth (symbolized by the freeing of the maiden from her dungeon) and the assimilation of a part of the unconscious, the defeat may be taken to represent the opposite.

The humor of the Dalton Ames - Quentin confrontation, like that of Cervantes, is sympathetic rather than caustic. To an extent it manifests identification and involvement with Quentin's human frailty. But it also tends to evoke distance, emphasizing the absurdity of Quentin's role. I believe that the intensity of involvement and distance reflects the irreconcilable ambivalence in the character of Quentin Compson. Idealism is shown as being at once noble and absurd. It reflects both concern for others and self-centeredness, since the idealist wants to benefit others, but tends to fall
in love with his own ideas. Quentin does genuinely care for Caddy and yet is too egotistical to transcend his self concerns and love anyone. In Quentin compassion and weakness seem inextricably bound together, as are idealism and folly. It was Nietzsche who suggested that the Christian virtues of love, compassion, and meekness expressed the ethos of the Jews, who were a conquered people. He termed these qualities passive feminine virtues which he contrasted to the active, masculine virtues of courage and honor, derived from the conquering Romans. In Nietzsche's rather cynical view, the Jews made a virtue of necessity. For him Jesus embodies the renunciation of the active virtues which lead to masculine assertion on the battle field and in bed. In place of these thwarted drives, the virtues of suffering and sympathy for others are extolled.

Faulkner's sensitive idealists tend to be passive and sexually celibate. It seems to me that Faulkner's understanding of the relationship between passivity and compassion may have been clarified in his reading of Ulysses. Leopold Bloom is also a passive and compassionate man. He, like Quentin, is masochistic, sexually thwarted, well-intentioned, and often ineffectual. It is as if the diversion of the sexual drive is related to kindness in some strange way. A partial explanation is that compassion stems from identification with the weak and the suffering. Volpe's comment about compassion and self-sacrifice in relation to Caddy provides
further clarification. He says that "Caddy's dilemma is that she must sacrifice her own response to life if she is to keep her brothers happy; but she is too passionate, too vibrantly alive, too vital to immolate herself." In this instance the need for self-fulfillment, as expressed through the sexual drive, is in conflict with the compassion she feels toward her brothers. From this perspective self-sacrifice and self-fulfillment may be regarded as opposites. Yet the vision of Faulkner is too complex to be reduced to a simplified view of the relationship between compassion and weakness. The tenderness of feminine characters such as Caddy and Dilsey seems to reflect their strength, which is their ability to care for and sustain others. It is in the sensitive, male idealists, such as Quentin and Byron Bunch, that compassion and weakness are complementary. In *The Sound and the Fury* this interrelationship is illustrated in the episode in which Quentin befriends the little Italian girl.

Even Irving Howe who is critical of Section Two, has nothing but admiration for this scene. It is successful because it is a narrative amidst the sea of Quentin's consciousness. The other events that occur on Quentin's last day of existence are not dramatized. We learn of the fight with Bland after it has taken place. Faulkner's technique in rendering this episode reflects the way in which "what is real for Quentin is the past as interpreted in the present, while the present itself can become real only when later
interpreted." The experience with Bland is not presented directly, but is filtered through Quentin's consciousness. Likewise, the suicide occurs offstage and is never directly mentioned. The failure to state what he is going to do reflects Quentin's consciousness which constantly circles problems without directly confronting them. This filtering of events through Quentin's consciousness conveys the way in which he is removed from direct experience. The incident with the little Italian girl is the exception to this. She is the only person on Quentin's death day capable of arousing more than a mechanical response from him. For the reader the concreteness of the event is a welcome relief from the airlessness of Quentin's claustrophobic consciousness. The effect is similar to opening a locked door and letting a breath of fresh air into a closed and stuffy room.

Quentin's compassion is aroused for the little girl who is looked down upon by the lady in the bakery as a "little wretch" and a foreigner (145). Because she seems poor and hungry to him, he buys her a bun and some ice cream in a drug store. Then he tries to help her find her way home. But, as usual, Quentin's communication with the outside world is limited. The little girl does not speak when he coaxes her to, although the mention of her address, or even just her name, would have been helpful to him. She later says,"There's Julic," (157) in plain English. When her brother tells her in equally plain English to "Git on home," (161) she under-
stands perfectly well and apparently does return to her own house. When Quentin inquires at one of the houses in the Italian neighborhood the woman says "no spika" (150). In this instance the phrase exemplifies the lack of communication which is evident throughout the novel in general and this episode in particular.

Neither Quentin nor the reader knows the girl's real name. She is referred to by Quentin as "sister" and is clearly associated in his mind with Caddy. But whereas Caddy has gone away from Quentin—"She ran right out of the mirror, out of the banked scent" (96)—, the little Italian girl refuses to leave him, following him everywhere. Having failed in his role of benefactor to his real sister, Quentin assumes that pose with the little girl. He shows warmth and genuine concern for her. In one sense his actions reflect benevolence, since Quentin can expect no benefit and acts out of genuine kindness. But in another sense Quentin is having the only kind of relationship he can feel secure in. Being blocked sexually he can function safely with females only in relationships that preclude sex. The role of benefactor to a little child avoids the necessary give and take of adult relationships. Thus Quentin's compassion for the little girl is related to his weakness and sexual passivity.

The whole episode, like the one involving Dalton Ames, is both comical and sad. Julio's cry,"You steala my seester," (158) is part of the comedy of misunderstanding. Quentin's
reaction is to burst into the joyless laughter which is a recurrent symbol of absurdity in Faulknerian novels. Instead of being the expression of joy, it is a kind of nervous, almost hysterical reaction to futility. Whereas healthy laughter suggests fulfillment and happiness this kind of laughter implies the reverse. Quentin laughs because he justly feels he has tried to help the little girl and is virtually accused of being a child molester. It is as if benevolent, disinterested actions are so rare that they are bound to be misunderstood. Yet it seems reasonable to me to suggest that Quentin is flattered by the friendly attention of the little girl, and though Julio's accusation is false, it has this much truth to it: that Quentin, who feels he has been robbed of his own sister, finds, for a few minutes, solace in treating a little girl as if he were her big brother. The girl becomes frightened when her own brother attacks Quentin. As an avenging older brother, Julio is as impulsive as Quentin is reflective. The efforts of the two big brothers to protect their youngest sisters are equally misguided. Julio succeeds only in upsetting his sister, making her cry. His efforts provide a comic parallel and contrast to Quentin's endeavors. Quentin sees the child one last time as he is riding away from court in the Bland automobile. He waves "but she made no reply" (165). The final moment of this episode is thus one of non-communication.

The entire episode may be regarded as a microcosm of
Quentin's efforts to cope with existence. His actions are sincere and misguided, idealistic and foolish. They reflect his compassion for others and his own egotism. Quentin tries to do what he feels is right; yet, in the final analysis, his endeavors contribute to chaos rather than to the restoration of order; and although he correctly regards himself in court as a victim of a misunderstanding world, Quentin is never able to acknowledge that his own actions have contributed to the outcome. Likewise, in the larger context of the novel, Quentin is unable to recognize his own share of responsibility for the Compson situation. Although he is aware how poorly the role of being an aristocrat is played by the Blands and his Uncle Maury, he is never able to apply his knowledge to his own conduct and actions. As an avenging brother and Western hero, Quentin is as poor a player as the mock Southern aristocrats mentioned above. But being unable to acknowledge this, he never achieves self-insight and expansion of consciousness.

Quentin can not comprehend the distortions in his own view of Caddy. As a result his efforts hinder his sister, rather than helping her in a time of crisis. A clearer understanding of himself might have enabled Quentin to avoid the self-righteousness evident in the following two comments to his sister:

"Why won't you bring him to the house, Caddy? Why must you do like nigger women do in the pasture the ditches the dark woods hot hidden furious in the dark woods"
Are you going to look after Benjy and Father. The less you say about Benjy and Father the better when have you ever considered them Caddy (125)

In the first passage Quentin unwittingly reveals his flesh revulsion as well as racial prejudice. In the second he accuses the only considerate member of the Compson family of the lack of consideration which he himself manifests. Quentin idealizes Caddy and then becomes upset when she diverges from his concept of her. The idealization is unfair, not only to his sister, but to himself. In projecting his ideas of honor and stability upon her he avoids self-confrontation, never acknowledging that such values are primarily dependent upon himself, not upon the actions of others. His powers are thus wasted because his intellectuality fails to lead to self-insight.

I believe it is the combination of his sensitive perceptions and his short-sightedness that makes Quentin one of Faulkner's favorite reflectors. He is the narrative consciousness in "That Evening Sun", "A Justice", a section of Absalom, Absalom! as well as Part Two of The Sound and the Fury. The author is able to dramatize through Quentin the process of attempting to comprehend experience and the dangers inherent in the attempt. Seeing experience through his sensitive eyes, the reader greatly increases his understanding. Yet, the limitations of his acute but narrow perspective are evident.
The tension generated from these conflicting perspectives of him is the most intense in *The Sound and the Fury*. Although his efforts are misguided and futile, Quentin does try to better things. His suffering is the greatest of the three brothers because of his deeper level of awareness. The reader can identify with his suffering, his benevolent impulses and his struggle to understand and cope with the problems of existence. But whatever sympathy one has for him is mitigated by Quentin's self-pity and self-righteousness.

Co-existing with his virtues are his severe shortcomings. After taunting and accusing Caddy of lack of consideration for Benjy and Mr. Compson, Quentin does promise to look after them. In leaping to his death he relinquishes that responsibility. His only significant act is one of renunciation. In yielding to his self-destructive impulses, he seals the fate of the helpless Benjy. As I indicated in Chapter Two, Faulkner once said that the initial impulse of the novel was his conception of the idiot-child and his wondering where Benjy would get the tenderness needed to sustain him. The author found the answer to his speculations in the compassionate natures of Caddy Compson and Dilsey—not in the character of Quentin. The two women strive to sustain others as long as they can. Quentin has the resources to survive but finds the burden unbearable and gives up the struggle, relinquishing the position of head of the family to Jason. As he leaps downward into the river, the last hope of the Compson family vanishes.
CHAPTER 4

IS THIS THE PROMIS'D END?
Jason is "the last" (16) and morally least of the Compsons. His emergence as head of the family, symbolized by his seizing of the reins of the family chariot, is a manifestation of the final and irrevocable decline of the household. Since Jason is visualized as the end of the line, it is symbolically appropriate that his section be the last rendered through the consciousness of one of the Compsons. The concluding section of the novel will proceed toward a larger, cosmic perspective rendered through the consciousness of a third person narrator.

Jason seems to have the qualities of his parents in an even more unfortunate combination than his older brother. Whereas Quentin combines the self-righteous inflexibility of his mother with the skepticism of his father, Jason has the self-centered coldness of his mother and an acerbic wit somewhat reminiscent of Mr. Compson. The resemblances between Caroline Compson and her favorite son are evident throughout the novel and have been noted by a number of critics.1 Both are incapable, not only of love, but of tenderness toward another person. This lack of tenderness contrasts with Quentin who, though incapable of love in the deepest sense, does feel sympathy for other people. The self-pity of Mrs. Compson and Jason prevents them from identifying with others. Every occurrence is perceived by them in terms of their own interests, making them oblivious to the needs of their family. Self-pity is portrayed as
being the opposite of compassion, resulting in indulgence of one's own emotions and isolation from others.

Their lack of fulfillment is indicated by the fact that both Jason and his mother suffer from a form of nervous prostration. Swiggart observes of Jason that "His headaches and the use of camphor relate him to his mother, who uses her illness as a focal point for self-pity." When Caroline Compson says to her son "you are a Bascomb, despite your name" (200), the reader tends to concur with her opinion.

Both characters have a shallow, superficial perspective which is especially evident in their attitudes toward Caddy. But whereas Mrs. Compson has a lack of love for Caddy, Jason feels hatred towards her. The mother's self-pity leads to passive renunciation, while Jason's manifests itself in active maliciousness. His section may be regarded as the rendering of a consciousness obsessed and dominated by hatred.

The hatred is primarily manifest through the cruel wit of Jason, which is both similar to and different from that of Mr. Compson. When Caddy says to her brother, "You have Father's name," he replies, "That's so... He did leave me something" (227). Though different from his father in his lack of consideration and absence of benevolent impulses, Jason completes the process of reducing the family domain which was begun by General Jason Lycurgus Compson II and continued by Jason III; and although he may justly be
considered as the antithesis of his ancestors in many respects, Jason shares certain qualities in common with them, including an ability to compete with the world under changing conditions. Ironically, he is more like his forbears in this sense than his older brother. The gambling instinct of the Compsons, which is absent in Quentin, survives in Jason, though in degraded and debased form.

A comparison of two passages, taken respectively from the end of Section Two and the beginning of Section Three, illustrates the similarity and difference between Mr. Compson and Jason.

...but Father said why should Uncle Maury work if he father could support five or six niggers that did nothing at all but sit with their feet in the oven he certainly could board and lodge Uncle Maury now and then and lend him a little money who kept his Father's belief in the celestial derivation of his own species at such a fine heat

I says she ought to be down there in that kitchen right now, instead of up there in her room, gobbing paint on her face and waiting for six niggers that cant even stand up out of a chair unless they've got a pan full of bread and meat to balance them, to fix breakfast for her.

There is a bitterness in both men that is expressed through their wit. In both quoted passages there is an assumed superiority on the part of the speakers, and an implied derogation of the Negro servants and a member of the family. Mr. Compson's wit is more philosophical and contemplative than that of his son. It is an expression of his skepticism and lacks the vicious, personal animosity implicit in the
utterances of Jason IV. But in both instances a sense of ironic distance and contempt is expressed through words.

Jason is the only one of the four Compson children who has a sense of wit. Quentin has a rather dry intellectual sense of humor, as shown by his remark that "God is not only a gentleman and a sport; he is a Kentuckian too" (110). It is not a prominent aspect of his sensibility, and is generally unobtrusive. Wit is an essential characteristic of Jason and is thus one of the distinctive features in his section of the novel. I have chosen two selections to demonstrate how Jason's wit reflects his consciousness. The first is a conversation between Jason and his boss, Earl.

"You'd be a good business man if you'd let yourself, Jason," he says. "At least I can tend to my own business and let other peoples' alone," I says. "I dont know why you are trying to make me fire you," he says. "You know you could quit anytime and there wouldn't be any hard feelings between us."
"Maybe that's why I dont quit," I says. (263)

In this passage Jason reveals his hostility and self-destructiveness. He is deliberately provoking his own boss, who has been as reasonable and understanding as possible. Earl is correct in assuming that Jason is trying to get himself fired. If this were to happen, Jason could feel all the more sorry for himself as a victim of an unjust world. His perversity in acting against his own best interests is evident here.
The second selection is an excerpt from a conversation between Jason and his mother about Miss Quentin.

"Remember she's your own flesh and blood," she says.
"Sure," I says, "that's just what I'm thinking of--flesh. And a little blood too, if I had my way. When people act like niggers, no matter who they are the only thing to do is treat them like a nigger." (199)

Freud states that wit "makes possible the gratification of a craving (lewd or hostile) despite a hindrance which stands in the way." In the Freudian context Jason's wit may be seen as a manifestation of his thwarted desires for sexual fulfillment and for physical vengeance upon those whom he feels have wronged him. A list of people in that category would exclude virtually no one. His remarks reflect a barely suppressed incestuous desire for his niece and an association of sex and violence in his mind. His wit is a form of verbal violence, a substitute for the physical violence that he is unable to inflict upon his acquaintances. Despite his image of himself as a man of action, Jason is as incompetent and ineffectual as his father and older brother. The first indication of his ineffectuality is rendered early in his section. Being thwarted in attacking his niece, Jason resorts to childish name calling, saying "downt think you can run it over me. I'm not an old woman, nor an old half dead nigger, either. You damn little slut" (203). It is one of the ironies of The Sound and the Fury that Jason is as much a man of words as Quentin and Mr. Compson. Although it is
less explicit in the novel, Faulkner makes it clear in the Appendix that Mr. Compson also finds an imperfect release for his frustrations by verbally attacking his acquaintances. Jason III, the lawyer, the man of words, "sat all day long with a litter of dogeared Horaces and Livys and Catulluses, composing (it was said) caustic and satiric eulogies on both his dead and his living fellowtownsmen" (8).

Jason IV also indulges himself in the temptation to caricature his fellow human beings. Having no use for literary endeavors, he comments caustically to others or mumbles negative remarks to himself, when no one else is around. Hunt is correct in noting that "Jason's humor... is a camouflage for an acute anxiety." I prefer to use the term "wit" rather than humor, making a distinction between humor as the laughter of joy and wit as the smile of mental recognition. In the sense that I use the terms here humor reflects the pleasure of the flesh and manifests a complex combination of involvement and detachment, whereas wit is cerebral, reflecting distance and derogation between the speaker and his targets. Hence wit frequently contains an element of cruelty. This quality in the wit of Jason is symptomatic of his frustration, stemming from blocked desires.

Jason's wit is a reflection of what Michael Cowan has called "a clever and vital mind caught in the prejudices of his day and the conventions of a bitter and narrow
材料主义。不幸的是，对于杰森来说，他的聪明才智没有用于明智的自我审视。他把所有的时间和精力都用来设谋，但他从来没有能力去质疑这些方案的价值，或者在更大的背景下，他的人生方向。他把他的头脑只用于实施他的目的，而不是去质疑它们。通过在昆汀的章节中展示了过度的反省和自意识的危险，福克纳现在戏剧化地展示了无法自我反省的意识的限制。结果是他完全没有自我意识。

虽然他似乎浸透在日常生活的实际中，杰森和他哥哥昆汀一样，与经验绝缘。科林·威尔逊指出："知识分子通过把自己困在概念的世界里而与现实隔绝；而普通人则因为过于自我专注，过于投入到日常的微不足道的现实中而与现实隔绝。"威尔逊的评论阐明了小说对敏感的知识分子和"普通人"意识的限制的描绘。

杰森从一个角度看是一个普通人，从另一个角度看是一个非凡的卑鄙小人。他在某种意义上是普通的，因为他代表了他社会的普遍价值观。正如沃尔普所说："杰森能够生活在社会中，只是因为现代社会的价值。"
mirror his own." From this point of view the flaws of Jason may be taken to represent the values that have come to predominate in the contemporary South (and by extension in contemporary America) with the failure of the old aristocracy. The movement from Section Two to Section Three represents the transition from the old way of life to the new. Faulkner has said that "Jason is the new South too." There is validity in Volpe's statement that "Section III is a bitter invective against modern society, its commercialism, its inhumanity, its superficial social and moral codes, its devotion to mechanical contrivances." All these qualities are reflected in the character of Jason Compson.

Although he is ordinary in this sense, Jason also represents an extreme. Duncan Aswell wryly observes that "Jason would not be a Compson if he did not turn his code of behaviour into an inflexible and unmanageable rule." Although the values he embraces are common, the single-mindedness of his pursuit of his aims, the abundant, frantically misplaced energy, and the "clever and vital mind" all mark Jason as extraordinary. The characters in the novel acquainted with Jason tend to regard him as extraordinarily bad. Dilsey associates Jason's behavior with the Satanic, on one occasion remarking to him that "I dont put no devilment beyond you" (203). After his attempt to prevent Caddy from seeing her own daughter,
Dilsey says, "You's a cold man, Jason, if man you is" (225). Caddy says to him, "You never had a drop of warm blood in you" (226). Miss Quentin, after being mercilessly asked at the dinner table whether she got "a good piece of meat," can contain herself no longer and asks, "Why does he treat me like this Grandmother? . . . . I never hurt him" (276). The question is a crucial one that admits of no easy answer. It is reminiscent of Lear's question out upon the heath: "Then let them anatomize Regan. See what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?" In both the novel and the play bewilderment is expressed about the nature of evil which seems to be destructive beyond the bounds of human comprehension. The destructiveness is bewildering, because it can not be explained simply in terms of self-seeking; ultimately it benefits no one.

Volpe asserts that Jason is so negative that he makes his mother look benevolent in comparison. This is no mean achievement. Faulkner himself has said in an interview that Jason represents "complete evil." When asked whether Jason were a bastard or not, the author replied "No. Not an actual one--only in behavior." Despite the overwhelming evidence of Jason's negative qualities, such as his pettiness, his callousness, his materialism, and his maliciousness, there is an ambivalence in the author's attitude toward him. The ambivalence has been noted by critics such as Richard Chase and John Hunt, but has not been fully explained.
I believe that it can best be understood in terms of the combined involvement and distance which the author has toward his character.

As I mentioned in my introductory chapter, the fact that Faulkner is able to identify sufficiently with Jason to present life from Jason's own point of view enables us to have understanding and hence sympathy for him. Faulkner consistently portrays hatred as stemming from the failure of one human being to identify with another. His understanding of hatred is in this respect reminiscent of Jonathan Swift's comment that "the yahoos were known to hate one another more than they did any different species of animals; and the reason usually assigned was the odiousness of their own shapes which all could see in the rest, but not in themselves." The result of this failure of human identification is a feeling of self-righteousness manifest by a projection of the faults one is unable to acknowledge within himself into others. This is evident in Jason's treatment of his niece, Miss Quentin. He rails at her, saying, "I want to know what you mean. . .telling your grandmother lies and forging her name on your report" (202). Yet Jason is a liar and a forger himself, deceiving Mrs. Compson into burning the checks that he has forged, while he cashes the ones Caddy has sent for her daughter.

There are a number of resemblances between Jason and his niece which could form a basis for an understanding
between them; but, unfortunately, one of the traits they share is a self-preoccupation that precludes human sympathy. Both reject the benevolent efforts of Dilsey, calling her a "nigger" and pushing her away from them (203). The lack of sympathy is even more evident in their attitudes toward Benjy, whom Miss Quentin refers to as an "old crazy loon" (67). Neither of them has any compassion for the idiot-child whom they regard as an encumbrance. Both Jason and his niece are concerned with material values rather than human ones. As a young boy Jason manages to get himself appointed treasurer among a group of boys selling kites for a nickel (193-194). Whereas Benjy "wouldn't know a quarter if he was to see it" (34), Jason hoards his money in his room, counting it over in secrecy. An external manifestation of his avariciousness is Jason's habit of keeping his hands in his pockets. Faulkner has commented upon it as follows:

... That was a mannerism, keeping his hands in his pockets, to me that presaged his future, something of greediness and grasping, selfishness. That he may have kept his hands in his pockets to guard whatever colored rock that he had found that was to him, represented the million dollars he would like to have some day.¹⁸

The mannerism may also be an indication of tension and repression, being an unnatural pose in childhood.

Miss Quentin is also grasping and greedy. She is first depicted in the novel through the consciousness of Benjy, fighting with Luster over some spools which she takes away from him (49). This occurs when they are both
children, Miss Quentin being three years older than Luster. When she comes to the seed merchant's shop where Jason works, she reveals a materialistic side of her character which is similar to that of her uncle. Her chief concern is with the money she may get, rather than with the letter from her mother; she reads it perfunctorily and then drops it on the floor (230-231).

Jason and his niece share even more in common than this. Each may be regarded as the end of the Compson line. Jason is the last male (with the exception of Benjy) to bear the family name. Miss Quentin, like her uncle, is referred to in the Appendix as "the last" (16, 19), being the sole offspring of the four Compson children. In both characters the finer idealistic impulses of the family are absent, as if these qualities had already been expended by the time of Jason's and Miss Quentin's birth. In this sense both characters are living refutations of the Compsons' aristocratic pretences, and are embodiments of the fact that the family well has run quite dry.

The speech of both Jason and his niece is characterized by cursing. Jason's section which begins and ends with the phrase "Once a bitch always a bitch" is framed by a curse. Profanity is recurrent throughout the Jason section. It is especially prominent in real or imagined conversations between Jason and Miss Quentin. In the first of the following two excerpts Jason imagines he is telling
off Miss Quentin. In the second one the two are actually conversing:

These damn little slick haired squirts, thinking they are raising so much hell, I'll show them something about hell I says, and you too. I'll make him think that damn red tie is the latch string to hell, if he thinks he can run the woods with my niece. (258-259)

"Are you hiding out in the woods with one of those damn slick-headed jellybeans? Is that where you go?"

"You—you old goddamn!" she says. She fought, but I held her. "You damn old goddamn!" she says. (202)

The cursing is on the most basic level a naturalistic rendering of speech. Faulkner has an excellent ear for speech patterns and is able to render convincing dialogue. His capacity for empathy enables him to convey the language and rhythms of speech peculiar to each character. The profanity may also be regarded as a kind of verbal motif, an external manifestation of a consciousness in a state of turbulence. It is a form of verbal violence. Because of his repressed incestuous desire, Jason would like to whip Miss Quentin and the men she runs around with. Being unable to do so he curses them instead.

Jason's profanity may be understood in comparison to the foremost curser in Light in August, Joe Christmas. The utterances of both characters form linguistic motifs in their respective novels. Standing in the nude out on the street, Joe shouts,"White bastards... That's not the first of your bitches that ever saw..." Joe's language
is the verbal equivalent of his explosive, physical violence. Both his words and actions express his pent-up, dynamic energy. Jason's cursing, in contrast, is a substitute for action. Though he pushes Dilsey and his mother, grabs and threatens to whip his niece, and attacks a little old man, Jason is ineffective in all these endeavors. His cursing is petty and niggling, rather than explosive. It reflects the consciousness of a man of words, rather than a man of action. It is another manifestation of the fact that when Jason is thwarted he becomes a name caller.

The profanity of both novels becomes a symbol of a violent renunciation of life. This is equally true of Joe Christmas, Jason Compson and Miss Quentin, although the clearest expression of it occurs when Joe rushes into the Negro church, cursing God and existence. All three characters are death oriented, being incapable of giving or receiving love. The cursers are the cursed. Those who are constantly uttering words such as "damn" and "hell" are in the state of Hell, in Dostoyevsky's sense of the term: he suggests in The Brothers Karamazov that hell is the state of mind of one unable to love.

Jason fails to identify with his niece, even though he shares as much in common with her as he does with any other character in the novel. Because he projects his own inadequacies outward to a scapegoat figure, instead of
accepting them within himself, their similarities make it all the easier for Jason to hate his niece. If one accepts the proposition that Jason's hatred is ultimately a reflection of his self-hatred, it follows that he would have a special antipathy for a person who mirrors his own tendencies. Her rejection of the Compson household, her shallow self-centeredness, her materialism, and lack of compassion are all traits that he partakes of himself; and although Jason's hatred is directed indiscriminately towards all, it is especially intense in relation to Miss Quentin. The promiscuity that he professes to hate in her is the projection of his own repressed and thwarted desires, which are manifest in violent emotions, violent words, and occasional, ineffective, violent actions.

Through empathy Faulkner is able to identify sufficiently with Jason to render a sustained version of life from his point of view. The achievement precludes the hatred that Jason himself is subject to, stemming from failure to relate to others. The following passage in which Faulkner talks about scoundrels helps to provide an explanation for the sense of identification:

"Well, I think that possibly the Old Adam in man suggests to him to be a blackguard if he can get away with it, and when there's a great deal of pressure to be respectable, if there is great enough reward for the respectability, he will choose that in preference to the pleasure of being a scoundrel and a blackguard . . . . there's too much pressure against being an individualist, and a good first-rate scoundrel
is an individualist. He don't really belong to a gang. Once he's got to join a gang, he becomes a second-rate scoundrel. But a first-rate scoundrel, like a first-rate artist, he's an individualist. . "

I feel that Jason qualifies as a first-rate scoundrel, despite his pretense to respectability. There is no danger of him ever joining a gang since he is incapable of getting along with anyone else. His idea of taking a hundred dollars from Caddy in return for a tantalizing glimpse of her daughter through the carriage window shows a perverse kind of originality. Although many of Jason's remarks, such as his comments upon worthless Blacks and big-city Jews, are commonplace, he does show originality of wit. He says that Benjy runs along the fence of the golf course so much that they're going to start charging him dues in the country club (205). He also proclaims sardonically that "I never had university advantages because at Harvard they teach you how to go for a swim at night without knowing how to swim" (213). In both instances Jason's sense of being an outsider is masked through wit. Jason's energy, his originality, his desire to manipulate reality, and even his skilled and clever use of words are analogous to the qualities of a "first-rate artist."

Jason is one of a number of Faulknerian characters whose inflexibility reflects a strong sense of life energy that has become misdirected. Ab Snopes of "Barn Burning" and Emily Grierson of "A Rose for Emily" embody similar
tendencies. All three characters, though different from each other, are individualists who follow their own desires and are impervious to pressures from the outside world. They are almost completely oblivious to the wishes of others. Although Jason is different from the other two, in that his values closely mirror those prevalent in society, he is ultimately as hostile to society and as anarchistic as they are. There is a grotesque quality in the isolation of all three. They are perverse and destructive, acting in ways that inflict pain upon others and ultimately upon themselves. Yet there is something admirable in the implacable nature of their spirits, in the strength of their individuality. They are all indomitable. All three characters are self-destructive, but too tough minded to commit suicide. They live out their respective lives with a kind of negative endurance. Jason and Emily manage to survive as the last remaining members of once prominent families. The author renders the impression that they are virtually unkillable.  

Faulkner attempts to explain the ambivalence evident in his treatment of characters such as Jason in the following statement about the writer:

He's interested in all man's behavior with no judgment whatsoever. That it's motion, it's life, the only alternative is nothingness, death. And so to the writer anything man does is fine because it's motion. If he were not doing that he would do nothing instead. Maybe the writer has no concept of morality at all,
only an integrity to hold always to what he believes to be the facts and truths of human behaviour, not moral standards at all. But that man in his books does what man will do, not what man should do but what he will do, maybe what he can't help but do.22

I would like to emphasize the statement "Maybe the writer has no concept of morality at all." I believe that Faulkner says "maybe" because on one level the author does make moral judgments. Faulkner's statements that Dilsey "was a good human being"23 and that Jason acted like a bastard,24 though inadequate as comprehensive criticisms, are not inconsistent with his portrayals of them in the novel. Yet there is a truth which contradicts these statements. On another level, and perhaps a deeper one, the artist transcends moral judgment and responds to anything that moves his imagination.

When a student at the University of Virginia refers to Joe Christmas as a "bad man"25 the author replies as follows: "Well, Joe Christmas--I think that you really can't say that any man is good or bad. I grant you there are some exceptions, but man is the victim of himself, or his fellows, or his own nature, or his environment but no man is good or bad either."26 Although the statement is crystal clear, there is a qualifying comment which suggests a counter perspective. The sympathetic identification precludes simple moral judgments and conveys the ambiguity of experience; yet the counter perspective remains a factor effecting our judgment. To say that Dilsey
responds positively to life whereas Jason responds negatively is not exactly the same as saying the former is "good" while the latter is "bad," but sometimes it seems to be saying the same thing in a slightly more sophisticated way. I suggest that Faulkner's sensibility might be termed a "modified Manichaean" one. The American sense of perceiving existence in terms of moral extremes remains a part of it, but is greatly modified by a mature awareness of the complexities of existence which resist categorization. Despite the awareness that people can not be classified as "good" or "bad" the Manichaean tendency remains, subordinate perhaps, but not entirely absent. Jason may be regarded as the embodiment of the negative results of this tendency, when it is carried to an extreme. Lacking an awareness of the complexities of existence, he can too easily categorize people. The "pigeonholes" (12) within the railed enclosure where Jason works suggest this characteristic of his.

Faulkner has the ability to identify with his main characters on so intense a level that moral judgment of them is suspended. Not all writers possess the negative capability that makes this achievement possible. Chaucer can convey a Pardoner who is fully as memorable as his Knight (and some people might argue even more so). Iago is as fully rendered as Othello because Shakespeare is able to identify imaginatively with both characters. In
contrast, writers such as Hemingway and Salinger lack negative capability, focussing most fully on a character who embodies their own moral standards. The reader never gets a full imaginative portrayal of a Hemingway anti-hero or an insensitive adolescent in the works of J.D. Salinger. But Jason is as fully rendered as any other reflector in *The Sound and the Fury*, even though he represents the antithesis of the author's implied moral standards.

In one respect Faulkner's treatment of Jason is traditional. A number of authors have been able to convincingly render con-men (and con-women) such as Chaucer's Pardoner and Becky Sharp, and Machiavellian manipulators such as Shakespeare's Iago and Edmund of *King Lear*, Milton's Satan, and Melville's Ahab. It might plausibly be argued that these characters are among their authors' most fully developed creations. I would suggest two reasons for the artistic success of these portrayals. Firstly, the author's manipulation of the world of his art is analogous to these character's manipulations of the materials of life. The Pardoner, Edmund (who is portrayed as a stage manager), and that excellent actress and mimic, Becky Sharp, are all commercial artists, using their powers of performance to gain their own selfish ends. They employ their vivid imaginations for utilitarian purposes. Secondly the five authors cited above are able to identify not only
with their moral norms, but with the polar opposites of these norms. This suggests a fullness of imaginative range. Perhaps the norms can only be fully comprehended if the reasons for violating them are fully understood as well.

What is unique about Faulkner's treatment of Jason is the contemporary emphasis on consciousness and the extent of identification with petty destructiveness. It is one kind of achievement to successfully project the Promethean defiance of an Ahab whose iron will achieves domination over strong men. It is another to identify with Jason, who attempts to push around widows, a virtual orphan, and a little old man. Yet Faulkner is able to evoke involvement as well as distance in his rendering of Jason who has a vivid imagination, perverse though it may be. John Hunt is correct in stating that Jason has a "certain neurotic vitality."²⁷ He has a large share of life energy that is misdirected and manifested negatively.

In private correspondence Faulkner could occasionally express himself in terms somewhat reminiscent of Jason. I am aware of the dangers of the biographical fallacy and have no desire to peruse Faulkner's life for words or actions that could be called Jasonian. Nor do I wish to shift the emphasis from the author's work of art to his life. But since the focus of this thesis is on Faulkner's rendering of involvement and distance, I would like to cite the following letter as tentative evidence of the author's
identification with language and sentiments akin to those of his created character. The letter is a reply to Malcolm Cowley, who had previously suggested the possibility of Faulkner's receiving a visit from the Russian author, Ilya Ehrenburg.

[Oxford] [May 1946]

Dear friend:

Thank you for warning me. What the hell can I do? Goddam it I've spent almost fifty years trying to cure myself of the curse of human speech, all for nothing. Last month two damned Swedes, two days ago a confounded Chicago reporter, and now this one that can't even speak English. As if anything he or I either know, or both of us together know, is worth being said once, let alone twice through an interpreter. I swear to christ being in Hollywood was better than this where nobody knew me or cared a damn. I hate like hell to be in this state, I can even put up with mankind when I have time to adjust. But I do like to have the chance to invite people to come to look at me and see where I keep my tail or other head or whatever it is strangers want to come here for.

Thank you again for the warning....Maybe the b hasn't realized he's in America now; I still own my home.

Faulkner

Without pushing the point, I would like to note that in a mood of indignation, rarely evident in his letters, Faulkner expresses himself in a manner somewhat reminiscent of Jason. The acerbic wit, the recurrent profanity, the tone of irritability, the deprecation of a person he has never met, and the rather narrow provincialism of the remarks about foreigners are all characteristic of the Jason section. But in Faulkner's letter the wit includes an element of self-deprecation which is beyond the
character of Jason.

The wit distinguishes Jason from an equally avaricious character, such as Flem Snopes, who is relatively inarticulate. It is as if Snopes uses words only when they will advance his purposes of acquisition. In contrast, Jason is talking all the time. When no one else is around for him to quarrel with, he talks to himself. There is a non-utilitarian aspect of Jason's consciousness which Faulkner may associate with the aristocracy. Jason's caustic remarks to Earl are not only of no practical value to him, but could be considered anti-utilitarian since they work against his own interests. The fact that Faulkner associates Jason with an aristocratic family aids him in achieving a full sense of identification with his character. The author is likewise able to achieve a fuller sense of empathy with Benjy, the idiot-child of the Compson family than with Ike Snopes, whose perspective is rendered in *The Hamlet*. The difference between Faulkner's characterization of aristocratic and poor white families is perhaps most evident in the contrast between *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*. In both novels the consciousnesses of the characters are presented directly to the reader. But the short renderings and constant transitions in the latter novel tend to limit the sense of identification and evoke comic distance. One aspect of Faulkner's sensibility is a tendency to identify with the
children of aristocratic families and to treat the poor whites and Blacks with a comic distance reminiscent of Chaucer's treatment of the peasants. Of course to isolate this tendency from the total context of his works is to distort, since Faulkner has the ability to project himself into the consciousnesses of a wide variety of characters from different backgrounds. One of his fullest depth studies is of Joe Christmas, who is as far removed from the aristocracy as it is possible for a character to be.

Jason shares with Joe Christmas an anger against the world. Richard Chase has acutely observed that Jason "suffers from that peculiar masculine 'outrage' at portraying which Faulkner is a master, possibly the greatest master of all time." Chase is correct in stating that Faulkner is able to identify with the attitude of outrage; it is rendered vividly in such diverse characters as Jason, Joe Christmas, Jewel Bundren, Ab Snopes, Buck Rider (of "Pantaloon in Black") and Rosa Coldfield. Walter Slatoff has described it as a "state of unreleased tension" in which there are "forces pushing and being blocked by some kind of restraint." Jason's opening words, "Once a bitch always a bitch" convey this sense of anger which is unmitigated throughout his monologue. His section may well be the most sustained treatment of pure outrage in Faulkner's works. Joe Christmas finds temporary but imperfect release in his outbursts of violence, achieving
freedom from tension only in death. But even the limited release of Joe Christmas' violence is denied to Jason, and he does not die violently. He lives on in a state of tension and is last pictured by Faulkner being as spiteful as ever. By sustaining the attitude of outrage throughout Part Three, the author is able to convey the impression that there is no moment in Jason's life when he is free from tension.

John Hunt argues convincingly that Jason has a number of valid reasons for feeling outraged. He says of Jason that

His self-image is not just a straw man; obviously the very condition of his life is outrageous. In terms of his own inner logic, he has indeed been dealt with poorly, and his survival in the face of his inherited circumstances shows a certain neurotic vitality. His father was an alcoholic, his older brother a suicide; his sister is a prostitute, his brother an idiot, his niece a bitch, his uncle a toady and a drunkard.\(^{31}\)

Regarded from this point of view, it is possible to sympathize with Jason and to identify with him to an extent. Like his brothers he is a victim both of circumstances and of his own nature. His irritability and his nervous headaches are manifestations of suffering. These symptoms are his equivalent of Benjy's moaning and Quentin's intellectual agonizing. Jason is not as openly vulnerable as Benjy, for the most part concealing his anxiety from others and himself through his mask of cynicism. There are rare moments, however, when the pain is directly
perceived. One instance is when Jason drives home saying to himself "Sometimes I think what's the use of anything. With the precedent I've been set I must be crazy to keep on" (253). At the cemetery after his father's funeral, Jason has two moments when he comes close to manifesting human responses to his sister (219, 221). Being cut off from his own deepest emotional responses, Jason can only say, "I began to feel sort of funny" (219). In the second instance the possibility of a breakthrough of honest emotions vanishes, as Jason instead gives vent to a self-righteous outburst against Caddy.

His suffering is not as deep as Quentin's, since the shallowness of his nature precludes both the agony of self-awareness and the pain that comes from being involved in intimate human relationships. Whereas Benjy and Quentin suffer because of the loss of Caddy's love, Jason is spared this loss since he never had it to begin with. Instead he frets constantly over what he regards as a missed business opportunity. He seems to have no joyous past to look back to, regretting instead the loss of a hypothetical future, symbolized for him by the promised job in the bank. Jason's suffering, though less poignant than that of Quentin and Benjy due to the superficiality of his nature, is the most unrelieved. Even the introspective Quentin is occasionally able to respond directly to the external world as is evident in the following passage:
A sparrow slanted across the sunlight, onto the window ledge, and cocked his head at me. His eye was round and bright. First he'd watch me with one eye, then flick! and it would be the other one, his throat pumping faster than any pulse. The hour began to strike. The sparrow quit swapping eyes and watched me steadily with the same one until the chimes ceased, as if he were listening too. Then he flicked off the ledge and was gone. (98)

Jason is even more locked within his own ego than Quentin, lacking moments of pleasure in the past and totally unable to respond to the sensuousness of present experience. He sees sparrows, like all other creatures, as existing for the sole purpose of making his own life miserable. This is evident from his following comment:

They [the sparrows] are as big a nuisance as the pigeons, to my notion. You can't even sit in the courthouse yard for them. First thing you know, bing. Right on your hat. But it would take a millionaire to afford to shoot them at five cents a shot. If they'd just put a little poison out in the square, they'd get rid of them in a day... (265)

Jason's anti-life tendencies are implicit in this passage. He does not observe the concrete particularity of a sparrow, but abstracts the species. It is as if he sees the droppings but not the actual bird. Thus a live sparrow becomes for Jason a nuisance that craps upon his hat and that must be eliminated, if possible. He apparently does not believe that there is a providence in the fall of a sparrow. His characteristic of taking all unfortunate happenings as a personal affront to himself is evident here.
Jason's anger and antagonism are so unmitigated that they come to embody basic human emotions in a pure form. Jason may be viewed as an incarnation of the wrath that all men experience. He expresses implacable hostility, a refusal to be awed by authority figures such as his boss and the sheriff, and a desire for revenge upon those he feels have wronged him. In Part Four he visualizes himself as a titanic avenger striking his enemies down and saying "I'm Jason Compson. See if you can stop me. See if you can elect a man to office that can stop me" (321). The sense of being wronged and the impulse to avenge is given full expression in the consciousness of Jason. I suggest that the reader is able to achieve empathy with him, because he expresses emotions that all men feel at some time during their lives.

But any sympathy that we have for Jason is more than counterbalanced by our sense of ironic detachment from him. I have stressed the involvement between the author and reader with the character, because it is less obvious and more easily overlooked than the sense of detachment. The crux of Faulkner's brilliant achievement in this section is his ability to render simultaneously both involvement and distance. He is able to identify sufficiently with Jason to humanize him, rendering the validity of his outlook on life. At the same time, Faulkner shows the grotesque distortion of Jason's view-
point. This distortion is most evident in Jason's attitude toward Caddy and toward Benjy. Jason's contempt for his sister contrasts sharply to the love the other two brothers have for her. The affirmative life-giving qualities of Caddy have already been established through the consciousness of the touchstone, Benjy, and reinforced in the second section of the novel. Quentin's attitude toward Caddy is more complex and ambivalent than Benjy's. But the perspectives of the two brothers are basically complementary, the differences in their attitudes being relatively minor. The strongest emotion that Benjy and Quentin both feel is a love for Caddy. The tenderness of their feelings for her is fully reciprocated. Because Caddy is the most important person in the lives of both her brothers, Faulkner is able to keep her in primary focus throughout the first two sections of *The Sound and the Fury*. By rendering her through the consciousness of Benjy and then Quentin, the author is able to convey a strong sense of her affectionate nature which contrasts to Jason's assertions about her.

In a number of interviews Faulkner has suggested that the rendering of Caddy's vitality was one of his central concerns in the novel.³² At the University of Virginia he states that "To me she was the beautiful one, she was my heart's darling."³³ Catherine Baum argues that the main function of each character is to reveal the nature
of Caddy. She further suggests that the "most simple and probable" explanation of the novel's structure is "a logical and traditional ordering based on the chronology of Caddy's life, her childhood, adolescence and maturity." Miss Baum is in essential agreement with Perrin Lowrey that in one sense the novel is "roughly chronological." He observes the Benjy is primarily concerned with childhood (1898-1905), Quentin with events leading up to 1910, while Jason's thoughts are focussed on events between 1910-1928 with emphasis on the present. She is not, however, sufficiently aware of Slatoff's suggestion that a Faulkner novel "prevents us from organizing our impressions about any single center." The reflectors in *The Sound and the Fury* are important in themselves as well as for the truth they reveal about Caddy and others. Faulkner says that "every time any character gets into a book, no matter how minor, he's actually telling his own biography—talking about himself." It is true that Caddy is foremost in the mind of her three brothers, although Jason has a kind of surrogate Caddy figure in his niece to vent his spleen upon. Consequently he thinks of his sister less often than the others do. Baum cites Faulkner's own comments to show the central importance of Caddy. But these remarks provide only one valid perspective on the book. In Part Four, as the novel moves to a larger context, Caddy recedes to the background though never completely out of
sight. This is because she always remains alive in the consciousness of Benjy.

Baum, in seeing the first three sections as functioning mainly to reveal the life of the "heroine" Caddy, has oversimplified. What is interesting about the use of the three Compson brothers as reflectors of Caddy is that their phase of life corresponds to the phase of her existence which is being illuminated. Thus Benjy reveals his perennial childhood and the lost one of Caddy. Quentin, the sensitive adolescent who remains celibate, broods about Caddy's loss of virginity during adolescence. Jason who achieves adulthood, though not maturity, confronts Caddy the resourceful and stymied mother. Jason, himself, is resourceful and frustrated. This pattern should not be overstated since Benjy's memories include Caddy's adolescence, as Quentin's include her childhood. Nevertheless, I suggest that Caddy's happy childhood is rendered through an innocent with the capacity for joy, her troubled adolescence through the turbulent consciousness of an adolescent, while her adult frustrations are conveyed through the perspective of a highly frustrated adult.

Caddy is tragic because she has the most potential of the Compson children, but is ultimately thwarted, as are her three brothers. She is the only one capable of a deep and unselfish love. The sterility of her brothers' lives is manifest in their failure to have children; this failure
contrasts to Caddy, who literally perpetuates life. Yet, like the others, her life is one of unfulfillment. Being unable to raise her daughter and provide the love she once tendered upon Benjy, she can only send checks through the mail in care of Jason. The waste of human potential is most strongly felt in relation to Caddy, whose childhood seemed to offer the promise of a richer and fuller life. This waste becomes evident in the Jason section; the woman who was once a delightfully curious, responsive and compassionate little child is portrayed as so frustrated that she can scarcely speak. After Jason suggests to her that Miss Quentin will be a whore, following in the footsteps of her mother, Caddy "acted for a minute like some kind of toy that's wound up too tight and about to burst all to pieces" (227). As a young girl Caddy was active and competent. Unlike her mother, she was able to function well, soothing and comforting Benjy. There is a desperation about the adult Caddy that is analogous to the same quality in Jason and Miss Quentin. It is a manifestation of a consciousness in a state of extreme tension unable to find any satisfactory release.

Caddy is as much a symbol of twentieth century rootlessness as Quentin, being cut off from her home, her family, her husband and her only daughter. In her final encounter with Jason she is so thwarted as to be completely paralyzed. Her total frustration is expressed in the
following passage from the Jason section: "then she begun to laugh and to try to hold it back all at the same time. 'No I have nothing at stake,' she says, making that noise, putting her hands to her mouth, 'Nuh-nuh-nothing,' she says" (227). Caddy's laughter, like Quentin's after his arrest, is an expression of anguish and futility in what appears to be an absurd universe. Caddy's suffering is so overwhelming that she is scarcely able to articulate herself in language. Her stammering shows her reduced nearly to the position of Benjy, who can articulate no words at all. The passage, in its depiction of a stifled fury that is unreleased and unfulfilling, is evocative of the "sound and fury signifying nothing."

Faulkner was once asked why he did not project himself into the consciousness of Caddy, choosing instead to render The Sound and the Fury from the perspectives of her three brothers and a third person narrator. The question and the author's answer are as follows:

Q. Mr. Faulkner, in The Sound and the Fury the first three sections of the book are narrated by one of the four Compson children, and in view of the fact that Caddy figures so prominently, is there any particular reason why you didn't have a section with--giving her views or impressions of what went on?

A. That's a good question. That--the explanation of that whole book is in that. It began with the picture of the little girl's muddy drawers, climbing that tree to look in the parlor window with her brothers that didn't have the courage to climb the tree waiting to see what she saw. And I tried first to tell it with one brother, and that wasn't enough. That was Section
One. I tried with another brother, and that wasn't enough. That was Section Two. I tried the third brother, because Caddy was still to me too beautiful and too moving to reduce her to telling what was going on, that it would be more passionate to see her through somebody else's eyes, I thought.  

Faulkner's response is helpful, but incomplete. I have found no interview in which the author was able to articulate fully his reasons for not rendering experience through Caddy's eyes. The answer quoted above suggests to me that Caddy becomes for Faulkner the symbol of reality, the blackbird who is looked at from various different perspectives, the focal point around whom the several narrators revolve. In this sense she is in an analogous position to Sutpen in *Absalom, Absalom!*  

In withholding a rendering from the consciousness of Caddy and Thomas Sutpen, Faulkner is able to convey an aura of mystery about them. They become the embodiments of a truth which can be partially apprehended, but never fully understood. The incompleteness of apprehension is an integral part of Faulkner's understanding of the nature of perception. I disagree with critics such as Michael Millgate, who says that "The different limitations in the viewpoints of Benjy, Quentin and Jason make unavoidable the shadowiness, the imprecision, of Caddy's presentation." He concludes that "The novel revolves upon Caddy, but Caddy herself escapes satisfactory definition, and her daughter's tragedy, simply because it
is more directly presented, is in some ways more moving.\footnote{1} The images of Caddy are not shadowy and imprecise. They vividly render the transformation of Caddy from a vital, whimsical child into a thwarted adult. The juxtaposition of images of her clearly suggest a lack of fulfillment and a loss of potential. It is after this sense of loss is rendered that the focus of the novel shifts away from Caddy.

The incompleteness of the portrayal of Caddy is not an artistic flaw in my opinion. Whitehead has stated that "The exactness is a fake"\footnote{2} and that "When men can say of any question, 'This is all there is to be known or said of the subject; investigation ends here,' that is death."\footnote{3} No matter how much is learned, something always remains mysterious and beyond rational comprehension. This sense of mystery and awe would be greatly diminished and perhaps lost if Caddy's perspective were directly presented. I believe that this is what Faulkner means when he says that "Caddy was still to me too beautiful and too moving to reduce her to telling what was going on."\footnote{4}

Jason's monologue conveys the later circumstances of his sister's life. But his acerbic attitude toward Caddy reveals more about himself than it does about the nature of his sister. There is a strong sense of identification between the reader and the reflectors of the first two sections. Thus the contrast with Jason's bitter and
reductive point of view suggests extreme distortion on his part. Distortion is equally evident in Jason's attitude toward Benjy, whom I have previously suggested is a touchstone in the novel. Having been forced into a sense of identification with the consciousness of Benjy, the reader can see the limitations of the viewpoint of a man who refers to the idiot-child as a "sideshow" (205).

The result of this gross distortion is to evoke a far greater sense of distance between the reader and the character than was evident in the first two sections of the novel. Backman has accurately observed that "After the morbidity and introversion of Quentin, the harsh wit and angry violence of Jason provide a sudden, welcome release through comedy." The main reason for the release is that the reader is freed from the intensive identification that he is subjected to throughout the Benjy and Quentin sections of The Sound and the Fury. It is a relief not to have to identify closely with the sufferings of the narrator.

Release also stems from the fact that the reader no longer has to struggle to determine what is happening in Section Three. Warren Beck has noted that

Faulkner is always a dynamic story-teller, never just a reporter of unorganized phenomena. His most drastic, most dream-like use of stream-of-consciousness, for instance, in The Sound and the Fury, is not only limited to the first two sections of the book, but it sketches a plot which in the lucid sections that follow gradually emerges clear-cut."
The reader's bewilderment and struggle for meaning in the first two sections mirror the difficulty of attempting to understand the nature of "the truth." In Section Three the meaning of experience has begun to clarify for the reader, who moves from groping confusion in the Quentin section toward lucidity.

In Jason's section the focus is much more external than that of previous renderings and the language is easy to comprehend. The sentences are "logical rational contained" (16) like Jason himself. The external focus reflects the consciousness of Jason, which is a superficial one, incapable of introspection. The fast moving quality of the prose helps to render the impression that Jason's life is a short superficial gallop across the surface of existence. The unsmooth, staccato quality of his language reflects a consciousness that is out of harmony with the basic rhythms of existence. Jason's frantic dashes around the countryside are the outer manifestations of the turbulence of his psyche.

External motion serves to objectify the inner life-rhythms that Faulkner conveys. Benjy is associated with his ambling along the fence and with the rides in the Compson carriage which are controlled by others (namely by T.P., Luster, and Jason). Quentin is a solitary walker in far off New England who meanders without direction, responding only occasionally to the outside world. Jason,
who is in some ways even more cut off from experience than Quentin, is frequently portrayed in a car. The following passage makes the connection with the rhythm of Jason's consciousness quite clear: "Jason got in and started the engine and drove off. He went into second gear, the engine spluttering and gasping, and he raced the engine, jamming the throttle down and snapping the choker in and out savagely" (321). It is obvious that the car engine is not the only thing that is gasping and spluttering. The closed car, which contrasts with the open carriage for Benjy, implies total insulation from the external environment. Benjy is open to experience whereas Jason is not. The car also becomes a symbol of Jason's mechanical existence. He has purchased it with money obtained by selling his share of the business to Earl. Mrs. Compson who has provided the money for her son's economic advancement is unaware of this manoeuvre. The transaction belies Jason's image of himself as a practical businessman, since in return for giving up his partnership, he has purchased an object which literally contributes to his headaches.

Jason won't admit that his own actions are largely responsible for his unhappiness, blaming instead his father, his sister, his older brother, stock market manipulators in New York, the telegraph operator who failed to contact him immediately, and anyone else he can think of. His total lack of self-awareness distances the reader from him;
the reader's awareness of the nature of truth is not only radically different from Jason's but is in many instances the antithesis of his perceptions.

The technique of using a narrator whose perspective is radically distorted is intelligently discussed by Wayne Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. He states that it involves "a communion between the author and reader behind the narrator's back." This communion stimulates "the pleasure of deciphering." According to Booth, the pleasure is heightened when the reader perceives a truth which is in ironic contrast to the literal words of the speaker. Booth elaborates upon this point as follows: "Our pleasure is compounded of pride at our own knowledge, ridicule of the ignorant narrator, and a sense of collusion with the silent author who, also knowing the facts, has created the trap for his narrator and for those readers who will not catch the allusion." This comment helps to explain what Hunt has described as "the curious delight the reader finds" in reading Jason's section. The pleasure is compounded by the previously mentioned sense of relief from the struggle to understand what is happening and the release from intense involvement.

In applying his understanding of the pleasure of deciphering to the Jason section of *The Sound and the Fury*, Booth is incisive.
We take delight in communion, and even in deep collusion, with the author behind Jason's back. Most of Jason's faults and crimes are so glaring that there would be no fun in talking about them openly. . . . To call Jason a bigot, a braggart, a thief, and a sadist offers none of the comic delight that his vicious behaviour offers. But to commune with Faulkner behind Jason's back is a different matter. We watch with him while this Vice reveals himself for our contempt, our hatred, our laughter, and even--so strong is the effect of his psychological vitality--our pity. 

Booth calls this kind of collaboration "one of the most rewarding of all reading experiences" and concludes this part of his discussion by explaining why.

To collaborate with the author by providing the source of an allusion or by deciphering a pun is one thing. But to collaborate with him by providing mature moral judgment is a far more exhilarating sport. . . . When we see the compound joke of Jason's not having anything against "jews as an individual" but just against "the race," we do so only by calling to bear on the passage our linguistic experience, our logical and moral sense, and our past experience with bigots.

In other words the technique of using an insensitive narrator stimulates the process of perception in the reader who must be alert to comprehend the inherent irony of the situation. With the help of the author the reader makes his own judgment as opposed to that of the narrator. Though stimulated to draw conclusions for himself, the reader does not have to struggle with subtleties and complexities of meaning, since the implied truth is generally the exact opposite of what is suggested by the narrator. Once the distortion of the narrator has been understood,
the rest follows logically.

This is evident in a work such as Swift's "A Modest Proposal," which depends upon the sustained use of an unsympathetic narrator. Tension is evoked because two perspectives are simultaneously present: the one stated by the speaker and the alternative implied by the author. Northrop Frye has noted that "The argument of Swift's "Modest Proposal" has a brain-softening plausibility about it: one is almost led to feel that the narrator is not only reasonable but even humane; yet the 'almost' can never drop out of any sane man's reaction." Tension is generated by the reader's awareness of the "plausibility" of the narrator's viewpoint and its ultimate grotesque distortion. The negative possibility of solving the problems of suffering humanity by eliminating the people is suggested and rejected. The narrator is ultimately wrong, and the vision of life presented is not ambivalent.

James Joyce in the Cyclops episode of Ulysses and Faulkner in the Jason section of The Sound and the Fury also use narrators whose perspectives have a certain plausibility and yet are radically distorted. Joyce's use of the technique is more complex than Swift's in "A Modest Proposal" and provides a possible direct link to Faulkner's employment of a similar method in Jason's narrative. Unlike Swift, the two twentieth century
novelists are concerned with characterization of their narrators. Frye suggests that satire "deals less with people as such than with mental attitudes." The speaker of "A Modest Proposal" is a kind of mask, a vehicle used by the author to project his own ideas. Characterization is subordinated, since as Frye observes in satire the author's ideas are the main character. Accordingly, only such information about the speaker as is useful for rendering the writer's thoughts is brought in. Whereas in *Ulysses* and *The Sound and the Fury* the impression of a naturalistic rendering of character is conveyed.

I suggest that the narrator in the Cyclops chapter of *Ulysses* is a midpoint between the dramatic projection of Swift in "A Modest Proposal" and the full characterization of Jason in *The Sound and the Fury*. The anonymous vulgarian of Joyce's novel is more fully developed as a character than the Swiftean mask, and less fully developed than Faulkner's portrayal of Jason. In my opinion Joyce's use of the unsympathetic narrator is more of a conscious literary device than Faulkner's, the spokesman being important as a reflector rather than as an actor. Whereas Jason is important both as a reflector and as a person who plays an integral part in the action of the novel. The Chapter in *Ulysses* is more like a setpiece. Jason's section is the elaboration of a number of motifs, first suggested in Benjy's monologue and finally worked out in
the concluding part of the novel. Interwoven into the last part of the Benjy section are a series of passages which serve as a kind of microcosm to the larger unit of Part Three. Jason sardonically urges Luster to borrow a quarter from Benjy (85-86), taunts his niece about her sex life, telling her if she doesn't like the Compson house she should leave it. Even minor details such as Jason's reading the newspaper, which is his only literature, and the breaking of a glass by Miss Quentin at a dinner time squabble are foreshadowed.

In the *Ulysses* chapter, the language sometimes reflects the speech of the narrator and at other times evokes a mock-heroic rhetoric that is beyond him. In Faulkner's novel the language is totally subordinated to the idiom of Jason, since the author sustains his presentation of the narrator's consciousness without interruption. The uniqueness of Faulkner's use of the unsympathetic speaker stems from his capacity to project himself fully into the character offering so distorted a perspective.

In my opinion the Cyclops chapter of *Ulysses* was a direct influence upon Faulkner and one of the inspirations for the Jason section. I feel that there is a special quality in the nature of the perceptions rendered that is intrinsic to both novels. I therefore wish to explore the possible interrelationship, even though the question of
literary influence is not the central focus of this thesis. The assertion of direct connection between the two parts of these novels must remain a tentative claim rather than a proven fact for two reasons. With a perversity worthy of the creator of Jason, Faulkner tended to minimize the influence of *Ulysses* upon his own work. In 1932, Faulkner claimed not to have read Joyce's novel, though he did acknowledge having heard excerpts of it discussed before he composed *The Sound and the Fury*. At a later date he did state that "I have read *Ulysses* once," though he did not specify when. Faulkner is known to have possessed a copy of the novel dated "1924." His wife has stated in an interview that on their honeymoon which took place in 1929, only months after the completion of *The Sound and the Fury*, "he began what he termed my education. He gave me James Joyce's *Ulysses* to read. I didn't understand it. He told me to read it again. I did and understood what Mr. Joyce was writing about." Thus, although evidence can be cited to support the argument of a critic such as Richard Chase for a direct connection between the two novels, it can not be absolutely proven by Faulkner's testimony.

A second reason why the assertion of Joyce's influence on the Jason section must remain tentative is that Faulkner tends to absorb and transmute those works that have been an influence upon him. The result is that the literary
echoes in Faulkner are less direct and hence less provable than in a work such as T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land," where the sources retain their own identity within the context of the poem. Was Faulkner, for example, influenced in his portrayal of Lena Grove by Frank Norris' rendering of Hilma Tree, the earth mother figure in The Octopus? The resemblances of character and even of name suggest this possibility, but it can not easily be demonstrated. Whereas there can be no doubt that a line such as Eliot's "the works and days of hands" refers to Hesiod's "Works and Days." The association of Lena Grove with the "still unravished bride of quietness" of Keats' "Ode On A Grecian Urn" is implicit throughout Light in August, greatly enriching the meaning of the novel. The connection of the character with the poem is made explicit in the lines which refer to Lena's journey "like something moving forever and without progress across an urn."\(^6^2\) Without this reference and the one to Joe Christmas' nightmarish vision of women as imperfect "suavely shaped urns,"\(^6^3\) the connection between the novel and poem would remain implicit, but unprovable. It is my contention that the connection between the Cyclops episode and the Jason section is implicit, lacking the explicit reference that would put the issue beyond critical doubt. For that reason I would like to suggest the direct influence of Ulysses on Section Three of The Sound and the Fury as a strong
possibility rather than as an absolute fact.

The most obvious resemblance between the Cyclops episode and the Jason section is that both authors use a vulgar observer-narrator whose perspective seems distorted and insensitive. Having previously rendered existence from the consciousness of Bloom and of Benjy, the authors now switch to an external perspective of them. In both instances the result is to evoke a strange combination of humor and pain. There is pathos stemming from the difference between the reader's sympathetic understanding of the two men and the callousness of the narrators toward them. The compassion that has been evoked in the reader is juxtaposed against the indifference of the reflector. The narrators represent values that seem all too prevalent, Joyce's suggesting a common view of a citizen of Dublin, Jason embodying "the New South." The vulnerability of Bloom and Benjy, both of whom appear doomed to be mistreated and misunderstood, is emphasized. Benjy is dismissed by Jason as a freakish monstrosity, while Bloom is treated by the narrator and the citizen as an alien and an enemy. His benevolent attempt to arrange for an insurance payment to a widow is misinterpreted by the citizen who calls Bloom a "Shylock," subjects him to a torrent of verbal abuse, and finally hurls a biscuit box at his head.

Yet, commingling with the pathos, a curious kind of comic relief exists. The technique of using an ignorant
narrator is perhaps inherently comic, since as Bergson observes "a comic character is generally comic in proportion to his ignorance of himself." Collaboration between the author and reader behind the narrator's back can readily be used for comic effect since, as Bergson says, "However spontaneous it seems, laughter always implies a kind of secret freemasonry, or even complicity with other laughers, real or imaginary." Bergson further suggests that "The laughable element... consists of a certain mechanical inelasticity" instead of living adaptability as a human being. In both the Cyclops episode and the Jason section the narrators manifest stereotyped, mechanical responses, reflected in the large number of clichés in their speech. Instead of responding directly to experience, they mold it to their own preconceived ideas. The result is extreme distortion of perspective and amusement on the part of the reader at the narrator's blindspots which are self-evident to others. In *The Sound and the Fury*, not only the reader, but nearly all the other characters in the novel are aware of Jason's weaknesses. In Swiggart's words,"His selfishness and cruelty are known to everyone, yet he refers constantly to his mother's 'good name' and the family's 'position' in the community." In both novels the comic effect is extended beyond the shortsightedness of the narrators' perspective to evoke laughter at subjects which have previously been
treated seriously. In *Ulysses* the laughter is directed not only at the vulgar speaker but at Bloom.

So they started talking about capital punishment and of course Bloom comes out with the why and the wherefore and all the codology of the business and the old dog smelling him all the time. I'm told those Jewies does have a sort of a queer odour coming off them for dogs. . .

The narrator's naive anti-semitism is treated comically as is Jason's disparagement not of the individual but of the whole Jewish race in *The Sound and the Fury*. But Bloom also is seen as a target of comedy in his high seriousness and verbal posturings. I believe the humor stems from the sudden change of outlook and the unexpected release from the serious perspective of Bloom previously rendered. In Faulkner's novel the humor is more acerbic reflecting the consciousness of Jason; but a similar effect is achieved by presenting what has previously been treated seriously in comic perspective. I believe the following passage from *The Sound and the Fury* epitomizes the Jason section. He is talking to his favorite audience, himself.

Do you think I can afford to have her running about the streets with every drummer that comes to town, I says, and them telling the new ones up and down the road where to pick up a hot one when they made Jefferson. I haven't got much pride, I can't afford it with a kitchen full of niggers to feed and robbing the state asylum of its star freshman. Blood, I says, governors and generals. It's a damn good thing we never had any kings and presidents; we'd all be down there at Jackson chasing butterflies. (247)
Jason's dominant concerns seem to crystallize in this passage. He gives expression to his obsession with his niece's sexuality, his worrying about the family's good name, his feeling that Benjy and the servants are encumbrances, his renunciation of his family ties and heritage and finally his fear that the insanity in the family extends to him. The disintegration of the family, one of the novel's most serious themes, is here seen in bitterly comic perspective, as is Miss Quentin's desperate attempt through sex to find the love she has never been given. Sardonic humor is directed toward Benjy who can not be said to have faults in the same sense as Bloom, since the idiot-child is incapable of moral responsibility.

The effect is the strange mingling of humor and pain which is inherent in what has recently been termed "black humor," which may be defined as something funny about something unfunny. In contrast to "humor" which reflects the laughter or joy and emotional release, there is an incomplete release in black humor because the underlying implications are painful. In the appendix to Comedy Wylie Sypher states that "The comic perspective can be reached only by making game of 'serious' life. The comic rites are necessarily impious, for comedy is sacrilege, as well as release." The Cyclops episode and the Jason section are used by their respective authors to express and release negative impulses. However compassionate Bloom is, he may
also be regarded as a fool and a hopeless bungler. Benjy's helpless and pathetic state can evoke exasperation as well as pity.

The negative impulse to dismiss it all as a cruel hoax and wish oneself free of the burden entirely is expressed in Jason's section. By showing that the central concerns in the novels that have been agonized over can also be scoffed at, Joyce and Faulkner convey an additional, startling perspective of reality that helps to complete the total picture. Sypher states that "man must periodically befoul the holy and release himself to folly. We find ourselves reflected in the comedian, who satisfies our need for impieties." In rendering scorn for people and concerns that have been shown to have ultimate significance, both authors achieve a release of negative attitudes by giving full expression to them.

The main resemblance then of the Jason section to the Cyclops chapter is that the author directly renders the consciousness of a callous and insensitive reflector, dramatizing a perspective that is negative and grossly distorted. There are a number of additional resemblances which it might be argued are coincidental. Taken together, however, they make the case for direct influence quite plausible. In both *Ulysses* and *The Sound and the Fury* the central negation is the absence of love. In each novel the symbol of this failure is the crucifixion, a motif that
is especially prominent in the Cyclops chapter and the Jason section. In Barney Kiernan's Public House a continuous verbal attack on Bloom leads to an attempt to destroy him. Grabbing a biscuit box to hurl at Bloom's head, the drunken citizen utters the following words: "By Jesus, ... I'll brain that bloody jewman for using the holy name. By Jesus, I'll crucify him so I will. Give us that biscuit box here." Jason's monologue takes place on Good Friday. Lawrance Thompson states that

Within the bitterly comic framework of Part Three, there is appropriate irony to be derived from having Jason's day fall on Good Friday. He spends most of his day in a rage because he feels he is being crucified, repeatedly, by different members of his family, but the reader is more likely to notice that what remains of the family is more nearly crucified by Jason.

Thompson's comment is valid but not sufficiently comprehensive. Good Friday comes to symbolize, not only persecution, but the entire sense of negation expressed in the third section. The struggle within the Compson family to achieve love is over and the battle has been lost. In Part Three only the external struggle remains. Jason is the living embodiment of the death of the Compson hopes. Mr. Compson and Quentin have literally died, while Caddy exists in a state of exile banished from her former home. Her furtive and fleeting visit emphasizes her permanent absence. The members of the Compson household most capable of human sympathy have died or disappeared. Benjy resides
in the house with Jason, Mrs. Compson, and Miss Quentin, all three of whom are incapable of providing love. It is the disappearance of love that is suggested by having the Jason section fall on Good Friday.

The fact that Benjy and Bloom, the main victims of misunderstanding and lack of love, are both associated with the sufferings of Christ is another resemblance in the two novels. Since the Christ story is central to Western culture, this does not necessarily imply direct influence. I would certainly not wish to argue that the associations of Christ with West's Miss Lonelyhearts, Hemingway's Santiago, or Kesey's McMurphy imply a direct connection with *Ulysses*. The feelings of tenderness and pathos evoked for a victim associated with the sufferings of Christ by Faulkner is however reminiscent of Joyce's use of the same technique. Tension stemming from the awareness that a character can be regarded both as insignificant and as no less than a Christ-like embodiment of suffering humanity is characteristic of both novels.

In the Cyclops chapter and the Jason section, the vulgarity of the narrator is conveyed through a rendering of speech dialect. There is a slangy vitality in the speech patterns of both narrators. Each of the narrations begins on a note of nervous irritability which is expressed through profanity. The openings of the two sections are as follows:
I was just passing the time of day with old Troy of the D.M.P. at the corner of Arbour Hill there and be damned but a bloody sweep came along and he near drove his gear into my eye. I turned around to let him have the weight of my tongue when who should I see dodging along Stony Batter only Joe Hynes.

-- Lo, Joe, says I. How are you blowing? Did you see that bloody chimneysweep near shove my eye out with his brush?

-- Soot's luck, says Joe. Who's the old ballocks you were talking to?

-- Old Troy, says I, was in the force.\textsuperscript{76}

Once a bitch always a bitch, what I say. I says you're lucky if her playing out of school is all that worries you. I says she ought to be down there in that kitchen right now, instead of up there in her room, gobbing paint on her face and waiting for six niggers that cant even stand up out of a chair unless they've got a pan full of bread and meat to balance them, to fix breakfast for her. And Mother says,

"But to have the school authorities think that I have no control over her, that I cant-"

"Well," I says, "You cant, can you?" \textsuperscript{198}

The recurrent pattern of speech, manifest in the format of "I says, then he says, so I says," is established in these opening passages and maintained throughout both sections. The vulgarity and banality inherent in this pattern serves to distance the reader from the speakers. Common language is used to reflect a common sensibility. The mechanical, stereotyped responses of the narrators is conveyed through the abundance of clichés. A number of the trite responses in both sections are directed towards foreigners who are dismissed as intruders and outsiders.\textsuperscript{77}

This attitude reflects a narrow provinciality of outlook. The stereotype of the Jew as a slick financial
operator who fleeces the innocent native sheep is central to *Ulysses*, but is also expressed in *The Sound and the Fury* in the following passage:

"Let him make a big crop and it wont be worth picking; let him make a small crop and he wont have enough to gin. And what for? so a bunch of damn eastern jews, I'm not talking of men of the jewish religion," I says, "I've known some that were fine citizens. You might be one yourself," I says.

"No," he says, "I'm an American."

"No offense," I says, "I give every man his due, regardless of religion or anything else. I have nothing against jews as an individual," I says, "It's just the race. You'll admit they produce nothing. They follow the pioneers into a new country and sell them clothes."

"You're thinking of Armenians," he says, "aren't you. A pioneer wouldn't have any use for new clothes."

"No offense," I says. "I dont hold a man's religion against him."

"Sure," he says, "I'm an American. My folks have some French blood, why I have a nose like this. I'm an American, all right."

"So am I," I says, "Not many of us left." (209)

The sentiments expressed by Jason would not be out of place at Barney Kiernan's. In the breadthness of the humor which suggests farce, in its repetition of cliches, its jingoistic sentiments, its anti-Semitism, and its dialogue of misunderstanding, the scene is reminiscent of the Cyclops chapter of *Ulysses*. Low-brow humor is prevalent in both sections. The standard bar room jokes in *Ulysses*, such as "Are you a strict t.t.? says Joe/Not taking anything between drinks, says I," provide comic relief and
reflect hackneyed sentiments simultaneously. The Jason section contains a mixture of his original wit and standard low-brow jokes. Examples of the latter are Jason's telling the telegraph operator "First thing you know you'll be working for a living," (235) and Miss Quentin's remark to her uncle that she'd prefer living in hell to being any place where he lives. Throughout this part of the novel Faulkner is rendering the American equivalent of Irish bar room jokes. Unlike *Ulysses* the setting is not a pub, since Jason is a teetotaler. Swiggart notes that "Like his brother Quentin, Jason never drinks alcohol--a frequent sign in Faulkner's work of moral impotency."  

The previously quoted conversation between Jason and the long-nosed drummer takes place at a lunch counter where the two are drinking that staple product of the South, coca-cola. The misunderstandings rendered in the dialogues both of *Ulysses* and *The Sound and the Fury* involve a comic treatment of the theme of non-communication, and by extension, of the failure of love.

The resemblances between the Cyclops chapter of *Ulysses* and the Jason section of *The Sound and the Fury* may be summarized as follows: Both parts render comic outlooks of essentially serious themes. In both novels the comic effect is achieved by the author's projecting himself into the consciousness of an insensitive and unsympathetic narrator. In both novels the superficiality of the
reflector's vision is emphasized by juxtaposition with previous renderings which have conveyed a more intensive, more sympathetic, and apparently more accurate version of the nature of observed reality. In each book the externality of the narrator's vision is implied through the predominance of speech, the language being coarse, banal, and salted with an element of profanity. There is an exuberance of language in each section which reflects the exhilaration Booth describes in the collaboration between author and reader behind the narrator's back. The use of dialect which serves to distance author and reader from the narrator is prominent in both books. Dialect tends to emphasize the idiosyncrasies of the speakers, focussing attention on the peculiarities of external mannerisms and speech. Because it evokes distance dialect is used for comic effect by both Joyce and Faulkner. In scenes of intense, personal anguish, the authors employ a language which transcends the limitations of regionalism.

In each novel the shortsightedness of the narrator manifests itself in a narrow provincialism; dislike of foreigners in general and Jews in particular is expressed. A stingy Irish citizen is enraged by the thought of a Jewish cheapskate, while an American Southerner, who spends most of his day scheming for money, expresses contempt for Jewish financial manipulators. In both *Ulysses* and *The Sound and the Fury* the motif of crucifixion
is prominent. In both novels it suggests victimization, lack of communication, and a failure of love in the twentieth century. Both authors in rendering this negation evoke a sense of an almost unbearable pathos which co-exists with a sense of comic relief. These sections of the novels provide a virtually unique combination of comic relief mingling with an intense, painful realization of injustice, manifest in man's inhumanity to man. In my opinion it is this combined sense of release and the failure of release which is the distinguishing quality of both sections.

I disagree with John Hunt, who says that "in many ways Jason is the most complex character of the novel, and the most difficult to assess." Jason is a totally repressed man who sees life entirely in negative terms. The faults he sees in others are invariably related to qualities he is unable to accept within himself. Once these facts are grasped, he becomes relatively easy to understand. It is not Jason's character that is complex, but the perspective of him that is presented to the reader. It is the combination of involvement with great detachment, of laughter and pain, of release with unrelieved tension that is difficult to assess. The comic treatment of painful events serves to render the complexity of experience. To directly call Jason a liar and a thief would not only lose what Booth calls the "comic delight,"
it would fail to convey the ambivalence of experience; for on the didactic moralistic level Jason is purely negative and unambivalent. The manner in which he is rendered, however, conveys conflicting emotions held in suspension by the reader. Complexity is thus rendered through the comic treatment of a negative character. It prevents the reader from oversimplifying the nature of experience. The temptation to do so is greatest when responding to characters such as Dilsey and Jason, who embody love and hatred in their purest forms.

Although Wayne Booth's comments on the Jason section are quite perceptive, he errs in stating that "we find ourselves viewing everything in a light contrary to that thrown by Jason's own beclouded soul." Despite the radical distortion of his viewpoint there is some validity in Jason's perspective. He is a negative reflector seeing folly and vice in everyone except himself. Everything he sees is reduced to the least common denominator. This is evident in the telegram Jason sends to Caddy (collect, naturally). He instructs the telegraph operator to forward the following message to her.

"All well. Q. writing today."
"Q?" the operator says.
"Yes," I says, "Q. Cant you spell Q?" (210)

The telegram is not, as one of Jason's fellow speculators guesses, a code message to buy stock. It is instead an indication of the way in which Jason reduces and abstracts
life. To envision his niece as "Q" is not to see her at all. The reductive tendency is a manifestation of consciousness dominated by hatred. The complex nature of experience is not recognized by Jason who sees life in terms of extremes, visualizing himself as righteous and his enemies as evil. In categorizing people he avoids confronting the ambivalence and ambiguousness of existence. I believe that Faulkner is suggesting that it is an innate characteristic of hatred to oversimplify.

Jason refers to both Caddy and her daughter as "bitches." Though reductive in both instances, the term seems less distorted when applied to Miss Quentin than to Caddy. The more affirmative a character seems to be on the basis of the previous renderings of Benjy and Quentin, the more distorted are Jason's perceptions. His view of Caddy is seen by the reader as a grotesque parody of the truth. But his viewpoint of characters who have previously been rendered as life denying has some validity. The more negative a character appears, the more accurate are Jason's comments, since he sees all things negatively. I cite as illustrations of Jason's insight three passages in which he converses with his mother.

"I know I'm just a trouble and a burden to you," she says, crying on the pillow.
"I ought to know it," I says. "You've been telling me that for thirty years. Even Ben ought to know it now." (199)
"I don't mean to worry you," she says.
"I'm glad to hear that," I says. "I wasn't sure. I thought I might have been mistaken." (254)

"I have to humor them," Mrs. Compson said. "I have to depend upon them so completely. It's not as if I were strong. I wish I were. I wish I could do all the housework myself. I could at least take that much off your shoulders."
"And a fine pigsty we'd live in, too," Jason said. "Hurry up, Dilsey," he shouted. (295)

In these conversations, Jason comments incisively on his mother's self-pity, her demanding nature, and her total incompetence. It is ironic that Mrs. Compson should hear bitterly accurate remarks about herself from her favorite son. It is also a poignant irony that she bestows affection upon the only one of her children incapable of responding positively to it.

There is often an element of truth in Jason's words which he, himself, is not aware of. In the following passage Jason, having failed to catch his niece and the man with the red tie, imagines himself talking to Dilsey: "and I says You're a nigger. You're lucky, do you know it? I says I'll swap with you any day because it takes a white man not to have anymore sense than to worry about what a little slut of a girl does" (260). One of the truths that emerges from The Sound and the Fury is that the blacks are lucky in the sense that they are less cut off from their own emotional roots than the "civilized" whites. Comedy results from the author and reader's shared knowledge that these words of Jason express a profundity that utterly eludes him. In the
futile pursuit after his niece Jason says to himself "It's a good thing the Lord did something for this country; the folks that live on it never have" (256). Jason's words are reminiscent of one of the central insights rendered in *Go Down Moses*. In a passage from Part Four of "The Bear" Isaac McCaslin muses about "this land this South for which He had done so much with woods for game and streams for fish and deep rich soil for seed and lush springs to sprout it and long summers to mature it and serene falls to harvest it and short mild winters for men and animals..."¹ Ike's impression of America is that the divinity has done so much for the land and man has done so little. In comic and negative terms Jason expresses this same insight.

Thus Booth's statement that the reader sees "everything in a light contrary to that thrown by Jason's own beclouded soul"² must be modified. Jason's perspective, like that of all reflectors in Faulkner's works, contains both validity and distortion. The latter factor in the Jason section is predominant, but not all inclusive. His section presents some valid insights within a radically distorted angle of vision. In most, but not all instances, his viewpoint is seen as the opposite of the truth.

As we have seen the faults that Jason attributes to others are often manifest within himself. I have already cited his condemnation of Miss Quentin as a liar and a forger as one example of his projection of his own short-
comings into a scapegoat figure. He sees Benjy as being a "sideshow" and a "hog for punishment" (270). Yet it is Jason who makes a spectacle of himself, grabbing his niece in front of a group of spectators and charging around the countryside after her; and it is Jason who manifests self-destructiveness, alienating his sister, his niece and his boss when it is not in his own best interests to do so.

Jason's contempt for Benjy can be partially explained in terms of the former's selfish and utilitarian nature. His brother can be of no use to him and is therefore an encumbrance to be gotten rid of as soon as possible. Being concerned with external appearances, Jason is disturbed by what other people might think about the idiot-child. But I suggest that the most basic reason for Jason's hostility is that his brother presents an image of freakishness and impotence which reflects Jason's deepest unacknowledged fears about himself. It is hinted in Section One, though never made explicit, that Jason leaves the gate open and is thus indirectly responsible for the gelding of his brother.

How did he get out, Father said. Did you leave the gate unlatched when you came in, Jason.
Of course not, Jason said . . . . Do you think I wanted anything like this to happen. This family is bad enough, God knows . . . . I reckon you'll send him to Jackson, now (71)

Jason is preoccupied with his brother's castration, referring to him as "the Great American Gelding" (280) and suggesting he be sent to the cavalry, since "they use geldings in the cavalry" (214). I suggest that Jason's jokes about impotence
reflect an underlying insecurity about his own masculinity. His boast to Lorraine about his own potency rings rather hollow. Jason says, "if I was to get married you'd go up like a balloon and you know it and she says I want you to be happy to have a family of your own not to slave your life away for us. But I'll be gone soon and then you can take a wife . . ." (263-264). Duncan Aswell suggests that some of the pronouns in Jason's section are "delightfully ambiguous" reflecting the confusion in his mind. I cite the above quotation as a prime example. The association of Lorraine with his mother may help to explain Jason's repression and his inability to have natural relationships with women. Mrs. Compson is the only person toward whom Jason manifests anything resembling affection, perhaps because she is most like himself. He thinks of her both as an "old fool" and a "good woman." At times Jason appears not to have outgrown the child's relationship to his mother. When Mrs. Compson says that Quentin was the only person who could have helped Caddy, Jason jealously replies "Too bad it wasn't me instead of him. You'd be a lot better off" (278). The suggestions of an unhealthy attachment to his mother are no more than a few scattered hints in *The Sound and the Fury*. But it does seem clear that Jason's sardonic jokes about the impotence of his brother reflect an inability to acknowledge his fear about himself.

Jason projects his own traits into casual acquaint-
ances as well as members of the family. He thinks of Earl as being hard to get along with and an extremely poor businessman, saying "I reckon he thinks they'd get him on the usury law if he netted more than eight percent" (246). But it is Jason who can get along with no one, and who proves to be a poor businessman, despite his image of himself as shrewd and practical. On the day his section is rendered he loses two hundred dollars speculating on cotton (260). The most astonishing example of Jason's projecting his own faults into the character of others occurs in the following exchange with Uncle Job:

Old man Job came up with the wagon. After a while he got through wrapping the lines around the whip socket.
"Well," I says, "Was it a good show?"
"I aint been yit," he says. "But I kin be arrested in dat tent tonight, dough."
"Like hell you haven't," I says. "You've been away from here since three o'clock. Mr. Earl was just back here looking for you." (266-267)

It is Jason who has been absent on his employer's time in the futile pursuit of his niece.

The minor characters in Part Three, such as Earl and Job, serve as norms against whom Jason is implicitly contrasted. Earl's reasonability and even temper are juxtaposed against Jason's irrational fury. The slow reliable pace of the patient Job contrasts sharply to the frenetic quality of Jason's existence. The old black man is by far the better employee of the two. Despite this fact, Jason complains about the poor quality of black labor, asserting
that he'd like to see the Blacks get so far ahead that he couldn't "find one south of Louisville with a bloodhound" (248). His acerbic wit contrasts to the good-naturedness of Job's humor. After being called a fool by Jason, the old man replies, "Well . . . I dont spute dat neither. Ef dat uz a crime, all chain-gangs wouldn't be black" (249). There is an acceptance of his own human weakness implicit in this statement by Job. Jason's wit does not extend to himself; it consists entirely of acidulous and depreciatory comments upon the nature of others.

In the verbal exchanges between the two, it is Job who wins the battle of wits, literally getting the last word. His final comment in the novel is as follows:

"You's too smart fer me. Aint a man in dis town kin keep up wid you fer smartness. You fools a man whut so smart he cant even keep up wid hisself," he says, getting in the wagon and unwrapping the reins.

"Who's that?" I says.
"Dat's Mr. Jason Compson," he says. "Git up dar, Dan!"

Job's comment suggests that Jason ultimately defeats his own purposes. All his scheming, his manipulations, his frenetic efforts benefit no one, including himself. In this sense they signify nothing. Volpe has observed that Jason's existence is one frantic dash of activity leading nowhere. He states that:

we see a man scurrying frantically around town all day long, searching for a blank check, rushing to the telegraph office, hurrying home to get his mother's signature on Caddy's check, rushing back
to town to deposit the money, then dashing back home to get cash from his strong box to put into the market, and getting sidetracked into chasing his niece around the countryside. The grande finale of all this furious activity is that Jason loses money on the market and the next day loses not only his savings but also the source of his long-standing illicit income when Quentin runs away.  

Jason's efforts result only in uselessly expending his own energy and in alienating others. He connives so constantly that he puts all of his acquaintances on guard against him, including the sheriff. This is counter productive for Jason, contributing to his own defeat.

Jason's self-destructiveness is evident in the woods when he is pursuing his niece. Being in an uncomfortable situation, he seems to derive a negative satisfaction from visualizing himself being even worse off. Noticing that he is touching poison oak, he leaves his hand on it.

I had gotten beggar lice and twigs and stuff all over me, inside my clothes and shoes and all, and then I happened to look around and I had my hand right on a bunch of poison oak. The only thing I couldn't understand was why it was just poison oak and not a snake or something. So I didn't even bother to move it.  

I believe that Jason's scheming is inherently self-destructive. It is manifest in his compulsive gambling on the stock market. Although he loses more money in one day than he earns at the store in a month, he is as anxious as ever to try again. In those famous last words of the compulsive gambler he says, "I just want an even chance to get my money back" (280). In an essay entitled "Dostoyevsky
and Parricide" Freud suggested that the compulsive gambler is self-destructive, unconsciously wishing to abase and humiliate himself. His conclusion is consistent with the portrayal in *The Gambler* by Dostoyevsky, who was something of an expert on the subject of compulsive gambling. If this assumption is correct, the underlying purpose of the gambler's scheming is not the quick financial gain he consciously strives for, but self-defeat and punishment. In my opinion, Faulkner's treatment of Jason supports this assertion by Freud. In ignoring the fluctuation of the stock market, in making it obvious to the whole town that he is short-changing his niece, and in virtually driving her away from his house, Jason helps to bring about his own frustration and failure.

Job's comment that Jason is so smart that he succeeds in fooling himself is thus one of the most significant insights of Part Three. It is illustrative of the Faulknerian technique of rendering a major insight through a relatively minor reflector. Another notable example is the statement of the nameless black gardener in *Light in August* that Joe Christmas does not know who he is and never will be able to find out. In rendering insights through an anonymous or near anonymous background figure Faulkner conveys the impression of a proverbial folk wisdom. It is as if the answers come from the very soil which the major characters in the novels are cut off from.
In his pursuit of his niece it becomes clear that Jason is literally not at home on the land. His discomfort is great when he has to "cross a plowed field . . . with every step like somebody was walking behind me, hitting me on the head with a club" (257). He is pursuing a sterile path of hatred across a plowed and fertile field, totally alienated from the soil beneath his feet. The focal point of his hatred is the promiscuity of his sister and niece. Yet there is no character in *The Sound and the Fury* who is as preoccupied with thoughts of sex as Jason. He constantly makes snide references to the fact that his sister has had an illegitimate child. Supposedly his concern stems from the loss of a business opportunity in the bank of Sidney Herbert Head. I suggest that a deeper reason for Jason's hostility is his own sexual repression and underlying frustration. His only sexual relationship is on a commercial basis with a prostitute named Lorraine. After reading a letter from her, Jason tears it up and throws it in the spittoon. The gesture reflects his distrust and contempt for women. He is apparently incapable both of intimate and casual relationships with them. He does not smoke, drink, or, aside from occasional trips to a Memphis whore house, make love. The abstemious Jason finds an outlet for his own frustrations and hostility in his promiscuous sister. Caddy is capable both of being casual about sex and of making money. Jason, desiring both, one unconsciously and the other very con-
sciously, can achieve neither.

The partially repressed Quentin can pose the question "Why couldn't it have been me and not her who is unvirgin" (97). Jason is so totally repressed that his sexual feelings are never expressed consciously. I believe it is for this reason that the incestuous feelings so prominent in Quentin's section are only hinted at in Jason's monologue. The following passages express the thoughts of Quentin and Jason respectively:

I have committed incest I said Father it was I it was not Dalton Ames (98-99)

I say it'd be bad enough if it was mine; I'd at least be sure it was a bastard to begin with, and now even the Lord doesn't know that for certain probably. (247)

Because he is more self-aware, Quentin is able to express his thoughts directly. Jason's desires are disguised and almost concealed by his sardonic wit.

By 1928, the focus of Jason's repressed sexual desires has shifted from Caddy to her daughter. He is obsessed with his niece's sexuality. Nearly all of his references to Miss Quentin are concerned with her promiscuity. But it is Jason who is promiscuous in thought. His desires are characteristically externalized, being projected onto her. In the opening pages of his monologue, Jason reveals a barely suppressed desire to rape his niece. He says, "I dragged her into the diningroom. Her kimono came unfastened, flapping about her, damn near naked" (202). He remarks to her, "You
dont look all the way naked . . . even if that stuff on your face does hide more of you than anything else you've got on" (205). When he sees her with the showman later in the day Jason thinks to himself: "I'll be damned if they dont dress like they were trying to make every man they passed on the street want to reach out and clap his hand on it" (249). Jason gives himself away in referring to his niece as a "little whore," since the only sexual relationship that he has is with a whore. When he tells his mother that he knows of a good place for Miss Quentin "and the name of it's not Milk street and Honey avenue either" (240), Jason appears to be referring to the Memphis whore house that he visits. In the lines that conclude his monologue Jason remarks that once he's got what he wants "they can bring all Beale Street and all bedlam in here" (280), referring to his niece and his idiot brother respectively. Beale Street is the location of the red light district in Memphis where Lorraine presumably works. In one passage he seems to associate Lorraine with his niece, jumping suddenly from thoughts of the former to the latter.

I says I'll buy you enough beer to take a bath in if you want it because I've got every respect for a good honest whore because with Mother's health and the position I try to uphold to have her with no more respect for what I try to do for her than to make her name and my name and my Mother's name a byword in the town. (251)

There is a parallel between the interrelationship of Jason, Miss Quentin and the man with the red tie to that of
Quentin, Caddy and Dalton Ames. Each of the characters in Part Three is a lesser figure. The human relationships in the earlier triangle seem vital and significant compared to the later one. In both instances a young woman disappears from the Compson household, causing anguish to one of the brothers, though for different reasons. Both Quentin and Jason take upon themselves the role of upholder of the family honor. This resemblance has been noted by Duncan Aswell, who makes the following highly perceptive comment:

Jason resembles Quentin not only in his obsessive concern with his relative's promiscuity, but in his extravagant view of the seriousness of the crimes he must punish and the lengths he must go to avenge himself. Quentin visualizes an eternity of suffering with Caddy as an answer to the meaninglessness and impermanence to which he and she are doomed. Jason's pursuit of his niece is a ludicrous parody of Quentin's teleological concern.  

Jason's statements, "let her go to hell" (256) and "I'll make him think that damn red tie is the latch string to hell if he thinks he can run the woods with my niece" (258–259), are cited by Aswell as manifestations of this parallel and contrast. If Quentin can correctly be regarded as a kind of mock-avenger in his encounter with Dalton Ames, then Jason must be seen as a parody of a parody.

The obsessions of both brothers reflect their lack of fulfillment which is most evident in relation to sex. Both have a sense of flesh revulsion, comparing their female relative's sexual conduct to that of "niggers" (111, 199). Quentin associates sex with his and Caddy's immersion in the
hog wallow. Jason's flesh revulsion is evident when he says "I'm afraid all the time I'll run into them right in the middle of the street or under a wagon on the square, like a couple of dogs" (257). This is consistent with his observation that Miss Quentin's eyes are "hard as a fice dog's" (205) and his repeated reference to Caddy and Miss Quentin as "bitches." Sex is perceived as being degraded and animalistic by Jason. But whereas Quentin's frustration manifests itself in occasional violent outbreaks, Jason's consciousness is in a perpetual state of violence. Sadism is expressed in Jason's belief that the best way to handle a woman is to bust her on the jaw (211) and in his unsuccessful attempt to whip his niece with his belt (203). Being unable to give or receive affection, Jason can communicate only through physical and verbal violence.

Although he does lay his hands on Miss Quentin twice in Part Three and unsuccessfully attempts to attack a little old man in the final section of the novel, Jason's violence is manifest most frequently through the taunt. It is his only consistent means of communication and it is an entirely negative one. By irritating people Jason is able to assert himself. Being unable to love he seeks to provoke hostility, seeming to prefer it to indifference. By this means Jason precludes human involvement, assuring himself that people are insignificant anyway and worthy only of contempt; he can thus dismiss the absence of their friendship and esteem as
unimportant. Nietzsche once observed that "Cynicism is the only form in which base souls approach what is called honesty." His insight applies well to Jason. Renunciation is one method of coping with the difficulties of existence. As manifest in Jason's turbulent and frustrated consciousness it is an unsatisfactory one.

The quibble is a recurrent motif throughout Jason's section of the novel. It is a petty verbal quarrel that evades the underlying concern and hence fails to bring release. It is reflected in the unsoothing, staccato-like rhythm of Jason's prose, which is a manifestation of his estrangement from others as well as from the basic rhythms of life. His characteristic stance is to take a position directly opposite to that of his acquaintances. When a black gas station attendant says the weather "gwine fair off," Jason snarls "Fair off, hell... It'll be raining like hell by twelve oclock" (320). It is true that there is stormy weather ahead for Jason. One of the more graphic and amusing instances of Jason's pointless perversity is his position against the New York Yankees. It is to be remembered that the Yankees of 1927 are regarded by many as having been the greatest baseball team of all time. Jason's opinion of them is expressed in the following lines:

"Well," Mac says, "I reckon you've got your money on the Yankees this year."
"What for?" I says.
"The Pennant," he says. "Not anything in the League can beat them."
"Like hell there's not," I says. "They're
shot," I says. "You think a team can be that lucky forever?"

"I don't call it luck," Mac says.

"I wouldn't bet on any team that fellow Ruth played on," I says. "Even if I knew it was going to win."

"Yes?" Mac says.

"I can name you a dozen men in either League who're more valuable than he is," I says.

"What have you got against Ruth?" Mac says.

"Nothing," I says. "I haven't got anything against him. I don't even like to look at his picture." 92

The level of perception is so intense in *The Sound and the Fury* that a seemingly insignificant remark in a minor episode can reflect a major insight. The final two lines of the passage cited above can be seen as summing up the essence of Jason. He has nothing against Babe Ruth, and yet he can't stand him. He must assert that the baseball player is insignificant. It becomes apparent throughout his section that Jason is opposed to everyone and everything. He expresses aversion toward forgers, foreigners, city Jews, country laborers, Blacks, women, pigeons, sparrows, and self-righteous know-it-alls. 93 He further asserts that "If there's one thing gets under my skin, it's a damn hypocrite. A man that thinks anything he don't understand all about must be crooked . . ." (246). In these lines Jason unwittingly provides an incisive comment on himself. He understands virtually nothing and is suspicious about everything. The hypocrite that really gets under his skin is Jason himself, a man who can one minute mock the Compson claims of gentility and the next instant be self-righteous about the despoiling
of the family name. Volpe states correctly that "Bitterness and hate dominate Jason's personality. Despite his belief that his bitterness has its source in Caddy's failure, it becomes apparent that Jason is actually keeping alive his bitterness to justify his own failure." 94

Jason's hatred is a reflection of his deeply rooted, unacknowledged sense of inferiority. Nietzsche's comment on hatred is incisive. He notes that "One does not hate as long as one disesteems, but only when one esteems equal or superior." 95 Lacking the insight to confront the source of the problem, Jason is doomed to a superficial existence, full of frustration and failure. Unable to acknowledge self-destructive impulses, he can never cope with them. Although he likes to think of himself as an independent man, Jason is able to define himself only by negating the views of others. This reflects complete dependency on his part, since he mechanically takes a contrary position to everyone else. He is like the contrary child who will say "down" if his parents say "up," "black" if they say "white." His burning of the free passes that Luster desires illustrates his childish spitefulness and petty perversity. In its destructiveness, its pointlessness and its frustration of others the incident is characteristic of him.

The fire that is a thing of beauty for Benjy and a means of punishment and desired purification for Quentin becomes an instrument of destruction for Jason. It may be
regarded as the external manifestation of his uncontrollable anger. In the Appendix Faulkner speaks of "Jason's rage, the red unbearable fury" (20). It is "unbearable" because the energy finds no creative outlet. Jason's burning of the passes reduces them to ashes but does not serve to abate his rage. On the contrary, each indulgence of his self-righteousness adds fuel to his fury, increasing his alienation from others and leading to further frustration. Actions, such as the burning of the passes, belie Jason's image of himself as a man of common sense. His uncontrollable passion is akin to madness. Duncan Aswell has noted the irony of Faulkner's reference to Jason as "the first sane Compson since before Culloden" (16). He observes that Jason, when chasing his niece, sees himself "without a hat looking like I was crazy too" (250). Aswell makes the following comment on this passage:

The point of course is that he is acting as if he were crazy, not just appearing to be so. He has the madness in his blood no less than Quentin, and all of his clever awareness of his own and other people's follies and incapacities is no help to him in checking his irrationality.  

Aswell is correct in noting that Jason is acting like a madman, but errs in stating that Jason is aware of his own "follies and incapacities." It is Jason's inability to confront his own deepest fears that is the crux of his problem. From this failure stems his projection of his faults into others and the necessity of defining himself externally as the opposite of other people. Jason is never able to admit
to himself that he is worried about the possibility of having inherited the madness of his family. He is close to a recognition at one point, saying to himself, "only if I'm crazy too God knows what I'll do about it" (250). But Jason never pauses to reflect on the implications of this statement, which becomes merely another instance of Jason defining himself more accurately than he consciously knows.

His characteristic method of disguising his fear of madness is by making sardonic jokes about it. This is illustrated in the following passage:

He's going to keep on running up and down that fence and bellowing everytime they come in sight until first thing I know they're going to begin charging me golf dues, then Mother and Dilsey'll have to get a couple of china door knobs and a walking stick and work it out, unless I play at night with a lantern. Then they'd send us all to Jackson, maybe. God knows, they'd hold Old Home week when that happened. (205)

It is revealing to note that Jason imagines himself as well as the other Compsons being sent to the insane asylum in Jackson. Though he tries to distance himself from his family Jason is "driven by the same compulsions and forced to act out the same obsessions as his unfortunate brothers." 97 All three brothers are isolated; none achieve adult relationships. Although the vulgar and materialistic Jason is from one angle of vision the opposite of the idealistic Quentin, he shares with his older brother a self-preoccupation and an inflexibility of outlook that prevents him from accepting life. His inflexibility is indicated in the first line of
his monologue "Once a bitch always a bitch," which indicates his belief that people never change or develop. In fact, it is Jason who is unable to grow or develop, since he never questions the validity of his own opinions. Like Quentin, he is unable to achieve fulfilled sexual relationships with women. Both brothers are self-destructive, one committing suicide, the other contributing greatly to his own unfulfilled life.

As a reflector of Quentin, Jason may best be regarded as a grim parody. This is evident, not only in their roles as upholders of the family honor, but in their concern with time. Quentin is born too late in the sense that he is bewildered by the fragmentation and multiplicity of modern existence and longs for the security of an age of absolutes. Whereas Jason is minutes too late to catch his niece in the woods and returns too late to avoid disaster in the stock market. Swiggart observes that Jason's "practical obsession with the passage of time is a virtual parody of Quentin's more philosophical concern." Quentin's agonized denial of the existence of Christ is paralleled by Jason's sardonic musing about the man who spent five thousand dollars a year in the hope of achieving salvation. He says,"I often think how mad he'll be if he was to die and find out there's not any heaven, when he thinks about that five thousand a year. Like I say, he'd better go on and die now and save the money" (212). Whereas Quentin is unable to uphold the tradition of his past, Jason renounces the past entirely, cutting himself off from his own sources.
There is a certain pleasure in renunciation. It allows us to take a position of ironic distance from potentially troubling problems. One means of responding to the difficulties involved in communicating with other people is to assure ourselves that they are unimportant and that the relationships are not worth struggling for. The pleasure of renunciation is the relief one feels in giving up a strenuous effort, whether it be to sustain a relationship, a difficult job, a doctoral thesis, or whatever. Ultimately, it is a negative satisfaction, since it involves surrender of the battle and withdrawal, rather than commitment. This feeling is manifest both within Jason's own character and in the attitude of the reader toward him. The element of sympathy that one has for him upon realizing that he is more unhappy than Benjy and more foolish than the quixotic Quentin is mitigated by his callousness, his self-righteousness, and his constant infliction of pain upon others.

Jason's detachment from humanity is paralleled by the ironic distance established between the reader and himself. Just as Jason's withdrawal spares him from suffering for other human beings, so the reader is freed from the anguish of intense involvement manifest in the close identification with Benjy and with Quentin. Jason seems to derive pleasure from seeing other people humiliated. It is my opinion that a similar desire to see Jason humiliated is aroused in the reader. I agree with Lawrance Thompson, who
states that "We want, and are eventually given, a chance to see Jason rewarded with some splendidly ironic form of poetic justice. It occurs when he is 'fleeced' by Caddy's daughter Quentin ..."\(^9\)

Thompson goes on to say that "the mockeries implicit in Faulkner's indirect uses of the classical Jason myth are not too subtle."\(^{10}\) Perhaps not, but there is resonance enough to enrich the meaning of the novel. In Euripides' *Medea* Jason represents the utilitarian values of a newly emergent class of people aspiring for wealth and power. After treating Medea callously he is robbed of his treasure (his children) by her. He is thwarted in his desire for revenge when she flees via a magic chariot. Miss Quentin's escape from a locked room is less magical as she descends via a pear tree to a car. There was also a well-known order, the Order of the Golden Fleece, flourishing in the fourteenth century which Faulkner may have been familiar with. He is certainly aware that their chroniclers were referred to as King-at-Arms, as he refers to the narrator of the Appendix as a "sort of Garter King-at-Arms."\(^{101}\) In discussing the Order of the Golden Fleece, Huizinga quotes "La Ballade de Fougeres," which he cites and translates as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
A \text{ Dieu et aux gens detestable} \\
\text{Est menterie et trahison,} \\
\text{Pour ce n'est poin mis à la table} \\
\text{Des preux l'image de Jason,} \\
\text{Qui pour emporter la toison} \\
\text{De Colcos se veult parjurer.} \\
\text{Larrecin ne se peut celer.}
\end{align*}
\]
To God and to men detestable Is lying and treason, For this reason the image of Jason Is not placed in the gallery of worthies, Who, to carry off the fleece Of Colchos, was willing to commit perjury. Larceny cannot remain hidden.\textsuperscript{102}

The effect of Part Three then is to render negation through the eyes of a negative reflector. Jason's response to the complexities of experience is to blind himself to their existence. Quentin has been overwhelmed by a sense of the multiplicity of perspectives that relativizes experience. He is unable to accept existence on these terms, being overwhelmed by what I have referred to in Chapter One as "the basic human dilemma." Jason evades the difficulties and uncertainties of this dilemma by blinding himself to the validity of any viewpoint except his own. Having dramatized the danger of confronting the dilemma in Section Two, Faulkner shows the even greater dangers of avoiding the problem in his third section of the novel. The horrifying consequences of lack of self-awareness are portrayed.

Humor can reflect a deep level of awareness of human nature. It can be a manifestation of human compassion based on sympathetic understanding. But Jason's macabre and deprecatory sense of humor, which is dominant in his monologue, expresses his alienation and distance from mankind. Essentially Jason makes life into a black joke, perceiving his fellow human beings as grotesque caricatures. This response is a defense mechanism to preclude the pain
inevitable in human involvement; but it dooms Jason to a life of withdrawal and isolation, establishing ironic distance between himself and experience. His humor is thus an expression of negation rather than of affirmation. Whitehead has said that "Irony . . . signifies the state of mind of people or of an age that has lost faith. They conceal their loss, or even flaunt it with laughter." Melville similarly noted that irony was the devil's humor since it ultimately reflected self-mockery.

Throughout the Jason section the reader confronts an ironic perspective in which life is viewed as a grim mockery of what it should be. This is manifest both in Jason's distorted attitude toward experience and in the portrayal of him that emerges for the reader as the antithesis of affirmative human values. The avoidance of the ironic viewpoint is a refusal to confront the negative aspects of life. Their confrontation is the central function of Part Three. But to make the ironic vision the only perspective is to reduce and degrade human existence, as Jason does. In avoiding involvement and seeing only grotesqueness in other people, Jason himself is grotesque.

Although Section Three is initially a relief from the introspection of Quentin, the negative humor soon begins to wear thin, indicating the hollowness of the pleasure of renunciation. The monologue, reflecting Jason's incessantly
tormenting and tormented consciousness, proves to be even more constricting than Quentin's. It is symbolically appropriate that his section ends with the same statement that begins Part Three, since the narrow, vicious circle becomes a metaphor of Jason's life. The final words of his monologue confirm the fact that his is a closed consciousness incapable of assimilating experience and gaining wisdom from it. Having lost a large sum of money on April 6, he will undoubtedly continue to do so in the future, having learned absolutely nothing. The concluding sentences express an almost apocalyptic sense of renunciation of the pleasures of the bed, of the table, and of his entire heritage. This ultimate denial of life fittingly terminates the section of a death-oriented, negative reflector.

Like I say once a bitch always a bitch. And just let me have twenty-four hours without any damn New York jew to advise me what it's going to do. I don't want to make a killing; save that to suck in the smart gambler with. I just want an even chance to get my money back. And once I've done that they can bring all Beale Street and all bedlam in here and two of them can sleep in my bed and another one can have my place at the table too. (280)

Having depicted the vicious circle of Jason's life, Faulkner is now ready to proceed to the cosmic perspective of Part Four that concludes The Sound and the Fury.
CHAPTER 5

EACH IN ITS ORDERED PLACE
I have suggested in my introductory chapter that a
Faulknerian novel is a drama of consciousness in which the
author and reader attempt to understand as fully as possible
the complex and shifting nature of experience. "The finished
work becomes, in a sense, the record of a process, the record
of the artist's struggle with his materials." 1 The aim of
the struggle is to find meaning in a universe where each
individual perceives truth from his own separate angle of
vision. The difficulty of the struggle is compounded by the
fact that both the inner consciousness and the external
reality are in a constant state of flux, being subject to
time and change. In the final section of The Sound and the
Fury the author confronts the problem of what meaning, if
any, can be found in the face of these difficulties.

It is my contention that the question of what signifi-
cance can be made of human experience is posed in the initial
passage of Part Four which echoes the opening lines of the
Bible. In order to support this contention I would like to
cite the Biblical passage, the first part of Section Four,
and the beginning of "The Old People" which is also remini-
scent of Genesis 1.

1 In the beginning God created the heaven
and the earth.
2 And the earth was without form, and void;
and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And
the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
3 And God said, Let there be light: and
there was light.
4 And God saw the light, that it was good:
and God divided the light from the darkness.
5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.  

At first there was nothing. There was the faint, cold steady rain, the gray and constant light of the late November dawn, with the voices of the hounds converging somewhere in it and toward them. Then Sam Fathers, standing just behind the boy as he had been standing when the boy shot his first running rabbit with his first gun and almost with the first load it ever carried, touched his shoulder, and he began to shake, not with any cold. Then the buck was there. He did not come into sight; he was just there, looking not like a ghost but as if all of light were condensed in him and he were the source of it, not only moving in it but disseminating it, already running, seen first as you always see the deer, in that split second after he has already seen you, already slanting away in that first soaring bound, the antlers even in that dim light looking like a small rocking-chair balanced on his head.  

The day dawned bleak and chill, a moving wall of grey light out of the northeast which, instead of dissolving into moisture, seemed to disintegrate into minute and venemous particles, like dust that, when Dilsey opened the door of the cabin and emerged, needled laterally into her flesh, precipitating not so much a moisture as a substance partaking of the quality of thin, not quite congealed oil. (281)  

The opening passage of "The Old People" renders the movement from chaos to order, from darkness to light. The first sentence functions both as a naturalistic description of the moment before the dawning of the light and as an echo of primeval chaos. Beginning in murky darkness, the picture clarifies into light with the emergence of the deer. It is described in terms which suggest that the deer is an ultimate embodiment of the life force, moving in light and giving off radiance. Its movement combines both motion and stillness, blending speed with tranquility. The harmonious reconcilia-
tion of these forces in one motion is a recurrent Faulknerian metaphor of the movement of life itself. It is manifest in Lena Grove, Sam Fathers, Old Ben the Bear, and in the word "Yoknapatawpha" which according to Faulkner means "water runs slow through flat land." 

When Isaac McCaslin follows Sam Fathers' instruction to "shoot quick and slow," he succeeds in embodying the life-force. This is symbolized by his absorbing the blood of the slain deer. It is a moment of rebirth for Isaac, a boy who proves himself worthy of being a man. His birth as a man corresponds to the beginning of the day manifest in the dawning of the light. The entire passage suggests that the forces of light and life manifest in the beauty and order of creation are still present. They are manifest within both nature and man.

The initial passage of Part Four of *The Sound and the Fury* also describes a dawning and an emergence. But the dawn does not bring transformation from darkness to light. Rather, it seems to be a continuation of the murkiness, the bleakness and the chill of the previous night. The "grey light" which dissolves into radiance in "The Old People" here "seemed to disintegrate into minute and venomous particles like dust" (281). This suggests not life and rebirth, but death. The cumulative effect of the words "disintegrate", "venomous," meaning "matter fatal or injurious to life" with a possible suggestion of the serpent
in the Garden of Eden, and "dust" which might suggest "dust unto dust" is powerful. The effect is heightened by the contrast of the desired condition with the grim reality. This is conveyed through the lines "which, instead of dissolving into moisture, seemed to disintegrate . . . " and "needled laterally into her flesh, precipitating not so much a moisture as a substance" (281). It appears as if the worst possibilities are to be realized. There is an absence of sunlight and life-giving rain blessing the earth. The change from night to day seems to make darkness visible, instead of being an ordering of life and light. The dawn of this Easter morning, unlike the late November one described in "The Old People" does not bring with it an immediate sense of re-creation.

The sense of initial disappointment is expressed by Dilsey who emerges from her cabin "with her myriad and sunken face lifted to the weather" (281), then turns and re-enters it, closing the door behind her. In "The Old People" it is the deer that emerges with its antlers "looking like a small rocking-chair balanced on his head." Dilsey is also balanced, as she appears "with a stiff black straw hat perched upon her turban" (281). The sense of emergence is central to both passages. I suggest that it is a Faulknerian metaphor of fulfillment, implying clarification of vision. In "The Old People" and "The Bear" the appearance of the animals is described in terms suggesting the incarnation of vision.6
It seems to me that in *The Sound and the Fury* emergence contrasts to the sense of disappearance which suggests loss of order and meaning. Dilsey's literal appearance from her cabin reflects her emergence into full focus in Section Four of the novel. It also reflects, as Edel has noted, the fact that in the final section of the book the reader "emerges from the inner vision of the three brothers into the light of external day." The Jason section, rendering the most constricted viewpoint of the four that are presented, concludes in the evening, inside Jason's room. Section Four begins outside of the Compson house. The shift in setting reflects the attempt of the author and reader to move toward insight in its cosmic context. The attempt to transcend narrow, personal vision is symbolized by the movement from indoors to outdoors.

Faulkner's dramatic sense is evident in the transition from Part Three to Part Four, as it is in the juxtaposition of all four angles of vision. The beginnings of each of the last three sections provide an initial sense of release from the limitations of the previous one. The lack of intellectualization in Part One is provided in Quentin's monologue. Relief from his introspection is rendered through Jason's sarcastic wit and the emphasis on action in his section. Relief from his narrow and constricting vision is provided by the cosmic perspective of Part Four. Dilsey is first pictured amidst a panoramic view, watching the dawn.
It must be noted, however, that Dilsey's initial appearance is brief, since she immediately goes back inside her cabin. "A moment later she emerged, carrying an open umbrella" (282). Her going to church is described in similar terms. The narrator states, "The cabin door opened and Dilsey emerged, again in the maroon cape and velvet gown, . . . and minus her headcloth now" (303). The initial, brief appearance of Dilsey, followed by her disappearance back into the cabin to get an umbrella, helps to convey, not only her adaptability, but the sense of tentativeness that is established at the beginning of Part Four. The sun does not emerge from behind the clouds with the dawning of the day; yet the possibility of sunshine still exists and does occur later in the morning. The trees have not yet bloomed, but do contain "the fledged leaves that would later be broad and placid" (282). The raucous blue jays, tilting and screaming in the trees, contribute to the picture of an unidealized Spring. They seem insignificant being "whirled up on the blast like gaudy scraps of cloth or paper" (282). Yet they are manifestations of life. Dilsey is described in language suggesting both her age and her continuing vitality. Her "collapsed face" is capable of reflecting "an expression at once fatalistic and of a child's astonished disappointment" (282). Her flesh has been consumed by the ravages of time, leaving a skeleton which is at once "indomitable" and "like a ruin" (282). The color of her
gown is described as being "regal and moribund" (282).

It is as if the elements of life and death co-exist in a state of suspension. The dawn brings, not a resolution, but a prolongation of this condition which is reminiscent of primeval chaos. The weather is neither fair nor foul; rather, it is a gray in-between state that could break either way. Although neither sunlight nor a feeling of rejuvenation have arrived with the dawning of Easter, they have not been completely precluded as possibilities. The opening scene contains elements of life potential as well as a strong sense of death.

The suspension of diverse elements that characterizes the beginning of Part Four can be understood in contrast to the opening lines of "The Old People." In that story the echoes of Genesis imply that the life force manifest in the creation of the earth is as vital as ever. In The Sound and the Fury the echoes are partly ironic, since at first glance the scene appears to bring death rather than life. I suggest that the beginning of Part Four is not so much an anti-creation as a non-creation, containing diverse possibilities. In my opinion, the effect is not to evoke a statement of condition, but to pose the implicit question central to the fourth section: Does the possibility of creative fulfillment still exist in the Twentieth Century? Will Easter in 1928 bring any hope of resurrection or will it be a meaningless movement of calendar time, devoid of spiritual significance?
Faulkner has ended the Jason section which occurs on Good Friday with an overwhelming sense of death. In the opening lines of the section, occurring on Easter Sunday, he asks, in effect, what succeeds this sense of death. He and the reader must now confront the problem of whether love, which gives order and meaning to existence, and is manifest in its purest form in the divine act of creation, can still be achieved in our modern world.

The question is implicitly posed at the beginning of Part Four and is worked out in the remainder of the section. I agree with John V. Hagopian that the concluding chapter of the novel contains a four part division. He suggests that it contains a prologue which brings all the remaining major characters together, serving as a kind of introduction. Hagopian states that the rest of the section is divided into what he terms three "movements." The first one contains Dilsey's procession to the Negro church for the Easter service. The second involves Jason's last frantic dash in pursuit of his niece to Mottson. The final movement focusses on Benjy's trip to the cemetery, his panic when Luster deviates from the accustomed route around the eyeless statue of the Confederate soldier, and his subsequent calming down.

It should be kept in mind that this structural principle is only one valid way of regarding the concluding chapter and is not meant to preclude others. It has been suggested to me that Section Four might be viewed as a series
of encounters including two confrontations between Mrs. Compson and Dilsey, and Jason's inter-action with the sheriff and the little old man. The fact that there are two distinct transitions in Part Four (317,329) might be used to argue for a three-part structure rather than a four-part one. In that case the centers of focus would still be Dilsey, Jason and Benjy respectively. Of these three suggested structural principles I prefer Hagopian's because it seems to reflect the sense of initial suspension and the later movements toward resolution.

I believe the first movement implies that human affirmation is still possible. The answer to the implicit question in the prologue of whether significance and order can still be found in existence is "Yes." The second movement follows Jason in the furious and futile path of ultimate negation. It suggests that fulfillment and meaning are no longer possible for the Compsons. The implied answer in the second movement is "No," at least as far as the Compsons are concerned. The final movement brings the elements of affirmation and negation together in indissoluble suspension. The last movement unifies the novel, not by neatly resolving everything, but by bringing together the diverse elements that comprise life as envisioned by Faulkner in *The Sound and the Fury*.

The first three sections of the novel present three different perspectives of life. Part Four gathers and
contains the multiple perspectives within itself. All the remaining characters are brought together in the Compson house at breakfast time. The greatly reduced cast is itself a symbol of the decline of the Compson household. In this respect it parallels the steady shrinking of the Compson domain, suggesting sparseness and a reduction of human potentiality. The focus of the section shifts to follow the various characters as they go their separate ways; Dilsey predominates in the first movement, being accompanied to church by her daughter, Frony, her grandson, Luster, and by Benjy who becomes in effect her adopted son. In the second movement it is symbolically appropriate that Jason travels alone, since he is incapable of achieving meaningful human relationships. In the final movement the focus is on the condition of Benjy who is driven to town by Luster.

I would like to suggest an approximate correspondence between the three movements of Part Four and the first three sections of *The Sound and the Fury*. It must be emphasized that this is not a neat, nor in my opinion, conscious pattern in which all the diverse elements of the novel are carefully ordered. Such a pattern would work against Faulkner's understanding of life as a complexity which can not be ordered into a consistent whole without extreme distortion. It is important to recall Slatoff's point that "Faulkner is not that consistent or systematic. Different antitheses operate at different times, or several operate simultaneously and
more or less independently." Bearing this caution in mind, I would like to explore the correspondence mentioned above.

The two surviving Compson brothers, each of whom renders his view of life in previous chapters, emerge as focal points in movements of Part Four. *The Sound and the Fury* begins and ends with Benjy. As a center of consciousness he is prominent, receding from central focus in the middle parts of the novel to emerge fully again at its conclusion. The Jason motif, if I may call it that, is first suggested in the Benjy section, when he is encountered by Mrs. Compson and Benjy on their way to the graveyard. When his mother says she would feel safer if Jason would accompany her, he replies that "Father and Quentin can't hurt you" (31). His motif is fully developed in Part Three and brought to its absurd conclusion in the final section of the novel. The correspondence here is straightforward. If Hagopian's supposition of a prologue and three movements is granted, it can not be debated that two of these movements focus on characters who have been the centers of consciousness in previous sections.

The relationship between the Dilsey movement and the Quentin section is not an exact correspondence. It is at this point that the novel can not be made to cohere into a rigid pattern. There is, however, a relationship between these two parts of *The Sound and the Fury*. The question of the possibility of human salvation is posed in Section Two
and answered in the first movement of Section Four. It is within the Quentin section that the struggle for meaning and its loss within the Compson family are dramatized. There is to be no resurrection for Quentin, no spiritual rebirth, no walking on water. The only immersion he finds is not in life, but in jumping into the river to his death. Quentin's suicide is the death of hope for the Compson family, making Caddy's banishment and Benjy's confinement in Jackson inevitable. Dilsey is the only person left within the Compson household capable of sustaining life.

Quentin's rootlessness and loss of identity contrast to Dilsey's security of identity. This is suggested in her statement that "My name been Dilsey since fore I could remember and it be Dilsey when they's long forgot me" (77). Her faith in Christ contrasts to Quentin's disbelief. Whereas Christ is for Dilsey a living presence, for Quentin he is an inanimate doll stuffed with sawdust. As Quentin recedes from focus, unable to believe in anything, Dilsey emerges as the embodiment of faith in herself, in life, and in the divine order of existence. It is Dilsey's faith that enables her to feel the spirit of resurrection that never comes to Quentin; and although Dilsey may be compared and contrasted with any of the other reflectors, the counterpoint of her simple "primitive" faith with modern skepticism and doubt emerges most fully when her perspective and Quentin's are juxtaposed. She manages to endure whereas Quentin dies in adolescence.
In the following exchange Faulkner talks about Quentin, Dilsey, and the question of endurance in *The Sound and the Fury*:

Q. Mr. Faulkner, when you say man has prevailed do you mean individual man has prevailed or group man?

A. Man as a part of life.

Q. In Quentin, for instance, [he] seemed to have the cards stacked against him . . . it seems to be inherently impossible and I wondered . . . .

A. True, and his mother wasn't much good and he had an idiot brother, and yet in that whole family there was Dilsey that held the whole thing together and would continue to hold the whole thing together for no reward, that the will of man to prevail will even take the nether channel of the black man, black race, before it will relinquish, succumb, be defeated.

The relationship between the Quentin section and Dilsey movement may be summarized as follows: Quentin's suicide means death for the whole Compson family; they will not endure. The Compson failure does not preclude the possibility that the human spirit will endure and prevail. This does not become clear in the novel, however, until the Dilsey movement of Part Four. It is symbolized by the spirit of resurrection felt at the Easter Sunday service. Quentin's death and the rejuvenation felt in the Dilsey movement are in this sense antithetical. In the passage quoted above, Faulkner appears to move by association from Quentin's inability to cope with life to Dilsey's success in doing so.

In the opening lines of Section Four Dilsey is pictured amidst a panoramic background, looking up at the
sky. The wide scope of her vision contrasts to the initial images of the first two sections which render Benjy looking through curling flower spaces and Quentin looking at but not through the window of his room at Harvard. "In watching Dilsey emerge out of 'a moving wall of grey light' (281) . . ., the reader himself seems to escape the gray interior world of aristocratic delusion and decay." The sense of relief is conveyed both by the metaphor of emergence and by the change of perspective in Part Four. The various characters are beheld at a distance and amidst the total context of the environment. The panoramic view which begins the final section suggests not only Dilsey's wide ranging vision, but the fact that the author and reader are now attempting to envision experience in its cosmic context. The Biblical echoes, especially prominent in the passages rendering Dilsey, imply that life is to be viewed in terms of its ultimate spiritual significance.

The language used by the narrator in Part Four tends to evoke distance between himself and the observed characters. Whereas the language of the first three sections has been a direct reflection of the character's speech and pre-speech patterns, the formal, almost stilted quality of the narrator's language is in counterpoint to the earthy spontaneity of Dilsey's speech. Distance is rendered because the idiom is so different from any that Dilsey herself would use. The narrator's language is illustrated in the following
The description of Dilsey, while rendering the present moment, conveys the sense of the past, as well. The indications of age and hardship reflect the fact that Dilsey has borne the weight of the Compson family's decline and fall. This is emphasized by the distorted comment of Caroline Compson who says to Dilsey, "You're not the one who has to bear it... You can go away. You don't have to bear the brunt of it day in and day out." (288). Mrs Compson's perspective, like that of her son Jason, generally reflects the opposite of the truth. It is clear that bearing the brunt of the Compson tragedy day in and day out has been Dilsey's fate. It is as if both the pain of the suffering and the courage to bear it are made visible in Dilsey's face and body.
As Thompson has noted, "there is artistic justification for viewing [Dilsey] as being analogous to 'the suffering servant'." Her suffering is similar to that of Christ's sacrifice in affirming that there is something in life worth struggling for. In this respect it contrasts to the sufferings of Quentin and Jason which lead only to negation. The strength and courage to bear pain, when necessary, may also validly be associated with the sense of the tragic. Evelyn Scott astutely comments that Dilsey "recovers for us the spirit of tragedy which the patter of cynicism has often made seem lost."

Faulkner, himself, when asked which character in his writing he considered most tragic, said "It would be between Sutpen and Christmas, Dilsey. I don't think I have a choice. It would probably be between those three." Dilsey's consumed flesh and indomitable skeleton manifest the strength shown in the capacity to bear suffering that is intrinsic to the spirit of tragedy.

The lines I have quoted from the first part of Section Four are thus more than a mere physical description. They carry a weight of meaning that can be comprehended only after the process of reading the first three sections of The Sound and the Fury. The lines convey a distillation of meaning that comes with the clarification of experience. The lucidity of the language of Part Four reflects the process of perception, as it continues to clarify, after the confusion inherent in the first two sections of the novel. The descrip-
tion of Dilsey mingles connotative words appealing to the senses with formal words which convey an impression of an ultimate quality beyond apprehension of the senses. Her face is described as being "myriad and sunken." "Myriad" refers most explicitly to the numerous wrinkles engraved by time on Dilsey's face. But it is one of those words like "terrific" that has a special, almost private meaning for Faulkner. It is frequently associated in his mind with a force of nature. I believe that in the context of the description of Dilsey (281-282) "myriad" suggests the paradox of being aged and timeless. The word evokes, not so much a physical description, as a rendering of an inner quality. The cape she wears has a border of "mangy and anonymous fur," the latter adjective suggesting long use and transformation from its original identity. Her dress of purple silk is pictured as "in color regal and moribund." This phrase might suggest the color purple; more importantly, it implies the majestic and consumed quality of Dilsey. The sense of poise, of suspension, of simultaneous vitality and death is suggested in this line.

It is the skillful combining of concrete, sensuous words with formal ones that enables Faulkner to convey the particularity of a scene and yet transcend direct, objective description. In this instance his description of Dilsey suggests both her external appearance and her ultimate significance. Peter Swiggart feels that Part Four begins with a
naturalistic description and expands to render experience
in its archetypal implications.\textsuperscript{19} I agree with him that
the characters and landscape are seen in their archetypal
significance. But, in my opinion, these implications are
inherent in the opening sentence with its echoes of Genesis
and in the description of Dilsey which immediately follows.
I suggest that Faulkner does not employ the beginning of
Section Four as a mere jumping off point for further expansion;
rather, he establishes the basic mode of perception in the
opening lines, that mode being the comprehension of the
implications of present and previously observed experience
in its archetypal significance.

The angle of vision through which experience is to be
observed is also established in the opening lines of Part
Four. Swiggart notes that the "artificial rhetoric by which
Dilsey and other characters are described is comparable to
the filtering of past events through a narrator's conscious­
ness."\textsuperscript{20} I believe this observation is accurate, although I
prefer the term "formal" to "artificial" rhetoric. Swiggart
goes on to say that "The language of Dilsey's section
suggests the point of view of a reader who has struggled
long and arduously with \textit{The Sound and the Fury}, and who now
recognizes beneath the 'cluttered obscurity' an extraordinary
clarity of action and theme."\textsuperscript{21} Having immersed himself
within the parallel and contrasting perspectives of the
three Compson brothers, the author attempts to stand back
and evaluate the implications of the observed experience. The narrative consciousness is that of a person who, having striven to understand experience by being intensely involved in it, now seeks the balance of healthy critical detachment.

I believe that this distancing reflects Faulkner's attempt to cope with the "basic human dilemma" which is the inevitable distortion of all individual perspectives. In order to comprehend the nature of experience one must transcend analysis, achieving intuitive knowledge which stems from sympathetic identification. Slatoff correctly states that in Faulkner's view "comprehension comes not from disinterested detachment but from involvement, empathy, identity." But involvement itself contains an element of distortion. It can blind one to aspects of truth which are self-evident to a detached observer. Faulkner's awareness of this fact is manifest in his inclusion of relatively external reflectors. Jason's consciousness, for example, is rendered through his own viewpoint, that of his two brothers and the narrator of Part Four, as well as through the comments of a wide variety of people. These commentators include both members of the Compson household and bystander characters such as Earl, Uncle Job, the farmer who "aint makin next year's crop yit" (213) and the sheriff of Jefferson. These men express clarity of insight about Jason because they are able to view him with critical distance. Caddy, who is involved in an intensely negative relationship with Jason, can comment on
the basis of experience that he never had a drop of warm blood in him. The very intensity of her involvement precludes her from making a comment such as Uncle Job's statement that Jason is so smart that he outwits himself. This perspective has the wisdom of good-humored detachment.

The author and reader must attempt to balance involvement and critical distance, if they are to approach an understanding of the truth. The difficulty is that the two factors tend to work against each other. Being immersed in the life of 1972 allows us to comprehend it beyond any understanding we can attain of existence in 1386, since we can only learn about the later Middle Ages indirectly. Yet our distance from that time enables us to view the era in its larger historical context and with a sense of critical judgment that we can not bring to bear on the present moment. In each instance the presence of one factor mitigates the other. I believe it is the impossibility of simultaneously being immersed in experience and sustaining an overview of it that prevents an individual from seeing the whole truth. The best one can do is strive for a tentative balance. Having previously conveyed the validity of the Compson experience through immersion in the consciousness of the three brothers, the author attempts to balance it with an overview rendered in Part Four.

The overview is in one sense a transcendence of the limitations of the previous sections since it attempts to synthesize what has been assimilated into a coherent whole,
and since it contains the critical detachment that the three previous reflectors lack. Yet there is an element of distortion inherent in any attempted overview, since immersion must, to an extent, be sacrificed. It is thus inaccurate to say that "The novel begins in total unawareness, approximating unconsciousness, and ends in complete awareness." Instead Faulkner renders in the concluding section both the possibilities of human comprehension and the limitations inherent in the endeavor.

Michael Cowan has suggested that in Part Four there is a sense of "objective" narration by an "outsider" rather than an explicit conclusion by a conventionally omniscient author. I disagree with the assertion that the narrator is objective, since objectivity of human consciousness is an illusion. Cowan's observation that the narrator is not the conventionally omniscient author is nonetheless a valuable one. Neither the author nor the reader nor any of the characters can attain omniscience since there is an element of distortion in all human perspectives.

Faulkner thinks of the narrative viewpoint of Part Four as being his own. In discussing The Sound and the Fury he says, "I finished it the first time, and it wasn't right, so I wrote it again, and that was Quentin, that wasn't right. I wrote it again, that was Jason, that wasn't right, then I tried to let Faulkner do it, that was still wrong." The perspective is that of the author who conceives of himself,
not as the omnipotent and omniscient god-like artist figure, but as an interested and involved reflector attempting to make conclusions. The movement from empathy with others to assimilation into his own perspective reflects the process of perception itself. In order to attain understanding of experience one must be able to identify sympathetically with the involved participants. Yet the observer must finally recreate experience, evaluating it in his own terms. It is thus appropriate that the narrator of the concluding section be the author himself. The structure of the novel to this extent emulates the process of consciousness. In this respect the structure of *The Sound and the Fury* is unique in Faulkner's works, and to the best of my knowledge, unique in literature.

Although he provides one of the few helpful analyses of how the language of Part Four reflects the process of perception, Swiggart goes slightly astray in the following comment:

Faulkner invests Dilsey with heroic dignity and at the same time mocks his own narrative technique. Dilsey's gaunt hand is compared to "the belly of a fish" (281) and her indomitable skeleton is seen to rise "like a ruin or a landmark above the somnolent and impervious guts."26

The description of Dilsey suggests that she partakes of both the majestic and the commonplace. The emphasis on the fact that she is subject to the decay of old age works against idealization by humanizing her. The juxtaposition of the slangy low-brow sound of "guts" with formal words such as
"somnolent and impervious" does have a somewhat deflating effect. It is as if the rise and fall of the language emulates the narrator's reaching out for meaning and his falling short of the desired result. This is not a mockery of the narrative technique; rather it is an indication of the limitations of the narrator's point of view, since even in the process of clarification meaning inevitably eludes us. In my opinion, Faulkner is able to imply the limitations of the quest for meaning without mocking it. The mixture of high-brow and low-brow language at this point in the novel contributes to the sense of suspension between opposite forces which characterizes the beginning of the fourth section. As previously suggested the tentativeness reflects the point at which experience has begun to clarify but has not yet resolved itself.27

The juxtaposition of language also serves to indicate the limitation of words as a vehicle for the expression of the ultimate significance of experience. The formal language that Faulkner uses to express his apprehension of qualities beyond the visible and tangible works well up to a point; but the juxtaposition with words such as "guts" emphasizes the stilted, almost "literary" quality of the formal language. Faulkner would undoubtedly agree with Whitehead's observation that "Words . . . do not express our deepest intuitions. In the very act of being verbalized they escape us." 28 His own most explicit statement on the limitations of
language is rendered in the soliloquy of Addie Bundren in *As I Lay Dying*; she makes the following comment:

And so when Cora Tull would tell me I was not a true mother, I would think how words go straight up in a thin line, quick and harmless, and how terribly doing goes along the earth, clinging to it, so that after a while the two lines are too far apart for the same person to straddle from one to the other; and that sin and love and fear are just sounds that people who have never sinned nor loved nor feared have for what they never had and cannot have until they forget the words.  

Language becomes for Faulkner both a means for expressing the significance of experience and an inevitable limitation. The possibility of clarification co-exists with the inability to ever completely comprehend life. This is central to Part Four, in particular, and to Faulkner's understanding of life in general. To overemphasize the clarification is to make Friedman's mistake of seeing the novel ending in total awareness. To overemphasize the distortion is to ignore the great expansion of vision that does take place. We become more aware of "social, economic, and political perspectives" as we progress. As Beverly Gross has observed in a perceptive article on Part Four, "The novel becomes more objectified, more outwardly social, more universalized in its focus from its beginnings." She also notes that the concluding section extends the range in time, bringing the Compson experience up to date. She states that "It is the only section of the novel that deals exclusively with the present and it is a present time in advance of all the
By this time Caddy has receded to the background and the love she once provided Benjy is sustained by Dilsey alone. It is interesting to note that Dilsey's emergence into focus seems to correspond to the diminished focus on Caddy. The latter is less central to Part Three than in the previous two sections, and entirely off stage in Part Four as Dilsey emerges into the foreground. The effect is to render the continuity of the life force amidst the Compsons' defeats.

In the prelude of Part Four, Dilsey is in counterpoint to Mrs. Compson. Dilsey is in constant motion as she bustles around the house bringing in the stove wood, which she holds "precariously balanced" (283) while closing her umbrella; she builds up the fire, attempts to placate the ever insistent Mrs. Compson, makes breakfast for the family, and manages to get her reluctant grandson Luster to dress and feed Benjy. Her motion is conveyed in the following passage from the beginning of Section Four in which Mrs. Compson hears Dilsey descending the steps:

As she got into bed again she could hear Dilsey yet descending the stairs with a sort of painful and terrific slowness that would have become maddening had it not presently ceased beyond the flapping diminishment of the pantry door.

She entered the kitchen and built up the fire and began to prepare breakfast (284).

I believe that Dilsey embodies the motion and tranquility that constitute a recurrent Faulknerian metaphor of the life force. There is an element of pain that distinguishes
Dilsey's movement from the motion of the youthful Lena Grove and the undiminished vigor of Old Ben, the bear. Faulkner conveys in Dilsey the endurance of the life force under extremely difficult conditions. Aged and ailing, she must work hard in a household where her efforts are appreciated only by the helpless Benjy. Although Dilsey moves slowly and painfully, "toiling heavily" (287) up the stairs, she does manage to function well despite being interrupted by the incessant demands of Mrs. Compson. The food she prepares literally sustains the members of the household. As Gross succinctly puts it, "We see Dilsey's patient and loving labor as she warms up the house and sets its life in motion."  

Both Dilsey's vitality and the counterpoint of Caroline Compson's negation are rendered in the ensuing passage:

As she ground the sifter steadily above the bread-board, she sang, to herself at first, something without particular tune or words, repetitive, mournful and plaintive, austere, as she ground a faint, steady snowing of flour onto the bread-board. The stove had begun to heat the room and to fill it with murmurous minors of the fire, and presently she was singing louder, as if her voice too had been thawed out by the growing warmth, and then Mrs. Compson called her name again from within the house. Dilsey raised her face as if her eyes could and did penetrate the walls and ceiling and saw the old woman in her quilted dressing gown at the head of the stairs, calling her name with machine-like regularity. (286)

The perpetual motion of Dilsey contrasts to the stagnancy of Mrs. Compson. Of the remaining characters Caroline Compson is the only one who does not leave the house on Easter Sunday.
Her self-willed confinement, like her mannerism of holding her quilted black dressing gown up to her chin, suggests withdrawal and insulation from life. Mrs. Compson is conveyed as disruptive and thoroughly incompetent in direct contrast to Dilsey who brings productivity and skill to the management of the household affairs. It becomes clear that Mrs. Compson is only the nominal mother of the family, while Dilsey fulfills all the functions of motherhood.

The sounds of the two old women are in counterpoint in the passage quoted above and throughout the final chapter. The contrast is a part of the larger motif of the significance of sound in the novel. Slatoff has noted that "In each of Faulkner's works particular sounds, or sometimes absences of sounds, become important narrative or symbolic motifs." He cites Benjy's bellowing as an illustration of his point. The bellowing expresses both sound and fury, motifs which are often interrelated in the novel. They are also developed separately, sound being used to express the feeling of resurrection at the Easter Service as well as the uncontrollable fury of Jason.

The motifs of sound and fury, evident throughout the first three sections of the novel, are most fully developed in Part Four. Benjy's bellowing and moaning are recurrent throughout his monologue. Quentin is portrayed as hearing the sound of the watch in the first sentence of Section Two. Throughout his monologue he is listening to watches, the
ringing of bells, and the sound of factory whistles all of which are converted by his consciousness into reminders of time. Harvard is for Quentin nothing more than "a fine dead sound" (193). In the final paragraph of his section it is stated that "The last note sounded" (197). This implies that the sound of bells, often associated with weddings and church services has become a death knell for Quentin. Jason's incessant talking is itself both sound and fury. Sounds continually mock Jason. Benjy's bellowing embarrasses him and the retreating sound of the horn of the car in which his niece rides "kept on saying Yahhhhh, Yahhhhh, Yaaahhhhhhhhhhh" (259). In Section Four the motif of sound becomes clarified and made explicit. The narrator seems to go to great lengths to differentiate the types of sound throughout the chapter.

Dilsey is the only person within the Compson household that sings. She is able to express her inner feelings both in song and in speech. In the early morning she sings "something ... mournful and plaintive" (286). After the church service "she sang a hymn. She sang the first two lines over and over to the complete tune" (316). In both instances the singing accompanies her preparation of meals. The working and singing complement each other expressing the harmony between body and spirit. The words themselves are not important. The first song is "without particular tune or words." Dilsey can remember the words of only the first two lines of the hymn, but this does not hinder her
expression. It is the feeling, expressed through the tune and words, and yet beyond them, that matters. On this Easter Sunday Dilsey returns from church, feeling rejuvenated, singing a joyous and spiritual song, whereas she had previously sang a mournful and secular one.

In her speech Dilsey achieves a precarious balance between restraint and impetuousness. When provoked by Mrs. Compson who makes her climb the stairs unnecessarily, "Dilsey said nothing" (288). Her silence at this point contrasts to Caroline Compson's querulous and incessant nagging. The narrator's statement that Dilsey "stood now like a cow in the rain" (288) emphasizes her acceptance of hardship and her archetypal humility. Yet Dilsey is not inhibited in speech. She is able to be assertive without being impudent. When Mrs. Compson complains that Jason might be awakened by Benjy, Dilsey replies,"I dont see how you expect anybody to sleep, wid you standin in de hall, holl'in at folks fum de crack of dawn" (287). When Jason, after commanding her to wake Miss Quentin, says,"Do you hear me?", she answers,"I hears you ... All I been hearin, when you in de house" (294). Dilsey manages to maintain a balance between speech and silence. Her sound is perhaps epitomized by the "small clear bell" (293) she rings to call the family to breakfast. She rings it once and they immediately respond. There is no waste of energy in Dilsey's efforts, and there is no waste of words. She is able to make everything she says and does count.
The sound of Dilsey contrasts to that of the three brothers and Mrs. Compson. Benjy is inarticulate, being able only to moan and bellow. Quentin thinks much and says little. His spoken words conceal his inner thoughts, rather than giving expression to them. Jason is as impetuous in speech as Quentin is restrained, being a compulsive talker. But as he is unable to confront the source of his problems, his words do not express real meaning. Jason's mechanical response is similar to the "machine-like regularity" (286) with which Caroline Compson calls Dilsey. Rather than building a fire and filling a hot water bottle for herself, Mrs. Compson stands at the top of the stairs "calling 'Dilsey' at steady and inflectionless intervals" (283). Her sound is conveyed in the following passage from Section Four:

"Dilsey," she called, without inflection or emphasis or haste, as though she were not listening for a reply at all. "Dilsey."

Dilsey answered and ceased clattering the stove, but before she could cross the kitchen Mrs. Compson called her again, and before she crossed the diningroom and brought her head into relief against the grey splash of the window, still again. (283)

The demanding nature of Caroline Compson is suggested in her querulous and insistent cry. She is virtually as helpless as Benjy and a great deal less appreciative. Deadness is suggested in the inflectionless, monotonous sound. Her subsequent comments to Dilsey are a kind of whining passive version of Jason's taunting. The fact that she calls "as though she were not listening for a reply at all" is indicative of her character. Her speech, like Jason's, is
not so much an attempt to communicate with others, as it is an indulgence of her own emotions. For Mrs. Compson, people are not important in themselves, but serve as receptacles for her complaints and self-pity. Her lack of responsiveness is rendered through the mechanical quality of her sound which contrasts to the living vibrancy of Dilsey's speech. The sense of her negation is reinforced by the references to her rusty black dressing gown and the rusty set of keys she carries in her pockets. The keys are utterly useless since Miss Quentin climbs up and down the pear tree to make her entrances and exits and since the mistrustful Jason has had his own lock inserted into the door of his room.

The resemblances between Mrs. Compson and Jason, which are implied throughout The Sound and the Fury, are made clear in the first part of Section Four. The two of them are described as sitting at the table

in identical attitudes; the one cold and shrewd, with close-thatched brown hair curled into two stubborn hooks, one on either side of his forehead like a bartender in caricature, and hazel eyes with black-ringed irises like marbles, the other cold and querulous, with perfectly white hair and eyes pouched and baffled and so dark as to appear to be all pupil or all iris. (295)

The description emphasizes the motif of eyesight, which as I have previously indicated, symbolizes the process of perception. Like the motifs of sound and fury the one of sight becomes clarified in Part Four. Jason's eyes are cold and hard like marbles. Mrs. Compson's inability to see reflects her lack of understanding which is in direct contrast to
Dilsey's penetrating vision. Caroline Compson is last portrayed in the novel lying down on the bed of her darkened room with her eyes closed.

Although he appears to see far more than his mother, Jason is similarly shortsighted at key moments in the novel. In rushing off to Mottson after his niece, Jason fails to foresee the obvious possibility that she will not be there. In describing Jason's entrance into Mottson, the narrator comments that "He could not see very well now" (323). It is only when the little old man is about to strike him down that "for the first time Jason saw clear and unshadowed the disaster toward which he rushed" (325). By this time it is too late for Jason to avoid the oncoming blow. Whereas Mrs. Compson has no comprehension of what is happening, Jason is aware of what is going on, but not of the underlying causes; more specifically, he has no sense of how much his own words and actions contribute to the disasters that befall him. Moreover, his understanding of both Miss Quentin's flight and the old man's fury come after it is too late for him to prevent or avoid defeat.

Jason begins Easter Sunday with a complaint, as does his mother. He is a disruptive force whose cold nature intrudes upon the warmth of Dilsey's kitchen. Faulkner's technique is to render the impression of hearing Jason's voice before he is actually seen. The effect is to stress his rasping sound and perhaps to implicitly contrast its
discordant note with the harmonious ring of Dilsey's dinner bell.

In the diningroom Dilsey moved back and forth. Presently she rang a small clear bell, then in the kitchen Luster heard Mrs. Compson and Jason descending, and Jason's voice, and he rolled his eyes whitely with listening.
"Sure, I know they didn't break it," Jason said. "Sure, I know that. Maybe the change of weather broke it." (293)

In the concluding chapter of The Sound and the Fury, Jason's sarcasm no longer seems funny. I believe that the effect Faulkner achieves is somewhat similar to Shakespeare's treatment of Edmund in King Lear. The initial amusement that the audience feels about Edmund dissolves as the consequences of his philosophy become clear. In the passage quoted above Jason seems petty and niggling rather than witty. After ordering Dilsey to mount the stairs and wake Miss Quentin, he continues to complain to his mother. This is rendered in the following lines:

Dilsey went out. They heard her mounting the stairs. They heard her a long while on the stairs. "You've got a prize set of servants," Jason said. He helped his mother and himself to food. "Did you ever have one that was worth killing? You must have had some before I was big enough to remember." (294)

The effects that Faulkner achieves in the passage cited above are quite subtle. The remarks of Jason are perfectly consistent with those uttered in his monologue. Yet the impression conveyed of him is different from the one rendered in Section Three. Gone is the unexpected partial release that stems from the violent humor of renunciation. Jason's wit,
which lashes out so unremittingly that it eventually becomes tiresome, seems to dissolve at the beginning of Section Four. His callousness and ingratitude are emphasized by his berating of Dilsey at the very moment that he helps himself to the food so carefully prepared by her. The statement, "They heard her a long while on the stairs", reinforces the impression of Jason's lack of consideration for others, reminding the reader of Dilsey's difficulty and pain in climbing the stairs. The passage unobtrusively calls attention to Dilsey's extraordinary devotion and her suffering for the Compsons at the very moment that Jason complains about having useless servants. His question, "Did you ever have one worth killing?" reflects all too accurately the destructive effects of both the death-oriented Jason and his mother.

The destructiveness of Jason and Mrs. Compson is further emphasized in the following conversation in which it becomes clear that Jason is unaware it is Easter.

"I know you blame me," Mrs. Compson said, "for letting them go off to church today."
"Go where?" Jason said. "Hasn't that damn show left yet?"
"To church," Mrs. Compson said. "The darkies are having a special Easter service. I promised Dilsey two weeks ago that they could get off."
"Which means we'll eat cold dinner," Jason said, "or none at all."
"I know it's my fault," Mrs. Compson said. "I know you blame me."
"For what?" Jason said. "You never resurrected Christ, did you?"

(295)

Easter signifies nothing to Jason but personal inconvenience. Although he grumbles about the servants not providing hot
food, Jason is fated to miss, not only the dinner that Dilsey sets out for the family, but breakfast as well. Minutes later he dashes up to Quentin's empty room, to his own safe, downstairs to the telephone, and then to the sheriff's house passing through the diningroom, "where the scarce-broken meal now lay cold on the table" (300). Sustenance is provided but Jason chooses not to partake of it. When Dilsey urges him to eat his breakfast, Jason's only response is to slam the door behind him as he leaves the house.

Jason's remark that his mother never resurrected Christ is another instance in which he expresses a profundity that utterly escapes him. The Biblical echoes that are evident throughout the novel become more overt in Part Four, where the anti-life forces manifest in Mrs. Compson and Jason are associated with the Satanic. Jason's "two stubborn hooks" (295) are reminiscent of the devil's horns. Mrs. Compson, dressed in black, with a "huge bunch of rusted keys on an iron ring like a medieval jailer's" (297) is a mock-Christ figure. This description is an ironic echo of Christ's statement in Revelation: "I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Her claim that "it's my place to suffer for my children" (238) is belied by her renunciation of them in moments of crisis. Her negation, instead, brings suffering to her children. This is expressed by Benjy's moaning in her presence and by
Quentin's anguished exclamation "If I could say Mother. Mother " (114).

It is her inability to love which is destructive of life. In the archetypal terms which emerge into clarity in Section Four, to give love is to affirm life. Nourishing and sustaining life is an emulation of the divine act of creation which is a manifestation of love in its purest form. The divine sacrifice is likewise an act of pure love affirming that life transcends death and that suffering can be significant rather than meaningless. In this context, to love is to resurrect Jesus by affirming that the love embodied in Christ is still an integral part of modern life. To thwart or hinder love is to manifest the Satanic force of disorder and death. Jason's remark that his mother never resurrected Christ thus expresses one of the major insights of the novel, though he, himself, is blind to it.

The sense of resurrection is brought to its culminating expression in the Negro Easter Service which is the climax of the first movement. Significantly enough it takes place outside of the Compson domain. This is stressed by Benjy's ceasing to moan as soon as he and Dilsey pass through the gate into the street. By this time the weather which seemed so ominous at dawn has cleared. The following passage contrasts to the opening lines of Section Four:

The rain had stopped. The air now drove out of the southeast, broken overhead into blue patches. Upon the crest of a hill beyond the trees and roofs and spires of town sunlight lay like a pale scrap of
cloth, was blotted away. Upon the air a bell came, then as if at a signal, other bells took up the sound and repeated it. The cabin door opened and Dilsey emerged, again in the maroon cape and purple gown, and wearing soiled white elbow-length gloves and minus her headcloth now.

With the sound of bells ringing under a clearing sky, Dilsey re-emerges from her cabin to begin her slow and serene walk to church. She and Benjy join up first with Luster and Frony and then with more and more people into a communal procession. Their movement is described in the statement that "Toward the church they thronged with slow sabbath deliberation" (308). As Dilsey proceeds she acknowledges social contacts and responds affirmatively to others. The friendly greetings reflect the ties that Dilsey feels with members of her community.

The harmony of the scene is expressed by the ringing of the bells which is the predominant sound at this point in the novel. The sound of the bells at Harvard, as filtered through the consciousness of Quentin, had a very different effect. In Section Two the sound is rendered indirectly and is devoid of sensuous pleasure. Quentin describes not so much the actual sound as the moment when the bells cease to ring. He notes that "It was a while before the last stroke ceased vibrating" (98). Later he states that "The last note sounded" (197). The bells toll every fifteen minutes from the chapel that Quentin never enters. They are at once remote and insistent, the former quality suggesting Quentin's
removal from the immediacy of sensuous experience; the latter reflects the fact that in Quentin's consciousness the bells come to represent the inevitability of time and death.

In Section Four the melodious sound of the church bells seems to fill the air. The sound is the musical accompaniment of the slow and stately procession to church. Like the tiny bell by which Dilsey summons the family to her meal, the church bell summons the entire community to participate in a spiritual meal. It is as if the sound of Dilsey's bell, like her singing, has been subsumed into the communal music of the whole congregation.

In the movement toward harmony and fulfillment an undercurrent of doubt persists right up until the moment when the Reverend Shegog becomes immersed in his sermon. The sun, although it has appeared from behind the clouds, is described as "random and tentative" (306). An element of chill remains in the air. Frony, "a thin woman, with a flat, pleasant face" (305), seems to be somewhat less compassionate than Dilsey, and more concerned about external appearances. She wishes her mother would leave Benjy at home because people are talking about his coming to the Negro church services. This elicits the reply from Dilsey "Tell um de good Lawd dont keer whether he smart er not. Dont nobody but white trash keer dat" (306). Benjy's estrangement from others is suggested both in this conversation and the one in which the Black children, staring at the idiot-child "with the covert-
ness of nocturnal animals" (307), dare each other to touch him.

The appearance of the landscape, the church and the Reverend Shegog himself are at first glance unpromising. Dilsey and her fellow church-goers pass through an area of grassless plots, broken things, rank weeds and trees that suggest the dryness of autumn rather than the blossoming of spring. At the end of the road "a weathered church lifted its crazy steeple like a painted church, and the whole scene was as flat and without perspective as a painted cardboard set upon the ultimate edge of the flat earth, against the windy sunlight of space and April and a midmorning filled with bells" (308). Contradictory elements are suggested in this sentence. The church seems both prominent and insubstantial. In the midst of emptiness it stands out as a focal point toward which all the people are converging. Yet the description suggests insignificance as well. The full sound of the bells seems out of proportion to the shabby, weathered little church with its crazy steeple. The people are thronging with high hopes to a rather insubstantial looking building. It is appropriate that the spirit of Christianity be felt by the poor people, amidst a humble setting. At this point in the novel, however, the description continues a sense of suspension, the prominence of the church conveying the movement toward fulfillment, its seeming insignificance suggesting the persistence of an element of doubt.
The entrance of Reverend Shegog does nothing to dispel this undercurrent of uncertainty. It is so unobtrusive that he is virtually unnoticed. The initial reaction of the congregation is one of "astonishment and disappointment" (309). Like the building in which he stands, the Reverend Shegog appears to be old and insignificant. The "consternation and unbelief" (309) of the church-goers is expressed by Frony, who exclaims, "En dey brung dat all de way fum Saint Looey" (309). But the minister is able to overcome the doubts of his listeners through the sound of his voice. Unlike the Compsons he is able to give of himself completely, bringing his physical and spiritual faculties into harmonious reconciliation, transcending his own sense of ego. The union of spirit and flesh is suggested in the statement that "With his body he seemed to feed the voice that, succubus like, had fleshed its teeth in him" (310). The word "succubus" meaning "a demon, esp. one assuming female form to have sexual intercourse with men in their sleep" is a striking one, used at no other point in the novel. It helps to convey the mysterious state of union in which the separateness of body and spirit and of action and words are overcome.

In the Easter service Faulkner is able to render the attainment of an intense level of consciousness by the minister and congregation. They achieve a moment of vision in which the ordinary limitations of perception are trans-
cended. The barriers between body and spirit, conscious and unconscious, action and words, and the self and others dissolve away as a sense of unity is apprehended beyond the dualities of existence. The process begins, significantly enough, with the Reverend Shegog's invocation of the word "Brethren," suggesting the common ties of all mankind. As he proceeds the minister simultaneously penetrates deeper into the levels of his own consciousness and into that of his audience. His voice which had previously been flat and cold begins to echo and resonate "with a sad, timbrous quality like an alto horn, sinking into their hearts and speaking there again when it had ceased in fading and cumulate echoes" (310). The immersion into the depths of his own consciousness is suggested by his shift from the idiom of the white man to Negroid pronunciation. The innermost life of his spirit and that of the congregation finds its outer expression, and hence fulfillment, in his voice.

And the congregation seemed to watch with its own eyes while the voice consumed him, until he was nothing and they were nothing and there was not even a voice but instead their hearts were speaking to one another in chanting measures beyond the need for words, so that when he came to rest against the reading desk, his monkey face lifted and his whole attitude that of a serene, tortured crucifix that transcended its shabbiness and insignificance and made it of no moment, a long moaning expulsion of breath rose from them, and a woman's single soprano: "Yes, Jesus!"

This is a moment of transcendence in which the minister uses his voice to negate his own ego and inspire a communal experience; the diverse people become an assembly watching
"with its own eyes." The affirmative nature of the experience is indicated by the woman's exclamation "Yes, Jesus!" The woman's voice is the first audible response from a congregation that becomes increasingly involved, until it is no longer an audience but a participant in the service. As the Reverend Shegog pauses momentarily in his sermon "A low concerted sound rose from the congregation: 'MMMMMMMMM!'
The woman's voice said, 'Yes, Jesus! Jesus!'" (311). The originally dubious church-goers have now reached a state of total involvement in harmony with the minister. The humming of the congregation reflects the fact that through words the minister leads them to an emotional state beyond the need for verbal expression.

The narrator suggests the transformation of the people to a state of ecstasy by first evoking the sound of Reverend Shegog's voice saying "Brethren." The description of the effect of his voice, which I have cited above, helps to convey the feeling of mystical oneness, but is not enough in itself. It is followed by a direct rendering of the church service, in which the narrator becomes less and less obtrusive. As the experience builds in intensity the narrator's voice recedes until it virtually disappears at the climax of the service. The narrator has achieved a state of immersion analogous to that of the minister and congregation, becoming fully absorbed in what is happening and losing for a brief moment his sense of separateness. The narrator, like
the parishioners, ceases to be a distant observer as he becomes increasingly involved in the Easter service. The reader is likewise drawn in to the experience, directly witnessing the responses of minister and congregation, as the obtrusive narrative voice vanishes for the first and last time in Section Four. The effect is to render the process of immersion in which the awareness of the self as a separate entity is transcended. I suggest that the reader is at one remove from the congregation, being always aware that he is watching a rural Negro service, and yet increasingly drawn into the experience. The effect on the reader is thus analogous to the parishioners' experience, rather than being identical to it.

The attainment of a state of consciousness in which dualities dissolve and an underlying unity is perceived is a regaining of the sense of primal oneness that characterized the perception of innocence. It is a recovery of the sense of harmony felt prior to the development of rational faculties which makes the individual aware of his separateness from others. I cite a previously quoted passage from Erich Neumann's *The Origin and History of Consciousness*:

Gradually, with the growth of consciousness, things and places were organized into an abstract system and differentiated from one another; but originally thing and place belonged together in a continuum and were fluidly related to an ever-changing ego. In this inchaote state there was no distinction between I and you, inside and outside, or between men and things, just as there was no clear dividing line between man and the animals, man and man, man
and the world. Everything participated in every­
thing else, lived in the same undivided and over­
lapping state in the world of the unconscious . . .

In the Easter service Faulkner renders a moment of perception
in which the barriers between the self and others are seen as
illusory on the deepest level of consciousness. The expansion
of vision is rendered in terms of the minister and congrega­
tion seeing "de light" (312). The regaining of the feeling
of unity and harmony with the universe may be termed a
rebirth of faith or a "resurrection." Rebirth is the essence
of the Reverend Shegog's sermon which first dramatizes the
birth and youth of Jesus, then proceeds to reenact his
suffering and death by crucifixion and concludes by affirming
resurrection for Jesus and for those who believe. The
minister's success in revivifying and unifying himself with
the congregation is thus in harmony with the words he speaks.
In the culminating words of the sermon the recurrent motifs
of sight and sound are merged with the underlying question
of whether faith in existence is still possible.

"I sees de darkness en de death everlastin upon de
generations. Den, lo! Breddren! . . . Whut I see?
. . . I sees de resurrection en de light; sees de
meek Jesus saying Dey kilt Me that ye shall live
again; I died dat dem whut sees en believes shall
never die. Breddren, O breddren! I sees de doom
crack en hears de golden horns shoutin down de
glory, en de arisen dead whut got de blood, en de
ricklickshun of de Lamb!" (312-313)

The narrator focusses upon Dilsey sitting "bolt up­
right, her hand on Ben's knee" (311) just prior to the
culminating moment of vision. At the climactic moment no
individual is mentioned, not even the Reverend Shegog, as the narrator renders the pure sound of the ministers and congregation, suggesting transcendence of individual identity. The focus then returns to Dilsey immediately afterward, emphasizing the effect of the experience on her. She is present at the service as a witness, in the Biblical sense, who participates in the transformation and affirms it by her faith. In contrast to the isolation of the Compsons, she is able to find fulfillment as a member of the community. Her emotional release is indicated by the tears which flow unself-consciously down her cheeks, reflecting a feeling beyond sadness and beyond pure joy. Her first utterance after the sermon contains a distillation of meaning that is beyond words. She says, "I've seed de first en de last . . . . I seed de beginnin and now I sees de endin" (313). The lines directly echo the first chapter of Revelation, which is concerned with death and resurrection and the role of witnesses. These lines complement the opening passage of Section Four, which echoes Genesis I, by calling to mind the last book of the Bible as well as the first, the end of earthly existence as well as the beginning. In my opinion, the echoing of Genesis and Revelations in the concluding chapter of *The Sound and the Fury* reflects the author's attempt to come to an understanding of experience in its totality, from beginning to end.

The words of Dilsey indicate her rejuvenation, showing
that she has absorbed the meaning of the sermon by the minister who "seed de power en de glory" (313). They signify the comprehensive range of her vision and her depth of insight which transcends rational apprehension. Hunt states that "In her character we are pushed beyond the rational, not to deny it, but to affirm that it is neither all of life nor enough of life." Dilsey has been a witness to the destiny of the Compsons. Having begun with high hopes, that family is now at the end of the line. Her love and devotion have not been able to save them as Jason sardonically points out in the following lines from his monologue. Dilsey is talking about Caddy's infant daughter.

"And whar else do she belong?" Dilsey says; "Who else gwine raise her 'cep me? Aint I raised eve'y one of y'all?"
"And a damn fine job you made of it," I says. (216)

Dilsey's love, like that of Cordelia in King Lear does not bring about a world in which all ends happily ever after. It is a value in itself and a realization of human potentiality in The Sound and the Fury as it is in King Lear. It is Dilsey's ability to sustain life that is presented as the positive value in the book, in contrast to the incapacity of Mr. and Mrs. Compson, Quentin and Jason. After Quentin's relinquishment and Caddy's subsequent exile, the tenderness that Benjy needed is provided solely by Dilsey. Faulkner states that "She held the whole thing together with no hope of reward, except she was doing the best she could because
she loved that poor, otherwise helpless, idiot-child."

Dilsey provides stability in a disintegrating household. Hunt correctly asserts that "She . . . stands as a contradiction, a denial that the responses of the Compsons are inevitable and unavoidable." In her embodiment of faith and love she affirms them as human possibilities. This affirmation serves to alleviate but not prevent the Compson doom which "is made more poignant and final" by Dilsey's contradicting vision of salvation. Although she embodies the positive human values Dilsey's fulfillment is not a solution to the dilemma faced by the Compson family. Whether the fulfillment she achieves can be attained by the civilized whites who are more cut off from their own roots than she is remains a moot point. What is certain is that none of the remaining Compsons can achieve her state of grace.

It is part of the pessimism of *The Sound and the Fury* that no character in the novel is able to learn from his experience and overcome his limitations of outlook. Dilsey is portrayed as in touch with the innermost sources of her being and hence self-integrated throughout her life. The absence of a character who learns from experience does not absolutely preclude it as a possibility. It is central to my thesis that the author and reader do approach an understanding of the truth, even though Benjy, Quentin and Jason do not. In his later novels Faulkner creates characters who are able to learn and grow through the assimilation of
experience into their own consciousnesses. They each become a kind of objective correlative of the possibility of growth through the process of perception. Cash Bundren of *As I Lay Dying* may be seen as the first figure or "pre-figure" to assume this function. Byron Bunch is the first fully developed character to fulfill this role. It is perhaps the primary function of the youthful narrators of Faulkner's later novels and of Isaac McCaslin in *Go Down Moses*. The absence of such a figure in *The Sound and the Fury*, while not precluding the possibility of growth, contributes greatly to the dark vision of that novel.

The paralysis of the Compsons is emphasized when Dilsey, Benjy and Luster return home after the church service and look "at the square paintless house with its rotting portico" (313). This is followed by the second encounter between Dilsey and Caroline Compson in which Faulkner renders one of the most powerful evocations of stagnancy in the novel. While Dilsey has been actively partaking of the spirit of resurrection, Mrs. Compson has lain dormant upon her bed, allowing her Bible to fall "face down" (316) on the floor among the shadows. Her room, with its "pervading reek of camphor" (314) and its drawn shades that keep out the light of the sun, is like a morgue. Images of halflight, drawn shades and a recumbent position have previously been employed to characterize the consciousness of Quentin. In that instance his physical paralysis both reflected his state of
consciousness and contrasted to the turbulence of his mental energies which could find no satisfactory outlet. Mrs. Compson, on the other hand, is the embodiment of total stagnation. She seems to actually look forward to finding a suicide note from her granddaughter. The implication is that she thrives on death which feeds her self-pity. The greater the family disaster the more she can feel sorry for herself. The narrator's judgments at this point are among the most explicit of any made in the novel.

Mrs. Compson said nothing. Like so many cold, weak people, when faced at last by the incontrovertible disaster she exhumed from somewhere a sort of fortitude, strength. In her case it was an unshakable conviction regarding the yet un plumbed event. "Well," she said presently, "Did you find it?"

"Find whut? Whut you talkin about?"

"The note. At least she would have enough consideration to leave a note. Even Quentin did that."

(315)

This scene has several important effects in the novel. Firstly, it brings Caroline Compson's negativism and renunciation of life to its final clarification. At one point Mrs. Compson admits that she doesn't know what has happened and doesn't "seem to care" (315). She alternates between self-pitying whining and the silence of defeat. In the earlier encounter between the two women "Dilsey said nothing" (288) when being unjustly provoked by Mrs. Compson. In that instance her silence reflected tranquility and self-control. The passage is a possible echo of Matthew 27:12 in which Jesus maintains silence in the face of provocation: "And
when he was accused of the chief priests and elders he answered nothing."

The word "nothing" has two contradictory meanings in the novel, implying both ultimate affirmation and ultimate negation. The former meaning is suggested when the Reverend Shegog's voice consumes himself "until he was nothing and they were nothing" (310). The minister and church which may be regarded from an external perspective as insignificant take on ultimate significance. In the moment of transcendence the reverend and congregation lose their sense of personal identity becoming nothing and everything. The positive meaning of the word is suggested here and in the first encounter between the two old women when "Dilsey said nothing" (288). In the second and final confrontation the narrator twice states that "Mrs. Compson said nothing" (315). The word is in this instance evocative of the "sound and fury signifying nothing." Mrs. Compson's response is the silence of renunciation of a bitter old woman "who looked like an old nun praying" (316). The image suggests abstemiousness and withdrawal rather than devotion. Lying in the darkened room, afflicted with failing eyesight, she can not see to read the Bible. She nevertheless refuses Dilsey's offer to raise the shade and let in fresh air and the life-giving warmth of the sun.

The scene also has the result of bringing the focus of perception back to the Compson dilemma. It thus sets the
vision attained in the Negro Easter service in the total context of experience. The effect is to remind the reader of the grim realities of existence which persist both before and after the sermon. The transformation has taken place on the level of consciousness. It has not at all affected the Compsons who remain trapped in the process of decay; the only member of the family to partake in the service is the helpless Benjy. Without denying the validity of the moment of vision, the author qualifies it through juxtaposition with this scene. The external realities are unchanged and life goes on more or less as it has before. The communal experience is an affirmation in itself; it does not, however, solve the problems of existence, even for those who have partaken of it.

The scene also provides a transition from the first movement of Section Four to the second one. Caroline Compson instructs Dilsey to set out dinner for Jason. But Dilsey who knows far more about the family than Mrs. Compson can say with confidence, "Jason aint comin home" (316). The focus then shifts from the negation of Caroline Compson to that of her favorite son, who has left the house before Dilsey for very different reasons. The second movement contrasts ironically to the first, containing the epitome of the sound and the fury, as the first one contains the vision of the power and the glory. As Dilsey serenely proceeds on foot to church surrounded by her family, Jason
drives by himself in a rage to the sheriff's home. The basic contrast between the two pilgrimages is that, while Dilsey acknowledges social contacts and responds affirmatively to others, Jason denies social ties and consequently is forced to proceed to Mottson as a solitary figure. Jason is rude to the sheriff and his guests all of whom treat him in a friendly manner. Dilsey, on the other hand, accepts greetings and returns them.

In these two movements the extremes of affirmation and of negation are juxtaposed. The contrast is rendered in terms of the sound signifying universal harmony and the sound signifying nothing. During the Easter service "A car passed along the road outside, laboring in the sand, died away" (310-311). It is not made explicit whom the car belongs to, but the mention of the vehicle with which he is associated suggests Jason to me. Likewise, when Jason is talking to the sheriff "Bells were still ringing from the direction of the section known as Nigger Hollow" (318). By evoking one movement within the other Faulkner is able to suggest the simultaneity of their occurrence and thus heighten the contrast.

The fulfillment of expression in the first movement is counterpointed with Jason's inability to express himself. When he telephones the sheriff Jason's voice is "so harsh and thick that he had to repeat himself" (300). He still does not succeed in communicating and must repeat himself
once more in the sheriff's home. Whereas the Reverend Shegog is able to use his voice to overcome the doubts of a skeptical congregation, Jason's efforts bring about the opposite effect. He is unable to convince the sheriff of the validity of his cause. By the end of his harangue the originally attentive law officer "did not appear to be listening at all" (319).

As I have previously mentioned the minor characters that come into contact with Jason function as norms. The sheriff has been sitting with his wife and guests when Jason comes barging in. His friendliness, indicated by his manner with guests and his "hearty florid gesture" (318) of greeting to passers-by contrasts with Jason's hostility and isolation. His level-headed calmness is juxtaposed against Jason's nearly hysterical frenzy. Whereas the sheriff is careful and deliberate in his manner, Jason makes empty threats that convince no one and increase his alienation. In his telephone conversation he has previously said to the sheriff "Have that car ready to leave at once. If you dont, I'll report it to the governor" (300). This threat is as absurd an instance of role playing as Quentin's ordering of Dalton Ames to get out of town by sundown. The days when the Compson family possessed the power of a governor have long passed. In both instances the role playing reflects a consciousness in a state of discord. In moments of crisis both brothers assume postures of power which are in direct
disproportion to their capacities for action. This signifies a pathetic gap between what the brothers are and what they wish to be. Their futile gestures of power are manifestations of impotence. The assumption of a role that can not be embodied is also evident in minor characters such as Uncle Maury and Gerald Bland. All of them, being unable to find the fulfillment of complete involvement, suggested by the act of immersion, become parodies of the ideals they wish to represent.

Jason's threats increase in direct proportion to his frustration and impotence. When the sheriff refuses to help him, he rages, saying, "You'll regret this. I won't be helpless. This is not Russia" (320). His reaction is similar to that of Joe Brown in Light in August, who also feels that he has been deprived of his just rights by the town sheriff. When he is "almost crying with rage and despair and fatigue" at being 'robbed' of his reward money, Brown says, "I be dog if it aint enough to make a man turn downright bowlsheyvick." In both scenes the reader is provided the melodramatic satisfaction of seeing a callous and selfish person receiving his come-uppance. In both instances the serious question of whether justice can be found in a universe that often seems arbitrary is treated comically. It is clear to the reader that Jason and Brown, both of whom claim to have been treated unfairly, are suffering the consequences of their own self-destructiveness.
There is a curious kind of reassurance in the figure of the sheriff, who shows stability and fair-mindedness. I believe the reasons for this reassurance are two-fold. Firstly, the sheriff's impartiality suggests that society is not malignant. Those, who like Jason and Brown loudly proclaim themselves victims of an unjust society, are indulging themselves in self-pity. Secondly, the validity of the sheriff's perspective suggests the possibility of apprehending "the truth." It has the opposite effect from Faulkner's use of a radically distorted reflector, such as the deputy of "Pantaloon in Black." In that instance what the deputy sees is a grotesque mockery of the truth. The effect is to emphasize the gap between the truth and what a more or less average member of the community sees as reality. But in *The Sound and the Fury* the sheriff shows perceptiveness in observations, such as his statement, "You drove that girl into running off, Jason" (320).

Jason, as always, can not accept the fact that he is in large part responsible for his own setbacks. His reaction to the sheriff's comments is to rush off in pursuit of his niece. This last futile dash may be regarded as the epitome of his existence. As he drives to Mottson, Jason pictures himself in the role of demonic avenger, striking down all those who attempt to thwart him.

He thought how he'd find a church at last and take a team and of the owner coming out, shouting at him and of himself striking the man down. "I'm Jason Compson. See if you can stop me. See if you
can elect a man to office that can stop me," he said, thinking of himself entering the courthouse with a file of soldiers and dragging the sheriff out. (321)

This passage, previously cited to illustrate Jason's desire for vengeance, suggests even more than this. Jason visualizes himself punishing, not only the sheriff who has thwarted him, but an imagined owner of an imagined team of mules. This indicates the way a consciousness filled with hatred abstracts and depersonalizes in projecting hostility. When no acquaintance fits into his fantasies of hostility, Jason invents a persona to fill the role. His delusions of grandeur are apparent in the following passage, in which Jason appears to hurl threats at God, himself, uttering the ensuing words as he passes a church: "'And damn You, too . . . .See if you can stop me,' thinking of himself, his file of soldiers with the manacled sheriff in the rear, dragging Omnipotence down from His throne, if necessary" (322). The associations of Jason with Satan are made explicit in this passage which echoes Paradise Lost VI: 135. His hatred and destructiveness are perceived in their archetypal terms. On this level Jason is a blasphemer, his cursing being the verbal manifestation of his violent and total renunciation of life. The resultant removal from the immediacy of experience into abstraction is indicated by the statement "Of his niece he did not think at all, nor [of] the arbitrary valuation of the money. Neither of them had had entity or individuality for him for ten years" (321).
The misdirection of Jason's energies is made evident as herushes into Mottson, suffering from a splitting headache that impairs his vision. He calculates how to surprise his niece, but never questions his underlying assumption that she will be there. Thus his energies are wasted in a futile effort that serves no purpose, aside from increasing his own sense of impotent fury. As he drives along Jason attempts to mitigate his pain by imagining himself lying with Lorraine in bed. Interestingly enough, he does not picture himself making love to her; instead he seems to desire a mother-comforter, visualizing himself pleading with her for help. This is perhaps a further indication that Jason has never been able to develop in consciousness from the child-parent relationship to adult ones. It certainly implies his sexual repression. I suggest that Jason's alternating images of himself as Titanic avenger and helpless pleader reflect his sado-masochistic nature. In *The Sound and the Fury* Jason's sadism is obvious in his relentless persecution of his niece and others. His masochism, though less obtrusive, becomes increasingly evident in Section Four and is made explicit in the incident that culminates the second movement.

By attacking a weak-looking little old man Jason makes an enemy out of a perfectly neutral person. His pointlessly hostile action produces an angry counter-reaction, which invalidates Jason's image of himself as a powerful instrument
of vengeance. Jason's fight is a ludicrous parody of Quentin's struggle with Dalton Ames. Quentin's Quixotic efforts seem almost commonsensical compared to Jason's. However misguided Quentin's action, it is at least directed toward a man who has some relationship to his problems. Whereas Quentin attempts to fight one of the toughest men in town, Jason charges at a harmless looking old man, after noting that he is "not as big as I am" (324). Both brothers lose their encounters without giving or receiving a blow, Quentin fainting, and Jason falling and hitting the back of his head against a rail. The little old man becomes the single-minded instrument of fury and vengeance that Jason would like to be. When provoked the old man strikes back swiftly and successfully at his tormentor. Jason can not act effectively, since he fails to confront what is really tormenting him. His self-destructiveness is made explicit when the man who runs the show exclaims, "What were you trying to do? Commit suicide?" (327). But the words are wasted on Jason, who is incapable of learning from experience. He is too blinded by hatred to heed the sign and keep his eye on Mottson or on anything else. The sketch of the human eye in the novel (327) serves to emphasize his blindness. His efforts are a complete disaster. "As he sits completely immobilized in the car waiting for some Negro to drive him home, he assumes the posture of the impotent Benjy on his afternoon rides with T.P."
The third and final movement of the novel focuses primarily on Benjy. His ride to the graveyard "in a battered and lopsided surrey" (333) recalls the earlier journey to the cemetery in which T.P. was the driver (30-32). His looking through the honeysuckle at the golfers who inevitably cry,"Here, caddie,"echoes the passage which begins The Sound and the Fury. It is as if the narrative has circled back to the beginning episode enabling the reader to view the same occurrences at the end of the novel that he did at the start; he can now consider them with whatever understanding he has been able to acquire through the exploration of experience. The effect is to emphasize the process of learning through perception and to evoke an image of circling which will add resonance to the final ride around the eyeless confederate statue.

Benjy, like Mr. Tarver of Mosquitoes and Lena Grove of Light in August, is in full focus at the beginning of the book, receding to the background, before re-emerging in the final episode. These three characters serve a special function in Faulkner's fiction: The tone of Mosquitoes, The Sound and the Fury and Light in August is established in the rendering of each of them; but to describe them as "tone-setters" is inadequate. I have previously suggested that Jason's section is framed by a curse and that the references to Quentin's awareness of time at the beginning and end of his monologue form a metaphor of enclosure.
Tarver's bragging, Benjy's way of looking at existence and Lena's movement function similarly in relation to their respective novels as a whole. It is as if the characters represent a basic underlying condition of existence to which the focus must inevitably return. By rendering Lena's travelling in the opening and closing lines of *Light in August*, for example, the author implies that she is in a state of eternal motion.

The futility of Tarver, the painful mingling of beauty and pathos in the life of Benjy and the tranquility of Lena serve as frameworks for the books in which they appear. *Mosquitoes* begins and ends with Tarver's false assertion of his own sexuality. The pose fools no one, including himself. It is significant that this novel, which emphasizes grotesqueness and lack of faith, has, as its enclosing character, a man who is impotent and unable to believe in anything. Although Benjy is also impotent, he contrasts to Tarver in having the faith of an innocent. There is thus a mingling of pleasure and pain, of fulfillment and loss, of affirmation and negation in the rendering of the idiot-child. I suggest that the difference between the perception of existence in these two novels is manifest in the differences between Tarver and Benjy.

The deeper pessimism that distinguishes *The Sound and the Fury* from *Light in August* is, likewise, indicated in the treatment of the character that begins and ends the work.
Whereas Benjy combines innocence with impotence, Lena is innocence wed to fertility. Benjy's instinctive belief in life is both valid and absurd; it is simultaneously a manifestation of the natural response to existence, which men like Tarver have lost, and a reflection of the fact that he "never becomes aware of his enormous pathos." Lena's faith is treated less ambivalently. Her affirmative response brings out the best in people who usually (though not always) justify her faith in them. Her belief that all will turn out well for her seems to be justified in the context of the novel.

The imagery of enclosure may be regarded as part of the larger pattern of circular motifs in Faulkner's works. I suggested in Chapter Three that the vicious circle is an image of ultimate negation for Faulkner, in contrast to the life-cycle which conveys fulfillment. Thus the circle may suggest constriction and entrapment as it does for Tarver, Quentin and Jason, or completion and release as it does for Lena, who is associated with the circular Grecian Urn and with the earth itself. I suggest that the recurrent pattern of fulfillment and loss in Benjy's life combines elements of affirmation and negation in an indissoluble suspension.

After being in primary focus as the center of consciousness in Section One, Benjy recedes to the background of the novel in Section Two, because Quentin's perceptions are generally focused elsewhere. Quentin recalls Benjy's
bellowing at the wedding of Caddy because the feelings expressed so closely parallel his own; but he does not often think about the idiot-child. Jason, on the other hand, thinks about his younger brother more frequently. Beverly Gross states that Jason regards Benjy as "a lumbering object, an obstacle . . . an embarrassment, and a financial burden to the family." She goes on to say that "Jason's heartlessness makes us react to Benjy with added pity" noting that the "neglect and deprivation," only hinted at in his own section, are made evident in Part Three.

In the final chapter Benjy is rendered in the prelude and the first movement before re-emerging into full focus at the conclusion of the novel. The external description of Benjy evokes an almost unbearable sense of pathos. The narrator describes him as

a big man who appeared to have been shaped of some substance whose particles would not or did not cohere to one another or to the frame which supported it. His skin was dead looking and hairless; dropsical too, he moved with a shambling gait like a trained bear. His hair was pale and fine. It had been brushed smoothly down upon his brow like that of children in daguerrotypes. His eyes were clear, of the pale sweet blue of cornflowers, his thick mouth hung open, drooling a little.

Faulkner reverses the traditional novelistic technique of beginning with a description of the character's external appearance and then proceeding to depict his inner qualities. In *The Sound and the Fury* the description occurs late in the novel, long after Benjy's consciousness has been rendered. The reader has been made to acknowledge the human feelings
shared in common with the idiot-child through empathy in Section One. Because of this sense of identification, the difference in Benjy's appearance from that of other people comes as something of a shock, even though Jason has prepared us for it with his deprecating remarks. The description has the effect of stressing Benjy's vulnerability. Evelyn Scott once observed that he "holds in his hands—in his heart, exposed to the reader—something frightening, unnamed—pain!" The vulnerability has previously been suggested but not fully rendered. The external description brings the reader's emotions to the surface emphasizing the beauty and helplessness of the idiot-child. The fact that Benjy is initially described as a "big man" heightens the pathos since he must be looked after like a little child. His "fine" hair must be brushed for him by someone else. The image of a "trained bear" reinforces the impression of Benjy's passivity and his large size. With a fully developed consciousness in his large body, Benjy might have been a powerful figure. As it is his large frame seems to be a stroke of an arbitrary universe, incongruous with his incapacity to function. Incongruity is also manifest in the contrast of his dead skin and vital eyes. Benjy's clarity of vision and gentleness are suggested in the description of his eyes which "were clear, of the pale sweet blue of cornflowers" (290).

In externalizing and clarifying experience in a few lines, the author's accomplishment is consistent with his
achievement throughout the final chapter of *The Sound and the Fury*. The poignancy evoked in the description of Benjy is achieved mainly through an implied contrast of perspectives. Having forced the reader into a position of sympathetic identification with Benjy in Section One, Faulkner is now able to contrast the way Benjy is with the way he appears to the outside world. The difference is overwhelming. For the reader, Benjy ultimately becomes a symbol of man's victimization, dramatizing his inevitable pain and suffering.\(^{53}\)

Through the juxtaposition of the first three perspectives of *The Sound and the Fury*, the author suggests that Benjy's dilemma is a variant of that faced by his two brothers. In Section Four "Benjy's presence at the Negro Easter service sets his suffering in the context of the Christian sacrifice.\(^{54}\) The fact that he is "de Lawd's chile" (333) suggests more than idiocy;"it points up his quintessential humanness"\(^{55}\) in addition to providing identification with the lamb of God.

But to the Black boys going to church, the idiot-child is "des a loony" (307). The boys, being neither overly sympathetic nor unduly malicious, serve as norms reflecting the angle of vision of the outside world. Their conversation is as follows:

"I bet you wont go up en tech him."
"How come I wont?"
"I bet you wont. I bet you skeered to."
"He wont hurt folks. He des a loony."
"How come a loony wont hurt folks?"
"Dat un wont. I teched him."
"I bet you wont now."
"Case Miss Dilsey lookin."
"You wont no ways."
"He dont hurt folks. He des a loony." (307)

Benjy's lack of malice, suggested in the "sweetness" of his gaze, is emphasized in this conversation. Although he is incapable of achieving adult love, Benjy is also totally devoid of hatred, in refreshing contrast to his brother Jason. The boy who says that "He dont hurt folks" is correct.

To the children Benjy is an oddity. They display the mixture of fear and curiosity that a passer-by feels in seeing an idiot in the street. It is the juxtaposition of the reader's enriched perspective with that of the outside world which conveys so strong a sense of poignancy. The effect is the converse of the reassurance felt by the reader in the sheriff's encounter with Jason. In that scene the nature of the truth seems to be discernible to an external observer. In this one the gap between reality and the outside world's apprehension of it is so vast as to appear to be irreconcilable. Whereas Jason's hatred of Benjy represents an extreme form of human conduct resulting from repression, the innocent children's distance from someone different seems to be a natural and perhaps inevitable part of existence.

One young churchgoer who is not curious about Benjy is Dilsey's grandson Luster, who, like the idiot-child, is present at the beginning and end of The Sound and the Fury. He volunteers to take Benjy for a ride to the "boneyard" (335) in order to have the pleasure of driving the horse and
carriage rather than out of consideration for the idiot-child. Although he is a minor character, Luster reflects an important perspective that would otherwise be missing from the novel. He expresses the emotions of a fourteen year old boy who has to cope with the responsibility of looking after Benjy, keeping him entertained. Evelyn Scott astutely sums up Luster as the "keeper, against all his idle, pleasure-loving inclinations, of the witless Benjy." If the idiot-child is not to be institutionalized, someone must look after him every moment that he is awake. The thankless and demanding job falls to Luster, who performs his duties with "skill and detachment" (292).

Although he is competent Luster often gives vent to frustration and boredom, becoming a disruptive force for Benjy. He feints with the spoon when feeding him, makes the fire disappear by closing the door with a wire (76), takes away Benjy's flowers, and taunts him by crying "Caddy" on two separate occasions. Such disruptive antics cause Dilsey to refer to her grandson as a "vilyun" (331). When he says of the Compsons "Dese is funny folks. Glad I aint none of em" (292), Dilsey responds "Lemme tell you somethin, nigger boy, you got jes es much Compson devilment in you es any of em" (292).

From one point of view Luster may be regarded as a kind of comic parallel of Jason. Although he does not literally have as much "Compson devilment" in him as Jason,
Luster is the most disruptive member of Dilsey's family. In this respect his position is similar to that of Jason who is the most disruptive member of the Compson household. Luster's futile search for a quarter to go to the show helps to suggest that all the characters in the novel are seeking for something. It may also be viewed as a parody of Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece. Luster's loss of a quarter through a hole in his pocket looms large in his thoughts and contributes to his frustration. One of the times he taunts Benjy is after he fails in his attempt to sell a golf ball for twenty-five cents in order to recoup his loss. Letting the golfer have the ball before he gets money for it proves to be a bad business deal for Luster. His reaction is mild, however, compared to Jason's frustration when he suffers financial reverses, culminating in his loss of both his savings and his source of illicit income; Miss Quentin flees with the money on the same day that Luster searches in vain for his lost quarter. In fact, just before her flight, she gives him twenty-five cents, the price of admission to the carnival (91). It is her only gesture of generosity recorded in the novel.

Luster's desire for money to go to the show seems normal compared to Jason's obsession with getting and hoarding dollars. Luster's real interest is in the carnival. He desires the quarter so that he can spend it for his own pleasure. But the frugal and abstemious Jason, despite his
statement that "money has no value; it's just the way you spend it" (212) desires money itself. He uses it, not for pleasure, but as a means to increase his income. Whereas Luster expresses the natural yearning of a boy to see a carnival, Jason's desires have been repressed and focus on abstractions. In this sense Luster is an "obverse reflection" of Jason, paralleling and contrasting to him.

Renunciation is implied in Luster's remark "Dese is funny folks. Glad I aint none of em" (331). It is also manifest in the following exchange:

"Gettin Quentin all riled up." Dilsey said. "Why cant you keep him away from her. Dont you know she dont like him where she at." "Got as much time for him as I is." Luster said. "He aint none of my uncle." (74)

This statement appears to be a low-brow echoing of Cain's famous rhetorical question "Am I my brother's keeper?"57 Luster's wish to distance himself from Benjy is another parallel and contrast to Jason who manifests renunciation of responsibility for others in its extremest form. He feels that his brother's keeper should be a state employee at the asylum in Jackson, rather than himself. He is unable to acknowledge that his lampoons about the freakishness and impotence of Benjy are expressions of his deepest fears about himself. Luster's renunciation, on the other hand, reflects the feelings of a young adolescent boy, given a full time responsibility that he does not relish. He manifests neither the compassionate devotion of Dilsey nor the hatred of Jason. Luster may be regarded as a median between the
two extremes. He should be considered a villain, only in the serio-comic sense that Dilsey applies the term "vilyun." It seems to me that Luster might better be called a "wise-guy" than a villain. In denying that he has broken Jason's window, he says to his grandmother, "I never done hit . . . . Ask Benjy ef I did" (292). He is a cheeky, pleasure loving not overly conscientious boy. He performs his duties well, but on a number of occasions takes his frustrations or boredom out upon Benjy. His competence is stressed by Faulkner in the Appendix, while his disruptiveness is emphasized by the comments of his grandmother.

Luster's taunting of Benjy on Sunday afternoon suggests that his conduct after the Easter service has not noticeably altered. It agitates Benjy so much that Dilsey is forced to allow Luster to drive him to the graveyard as a last resort. Her striving in the face of overwhelming difficulties is thus dramatized one last time in the novel. In this instance her efforts to comfort the idiot-child are not overly successful. Benjy continues to utter "the grave hopeless sound of all voiceless misery under the sun" (332) even after Caddy's soiled and faded slipper, the last visible reminder of her presence, has been fetched. Dilsey is even less effective with her own grandson. In the last scene where she is present in *The Sound and the Fury* it is evident that Dilsey cannot control Luster. I believe that one of the reasons why her rendering is convincing is that
Faulkner does not sentimentalize or overstate the effects of her life-giving qualities. The fact that she does the best she can is an affirmation in itself.

Her love is a comforting and stabilizing force in a world of instability and accelerated change. It does not either prevent or significantly alter the disintegration taking place. Dilsey belongs to an older generation in which loyalty to the dominant whites is given unquestioningly. The restless Luster belongs to a new generation. Whatever future he encounters will be markedly different from the life of his grandmother. Although the range of black reflectors is much more narrow than that of the whites and the exploration of consciousness considerably less deep, it is comprehensive enough to suggest the exceptional qualities of Dilsey and hint at the passing from one generation to another.

Frony is a lesser figure than her mother, and Luster is more disruptive than any member of his family. His attempt to show off while driving the delapidated Compson carriage leads to the episode which terminates *The Sound and the Fury*.

The ending epitomizes Benjy's existence which moves abruptly and, from his point of view, inexplicably back and forth from order to disorder. His reaction to the sudden inversion of his world as Luster swings to the left of the statue of the Confederate soldier is the culminating expression of sound and fury.

For an instant Ben sat in utter hiatus. Then he bellowed. Bellow on bellow, his voice
mounted, with scarce interval for breath. There was more than astonishment in it, it was horror; shock; agony eyeless, tongueless; just sound . . . (335)

Benjy can do nothing about the disruptive forces beyond his control except bellow his sorrow. The sound is the expression in quintessential form of a grief and agony beyond words. Beverly Gross perceptively explains the significance of the scene as follows: "The final episode by its sheer shock manages to recall much of the subjective intensity expressed through Benjy and Quentin's consciousness earlier in the book. It restores the novel all the more poignantly to its tragic beginnings." The crescendo of sound is the culmination of a motif that runs throughout the novel. The sound of agony has a very special kind of intensity. Whitehead provides a possible explanation for this, suggesting that with sight the idea communicates the emotion, whereas with sound the emotion communicates the idea, and is therefore more powerful and immediate. He asserts that the direct communication of emotion through sound is the reason why hearing a national anthem is more moving than the sight of a flag.

Jason contributes his own sound and fury to the scene, ineffectually shouting at Benjy to shut up. He has returned from Mottson just in time to undergo one final humiliation. Being overly concerned with external appearances and his family's "good name," he is chagrined at the spectacle of his idiot-brother bellowing at the top of his lungs in the center
of town. This chaotic experience occurs by the statue which is a monument to an order that once gave meaning to the past. Jason's frenzied whipping of the blameless old mare Queenie, his striking of both Luster and Benjy, and his insistence that Benjy never be allowed to cross the gate again are all manifestations of his death-oriented consciousness.

The novel does not end with the crescendo of sound, however, but with the silence immediately after. It is an anti-climatic ending which is characteristic of Faulkner's way of concluding his works. In The Sound and the Fury all four sections end anti-climatically. Benjy's chapter seems to build toward a climax of disintegration (90), but suddenly shifts direction; it ends with him immersed in his earliest memories, lying in bed, secure in the arms of his sister Caddy. Quentin's section similarly moves deeper and deeper into disorder, indicated by the lack of punctuation, and brought to its culminating expression in Quentin's renunciation of life. But the chapter ends in an orderly paragraph in which Quentin describes his tidying up of small things such as the brushing of his teeth and the packing of his bags. Jason's section contains a melodramatic, potentially climactic chase in which he pursues his niece and the carnival pitchman. But nothing comes of this pursuit as Jason winds up nearly as deflated as the tire of his car. His monologue ends with him in his room at night counting
his money. It is one of the few moments in his chapter when he is not portrayed in conflict with another person or dashing across the countryside in pursuit of something. Although he is externally quiet Jason's thoughts are violent and renunciatory. Faulkner chooses to conclude *The Sound and the Fury* with the following anti-climactic paragraph.

Ben's voice roared and roared. Queenie moved again, her feet began to clop-clop steadily again, and at once Ben hushed. Luster looked quickly back over his shoulder, then he drove on. The broken flower drooped over Ben's fist and his eyes were empty and blue and serene again as cornice and facade flowed smoothly once more from left to right; post and tree, window and doorway, and signboard, each in its ordered place. (336)

The first point that should be noted about the ending is that it encourages explication. As Beverly Gross astutely observes, "because it offers suggestiveness rather than conclusiveness, this final episode demands that the reader engage in some act of interpretation." The reader's faculties of perception are stimulated, since he is forced to make his own attempted synthesis of the experience that has been presented. This is because the ending does not bring the diverse elements into a neat resolution. Miss Gross observes that the final episode is not a dramatic conclusion to the action. "Instead, it is a concentrated image of intense disruption and disaster." The fact that the conclusion is not the culminating episode of a clear plot sequence militates against ordering the experience into a neatly resolvable pattern. The ending implies that more
could be known and said. This is achieved through the rendering of a state of order which is highly tentative and temporary, rather than being a stable and fixed condition. At the end of a work such as *Hamlet* Fortinbras has succeeded to the throne and order has been restored to the kingdom of Denmark, presumably for some time to come. Benjy's restoration to tranquillity, in contrast, can not last long. Whether it will last until the ride is over or until Jason arrives home or up to the time when the next golfer cries, "Here, caddie!" is left open to speculation. But the temporary quality of Benjy's contentment is beyond doubt. The implication that more could be said was made explicit sixteen years later, when Faulkner composed the Appendix as evidence that the exploration not only could but did continue.

The fact that the novel ends with an image reflects the author's Bergsonian view that on the deepest level of experience man intuitively apprehends truths in terms of images which lend themselves to various interpretations. I suggest that the movement from order to frantic disorder to order again implies that it is flux, rather than the serenity conveyed in the last sentence, that emerges as the dominant condition. The flux is emphasized by the suddenness of the shift in the last parts of Sections One and Two, as well as in the final chapter, from disorder to temporary order. The sequence of fulfillment, sudden inexplicable loss, and equally inexplicable recovery epitomizes Benjy's
life. He regains fulfillment when thinking of Caddy, since memories are as real to him as present experience. This somewhat mitigates his sense of loss. His existence is an inextricable mixture of fulfillment and loss. Affirmation is rendered in the idiot-child's ability to respond positively to life-giving forces; negation is manifest by his utter passivity and helplessness, suggested in the final sequence by his being a passenger in a vehicle controlled by others. The Dilsey and Jason movements may be seen as illustrations of the extremes of affirmation and negation respectively. In Benjy's existence these forces are brought together in indissoluble suspension. He is the only Compson present at the Easter service and the only remaining one with the capacity to respond to its harmony. His elemental pleasure at the movement of a horse and carriage, the sight and shapes of various objects and the order of an accustomed ritual are illustrated in the final episode. The ease with which his primitive consciousness may be stampeded into sheer terror is also conveyed. His inflexibility in lieu of change and his total lack of control over the path of his own destiny is vividly dramatized in this scene. One is reminded both of how easily Benjy can be pleased and of the fact that little pleasure awaits him in the future. He has ceased to whimper when leaving the Compson domain, with its aura of disintegration, but is now to be confined within its gates. Mrs. Compson, Jason, Luster, and Dilsey remain with only the
latter to give him sympathetic understanding.

The order achieved at the end is thus highly tentative, since continued disintegration and further disorder are implied. It contrasts ironically to the desired condition of a stable order based on compassion and human understanding. This is especially evident in the anti-climactic ending of Section Two, where Quentin, unable to act in a way that will give meaning to existence, scrupulously attends to trivialities. His actions in brushing his teeth and hat before he commits suicide reflect a clinging to an inflexible mode of conduct and a kind of perversity that manifests a sense of outrage at the futility of existence. Quentin knows his formal tidying up is futile, but persists, not so much in spite of this knowledge, but because of it. In an absurd universe, he seems to say, one might as well subscribe to empty rituals since no others exist. The ordering he achieves is thus a mockery of the stable order he desires. By evoking a transitory order at the end of three sections (the first, second, and fourth) Faulkner suggests the gap between the desire for an ordered existence and what the characters are actually able to achieve. I think that the effect is analogous to the Democrats singing "Happy Days Are Here Again" in a brief moment of contentment during the nomination of their presidential candidate in 1968. This moment occurred just after the Chicago riots and prior to their defeat in November. Tension was generated because of the
disparity between the desired condition and the grim reality.

The final passage of Quentin's section is characteristic of Faulkner in that it places primary focus on the consciousness of the characters, rather than on the action. Instead of dramatizing the suicide, the author chooses to focus on the innermost thoughts and feeling of Quentin prior to his leap from the bridge. The concluding passage of his section portrays the quietness of Quentin's state of mind after he has given up the struggle to live. It reflects the fact that he can find peace only in death. The suicide itself occurs off stage and remains in diminished focus.

There are a number of scenes in the novel in which violence is portrayed but is subordinated to the emphasis on perception. Benjy runs after a young girl and is hit over the head with a board by her father. Faulkner conveys the agitation of Benjy's consciousness in "trying to say" (70-71), stressing the inner emotional turbulence, rather than the external incident. The same is true of Quentin's two fights, which themselves are anti-climactic, since Quentin faints in the encounter with Dalton Ames, and never does land a blow in either "fight." In these three incidents the focus is on how the consciousness of the reflectors contributes to the violence and how they perceive it. The endings of all four sections reinforce this emphasis on perception by focussing on consciousness rather than on action.
In the scene that concludes *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner dramatizes a violent and disruptive occurrence, but does not dwell on it. The incident is framed by renderings of the peacefulness of Benjy's gaze which is "empty and blue and serene" (336). The way that Benjy's childlike consciousness is always fully immersed in the present, moving from the total involvement of peace to utter turmoil and back to peace again is emphasized. Although the sound of bellowing echoes in the ensuing silence for the reader, it does not for Benjy. There is grim irony in the fact that his happiness stems from his inability to foresee what is going to happen to him in the future. The only member of the Compson household capable of achieving even momentary happiness in 1928 is the one who lacks the ability to synthesize what he has perceived, and learn from experience. The family decline has reached so irrevocable a state that Benjy is in one sense fortunate not to be able to comprehend the full implications of experience. The rendering of Benjy's perception in the concluding sentence brings together diverse elements in this respect: His response is an affirmation of the capacity of the life instinct to find elemental pleasure in the shapes, the movement and the order of existence; unblocked and unfettered by repression, the life force is able to respond positively to experience. Commingling with this affirmation is the nearly overwhelming sense of negation implied in the concluding image, which suggests that the
only possible fulfillment left for any member of the Compsons depends upon the acute limitation of vision. No member of the family has been able to assimilate experience into his consciousness to learn from it and respond positively. Now it is too late.

The full and intensive, though by no means complete, exploration of experience undertaken by the author and reader concludes with the focus on a character unable to assimilate and synthesize his perception of life. There is thus not only a counterpoint between affirmation and negation in Benjy's consciousness; there is also an implied counterpoint between the idiot-child's incapacity to learn and the author and reader's attempt to achieve an overview of experience which approaches an understanding of the truth. Faulkner's own testimony suggests that his exploration of experience in the novel was more rewarding for him personally than in any other of his works. I quote from a paraphrase by Meriwether of what, in my opinion, is Faulkner's most comprehensive statement about The Sound and the Fury.

In writing Sanctuary, and later As I Lay Dying, he noted he had found something missing from the experience that writing The Sound and the Fury had been. This—a feeling hard to define but including an actual physical emotion, faith and joy and ecstasy and an eager looking forward to what the process of creation would release from the paper before him—this, he felt, might have been missing from As I Lay Dying because he had known so much about that book before writing it. He waited nearly two years before beginning his next novel, and then tried to create for Light in August the conditions of writing The Sound and the Fury, by sitting down to face the first blank sheet with only a single image in mind instead of the whole book, in this case the image of the pregnant
girl making her way along an unfamiliar road. But the new novel failed to bring him the feeling he had had with The Sound and the Fury, though it progressed satisfactorily . . . he wondered if he were not now in the situation of knowing too much about the techniques of fiction, and if he had not already made use of the only image . . . which had the power to move him as he wanted the act of writing to do.  

In Light in August Byron Bunch's assimilation of experience is analogous to that of the author and reader, corroborating the possibility of growth. It is fascinating that in the work which Faulkner considered his fullest exploration of experience, not only is no learner presented, but the focus of the novel comes to rest on the one character totally devoid of this capacity. In The Sound and the Fury the capacity of author and reader to approach understanding is implicit, but remains tentative, not being embodied in a character. Whether the lessons learned can be applied to the experience of one's own life remains a moot point. This contrasts with the vision presented in Light in August.

The image which concludes The Sound and the Fury is extremely rich in implication. It is a powerful and fitting conclusion to the novel, bringing together into focus the central concern of perception as expressed through the act of looking, the apprehension of life as motion, the movement of the Compson brothers in circles, the quest for order and meaning in experience, the negations of sound and fury, and the sense of man's victimization. All of these diverse motifs are rendered without being forced into an over neat
resolution which would falsify the meaning of existence. Michael Cowan has commented upon the diffuse focus and ambiguousness of *The Sound and the Fury* as follows:

In the complex interaction of the vision of "the sound and the fury" with the vision of "de power en de glory" lie the many and ambiguous tones of the novel—a twilight zone of light and shadow, youth and decay, freedom and fate, hope and despair, that can never be resolved by the rational mind of man or by the explicit statement of Faulkner. For all that he implies about the causes or meaning of experiences, Faulkner leaves a strong sense of mystery as to the ultimate source of natural and human processes in the novel. One of the most fascinating and frustrating aspects of *The Sound and the Fury* is its ultimate ambiguity. The three movements of the final section convey the power and the glory, the sound and the fury, and the twilight zone in between, respectively.

The mingling of affirmation and negation in the novel is most clearly understood in relation to Benjy, since he embodies both the life instinct and impotence in pure forms. The negation is evident in the images of sterility, alienation, passivity, and victimization and needs no further explication. The sense of affirmation in the face of deep pessimism is more elusive and more difficult to explain. I am in agreement with critics such as Evelyn Scott and Richard Adams that a strong sense of affirmation co-exists with the negations making *The Sound and the Fury* an assertion of "grim faith." Although the affirmation reaches its culminating expression in Dilsey it is not confined to her. In my opinion, it stems from the involvement of the author
and reader with the characters, enabling us to feel that the lives of the Compsons, and by extension, the lives of humanity as visualized in the novel, are important. Man may often be miserable and unfulfilled, but he is not insignificant. The lack of fulfillment of Caddy, Quentin, Benjy, and even Jason is painful precisely because they have vitality. This is most clearly dramatized in Benjy whose humanity is so strongly rendered. His hurts are the pains of a suffering humanity. To dismiss him in particular, or existence in general, as a black joke is to evade the issue as Jason does.

The unflinching nature of the exploration of experience, avoiding none of the negations which comprise a large part of modern existence, is also an important element of affirmation in the novel. In its resonance of implication the final episode enriches the exploration of experience by the author and reader without terminating it. The anti-climactic ending has a deflating effect which suggests that the quest for meaning must be incomplete. The reader does not achieve a climax of awareness in which all diverse elements fall into place. Walter Slatoff is correct in suggesting that the endings of Faulkner's novels prevent complete resolution and "leave the reader with conflicting thoughts and feelings." He seriously errs, however, in underestimating the capacity of the author and reader to learn through the process of perception. The paraphrase of Faulkner's statement quoted previously makes explicit his feeling of confidence in the
creative powers of the human imagination. The feeling expressed is not one of frustration but of exhilaration and wonder at the capacity of the creative faculties for exploration and discovery. The extent of these capacities is indicated by the clarification of experience that begins to take place for the reader in Jason's monologue and culminates in Part Four. This is an essential element of affirmation in the novel. The anti-climax does not negate the exploration which is a value in itself; rather the deflation reflects the fact that the exploration is of necessity incomplete; no matter how far it has gone, it could always have gone further. The anti-climax becomes a kind of external manifestation of the inevitable incompleteness of the quest for meaning. Faulkner acknowledges this incompleteness when he refers to *The Sound and the Fury* as the most magnificent of his failures. His statement is not an expression of ultimate frustration, but an affirmation of human potentiality. In my opinion, Faulkner's vision is in accordance with the statement of Alfred North Whitehead with which I conclude this part of my study.

> Our minds are finite and, yet even in the circumstances of finitude we are surrounded by possibilities that are infinite, and the purpose of human life is to grasp as much as we can of that infinitude. I wish I could convey this sense I have of the infinity of the possibilities that confront humanity.

In *The Sound and the Fury* Faulkner does convey both the strivings of the finite mind and the infinity of the possibilities that confront humanity.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

AND WAS NOT HEARD OF AGAIN. EXCEPT . . . (11)
In composing *The Sound and the Fury* Faulkner is able to give expression to his full artistic powers for the first time. The exuberance that he feels in realizing his creative potentiality, as new possibilities open up before him, evokes a strong sense of affirmation that is not embodied in any of the characters in the novel. The affirmation stems from the author's sense of joy and confidence in his own creative faculties to explore and make discoveries about the nature of experience.¹ In doing so he provides the reader with an opportunity to put himself in an analogous position and make sense out of the material that has been presented.

The feeling of exhilaration is perhaps intensified when the artist is able to fully realize his powers relatively early in his career, as Whitman does in "Song of Myself." But whereas Whitman envisions the virtually unlimited possibilities for discovery in both himself and other people, Faulkner's sense of discovery is in counterpoint to the inability of the Compson brothers to learn from experience. The implication is that people have the innate capacity to learn, but are generally failing to do so. Richard Adams has compared Faulkner's rather sudden discovery² of his full artistic powers to Hawthorne's experience in writing *The Scarlet Letter*, quoting a comment from Henry James' *Hawthorne*:

Henry James said of *The Scarlet Letter*, "... it has about it that charm, very hard to express, which we find in an artist's work the first time he has touched his highest mark--a
sort of straightness and naturalness of execution, an unconsciousness of his public, and freshness of interest in his theme." *The Sound and the Fury* is the work in which Faulkner first touched his highest mark; and, for all its technical complexity, it has about it much of the same charm.  

The decline of the once aristocratic Compsons proved to be a subject conducive to exploration of consciousness by the author. The topic provides both a unity of focus and a scope wide enough for the writer to include a diversity of approaches. As I mentioned in my introduction the diverse angles of vision are necessary, because for Faulkner no individual sees enough of "the truth" to merit exclusive focus. The interrelatedness of the main characters who are both reflectors and participants in the action evokes a stronger centrality of focus than in *Light in August* and in *Go Down Moses*. In the former novel the protagonists rarely interact; in the latter the fact that the main characters of the stories are all connected with the McCaslins in some way is the only resemblance they share. In *Absalom, Absalom!* there is central focus on one family's aspiration and decline, but the reflectors are, with one exception, spectators rather than participants in the action.

In addition to his sudden realization of his artistic powers, and the diversity of approach he discovered within a flexible unity of focus there is another reason why Faulkner is able to explore experience so intensely in *The Sound and the Fury*. I believe he found in the Compsons a family similar enough to his own to stimulate a strong sense
of identification yet different enough to allow for a free ranging of his imaginative faculties. The most important resemblance is the sense of a family, with a colorful forefather, that has lost its position of dominance in society. The question of what place, if any, exists for the sons of the displaced aristocracy is explored especially intensely in Part Two. In my opinion, the author's identification with the Southern aristocracy is an integral part of his sensibility. Poor white families such as the Bundrens and Snopeses are treated with more comic distance than are the Sartorises, Compsons, McCaslins and Sutpens. The aristocratic preference for an elaborate and ornamental, non-utilitarian pattern is reflected in the texture of Faulkner's sentences and the intricate structuring of his novels. If Hemingway's style may be said to reflect the journalistic, utilitarian sense of coming directly to the point without wasting a word, Faulkner's manifests the sense of leisure to take as long as necessary to complete an intricate and ornate patterning.

His treatment of the Sartoris family is most clearly based on the history of the Faulkners and is considerably more restrained than his exploration of the Compsons. This is partly attributable to his not having discovered the technique of immersion within the consciousness of characters in Sartoris. I believe another reason for the restraint is that Faulkner could not fully explore disintegration in a
family so explicitly connected with his own as the Sartoris household. According to Malcolm Cowley, Faulkner told him that "When he was writing *The Sound and the Fury*, he found there were connections between the Sartoris family and the Compsons." The general situation of the Compson family is similar enough to the writer's own to encourage sympathetic identification, while the differences enable him to explore his material from a healthy critical distance.

The sense of intense involvement is lacking in the Appendix to *The Sound and the Fury* that resulted from his collaboration with Malcolm Cowley to produce *The Portable Faulkner* in 1946. The editor wished to include the Dilsey excerpt in his volume and believed the author was about to provide him with "a two-page introduction summarizing the rest of the novel and making it possible for this story or episode to stand alone." But neither brevity nor analytical explication were among Faulkner's strongpoints. Even in his original statement of intention the multiplex focus of his sensibility is evident:

Suppose you use the last section, the Dilsey one, of *Sound and Fury*, and suppose . . . I wrote a page or two of synopsis to preface it, a condensation of the first 3 sections, which simply told why and when (and who she was) and how a 17 year old girl robbed a bureau drawer of hoarded money and climbed down a drain pipe and ran off with a carnival pitchman.

Instead of getting a synopsis Cowley received the "Appendix." It was composed in 1945 sixteen years after the publication of the original volume. The author did not
possess a copy of his favorite among his own novels and wrote entirely from memory. This partially explains the factual discrepancies between the Appendix and the novel as first published. The most obvious inconsistencies are discussed by Cowley, who was considerably more worried about them than Faulkner was. The following excerpt is not a letter but an articulation of what Cowley considered to be his editorial dilemma:

"Where . . . did Jason keep his strongbox? -- under a loose board in the clothes closet, as the novel tells us, or in a locked bureau drawer, as I read in the new manuscript? How much money was in the box? -- three thousand dollars, as Jason informed the sheriff in the novel, or nearly seven thousand as in the Appendix? . . . . How did Quentin escape from Jason's locked room? -- Did she climb down a pear tree (novel) or slide down a rainspout (Appendix)?

If Faulkner had been disturbed by factual inconsistencies, such as these, he might have tried to obtain a copy of the novel; but he did not endeavor to do so. In a subsequent letter to Cowley he clarifies his position, stating that he did not wish to read The Sound and the Fury again and that he "would rather let the Appendix stand with the inconsistencies." His reason is that "The inconsistencies in the appendix prove to me that the book is still alive after 15 years, and being still alive is growing, changing." This is an unusual if not a unique position for an author to take. Faulkner makes it clear in this statement that his ultimate concern is with perception. He wishes to render the way the characters of the novel are perceived by
his consciousness as of 1945. The changes and inconsistencies are evidence that the process of perception is fluid and infinite, rather than fixed and finite.

The Appendix is the ultimate corroboration of the fact that Faulkner has created an open form reflecting the complex and shifting nature of experience. It should not be taken as "the truth," but as a truth, the last of five rendered perspectives all of which contain both validity and distortion. The comment on Luster, for example, makes explicit the positive aspect of his character, as suggested in the novel. It does not deal with the disruptive aspects of his nature. Taken as one of several ways of looking at Luster, the comment is a useful clarification. It is clearly inadequate as a final comprehensive statement of the truth.

The angle of vision of the Appendix is more external to the consciousness of the characters than any of the four previous renderings. The form of a "rambling genealogy of the people, father to son to son" militates against depth exploration of any one consciousness. When the author immerses himself within the consciousness of his reflectors, as he does most fully in the first two sections of *The Sound and the Fury*, the flow of perception determines the structure. The more removed the author is from the consciousness being explored, the more prominent is the chronological sequence, which is an external principle of ordering experience. This
is evident in the Appendix, which lacks the validity of immersion, containing instead the clarity of vision of retrospect.

The understanding of experience has become more explicit and is expressed in a higher proportion of statements to images than in the previous sections. Caddy is "doomed and knew it" (10), Quentin "loved death above all" (9), whereas Benjy "loved three things: the pasture [,] . . . his sister Candace, firelight" (19). In distilling experience the Appendix continues and extends the direction of the achievement of Section Four. The movement from image toward statement reflects the process of expressing experience, initially perceived by the unconscious, on an increasingly more conscious level. In Bergsonian terms the Appendix is more "analytical" and less "intuitive" than the rest of the novel. The clarity gained in the retrospect is offset by the removal from the immediacy of experience. The statement that Quentin "loved death," for example, is a valid conclusion based on the rendering of him in the original volume. But in isolating and classifying an aspect of his consciousness (even a dominant aspect) the narrative perspective contains distortion along with its validity. The statement misses something rendered when Quentin's consciousness, which includes a strong element of self-destructiveness, is directly presented.

The sense of tension conveyed through the reader's
awareness of the simultaneous involvement and distortion of the reflected perspective is absent from the Appendix. Likewise, the dynamic energy generated from being immersed in the struggle to find meaning in a world of perpetual flux is also missing. In my opinion, The Sound and the Fury is highly successful, precisely because it generates so great an amount of tension and energy, dramatizing the quest to determine the meaning of experience in the face of formidable difficulties. In a recent study Richard Adams has perceptively discussed this aspect of the novel.

Maurice Coindreau, in his preface to the French edition of The Sound and the Fury, dated 1937, says that that novel was "written during a time when the author was struggling with some personal difficulties," and adds in a footnote that "Deep emotional shocks are a potent factor in the inspiration of William Faulkner," remarking as supporting and more specific evidence that Light in August was written after the death of one of Faulkner's children and Absalom, Absalom! after that of his brother Dean.

We may never clearly know the relations between Faulkner's private life and his esthetic work; apparently he did not intend that we should. We do know, however, that there must have been a tremendous charge of creative energy to be released, and that in 1928 he was able not only to release it at full pressure but to direct and control it with an equally powerful pressure of artistic discipline. 12

The absence of this energy is reflected in the language of the Appendix which is more self-conscious and less resonant than that of the previously rendered perspectives.

In one of his letters to Cowley Faulkner suggests that the narrator of the Appendix "knew only what the town could have told him." 13 He comments upon the narrative viewpoint as follows: "(In fact, the purpose of this genealogy
is to give a sort of bloodless bibliophile's point of view. I was a sort of Garter King-at-Arms, heatless, not very moved, cleaning up 'Compson' before going on to the next 'C-o' or 'C-r'."] This statement should not be taken too literally. In some of Faulkner's public statements, including this one, there is a tone of deprecation which belies the nature of his achievements. The remarks quoted above are nevertheless interesting because they contain Faulkner's acknowledgment that the distance of the narrative perspective is a limiting factor. When he refers to himself as "heatless," I believe it is his self-deprecatory way of stating that the "tremendous charge of creative energy" manifest in the writing of the original volume was greatly diminished in 1945. There is a "bloodless bibliophile" in the Appendix named Melissa Meek who wishes to save Caddy. She can not arrange things to her satisfaction, however, any more than the novelist can order experience to correspond perfectly to his perception of it. After failing to get satisfaction from Jason she makes one last try, as does the novelist in composing this fifth perspective.

The Appendix extends the direction of Part Four, not only continuing the clarification and distillation of experience, but in expanding the economic and social context in which the characters are seen. Faulkner had rendered the present of the novel which included events from approximately 1897 to 1928, as containing the culmination of the past and
the implication of the future. In the Appendix he explores both past and future experience, extending the time span from 1699 to 1945, using the genealogy as an underlying structural principle, as he does in *Go Down, Moses*. Faulkner's interest in genealogy in the first half of the nineteen forties is, in my view, a natural outgrowth of his concern with the interrelationship between the past and the present, and of his sense of ancestry first dealt with in *Sartoris*. It also reflects his fascination with the attempt to found a dynasty, which is explored in *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Go Down, Moses*. His interest may have been further stimulated by the publication of W.J. Cash's *The Mind of the South*, which first came out in 1941.

In his initial chapter Cash studies the ancestry of Southerners with particular reference to the belief that the Southern Aristocracy were the descendants of Cavaliers. For the most part, he discredits the myth. In the Appendix Faulkner both draws upon this myth and deflates it. He associates the founder of the American Compsons with the supporters of Bonnie Prince Charlie at Culloden, but deflates the claims of aristocracy. He traces the evolution from the Cavalier Dream to the Southern Agrarian Dream envisioned by Jason I. Its final reductive form is Jason's dream of making a killing on the stock market. The first Jason Compson establishes the family domain by racing his mare against others and then trading her for a square mile of land.
Jason IV presides over the final disintegration of this domain as his namesake presided over its founding. In selling the land and buying an automobile Jason completes the process begun by his grandfather and continued by his father. The first Jason is a shrewd gambler, a man of action who races his horse to gain land and found a dynasty. The last person to bear the name of Jason Compson is a man of words and a compulsive gambler who seems to lose constantly. His gambling on the stock market for money indicates the way the dream has become materialistic and abstracted. The reductiveness of his dream, and of Jason's consciousness in general, is manifest in the shrinking and ultimate abolition of the family domain as a result of his action.

In rendering the Compson experience within a historical context Faulkner presents the intertwined destinies of the Indians, Whites, and Blacks. The order of his presentation may simply reflect the order in which the three races came to America. But it is appropriate that the Appendix begin with the Chickasaws, who are forerunners of the Compsons in their inability to adjust and survive, and end with the Blacks, who are able to endure. The ability to survive under changing and adverse conditions is manifest by the Blacks alone, who show their capacity to cope with dispossession. The author's interest in the intertwined destinies of the three races is evident in Go Down Moses, as well as in the Appendix. In
the former work it becomes the focal point of a full exploration of experience. In the latter, which is a supplement to what has previously been rendered, the treatment of the darker races is relatively sketchy.

The form of a "rambling genealogy from father to son to son" implies a wide ranging horizontal structure rather than a vertical one conducive to depth exploration. It makes for a diffuse focus on character rather than a concentrated one as in the novel. It also tends to restrict the flow of narrative consciousness, since the structural principle serves as a kind of outline. But Faulkner's consciousness will not be confined within an inflexible form, and he is able to ramble within the genealogy, portraying Caddy, Melissa Meek, Jason and Dilsey within the Caddy caption. This excerpt, occurring in the central part of the Appendix, is the longest and most energetic of the captions. This suggests to me that the story of "the beautiful and tragic little girl" continued to haunt the imagination of her creator. By the end of the fourth section it is evident that Jason is doomed to a life of embittered isolation and that Benjy will eventually be confined to Jackson. The depiction of Caddy's fate, which is uncertain at the conclusion of *The Sound and the Fury* in 1928, is the climax of the Appendix.

In the novel itself Caddy is presented indirectly through the consciousness of her three brothers. The Appendix maintains this element of indirection, rendering the effect
that an image of her has upon others. The rather melo-dramatic image that dominates this section implies that Caddy has survived amidst difficult circumstances, but that the life-giving qualities she manifested as a child and young woman have been wasted. It is conveyed as follows:

... a picture, a photograph in color clipped obviously from a slick magazine—a picture filled with luxury and money and sunlight—a Cannebière backdrop of mountains and palms and cypresses and the sea, an open powerful expensive chromium-trimmed sports car, the woman's face hatless between a rich scarf and a seal coat, ageless and beautiful, cold serene and damned; beside her a handsome lean man of middleage in the ribbons and tabs of a German staff general. . . (12-13)

I feel that this image is more conscious and less resonant than the richly evocative ones contained in the novel as originally written. In my opinion it is somewhat dated whereas the image of the little girl climbing the tree is timeless. The picture in the magazine suggests that the warmth and vitality of Caddy have metamorphosed into a cold and brittle hardness. Whereas the image of her climbing the tree suggests motion and a child's healthy curiosity, this one is a still life conveying a state of frozen immobility.

The effect of the image on Jason is quite predictable, since he is incapable of growth. He continues to regard Caddy and other women as "bitches", deriving negative satisfaction from her predicament. I believe that the only instance in which Jason is rendered as laughing in The Sound
and the Fury is when he is shown her picture. His laughter is followed by words of denial: "'That Candace?' he said. 'Don't make me laugh. This bitch aint thirty yet. The other one's fifty now'" (14). Although his external circumstances have changed, Jason's renunciation of human responsibility remains constant. In the Jason caption Faulkner renders him as uttering one final negative witticism which appropriately concludes the presentation of him in the novel. It is an ironic inversion of the Emancipation Proclamation in which Jason proclaims his severing of the ties which bind him to a common humanity. "'In 1865,' he would say, 'Abe Lincoln freed the niggers from the Compsons. In 1933, Jason Compson freed the Compsons from the niggers'" (18). In a Faulknerian novel a character is never less free than when he proclaims himself to be so. Jason mistakenly equates renunciation of responsibility with freedom.

The black that Jason is most anxious to 'free himself' from is Dilsey, whose affirmation threatens him because it poses an alternative to his own sterile mode of existence. She is last rendered in the caption entitled "Candace" sitting in a rocking chair by a fire in the small neat home of her daughter, Frony. Her transcendence of isolation and her association with the warming fires of life are suggested in this image. She has aged considerably, but her "supple and delicately shaped" hands indicate her continuing vitality. Although her eyes are "now apparently almost sightless" (14),
Dilsey is still able to see the Compson situation with penetrating clarity. She immediately envisions the previous efforts of Melissa and the hopelessness of any attempt to try to save Caddy. In the following passage Faulkner brings the recurrent motif of sight as a symbol of the process of perception to its final conclusion in *The Sound and the Fury*:

'Look at my eyes,' the old Negress said.  
'How can I see that picture?'
'Call Frony!' the librarian cried. 'She will know her!' But already the old Negress was folding the clipping carefully back into its old creases, handing it back.
'My eyes aint any good anymore,' she said.
'I cant see it.'
And that was all. (15)

Faulkner is rendering an insight here which had not crystallized in his original version of the novel. Dilsey's reaction is similar to that of Lena Grove when "she is not listening apparently" to Varner's statements about the foolishness of continuing her journey. What the author conveys in this passage and in the one from the Appendix is not a blindness, but a refusal to dwell on negations of existence that can not be rectified. It is as if Dilsey and Lena look, not away from, but through and beyond the negations, refusing to focus on them. Dilsey sees with clarity that the struggle for affirmation within the Compson household has been lost. Unlike Quentin, she does not fret or waste her energy brooding over a situation beyond her control. She struggles as long as she is able to alleviate the sufferings of others,
Melissa, Faulkner's deprecatory portrayal of a person trying to rectify the unrectifyable, gains increased understanding. As a result of her efforts she attains the insight that Dilsey "didn't want to see it know whether it was Caddy or not because she knows Caddy doesn't want to be saved hasn't anything anymore worth being saved for nothing worth being lost that she can lose" (16).

Having rendered Dilsey as fully as he wishes in this caption Faulkner has no need for further amplification of her character when he briefly deals with the Blacks at the end of the Appendix. Placing her name last is the one deviation that the author makes from his chronological sequence. I believe this placement is itself a metaphor. If the sound and the fury continue, so do the positive life-giving forces that oppose them. It is significant that the novel, in its final form, ends with Dilsey because she embodies the life force which has endured and will continue to endure. The concluding words heighten the poignancy of the novel by suggesting a contrast between Dilsey's family and that of the Compsons, who failed to perpetuate themselves. The words also reflect the emergence of positive elements of existence which exist like the earth itself as a kind of framework beyond the sound and the fury signifying nothing. Dilsey is Faulkner's portrayal of the embodiment of this life force. The author has reached the point where the invocation of her name is itself a profound statement. The process of per-
ceiving "the truth" of the Compson situation is unlimited, each individual comprehending reality differently from every other, and each individual perspective constantly being modified by time and change. But for William Faulkner the distillation of the meaning of the Compson experience can go no further and it is fitting that with the words "Dilsey/They endured" (22) he ends his exploration of the process of perception in *The Sound and the Fury*.
CHAPTER NOTES

AND

LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED
NOTES FOR CHAPTER 1

All Biblical references are taken from the King James Version. Dictionary definitions are taken from Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, 1967.

1 Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner, Faulkner in the University, pp. 273-274.

2 Walter Slatoff, Quest For Failure, p. 150.

3 Gwynn and Blotner, op. cit., p. 71.


5 William Faulkner, Go Down, Moses, p. 361.


7 Olga Vickery, The Novels of William Faulkner, p. 29.

8 Michael Millgate, The Achievement of William Faulkner, p. 87.

9 Booth, op. cit., p. 299.

10 Charles Feidelson, Symbolism and American Literature, p. 32.

11 Ibid., The italics are Feidelson's.

12 Ibid., The parenthetical insertion is mine.


14 Feidelson, op. cit., p. 32.

15 Ibid., Feidelson ascribes this function to Ishmael.

16 William Faulkner, Sartoris, with an Afterward by Lawrance Thompson, p. 307. Thompson makes the following overstatement: "In the first two novels his primary goal was to vent spleen through harsh uses of satire and sarcasm for purposes of negation."

Booth, *op. cit.*, p. 245.


Lucien Price, *Dialogues of Alfred North Whitehead*, p. 214. The italics are mine.


Booth, *op. cit.*, p. 308.


William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (New York:
1946) p. 23. I have used the Random House edition, making the textual corrections suggested by Meriwether, who has collated subsequent editions with the original one published by Cope and Smith in 1929. I have indicated the suggested corrections with brackets. See James B. Meriwether, "Notes on the Textual History of The Sound and the Fury," The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, LVI (Third Quarter, 1962), 285-316.

39 William Faulkner, Light in August, p. 3.


41 Booth, op. cit., p. 20.


45 Volpe, op. cit., p. 20.

46 William Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom! p. 190.

47 Volpe, op. cit., p. 186.

48 Goldberg, op. cit., p. 233.

49 Coleridge's Biographia Literaria ed. by J. Shawcross, II, 6.


51 Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens, p. 22.

52 Gwynn and Blotner, op. cit., p. 50. Faulkner states "I read Don Quixote every year."

53 Miguel de Cervantes, Don Quixote, Ozell's Revision of the translation of Peter Motteux, p. 3.

54 Ibid., pp. 611-619 (Part II, Book III, Chapter XXVI).

55 Peter Swiggart, The Art of Faulkner's Novels, p. 80.

56 Gwynn and Blotner, op. cit., pp. 273-274.
57 Slatoff, *op. cit.*, p. 76. The italics are mine.


61 Gwynn and Blotner, *op. cit.*, p. 274. The italics are mine.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 2

1"The Kingdom of God" was published April 26, 1925. Although it was first published October 7, 1929, The Sound and the Fury was finished, according to Faulkner, "in all the hooraw of Smith and Hoover in November (1928)." See Frederick L. Gwynn, "Faulkner's Raskalnikov," Modern Fiction Studies, IV (Summer, 1958), 169.


4Edel, op. cit., pp. 164-165.

5Booth, op. cit., p. 301.

6Ibid., p. 301. Booth refers specifically to Ulysses rather than The Sound and the Fury.

7Goldberg, op. cit., p. 262.


10Colin Wilson, Introduction to the New Existentialism, p. 38.

11Ibid., p. 41.


14Ibid., p. 200.

15Gwynn and Blotner, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

Izsak, op. cit., p. 191. "All mention of Benjamin's thirty-third birthday and Dilsey's celebration of it... are entirely missing in the manuscript." Miss Izsak concludes that this "type of revision, made after the completion of the fourth section and before the novel was typed, transformed the first section from an independent narration into one which precisely anticipates the third and fourth sections."


Ibid., pp. 214-215.

Slatoff, op. cit., p. 108.

Bouvard, op. cit., p. 262.


Meriwether and Millgate, op. cit., p. 147.

Edel, op. cit., p. 162.


Slatoff, op. cit., p. 150.


Meriwether and Millgate, op. cit., p. 63.

John W. Hunt, Art in Theological Tension: The Locus and Status of Meaning, pp. 91-92.


Meriwether and Millgate, op. cit., p. 146.


37 Gwynn and Blotner, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.

38 Cowan, *op. cit.*, p. 9. This list of Cowan does not include the death of the mare (?) Nancy which breaks its leg and is shot prior to the death of Damuddy. It is thus the first instance in which the Compson children come into contact with death. I believe that Faulkner subconsciously associates this incident with the servant Nancy and her fear of death in the ditch in *That Evening Sun.*

39 Please see Carey Wall, *The Sound and the Fury: The Emotional Center*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, XI, Number 4 (Summer, 1970), 372. Wall states "The Compson history is a story of loss, of the inexplicable cultural loss of a vital religious myth capable of giving life definite tragedies and triumphs."


41 Howe, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

42 Swiggart, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

43 Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER 3

1 Hunt, op. cit., p. 62.
2 Ibid., p. 87.
3 Neumann, op. cit., p. 108.
4 Ibid., p. 104.
5 Ibid., p. 109.
6 Bergson, An Introduction to Metaphysics, op. cit., p. 41.
7 Ibid., pp. 23-24.
8 Ibid., pp. 10-11.
9 Edel, op. cit., p. 98.
10 Frederick J. Hoffman, William Faulkner, p. 55.
11 Beyond Good and Evil in The Collected Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, ed. by Oscar Levy, trans. by Helen Zimmern, XII, 144.
12 The manuscript of The Sound and the Fury was entitled "Twilight." Please see Linton R. Massey, William Faulkner: Man Working, p. 35.
13 Cowan, op. cit., p. 11.
14 Swiggart, op. cit., p. 82.
15 Hunt, op. cit., p. 89.
16 Cowan, op. cit., p. 67.
17 Slatoff, op. cit., p. 67.
18 Ibid., p. 67.
19 Humphrey, op. cit., p. 74.
20 Cowan, op. cit., p. 10.
21 Melvin Backman, Faulkner: The Major Years, p. 15.
22 Ibid., p. 15.
Howe, op. cit., p. 167.

Gwynn and Blotner, op. cit., p. 17.

Ibid., p. 263.

Ibid., p. 274.

Jackson J. Benson, "Quentin Compson: Self-Portrait of A Young Artist's Emotions," Twentieth Century Literature, XVII, No. 3 (July, 1971), 146.

Cowan, op. cit., p. 4.

John Faulkner, My Brother Bill, p. 120.

The connection may be seen with variation in Sartoris Pylon, "Honor" and "All the Dead Pilots." For a brief discussion of air force pilots and death see Gwynn and Blotner, op. cit., pp. 22-23.


Ibid., p. 244.

Ibid., p. 6.

Backman, op. cit., p. 17.

Volpe, op. cit., p. 103.

Richard P. Adams, "Some Key Words in Faulkner" Tulane Studies in English; XVI (1968), 145.

Volpe, op. cit., p. 108.

Nietzsche, op. cit., p. 144.

Hunt, op. cit., p. 5.

Ibid., p. 5.


Backman, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

Norman O. Brown, Life Against Death, p. 92.

Ibid., p. 92.
Mark Spilka, "Quentin Compson's Universal Grief," *Contemporary Literature*, II (Autumn, 1970), 460. Spilka is helpful in explaining why the theme of incest is especially prominent in Southern writing. He states "Family pride, the physical isolation of plantation homes, the racial and social isolation of caste society, make for hothouse relations in old Southern families. The encroachments of modern commercialism and social flux further intensify domestic closeness and exacerbate domestic tensions."

William Shakespeare *Othello* I.i.116.

Backman, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

Lawrence Thompson, *William Faulkner: An Introduction and Interpretation*, p. 49.

Walter Brylowski, *Faulkner's Olympian Laugh: Myth in the Novels*, pp. 75-76.


The discussion is implicit throughout Neumann's book and is not easily pinpointed. Please see Chapter II, especially pp. 58-61.


Gwynn and Blotner, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

Cervantes, *op. cit.*, p. 129.


Volpe, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
65 Please see William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, p. 526. I have used the edition which includes this novel with *The Sound and the Fury*. See also *Go Down, Moses*, op. cit., p. 315.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER 4

1Please see Backman, op. cit., p. 30, Cowan, op. cit., p. 18, Swiggart, op. cit., p. 102, Volpe, op. cit., p. 123.

2Swiggart, op. cit., p. 102.

3Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious in The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud, trans. and ed. by A.A. Brill, p. 696.

4Hunt, op. cit., p. 79.

5Cowan, op. cit., p. 10.

6Wilson, op. cit., p. 25.

7Volpe, op. cit., p. 119.


9Volpe, op. cit., p. 124.

10Aswell, op. cit., p. 213.

11Cowan, op. cit., p. 10.

12Shakespeare King Lear III.vi.80-82.

13Volpe, op. cit., p. 123.


15Gwynn and Blotner, op. cit., p. 84.


17Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels and Other Writings ed. by Louis A. Landa, p. 209.

18Gwynn and Blotner, op. cit., p. 263.

19William Faulkner, Light in August, op. cit., p. 94. See also pp. 102, 148, 283.

20Gwynn and Blotner, op. cit., p. 33. The italics are mine.

21In a recent article on the attempted assassination of George Wallace, Time Magazine referred to his unkillable Snopes-like quality.

23 Ibid., p. 85.

24 Ibid., p. 84.

25 Ibid., p. 117.

26 Ibid., p. 118.

27 Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 70.


31 Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 70.


33 Gwynn and Blotner, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

34 Catherine B. Baum, "The Beautiful One: Caddy Compson as Heroine of *The Sound and the Fury*," *Modern Fiction Studies*, XIII, Number 1 (Spring, 1967), 34.


36 Ibid., p. 54.

37 Slatoff, *op. cit.*, p. 150.


39 Ibid., p. 1. The italics are mine.


41 Ibid., p. 98.


43 Ibid., p. 168.


45 Backman, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
7 Volpe, op. cit., p. 121.
8 Booth, op. cit., p. 300.
9 Ibid., p. 301.
10 Ibid., pp. 304-305.
11 Hunt, op. cit., p. 70.
13 Ibid., p. 307.
14 Ibid., pp. 307-308.
16 Ibid., p. 309.
18 Meriwether and Millgate, op. cit., p. 284.
20 Ibid., p. 300.
21 Chase, op. cit., pp. 223-224.
23 Ibid., p. 165.
24 Cowley, op. cit., p. 25.
26 Ibid., p. 64.
27 Ibid., pp. 66-67.
28 Swiggart, op. cit., p. 103.
29 James Joyce, Ulysses, p. 304.
71Ibid., pp. 223-224.


73Joyce, op. cit., p. 342.

74Thompson, William Faulkner: An Introduction and Interpretation, op. cit., p. 45.

75Backman, op. cit., p. 30.

76Joyce, op. cit., p. 292.


78Swiggart, op. cit., p. 102.

79Hunt, op. cit., p. 77.

80Booth, op. cit., p. 306.

81William Faulkner, Go Down Moses, op. cit., p. 283.

82Booth, op. cit., p. 306.

83Aswell, op. cit., p. 214.


85Volpe, op. cit., pp. 121-122.

86Freud, "Dostoyevsky and Parricide," The Collected Papers of Sigmund Freud, V, 238.


88T.S.A.F., pp. 199, 205, 211, 229, 247, 256-258, 270, 274.

89Ibid., pp. 206, 214, 227, 240, 247.


91Nietzsche, op. cit., p. 39.

92Faulkner's own comment on Babe Ruth seems to indicate
that at least on one occasion he considered the baseball player a symbol of excellence. Please see Adams, *William Faulkner: Myth and Motion*, op. cit., p. 30.

\(^9\) Please see *T.S.A.F.*, pp. 202, 210, 209, 251, 208, 264, 265, 210, respectively.

\(^9\) Volpe, op. cit., p. 120.

\(^9\) Nietzsche, op. cit., p. 100.

\(^9\) Aswell, op. cit., p. 214.

\(^9\) Ibid., p. 211.

\(^9\) Swiggart, op. cit., p. 102.


\(^10\) Ibid., p. 45.

\(^10\) Cowley, op. cit., p. 44.


\(^10\) Whitehead, op. cit., p. 264.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER 5

1Slatoff, op. cit., p. 253.

2Genesis 1:1-5.

3William Faulkner, Go Down, Moses, op. cit., p. 163.

4Gwynn and Blotner, op. cit., p. 74.

5William Faulkner, Go Down, Moses, op. cit., p. 163.

6Ibid., pp. 163, 209.

7Edel, op. cit., p. 170.

8John V. Hagopian, "Nihilism in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury," Modern Fiction Studies, XIII (Spring, 1967), 46.

9This idea was suggested to me by a seminar paper at U.B.C. by Kenneth Robson entitled The Sound and the Fury: Progression Towards an Unvarying Nil.

10Slatoff, op. cit., p. 106.

11Hunt, op. cit., p. 93.


13Gwynn and Blotner, op. cit., p. 5.

14Swiggart, op. cit., p. 106.

15Thompson, William Faulkner: An Introduction and Interpretation, op. cit., p. 45. For possible Biblical echoes, see Isaiah 42:1, 4, 10, 13.

16Scott, op. cit., p. 29.

17Gwynn and Blotner, op. cit., p. 119.

18I have drawn upon Frye's suggestion that tragedy is essentially autumnal containing elements of both fulfillment and death. Please see Frye, op. cit., pp. 206-223.

19Swiggart, op. cit., p. 107.

20Ibid., p. 106.

21Ibid., p. 107.
22 Slatoff, op. cit., p. 244.


24 Cowan, op. cit., p. 12.

25 Gwynn and Blotner, op. cit., p. 32.

26 Swiggart, op. cit., p. 106.

27 Tentativeness is further suggested by the fact that "almost every page contains at least one conjectural phrase: as though, as if, appeared, seemed, might have been; "Margaret Blanchard," The Rhetoric of Communion: Voice in The Sound and the Fury," American Literature, XLI (January, 1970), 559.


30 I feel that Slatoff makes this error throughout Quest For Failure. Peter Swiggart's statement that Faulkner mocks his own technique over-stresses negation, in my view, since the narrator's perception may be limited, as is a magnificent failure, without being mocked.


33 Ibid., p. 440.

34 Ibid., p. 442.

35 Slatoff, op. cit., p. 32.

36 Robson, op. cit., pp. 3-4. I am indebted to Kenneth Robson for this insight and the points made in the following paragraph.

37 Please see Revelations 1:18.

38 William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury, op. cit., p. 123. Mrs. Compson says of Quentin, Caddy and Benjy "they're not my flesh and blood like he [Jason] is strangers nothing of mine..."

Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 94.


Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 98.


I am indebted for this term and general idea to Loic Bouvard, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

Please see Matthew 27:12-14.


Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

Gross, *op. cit.*, pp. 441-442. Miss Gross says "We see the freakish idiocy of Benjy becoming more and more an embodiment of the suffering of all mankind."


Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

*Genesis* 4:9.

Gross, *op. cit.*, p. 446.


Meriwether, "Notes on the Textual History of The Sound and the Fury," *op. cit.*, p. 306. I have chosen to retain this paraphrase. The typescript was published during the time I was revising this thesis. Please see

63 Cowan, op. cit., p. 8.
65 Adams, William Faulkner: Myth and Motion, op. cit., p. 223.
66 Slatoff, op. cit., p. 136.
68 Whitehead, op. cit., p. 163.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER 6

1 Please see Meriwether, op. cit., p. 306.


3 Ibid., p. 215.


6 Ibid., p. 33.

7 Ibid., pp. 31-32.

8 Ibid., pp. 41-42.

9 Ibid., p. 90.

10 Ibid., p. 90.

11 Ibid., p. 25. In a letter to Cowley dated August 16, 1945, Faulkner says "By all means let us make a Golden Book of my apocryphal county. I have thought of spending my old age doing something of that nature: an alphabetical [rambling genealogy of the people father to son to son."] The italics are mine. Faulkner had not yet conceived of the Appendix to The Sound and the Fury. I have taken the italicized phrase out of context, because I feel it expresses what evolved into the Appendix.


13 Cowley, op. cit., p. 44.

14 Ibid., p. 44.


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PRIMARY SOURCES

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II. Interviews and Letters


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1968), 439-449.

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The Revisions in the First Section.*" *Studies in  

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———, Type and Archetype: Jason Compson as Satirist. *Genre,* IV (June, 1971), 173-188.


Robson, Kenneth. "*The Sound and the Fury*: Progression Towards an Unvarying Nil." This is an unpublished seminar paper done for Dr. Elliot B. Gose, Jr. at the University of British Columbia, April 30, 1969.


III. General Works


