

**The Frustration of Desire:
Dissatisfaction in William Faulkner's
*The Sound and the Fury***

by

Rebecca LeLeiko

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to my parents

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Abstract

In his novel, *The Sound and the Fury*, William Faulkner creates a story founded on the issues of desire and its elusiveness. The main character, Caddy, never speaks in the text; she remains an intangible presence that is absent for most of the book. Caddy is the personification of desire and its frustration in Faulkner's novel; her three brothers, who narrate most of the story, represent Faulkner's conflicting emotions surrounding this issue.

Dissatisfaction suffuses the entire book, represented primarily by the three Compson brothers as they each attempt to possess their lost sister. Moreover, dissatisfaction is the primary emotion following Faulkner's writing of the novel; the novel's structure itself reflects the author's inability to be satisfied with his work. Yet both Faulkner and his novel possess an inherent contradiction regarding the feelings and results of dissatisfaction. The basis for this contradiction lies in Faulkner himself: although he claims to remain unsatisfied with his novel, many of his actions and statements suggest that this dissatisfaction, and the creation of an imperfect but nonetheless successful piece, is essentially what he was seeking.

My first section will explore the novel from Faulkner's perspective. This section will examine his reasons and motivation for writing, and how these affect the formulation of Caddy as a central concept -- though indistinct and formless -- in the novel. The next three sections will look at Faulkner's depiction of the three Compson brothers, and their individual roles in shaping this story through their respective views of their relationship with Caddy. In Benjy's chapter, I will explore the major images of loss, and the parallels that exist between the author and this character. In Quentin's chapter, I will again examine the parallels presented between him and the author, especially regarding the contradiction discussed above, and the fears shared by the two men of losing their deep emotion. Jason's section explores the frustration he and Faulkner share regarding their feelings of desire, and the failed attempt of both men to fulfill their losses with an ineffective replacement.

Each brother represents a different aspect of Faulkner's emotions, and together they not only form the body of the novel, but they depict a full representation of the author's complex relationship with his story. Although in writing his novel Faulkner fails to achieve what he ultimately desires, the book's very success is the result of the deep emotion he felt during his many failed attempts.

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Introduction

. . . beauty is difficult . . . those things most worth seeing,
knowing and saying can never be directly or fully seen,
known, and said. (Minter, 103)

. . . for Faulkner, the greater the failure the more
magnificent the success. (Adams, 221)

William Faulkner wrote a novel that was never completed: the edition of *The Sound and the Fury* originally published was not satisfying to him; fifteen years later he wrote an Appendix in an attempt to complete his story. Yet it is in precisely this lack of completion that lies the essential foundation for Faulkner's novel. In the dissatisfaction that *The Sound and the Fury* produced in its author, in the frustrations that exist in the novel's characters, this book becomes a genuine and ingenious representation of passion and desire.

In Faulkner's novel, Caddy is the main character, yet she is also the most elusive. She is rarely in the novel in the present; most of her character develops through stories and memories of the past. Faulkner's inability to define Caddy, and Caddy's refusal to be defined are the result of the beauty and deep passion that she embodies. Faulkner's emotions are evident in his other main characters as well: each of Caddy's brothers depicts an aspect of Faulkner's strong emotion during the writing of his novel.

Caddy is the main character in the novel, yet she is the only Compson child whose story is never heard. This absence of Caddy's narrative perspective on the story contributes to the ambiguity surrounding her character. It also requires the reader to

make his judgment of Caddy primarily from the opinions of her three brothers. Each of the brothers gives his account of his interaction with Caddy. The first three chapters therefore each represent a different line, or boundary, between Caddy and her brother. As Andre Bleikasten, in *The Most Splendid Failure*, notes, "Caddy cannot be described; she can only be circumscribed"(60). I believe that the first three chapters in the novel represent three points of interaction between Caddy and her brothers. These points begin to define Caddy, and they come together and are joined by the final section of the novel, which was written in a third person narrative. This thesis will focus on the first three chapters only, in order to support and develop my argument using Faulkner's depiction of the Compson brothers and their respective representations of Caddy.

Because Caddy has left the family before Benjy's section begins, she exists throughout the entire novel either as a character removed from the present location of the story, or as a person from the past. Yet her presence still takes up a large space in the book and critics agree that Caddy's absence is a vital component of the novel. In *The Sound and the Fury: Faulkner and the Lost Cause*, for example, John T. Matthews discusses Caddy as an idea that is already lost as soon as Faulkner puts her image into writing. Several other critics echo these ideas, debating similar purposes for Caddy in the novel.

It is clear that Caddy is a catalyst in the novel, since her actions are responsible for many of the narrative events that transpire. At an early age, Caddy becomes sexually active, and consequently gets pregnant. Her family, once Southern aristocracy but quickly falling from that society, marries her off as soon as possible, but the consequences of these actions resound throughout the novel. Caddy is not only another aspect of the Compson family's downfall, she is actually the cause for her three brothers' respective spirals downward (Quentin literally plunges downward in his suicide, while the other two brothers figuratively spiral). In this way, the novel develops around Caddy's absence, with an understanding throughout the story of Caddy's deep influence.

Each of her brothers tells a story of Caddy's effect on them, and the reader begins to make clear the shape of Caddy's character. When she marries, Caddy leaves with each of her brothers a strong (though indistinct, in some cases) memory of herself. With her parents, Caddy leaves only bitterness. Mr. and Mrs. Compson's repression of the truth and denial of Caddy's existence adds to the feeling that Caddy's character exists only as an absence. At the same time, she has influenced her family in such a way that in every page of the book there is a sense of her. In each of the Compsons, their memory and the feelings they attach to that memory are all that exist of their daughter and sister. When they recall her, if they recall her, it is not the real Caddy that they think of but the image of her that has been etched in their minds. Each character's idea of Caddy is different, and it is this image, this memory in each of the Compson brothers that forms the novel. The first three chapters in the book represent three different tellings of the same story, three images of one elusive character.

The first chapter will address Faulkner, focusing on his motivation for writing the novel. According to Faulkner, the entire novel originates from one image in his mind of the three brothers staring up at their sister's dirty underwear as she climbs a tree. This image foretells the obsession of the brothers with Caddy, each in their own way. This chapter will explore the possibilities of the novel, and Caddy, as substitutions in Faulkner's life that make up for areas in which he feels lacking. I will then analyze Faulkner's comparison of his novel to a Roman Vase. Finally, this section tackles the issue of Faulkner's great contradiction: the illusion of dissatisfaction. Despite Faulkner's insistence that he is never satisfied with his novel, a deep look at Faulkner's personality and his remarks on *The Sound and the Fury* lead us to believe that satisfaction isn't Faulkner's primary objective in writing the novel. Instead, Faulkner appears to actually fear the very success and, subsequently, the satisfaction that he claims never to gain from this novel. Faulkner's thoughts on this matter are often ambiguous or even contradictory, representing much of the very contradiction that lies within his writing.

The next three sections will discuss the three Compson brothers and their respective chapters in the novel. The first chapter is narrated by Benjy, whose chapter is vital to the tone and structure of the whole novel. In my analysis of his chapter, I focus on images of loss. Benjy has several instances of loss, most of which are somehow related to his sister's departure. The main part of this chapter will analyze Benjy's grief and the nature of his suffering.

Not only is the placement of Benjy's chapter and its strong images instrumental in the entire story, but the tone and style of the chapter are important as well. The chapter is written as a stream of consciousness, straight from the mind of a mentally disabled man. This section establishes the structure of the novel by defining what is known (very little) and what is not known (very much) after this introduction. However, Faulkner's use of Benjy's chapter to introduce his story is incredibly effective because it subtly and subconsciously slips bits of information into the consciousness of the reader. In Benjy, Faulkner wants to create a completely innocent character in order to witness that character's interactions with the world, and to express to the reader events exactly as they are seen. Benjy has virtually no cognitive ability, and Faulkner's style in this first chapter perfectly complements this. This first part of the novel gives the reader an unadulterated view of the Compson household.

Benjy's chapter is not important simply because of its style or position in the story, but also because it introduces Caddy. This first chapter portrays Caddy as only a memory, but we see that she was once a child who was kind and who loved her outcast little brother. Caddy is represented as the whole of Benjy's world, something we realize not only from his past interactions with Caddy, but also from his present associations with her after she is gone. Because Benjy's chapter begins the novel, his emotions for Caddy are the readers' first impressions of her; thus our first and most vivid image of Caddy is as a gentle and loving older sister.

The second chapter in the novel, narrated by the oldest Compson, Quentin, offers the reader a different perspective on Caddy and on the story as a whole. Like each of the Compson children, Quentin is disturbed by Caddy's departure. While each of the brothers is obsessed with Caddy in their own way, Quentin's fixation is the most outwardly expressed. He believes he is in love with Caddy, to the point that he becomes preoccupied with the idea of committing incest with her. Quentin wants to define himself in any way possible, even if it is with shame. This is one example of the general contradiction that suffuses Quentin's chapter, recalling the similar contradiction revealed in Faulkner and his writing. Strong parallels can be seen between Faulkner's relationship with his novel, and Quentin's relationship with Caddy: neither man wants to give up their passion. Both Quentin and Faulkner wish not so much to hold onto their objects of desire, but to retain the emotion inspired by those objects.

Chapter Three will also explore the significance of the similarities between Quentin's chapter and Benjy's chapter. Although Quentin is hardly mentally disabled, there are times when his stream of consciousness thoughts resemble Benjy's. Both of these brothers' chapters are also dense with tangible memories: memories of smells, sounds and touches. The similarities between their two accounts are important because they help to define the theme of frustrated desire that is present in each of the chapters.

In the third chapter of the novel, differences as well as similarities between the brothers become apparent. Jason, younger than both Quentin and Caddy, narrates this chapter. Jason expresses his frustration in anger: he is bitter because he will never have the job promised to him by Caddy's ex-husband, or the opportunity to receive an education like Quentin. To him Caddy will always represent that lost job and unaffordable education. Though Caddy is only partially and indirectly responsible for Jason's bitterness, he projects his anger wholly onto her. Moreover, because Caddy is absent, Jason takes out his anger on her daughter Quentin,¹ who acts to Jason as a type of

¹To avoid confusion, Caddy's daughter will hereafter be referred to as Quentin II.

double for her mother. While the first two chapters show the desire of the brothers as centered on Caddy, in Jason's chapter Caddy's daughter becomes the main object of desire. Jason's frustration thus lies in his physical desire for Quentin II, and his belief that she is responsible for inciting that desire in the first place. Thus Jason, like his two brothers, is also fascinated with Caddy -- but his expression of it happens to be through her daughter. In this section I will also explore Jason's idea of his financial loss, and his attempt achieve satisfaction by stealing money from Caddy and Quentin II. This is also reflective of Faulkner, who attempts to fulfill his loss with a material object: his novel. Through Jason, we see a different aspect of Faulkner's relationship with his main female character, thus adding another layer to our understanding of the complex dynamics of the author's own passion. *The Sound and the Fury* represents the intricacies and contradictions of one man's desires and passions, condensed and embodied within its text.

Chapter One

William Faulkner: The Expression of Desire

So I, who had never had a sister and was fated to lose my daughter in infancy, set out to make myself a beautiful and tragic little girl. (qtd. in Minter, 227-228)

William Faulkner's most famous novel began with one image in his mind's eye: that of a young girl climbing a tree in her backyard to peek into a window. Her brothers are on the ground below, looking up and seeing her underwear, dirty because she has been playing in the mud. According to Faulkner, this image completely forms the plot and structure of his entire novel.

The significance of the image lies partially in Caddy's muddy underwear, which represents her sexuality and the "dirtying" of her reputation due to the loss of her virginity. Climbing the tree represents Caddy's adventurousness, something that her brothers are lacking. The combination of her sexual "dirtying" and her adventurous nature are the causes for Caddy's downfall; it is these characteristics that result in her pregnancy. The brothers' position on the ground is important because of their separation from Caddy. The boys are staring up at Caddy, fascinated by her position in the tree and, it seems, also fascinated by her dirty underpants. This represents the entire structure of the novel, and the roles of the three brothers in the book. Their gaze is indicative of each of the boys' chapters: a representation of their personal perspective on Caddy. Their fascination with her audacity both to climb the tree, and to dirty herself represents their

obsession with Caddy as she grows. This is characterized most of all by their interest in her bold sexuality.

In the quote on the previous page, Faulkner suggests that his writing in some way makes up for his failure to have a sister or a daughter. However, there are two separate, distinct things Faulkner desires: he speaks of the lack of a sister, but the loss of his daughter. By creating the character of Caddy, Faulkner attempts to fulfill both of these needs, yet he ends up satisfying neither. While the novel revolves around Caddy, it begins and ends in her absence. This leaves us to question what Faulkner's objectives are in writing his novel, and whether he receives any satisfaction at all from its completion.

Faulkner's writing of *The Sound and the Fury* was a private affair. Disenchanted with publishers and editors, he decided to write the novel for no one but himself. Although the image in Faulkner's head seemingly pours itself out onto the page, and eventually forms the shape of his novel, it is not written without pain and anguish. Faulkner is never satisfied with his novel, partly because it is such an emotional piece for him. In his "Introduction" to *The Sound and the Fury* Faulkner explains that writing this novel gave him "that ecstasy, that eager and joyous faith and anticipation of surprise which the yet unmarred sheet beneath my hand held inviolate and unfailing, waiting for release" (qtd. in Minter, 226). This power that Faulkner feels, the exhilaration that takes hold of him as he writes this novel, is exactly what makes the writing (and especially the completion) of the novel so difficult. Yet despite this emotional release, or perhaps because of it, Faulkner is never satisfied with his finished product: "I couldn't leave it alone, and I never could tell it right, though I tried hard and would like to try again, though I'd probably fail again" (Faulkner, *Lion in the Garden* 245). Several critics have hypothesized reasons for this; in *Faulkner: Myth and Motion*, Richard P. Adams offers one theory:

The exaltation and the unconsciousness of possible publishers and readers that he felt . . . is not inconsistent with his feeling . . . that the result on paper fell short of the creative incandescence which he had been trying to capture and immobilize. The very effort to immobilize is a betrayal of the divine energy. (Adams, 221)

Adams supports the idea that Faulkner's difficulties with the novel relate directly to his deep privacy during his writing. He also recognizes that there is, inherently, a disagreement between the image in Faulkner's mind and its fulfillment on paper. Bleikasten notes that Faulkner appears to contradict himself in some of his accounts of the writing of his book. In his 1933 Introduction to the novel, Faulkner claims that he wrote the book without any drive or effort, but later in an interview he says that he anguished the most over this very novel (qtd. in Minter, 230, 232). Bleikasten believes that "the whole truth lies precisely in the contradiction: *The Sound and the Fury* was the child of care as well as of inspiration, of agony as well as of ecstasy"(48). The truth is that his words are not so much a contradiction as they are an affirmation: Faulkner writes his novel with passion. This passion is partially the result of his falling in love with the tragically beautiful Caddy, and partially a result of his joy in writing a story that moves him so much. Like any artist with such an attachment to his work, it is hard for Faulkner to put his work down. He can barely step away from his novel.

Faulkner's emotion for his novel is apparent in the characters he creates: each of the Compson brothers experiences loss and dissatisfaction in a way similar to Faulkner. Although the three brothers are extremely different from each other, the lives of all three are forever affected by their sister's departure. As David Minter recognizes in *William Faulkner: His Life and Work*, "The Compson brothers may be seen as manifesting the needs Faulkner expressed through his creation of Caddy"(99). I believe that the brothers

do not simply represent Faulkner's 'needs' but specifically they signify his desire and passion. Both Faulkner's and the brothers' desire are all expressed in the boys' relationships to Caddy. The author uses the very different relationships between Caddy and each of her brothers to express the complexity of his own desires.

As a personification of desire -- both Faulkner's and the brothers' -- Caddy is the strongest representation of passion in the novel. Faulkner's main character symbolizes the possibility of ultimate satisfaction and the fulfillment of desire. Yet her passion, alive in Caddy from her childhood, is responsible for her lack of care for other's judgements; this passion is ultimately responsible for her downfall. Caddy's influence and her role in the family's destruction account for her brothers' respective downfalls. Because *The Sound and the Fury* was written with and about passion, Faulkner's very inability to be satisfied in his novel is in part ascribable to his strong emotions towards the book and its characters. Appropriately, the characters Faulkner creates share these strong emotions, and Faulkner's dissatisfaction is evident in their inability to be satisfied -- or even to be remotely happy.

The Roman Vase

In examining *The Sound and the Fury* as a novel written, originally, for the author, we cannot ignore the image of the Roman Vase which figures centrally in Faulkner's introduction to the novel, and which several critics have since explored. In his Introduction, Faulkner refers to a novel by Henryk Sienkiewicz, *Quo Vadis* (1895), "Now, I can make myself a vase like that which the old Roman kept at his bedside and wore the rim slowly away with kissing it" (qtd. in Minter, 227). This analogy can be approached in many different ways, all of which highlight the complexity and intensity of the author's desire for his creation. This image of the vase brings again to light the

energy and passion with which Faulkner expresses himself in the writing of *The Sound and the Fury*. It also reminds the reader of the emotions within the novel, the love and desire of the brothers for Caddy, as well as Faulkner's own love for his main character. The vase alludes to a fact that Faulkner himself mentions about his experience in writing the novel: "I wrote this book and learned to read" (qtd. in Minter, 225). In claiming that he has made his own vase in writing the novel, Faulkner suggests that he might now love his creation to the point of destruction. This idea of passionate destruction resounds within the text of the novel: Caddy's own destruction is the product of her unchecked desires. Her downfall, as we have noted, leads to the downfall of several other characters in the novel.

Similarly, the vase is also representative of what Bleikasten implies is Faulkner's seeking of self-gratification from his novel. Bleikasten explains that *The Sound and the Fury* "has been defined in psychoanalytical terms as a transnarcissistic object, meant to establish a connection between the narcissism of its producer and that of its consumer" (46). Because Faulkner claims to write the novel for his own enjoyment (i.e. he is both its producer and its consumer) we can therefore see the novel, like the vase, as primarily an object of self-satisfaction.

Another interpretation of this Roman Vase is Freudian: the vase can be seen as an empty vessel symbolizing female sexuality. In this case, the vase is most representative of Caddy, although it may simultaneously represent the novel as a whole. Caddy's sexuality is a major part of the novel, and it is not unreasonable to view this as the supporting structure of the novel, embodied in the vase. The Freudian symbol of female sexuality is any open, empty vessel, and this is a good description of Caddy's role in the novel: a female who occupies empty space. Bleikasten suggests that the vase is "the mark and mask of an absence" (46) which supports the view of Caddy as an absent figure, and the symbol of the vase therefore substitutes for that absence.

I believe that the vase signifies both Caddy and the novel, simultaneously. This is possible because of the parallels between the novel as a whole, and its main character.

As David Minter asserts in his book *William Faulkner: His Life and Work*:

The vase becomes Caddy and *The Sound and the Fury*;
both “the beautiful one” for whom he created the novel as a
commodious space and the novel in which she found
protection and privacy as well as expression. (Minter, 102)

Minter believes that Caddy was not only the central part of the novel, but she was the driving force for it, even the sole reason it was written. Minter elevates Caddy to a level where she is not only the main character, but she is also a cause for the structure of the novel, and even the main purpose for Faulkner’s creation of the story. Minter’s idea supports the image of the Roman Vase as the sole love and obsession of its creator, simultaneously the object *created* and the object *for which* it is created.

While Faulkner “fell in love” with Caddy, his inability to grasp her character mirrors his difficulty to fully articulate his story, and properly “tell” Caddy. Supporting this claim, Bleikasten believes that Faulkner wrote the novel for himself; this is substantiated by Faulkner’s own words on the writing of the book:

One day it suddenly seemed as if a door had clapped
silently and forever to between me and all publishers . . .
and I said to myself, Now I can write. Now I can just
write. (qtd. in Minter, 230)

Bleikasten sees the vase as signifying both the object of Faulkner’s love and obsession, and at the same time the overwhelming emptiness in the novel. If the vase is

primarily viewed as an empty object, it can also be seen as Minter sees it: as a source of protection and shelter for Caddy. If the vase is representative of the novel, this might conceal Caddy, thus explaining her intangibility in the book. If the vase does represent the novel, Minter suggests that it is "a haven or shelter into which the artist may retreat . . . a world in which he may find shelter" (Minter, 102). The concept of the vase as shelter leads us to the idea that the vase hides both Faulkner and Caddy. Caddy's concealment is therefore another way to view her absence in the book. Although it can hide or shelter Caddy within it forever, the novel can only hold Faulkner for a finite length of time: the time in which he is writing it. Faulkner cannot stay inside his "vase" forever; he must crawl out of it. When viewed as a hollow or encompassing space, the vase functions in several ways as a symbol for unattainable desire. It represents Faulkner's inability to capture Caddy, and Caddy's inability to be caught.

Considering only the emptiness of the vase, there is yet another aspect to its interpretation. Our approach to the novel thus far has examined Caddy as a main character who influences the entire book despite her prevailing absence. The empty vase is a perfect metaphor for this interpretation. Minrose Gwin says of the "space" that Caddy occupies in the novel, "To examine its shape we may walk around it. To know what it is, or to know that we do not know and perhaps cannot know what it is, we must enter it" (48). Though the vase is beautiful on the outside, the object of wonder and desire, we do not know about its inside; the reader may wonder if it isn't empty, if indeed there is anything inside. Faulkner's novel implies that Caddy is much more than we can ever know or understand, since even Faulkner, the author of the book and the creator of his character, cannot fully comprehend or apprehend his character. The novel only helps us to imagine all that we are missing, just as the vase only suggests what it holds inside.

The Illusion of Dissatisfaction

A significant aspect of Faulkner's attachment to his novel can be attributed to his need to fulfill his desire -- a desire for both his daughter, and for the sister he never had. Yet Faulkner's attempt to satisfy these desires in the novel leaves an emptiness, because he fails to realize either one. The characters are left with the vacancy Caddy once was, and Faulkner is left with a similar feeling of empty dissatisfaction. Faulkner does not speculate on his dissatisfaction -- he states this simply, as a fact. His words seem to indicate that this frustration is inherent to the novel, and -- to some extent -- accepted by Faulkner himself. He appears to view his frustration as a vital component of the book and of the process that created it,

I wrote the Benjy part first. That wasn't good enough so I wrote the Quentin part. That still wasn't good enough. I let Jason try it. That still wasn't enough. I let Faulkner try it and that still wasn't enough, and so about twenty years² afterward I wrote an appendix still trying to make that book . . . match the dream. (qtd. in Minter, 237)

Minrose Gwin suggests that "Faulkner's feeling of failure...derives from his frustrations at "trying to say" Caddy, trying to write the female subject...and always failing" (37). More than Faulkner "tries to say" Caddy, I believe he tries to claim her, to possess her in some way through his writing of the novel. He fails to answer this longing; Faulkner's true desire is to see his Caddy, to feel her in his book as a tangible presence. And yet the

²The Appendix to *The Sound and the Fury* was actually published approximately 15 years after the novel.

question then remains: why does Faulkner keep Caddy away; why does he refuse to tell her story? One reason Faulkner offers is that "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" (qtd. in Minter, 235). Yet in this statement lies much of the contradiction that exists in the novel. Faulkner desires a girl; he creates Caddy around a dream, a concept he has of a person who never existed. Yet his novel remains, ultimately, as everything *but* the very character he desires. It seems as though Faulkner fears achieving his goal because he knows that, once achieved, it will be gone:

I knew then why I had not recaptured that first ecstasy, and that I should never again recapture it; that whatever novels I should write in the future would be written without anticipation or joy: that in *The Sound and the Fury* I had already put perhaps the only thing in literature which would ever move me very much. (qtd. in Minter, 227)

This idea of a climax with a subsequent fall, of a finite and measured amount of happiness, is what Faulkner describes in this quotation; this is what the novel itself reflects. It is also represented *as* the novel -- a work that Faulkner refuses to be satisfied with, in order that he might continue to work towards his dream, and therefore hold onto the strong emotion he feels. My belief is that because of the unparalleled joy Faulkner claims to experience in writing this novel, he cannot let go of the experience. Faulkner is unable to accept the idea that the ecstasy he felt is gone forever. This could be the reason that he claims dissatisfaction in the novel; while he remains dissatisfied, he can retain the strong emotions, the drive he felt to finish his novel. "I wrote it five separate times trying to tell the story, to rid myself of the dream which would continue to anguish me until I did" (Faulkner, *Lion in the Garden* 244)). And yet he claims he "never could tell it right"

(Faulkner, *Lion in the Garden* 245). These two quotes suggest that Faulkner may refuse to be satisfied with his novel for a purpose: so that he can continue to feel the deep feelings and the emotional rush of working toward a distant goal.

Other clues support the possibility that Faulkner's proclaimed dissatisfaction is not entirely accurate. David Minter explores aspects of Faulkner's personality, especially during his involvement in his writing, which maintain this idea. Minter concludes that Faulkner's objective in writing the novel is actually a feeling of dissatisfaction, a sense of incompleteness. This appears to be Faulkner's fear of achieving success, "he needed dissatisfaction as well as hope" (Minter, 102). However, Faulkner most likely does not actually fear success; what he is afraid of is the possibility that, once achieved, perfection will be lost, along with the ecstasy involved in achieving that point. Faulkner is overwhelmed by his own deep emotional attachment to his novel, and he becomes infatuated and somewhat reliant on the elation he feels while writing. Faulkner fears these emotions because he knows that they must come to an end. He knows that when he completes the novel, his emotion will be gone, along with his purpose and his joy in writing. If this novel is actually the culmination of his career, if it truly represents the sister and daughter he never knew, if it actually fulfills his desires, than its perfection means that Faulkner has achieved his greatest feat. Yet with it, the emotions he feels in the act of creating will be gone forever.

Part of the dependence Faulkner feels on his emotion while writing *The Sound and the Fury* can be interpreted as Faulkner's need to remain within its shelter. As Minter notes, "If he wrote *The Sound and the Fury* in part to find shelter, he also wrote knowing that he would have to emerge from it" (Minter, 100). Faulkner fears emerging from the shelter of the novel. The basis of these fears is Faulkner's apprehension of losing the actual force that keeps him writing the book. This force is similar to that represented by the Roman Vase: crafted by Faulkner himself, it is now in danger of being destroyed by the very passion and love that created it. Most of all, this force is

represented by Caddy, for whom the novel was written, the embodiment of passion and desire and everything Faulkner believes is perfect and unattainable. Faulkner can never again achieve the same level of purpose, the same joy in writing as he did when he wrote *The Sound and the Fury*. He realizes this after he begins his next project:

I learned only from the writing of *Sanctuary* that there was something missing; something which *The Sound and the Fury* gave me and *Sanctuary* did not...the cold satisfaction was there . . . but . . . the . . . quality which *The Sound and the Fury* had given me was absent. (qtd. in Minter, 226)

These words suggest that Faulkner's novel actually succeeded in accomplishing exactly what he *doesn't* want it to accomplish: *The Sound and the Fury* is very close to perfect, and is therefore actually the climax of Faulkner's career. His words in interviews and in his Introduction to the novel express this sentiment: he realizes that he will never feel the same emotion and attachment for his writing, and that he will never again write a book such as this. "the ecstasy . . . will not return. I shall never know it again"(qtd. in Minter, 231).

Although Faulkner states that he is always dissatisfied with this novel, it is possible that its very success is what disturbs him, because success represents to him the loss of a private, personal sanctuary. Faulkner appears desperately afraid of wearing away his "vase", claiming, "I had made myself a vase, but I suppose I knew all the time that I could not live forever inside of it" (qtd. in Minter, 232). He is afraid of loving his story to death; he is afraid of losing the beauty and perfection that he might have attained. And so to insure he will never lose these things, Faulkner never admits to claiming them:

he keeps satisfaction and success at a distance. Faulkner remains, to others and possibly even to himself, dissatisfied and constantly frustrated with the novel he produced. He claims that he "rewrote" the same story five times to rid himself of the pain it produced. Yet these very actions suggest that he purposely prolongs his story, perhaps harboring a secret hope that he might find a way to live forever inside his vase.

Chapter Two

Benjy:

An Unspeakable Grief

Benjamin . . . who loved three things: the pasture which was sold to pay for Candace's wedding and to send Quentin to Harvard, his sister Candace, firelight. Who lost none of them because he could not remember his sister but only the loss of her, and firelight was the same bright shape as going to sleep, and the pasture was even better sold than before(qtd. in Minter, 213)

Benjy, the least conscious of himself and his surroundings -- the embodiment, in Faulkner's mind, of complete innocence -- might have been the most affected by his loss of Caddy. Benjy has enormous losses in his life, yet because of his inability to analyze his sensory perceptions, loss remains as a raw emotion for him. This emotion, although not able to be articulated or even processed by Benjy, is one that is present in everything he does. While each of the brothers' chapters portrays Caddy's absence, Benjy's particular frustration is the result of this very inability to comprehend his feelings of loss. Thus Benjy is unable to know how to grieve for his sister, or even to communicate his thoughts.

To Benjy, losing Caddy means losing the one person who ever tried to understand him, and then not having her guidance to help him grieve. His loss is equivalent to the loss of a lover who is also a best friend. The grieving person not only has to grapple with

the removal of a vital part of their lives, but they also have lost a confidante with whom they could share their grief. Thus Benjy's loss is doubled and his grief is compounded. Even apart from this, Caddy's departure means much more than the loss of an older sister to Benjy. Because of Mrs. Compson's aloofness to her children and especially to Benjy, Caddy is the one member of the family who looks out for Benjy and who treats him as a person and as a friend. In his book *The Sound and the Fury: Faulkner and the Lost Cause*, John T. Matthews notes how Mrs. Compson delegates the care for Benjy to others, including Caddy and the servants, and Caddy is the only Compson who treats Benjy with affection and care. "Caddy nominates herself to occupy the position Mrs. Compson has abdicated," notes Matthews (39). Thus Benjy's loss of Caddy marks the loss of the one person in his life who cared for him and who truly loved him.

Loss has taken many other roles in Benjy's life, several of them related to Caddy's leaving. The one loss that took place long before the others was Benjy's loss of his name. Originally named Maury after his uncle, Mrs. Compson's brother, his name is changed to Benjamin when he is five. Although this event is not given much significance in the novel, the issue of names is emphasized from the start. In an early scene, Benjy becomes very upset by the incessant calling of golfers on the new course nearby: "caddie!" He cannot differentiate between his lost sister's name and the term used in golfing. It is similarly significant that after Caddy leaves the house, her name is not spoken by the members of the family, as if her existence can be erased by their silence. This repression is criticized by Dilsey, the housekeeper: "They aint no luck going to be on no place where one of they own chillen's name aint never spoke"(Faulkner, 20). Dilsey has predicted such bad luck once before. When Benjy's name is changed, she claims, "folks dont have no luck, changing names"(37). At age five, Benjy has already lost a part of his identity.

Several other examples of loss in Benjy's life come after Caddy's departure. The first is the loss of the pasture that was to be Benjy's birthright. The pasture is sold to pay

for Caddy's wedding and Quentin's college tuition. Ironically, the pasture that is called "Benjy's pasture" is what helps the family to send his beloved sister away. Benjy has no understanding of what he loses when the pasture is sold. Yet in the beginning of the novel, as he walks with Luster through the golf course that was built on his land, the word "caddie" is first called out and interpreted by Benjy as "Caddy." Benjy's anguish is so deep that his thoughts can not begin to express his feelings. Our only sense of the pain Benjy feels comes not from Benjy's articulation of it, but from Luster's words to him, telling Benjy to "hush up that moaning"(3). Although he feels nothing for the land, its loss provides another opportunity to remind Benjy of his ultimate loss: the loss of Caddy.

The final loss that Benjy experiences in the novel is also influenced by Caddy's departure. When Caddy was a child, Benjy used to wait by the gate for her to come home from school. Years later, Benjy still waits by the gate as children walk by. In one scene, Benjy follows some girls down the street, separated from them by the fence:

They looked at me, walking fast, with their heads turned. I tried to say, but they went on, and I went along the fence, trying to say, and they went faster. Then they were running and I came to the corner of the fence and I couldn't go any further, and I held to the fence, looking after them and trying to say. (Faulkner, 33)

The question is, as Matthews also asks: what is it that Benjy is "trying to say"? Presumably, these young girls remind him of his Caddy, who for so many years came home from school and met him at the gate. Benjy probably just wants to tell them about Caddy, or perhaps he believes that one of them is Caddy, and if he could only catch up

with her . . . This scene is played out on the next page, when Benjy escapes the gated front yard and runs after a young girl.

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 . . . They were going up the hill to where it fell away and I tried to cry.

(Faulkner, 34)

This scene is an example of Benjy's helplessness, and his striking inability to distinguish among people, times, places and feelings. As Matthews notes, Benjy's attempt to catch this girl was an attempt to "repossess"(85) Caddy. Despite the fact that Caddy left the house years ago, Benjy continues to await her return, as he always did, by standing in the yard. The action Benjy takes, running and catching hold of a young girl, is interpreted by neighbors as a result of his untamed sexual impulses. This leads to his surgical castration, a traditional symbol of the loss of masculinity and male identity in its victim. Most likely, Benjy's actions are a result not of sexual urges but of his raw desire to fill the void that Caddy has left. Following this thinking, the girl that Benjy "attacks" is not only supposed to fill Caddy's empty space, but by running away she actually mirrors Caddy's inability to be held or possessed. Matthews notes:

The crime is the punishment, for Benjy reaches out to the little girl as she vanishes over the hill; her elusiveness suggests the torture Caddy's absence imposes on Benjy.

(Matthews, 44)

Benjy's unintentional attempts to satisfy his desire for Caddy lead to his castration, which is yet another loss, this one a personal loss of part of his identity.

Benjy's section can easily be interpreted as one full of pain and suffering, this pain being the main and central component overshadowing all else. This is what Minter believes, as he states, "What loss of Caddy means to [Benjy] is a life of unrelieved and meaningless suffering" (Minter, 99). He emphasizes that Benjy is "sentenced to a truncated life of pain" (Minter, 99). While Minter points out a very crucial aspect of Benjy's narration, this analysis does not get to the core of Benjy's emotions. Minter points out Benjy's need and helplessness after Caddy's departure, yet I would argue that it is not so much his need that is significant as it is the "meaningless" aspect of his pain, the inability to clearly speak or state, or even understand his grief. While Benjy's need is real, and his emptiness from the loss of Caddy very much a void in his life, his inability to define it in any terms -- his inability to even process his sensations or emotions of loss -- is the real tragedy. Benjy is caught inside his "meaningless suffering," a victim not only of his unending grief but also of his inability to move in time. Benjy is unable to bring meaning to the loss of his sister, yet at the same time he cannot to put the loss behind him. Benjy is unable to make up a chronological time-line of experiences in his mind, which is why his suffering is not only "meaningless" but also "unrelieved" and, therefore, unending; his pain is infinite.

The inability of Benjy to communicate his loss, in his "trying to say" and his inability to properly express his grief ("tried to cry"), amplifies the sense of loss Benjy feels. Matthews notes that "[Benjy's section] mirrors rhetorically...his impotence to grieve well"(qtd. in Bloom, 80). Benjy is isolated in his own world, and Caddy is the only character who ever cared to try to understand him, who cared what it was that he was "trying to say." After Caddy is gone, Benjy has no one who will even attempt to understand him. The contradiction of Benjy's existence is that his anguish is profound because his desire for Caddy is unsatisfied, and never will be fulfilled. Yet because of

Caddy's absence, Benjy cannot even truly understand his grief. With Caddy, Benjy simultaneously experiences loss, and also loses any ability to comprehend its possible significance.

Sexual Desire

Caddy was all wet and muddy behind, and I started to cry
and she came and squatted in the water. (Faulkner, 12)

There are several ways to interpret Benjy's relationship and feelings for his sister. Although it is impossible to prove any sexual desire Benjy might have had for Caddy, this is an aspect of his section that cannot be overlooked. While Quentin blatantly expresses his sexual feelings for his sister, the incestuous desire in the other two brothers is much more concealed. The quote above reveals Benjy's agitation at the possibility of his sister's "dirtying". As we will see later, Quentin and Benjy show identical symptoms of anger when Caddy symbolically "dirties" herself when she falls in the mud as a child, and later when she becomes sexually active.

Because Benjy is unable to process his thoughts into any logical sequence, much of his chapter consists of images of physical sensation. He constantly refers to Caddy with regard to her changing "smell." Benjy believes she "smelled like trees" (Faulkner, 27) most of the time; this may refer to his association of Caddy in her pure state as similar or close to nature, as a part of the natural world. Although he has no words for his senses, Benjy is very sharp in observing the difference in Caddy at specific, crucial moments. "Caddy put her arms around me, and her shining veil, and I couldn't smell trees anymore and I began to cry"(Faulkner, 26). At this moment, Benjy is observing Caddy before or during her wedding, as she is wearing a wedding veil. Wearing her veil,

Caddy is about to be given away by her family -- this is why her characteristic smell vanishes at this point. Although the dress and veil worn at a wedding symbolically represent purity and virginity, the reason for Caddy's wedding is that she has been defiled and is pregnant. Faulkner's juxtaposition of a veiled Caddy with her brother's sensation of her as impure emphasizes the anxiety of this scene for Benjy.

Earlier in his life, Benjy is no less aware of Caddy's transgressions. As we will later note, both Benjy and Quentin show a similar display of jealousy when confronted with any of Caddy's lovers. When Caddy and Benjy meet Charlie, he responds in the only way he can to show his distrust of the older boy. First, Benjy cries, and repeatedly pulls at Caddy's dress. Finally, Caddy leaves Charlie and apologizes to Benjy, promising, "I wont . . . I wont anymore, ever. Benjy. Benjy"(Faulkner, 31). Benjy expresses his feelings in the only way he can; Caddy is able to understand him and she responds by leaving Charlie. Benjy's pulling at her dress is a subtle suggestion that he is not just jealous for Caddy's attention. He actually seems to be pulling her back, as if he wants to have her for himself. Benjy's sexual desire is never articulated, but Faulkner subtly implies the possibility of it throughout the novel.

These examples are representative of Faulkner and his emotions: as we will also see with Quentin, Benjy shares an impotence with Faulkner that leaves them both frustrated by their chief desire. Like Benjy, Faulkner seems unable to achieve his goal: he cannot possess Caddy anymore than Benjy can possess her. To both the author and the characters, Caddy has been removed from the novel even before it begins.

The Emptiness of Pain

Loss in Benjy's chapter is often represented as an emptiness. Faulkner suffuses Benjy's chapter with the impression of this emptiness by inserting subtle images

throughout the text. In her book *The Novels of William Faulkner: A Critical Interpretation* Olga W. Vickery notes this,

. . . with Caddy, he [Benjy] is reminded by the small depression in the earth or by the sound of her name that something is missing, but what it is he misses, he scarcely knows himself. (Vickery, 36)

What is important in this statement is what Vickery uses to describe the times that Benjy remembers his sister. These examples are themselves images of absence: a depression in the ground, and the sound of Caddy's name. Although a name is not necessarily a negative object on its own, the sound of it, when the person it refers to is no longer there, is just as empty as a hole in the earth. Yet Vickery also argues:

Despite his moans Benjy suffers less than any other person in the book because even pain is something external to him, and because one pattern can be replaced with another.
(Vickery, 36)

Each of the brothers is obviously affected by Caddy's departure, and Quentin and Benjy seem to have comparable pain regarding their loss. Yet the claim that Benjy suffers less for his inability to process his feelings is a broad, unsubstantiated claim. Rather, I would argue that in order for pain to be "something external" to Benjy, he would need to be able to verbalize that pain. Without words for his feelings, Benjy cannot comprehend his loss. Without comprehension Benjy can never separate himself from his grief. In the state Benjy is in, with no ability to express his thoughts and feelings, and no process by which to analyze them, his pain cannot escape and forever

remains internal to him. Indeed, his very inability to communicate, in some small way, with the outside world is lost when Caddy leaves.

In the novel, Caddy gives Benjy a voice and gives his thoughts meaning, yet she takes this all away from him when she leaves. Caddy leaves Benjy silent, without a voice to communicate with. He is alone with his emotions, forever "trying to say." In a similar way, Faulkner writes his novel about Caddy, his "beautiful and tragic little girl." He introduces her character, weaves her into the depths of his novel, yet in the same motion he takes her away from it. Faulkner is unable to fully uncover Caddy in the novel; he keeps her from satisfying the reader, and even keeps her from satisfying himself. As the producer, the writer of the novel, Faulkner has the power to introduce Caddy, and he also has the power to remove her. As we discussed Faulkner also plays the role of the consumer, or reader of the novel. Therefore, his very actions as a writer cause his own dissatisfaction as a reader. We can never know if Caddy is frustrated by her own exclusion in the novel, but we do know that Faulkner is dissatisfied with his treatment of Caddy, and he remains frustrated by her constant elusiveness.

Chapter Three

Quentin:

The Comfort of Despair

[Quentin] who loved not the idea of the incest which he would not commit, but some presbyterian concept of its eternal punishment. (qtd. in Minter, 207)

Quentin's desire is above all a desire for Caddy's desire.
(Bleikasten, 107)

Benjamin's desire for Caddy was ultimately a desire for the warmth and love and the ability to communicate that only his sister could give him. Both Benjy and Quentin remain unsatisfied in their desire throughout the novel, but Quentin is different because he expresses a desire for his sister's body. Yet the truth is that Quentin's desire cannot be satisfied, even if he were actually to possess Caddy's body in an act of incest. What he wants is a return to the past and to the innocence that he and Caddy have both lost. As Matthews points out, "Quentin yearns to recover the physical and psychological intimacies of childhood" (46). Quentin does not wish for an actual sexual relationship with Caddy; he wishes for her regression. Quentin desires to recover the pure state that Caddy occupied as a child, therefore his true obsession is with the image of Caddy as a young, innocent girl. Somehow, his logic leads him to believe that by sleeping with his sister he can somehow erase the past. Quentin believes he can erase Caddy's other sexual experiences and thus recover her innocence.

Even in childhood, Quentin was clearly angered by the real or metaphorical dirtying of his sister. Just as the image of the brothers staring at Caddy's muddy drawers is representative of the entire plot of the novel, Quentin's anger at her "dirtiness" is symbolic, foreshadowing his later anger and despair over her sexual activity. Examples of this illustrate the expression of Quentin's anger in violence, as well as the possibility of a sexual playfulness between the two siblings. In the beginning of Benjy's section, Benjy watches Quentin's reaction to Caddy's removal of her clothing,

Caddy took her dress off and threw it on the bank. Then she didn't have on anything but her bodice and drawers, and Quentin slapped her and she slipped and fell down in the water. When she got up she began to splash water on Quentin, and Quentin splashed water on Caddy. (Faulkner, 12)

Ironically, Quentin's slap simply causes Caddy to fall back into the dirty stream. The scene ends with both Caddy and Quentin equally soaked with the muddy water. Despite the emphasis on Caddy's dirty behind, this memory recalls Quentin's ideal solution to his sister's shame. "Just as he smears mud on Caddy to express his outrage at her befoulment -- trying to undo by redoing -- he also tries to restore her virginity by taking it himself" (Matthews, 52). The scene subtly foreshadows Quentin's desire to commit incest, thus tying himself to Caddy in a sin that they commit together. This is an early example of Quentin's warped reasoning, as he tries to cover dirt with more dirt, water with more water.

Quentin's distorted logic, evident in his attempt to purify his sister by further tainting her, remains even as he grows older. Speaking cryptically of her pregnancy, Caddy asks Quentin, "Do you want me to say it do you think if I say it it wont be"

(Faulkner, 77). Here, Caddy is almost able to grasp Quentin's strange logic, his unnatural desire to fix what is done by doing it again. Caddy believes that Quentin desires her acknowledgment of her sin, so that the sound of it on his ears will somehow make it all go away. Caddy's mistake is in underestimating the extent of Quentin's unnatural reasoning; she doesn't understand that Quentin actually desires to *recreate* her sin with her in order to erase it all.

Aspects of Quentin's logic recall the contradiction that governs Benjy's section and his feelings of loss. Both brothers confuse the present with the past, unable to reconcile the two time periods with each other, yet also unable to differentiate between them. In Quentin's section, the memories he recalls often bring us back to the Compson children's childhood. Many of these scenes take place between Quentin and Caddy, some of them quiet, dark, secretive encounters that suggest a sexual energy that is never consummated.

Quentin's childish slap of his sister, pushing her back into the dirty water, is repeated later in their childhood after Caddy's first kiss. The scene is replayed in Quentin's memory, as he recalls the conversation between himself and Caddy.

What did you let him for kiss kiss

I didn't let him I made him . . . What do you think of that?

Red print of my hand coming up through her face . . .

her eyes going bright

It's not for kissing I slapped you . . . It's for letting it be

some darn town squirt I slapped you (Faulkner, 84)

Quentin remembers his rage, but it is not just rage over Caddy's dirtying of herself, nor is it rage over who she kissed, although he claims that is the cause of his anger. Instead, Quentin is outraged by the thought of Caddy's agency. He wants to keep his little sister

innocent, and the only way for him to account for her kiss (and later for much more) is for him to believe that she was not the initiator. Quentin wants to believe that the men Caddy is with overpower her, thus marking *them* as the bad, corrupting force and preserving his sister's helplessness and innocence. Caddy's claim that "*I didn't let him I made him*" (Faulkner, 84) directly contradicts Quentin's desire for Caddy's innocence, at the same time making her the willing accomplice, if not the instigator, in her own downfall. This disagreement between Quentin's wish for his sister's innocence and Caddy's brazen lack of it comes up not only after her first kiss, but also later when Quentin is trying to reconcile himself with Caddy's loss of her virginity. Again, Quentin attributes all agency and blame to the man in the encounter:

did he make you then he made you do it let him he was
stronger than you and he tomorrow Ill kill him I swear I
will . . . Caddy you hate him dont you dont you. (Faulkner,
95)

Quentin wants to believe that Caddy has no part in her own transgressions, and that he can entirely blame the men with whom she has relations. Quentin also wants to feel powerful himself: he wishes to be strong -- a man who will fight for his "weak" sister, and retaliate against anyone who has hurt her.

Quentin's obsession with being stronger than his sister is distinctly evident in the many times he tries to assert his superiority. He wants to use his strength to overpower her, in the same way he wants to believe that the other men overpowered her. Quentin wants to use his strength to possess her, sexually, because if he can accomplish this then he will prove to himself that other men are able to take advantage of her as well. Despite Caddy's insistence that she is an active player in her sexual activity, Quentin still believes that if he can overpower Caddy, then he can effectively negate the initiative she has taken

in the past. Caddy seems aware of her brother's logic, and she tries to make him see his error, attempting to show Quentin that his plan cannot be successful.

stop Quentin
 Caddy
 I got in front of her again
 Caddy
 stop it
 I held her
 Im stronger than you
 she was motionless hard unyielding but still
 I wont fight stop youd better stop
 Caddy dont Caddy
 it wont do any good dont you know it wont let me go
 (Faulkner, 97)

It is no accident that this scene sounds very much like the initiating words before a rape. Faulkner deliberately uses sexual words and actions, and structures many of his scenes to invoke the passion, desire, and frustration evident throughout the novel. Quentin desires to be strong and to use his strength against Caddy; however, his attempts repeatedly fail. A few pages after this quote, Quentin fails to "consummate" Caddy's death with his knife. Matthews interprets this scene as illustrating Quentin's impotency (Matthews, 52). Similarly, the portion quoted above is yet another example of Quentin's weakness.

Quentin's logic here is an example of his belief that to assert his strength would prove Caddy's weakness. It is the same logic with which he reasons that if he can sleep with his sister he can erase her past lovers, and restore her to her childhood innocence. In

this scene, it is evident that Quentin believes he can renew his sister's lost innocence by somehow proving her inability to be anything but a weak, helpless child.

Strength is a recurrent theme in Quentin's section; he wants to appear stronger than Caddy, so that he can somehow take the place of the men who have had sex with her. If Quentin cannot physically overpower Caddy, then he will try to be her savior, and to rescue her by attacking the person responsible for disgracing her. Quentin arranges a meeting with Dalton Ames, Caddy's lover and the man supposedly responsible for her pregnancy. The meeting between the two men appears not necessarily like one between a brother and a lover, fighting over the honor of a woman, but one between two men, both in love with the same girl. However, Quentin loses his composure in front of his older and more controlled rival. David Minter comments on this show of Quentin's powerlessness:

What [Quentin] discovers in himself is deep psychological impotence that manifests itself in his inability to play either of the heroic roles -- seducer or avenger -- that he deems appropriate. (Minter, 100)

Minter recognizes that Quentin's failure in this meeting is yet another expression of impotency, another example of Quentin's lack of power, where he so desires to be strong. Even the words used to describe Quentin's meeting with Dalton Ames imply that Quentin retains no strength when face to face with this man. Describing their confrontation, Quentin says, "I heard myself saying Ill give you until sundown... my mouth said it I didnt say it at all" (Faulkner, 101). Quentin appears to have lost any amount of power or self-control. He is reduced to nothing by the man who not only disgraces his sister but also proceeds to throw it in Quentin's face: "listen no good taking it so hard its not your

fault kid it would have been some other fellow”(101). Quentin’s resolve fails yet again; his defeated state once again emphasizes his inadequacy.

Quentin’s obsession with childhood as well as his lack of power becomes apparent when he meets a little Italian girl while wandering outside of Boston. Immediately before Quentin meets his new friend, he recalls Caddy saying “*now I know I’m dead I tell you*” (78). These words are recalled a few pages later when Quentin describes the young girl as “. . . motionless. She didn’t even seem to breathe” (Faulkner, 81). From this point, Faulkner implies the relationship, in Quentin’s mind, between the little girl and Caddy. After meeting in a bakery, the girl follows Quentin, and although he tries to leave her at first, a relationship forms between the two that represents the one Quentin wishes to have with his sister. He even treats the girl as he wants to treat Caddy: he attempts to preserve her innocence. Quentin wants to keep the girl from growing up, he wants to protect her from what he believes is a certain corruption. At several points in this scene, Quentin’s mind becomes filled with flashbacks. These italicized paragraphs are not unlike those throughout Benjy’s section which indicate a change in time and scene, although these are slightly more structured. His thoughts return to memories of slapping Caddy and of his interactions and accusations at the time, as well as to his brief sexual encounter with a young girl named Natalie. It is no coincidence that these specific memories are recalled: the young Italian girl clearly signifies other women in Quentin’s life. Present actions combine with Quentin’s recollections, coming together in a series of erotic, sexual images. These images are based on words of Caddy’s that refer to her sexual experience, and lead to another confusing, sexually charged interaction between the siblings.

*It’s like dancing sitting down did you ever dance sitting
down . . . How do you hold to dance do you hold like this
Oh*

*I used to hold like this you thought I wasn't strong enough
 didn't you
 Oh Oh Oh Oh* (Faulkner, 85)

Many of the images that Quentin recalls of his sister have a similar sexual energy. This is representative of Quentin's obvious fixation not only with his sister, but also with her body and her sexuality. In this section, the deliberate juxtaposition of erotic thoughts with the innocent little girl implies Quentin's own association between the two characters. I believe that Faulkner does not so much associate this little girl with Caddy's disgrace, but he associates her with the innocence that Caddy once had. Quentin's deeply sexual images are a strong contrast with the quiet innocence of the girl and her "stiff little pigtails" (Faulkner, 85).

When Quentin and the girl come upon a group of boys swimming, his thoughts become more and more sexually charged, despite the innocence of the scene. He is reminded of past scenes with Caddy in the muddy water, and he once again recalls his distorted logic:

*I smeared mud on her with the other hand I couldn't feel
 the wet smacking of her hand I wiped mud from my legs
 smeared it on her wet hard turning body hearing her
 fingers going into my face but I couldn't feel it even when
 the rain began to taste sweet on my lips.* (Faulkner, 87)

Simultaneously, the memory attracts and repulses him. Quentin stands with the little girl, watching until the boys scare them away, and then says to the girl, "That's not for us, is it" (Faulkner, 87). Quentin proceeds to lead the little girl away from all that he sees as bad for her: men and muddy waters.

Quentin's interest in the girl comes from his desire to make her into everything Caddy couldn't be. The girl needs his help; she follows him, he leads her. Quentin can exert a power over her that he never had with his sister; he enjoys the opportunity to control someone. She represents the innocent Caddy, wandering and lost, with only Quentin to lead her in the right direction. In his words to the girl, "Poor kid, you're just a girl" (Faulkner, 87), we can see the satisfaction he takes in condescending to her because in doing it he can see himself as her older, wiser, stronger brother; he even calls her "sister."

Quentin's moment of confidence and control does not last long; the arrival of the girl's brother, and his attack on Quentin, quickly recall Quentin's true lack of power. This scene is reminiscent of Quentin's confrontation and consequent yielding to the stronger Dalton Ames. Faulkner quickly returns the reader to the story, and to Quentin's unchangeable role as anything but the dominant figure he wishes to be.

Quentin's Fear

We have established that Faulkner's characters represent many emotions felt by Faulkner himself, especially reflecting the passion and frustration with which he wrote his novel. Quentin, with his life-long and eventually fatal obsession with his sister, personifies Faulkner's desire to possess Caddy. Moreover, just as Benjy fails, Quentin also fails in his attempt to claim and keep Caddy. Both characters reflect their author; none of them are ever able to possess the "beautiful and tragic little girl."

Faulkner was deeply afraid of achieving perfection in his work because he felt that to achieve it would mean losing it. He feared finishing his novel because to finish was to emerge from it, and from the shelter of its intensity. In this way, Quentin is a

reflection of Faulkner, since both share a common passion: Faulkner was deeply involved with his novel, and Quentin with his sister. Quentin viewed the day when his sister would mean less to him with the same apprehension as that with which Faulkner feared the day he must finish his book. Minter acknowledges this relationship between author and character, claiming that "In Quentin we see clearly Faulkner's sense that the desire to escape such anxiety was potentially destructive" (Minter, 100). Minter thus suggests that the reason for Quentin's suicide is not his inability to recover from Caddy's departure, but his inability to accept the fact that his life might lose its one meaning, its one purpose. Minter states that "For Quentin . . . loss of Caddy means despair"(99). Before, Caddy was Quentin's entire world, and now he is left with an emptiness. Quentin attempts to fill that space with Caddy's absence; he attempts to make her as important to him in her removal from his world as she was when she was still in it. This is why Quentin feels not only grief but also despair: only a feeling so intense, so absolute as despair can envelop him, allowing him to live his life entirely around and for it, as he wishes to do. While she existed in his life, its only meaning was Caddy. Now that she is gone, his life's only meaning is his grief over his loss of her. This parallels Faulkner's fear of "emerging" from writing *The Sound and the Fury*, and his fear that by emerging he will lose that focus he relied upon while creating his book.

This fear in both men, author and character, most likely develops out of their respective wishes to hide within something larger than themselves. Returning to the image of the Roman Vase, Minter suggests that another meaning for it is that of a "haven or shelter" (Minter, 102). Faulkner himself makes this analogy when he says, "I had made myself a vase. I suppose I knew all the time that I could not live forever inside of it" (qtd. in Minter, 232). This "shelter" implies that not only did Quentin and Faulkner find refuge within their respective shelters, but they also found a hiding spot. Quentin hides within his despair, afraid to come out from its protection; when he does, he finds

that ultimately, he is unable to live without it. Similarly, Faulkner hides within his novel, writing and rewriting it, afraid of what he faces when he emerges.

With Quentin as well as with Benjy, Caddy is at the center of the primary irony that shapes both men's lives: only in her absence can the two boys fulfill their seeming desire of her, yet *because* of her absence it is impossible to satisfy this desire. Quentin's own attempt to regain his sister's purity through actions of defilement is an example of the distorted rationalization, which controls many of his actions. As an adult, Quentin wishes to dirty himself with Caddy, hoping that the act will somehow cleanse her, returning her to her natural, pure, childhood state. He wishes to negate what is real with what is imaginary. He wants to sexually possess Caddy, in the hopes that if he possesses her, it will negate others' possession of her. As Matthews recognizes, the entirety of Quentin's existence is spent trying to undo damage by doing further damage. It is this paradox, this contradiction that mirrors the contradiction Caddy upholds throughout the novel: her absence is the only thing that makes her alive in the minds of her brothers, that allows her to be present and vibrant within the novel. All that we see of Caddy, in fact, is the result of looking into the past, often from a place or time far removed. Given his sister's overwhelming absence, Quentin's quest is obviously in vain; not only does he never sleep with Caddy, but even if he were to, he could never recover for her -- or for himself -- the essential innocence that was lost. His desire is therefore as elusive as Caddy herself, and the result leaves Quentin, and Faulkner, dissatisfied.

Chapter Four

Jason:

A Bitter Loss

Once a bitch, always a bitch, what I say. (Faulkner, 113)

In his Appendix, Faulkner claims that Jason Compson is “The first sane Compson . . . and . . . the last” (qtd. in Minter, 212). Yet this cruel, irrational character who narrates the third chapter of the novel, though possessing perhaps a more superficially stable facade than the rest of his family, in fact harbors as many psychological problems as either of his two brothers. Just as aspects of Benjy and Quentin’s sections contain reflections of Faulkner’s mental and psychological states during the writing of the novel, Jason’s chapter also has aspects that represent the author’s personality. While the themes of frustration and desire are in some ways blatant in the first two chapters, they become obscured in Jason’s chapter. What makes this theme different is that Jason’s frustration is provoked as much by the existence of the desire he feels, as by the fact that he cannot satisfy it. This frustration is also provoked by his unsuccessful attempt to satisfy his desire with a material compensation.

Faulkner portrays many of Jason’s frustrations in the form of an overall bitterness in Jason and in his outlook on the world. Beyond this bitterness, and beyond what appears to be a relatively sane, if not psychologically stable character, is yet another result of Caddy’s downfall and her departure from the family. In this chapter the reader is once again familiarized with the incredibly destructive force that affects the Compson family, and with the magnitude of Caddy’s influence.

Jason is different from his two brothers; he is aware of his desires, and recognizes their influence on him. Yet he is frustrated not only by his inability to satisfy them, but also by the fact that they exist at all. Jason's reaction to his unwanted desire is to lash out against the people around him. He needs to place blame on someone, and decides to blame both Caddy and her daughter. Superficially, he blames Caddy for his loss of the job that Herbert Head promised him. He blames Caddy's daughter Quentin II for anything he can find wrong with her, yet he still spends a great deal of time harassing her. Most of all, Jason blames Quentin II for inviting his interest, and for sparking his sexual desire. Examples throughout this chapter express Jason's sentiment; he often yells at her or comments on her clothes, her body, and her makeup. Not only does Jason get upset over his attraction to her, but he also becomes angry when reminded of her effect on other men, and their desire of her. In this respect Jason acts like his brother Quentin, who desires both Caddy's innocence and his own sexual possession of her. Jason is frustrated by his desire for Quentin II, yet he also resents the idea of her with other men. As Quentin attempts to do with Caddy, Jason justifies his anger and his actions by insisting that he is protecting his niece.

In the first two chapters, the obsessions of Benjy and Quentin with their sister are easy to understand; at times they are even blatantly obvious. In the third chapter, Jason's obsession is no less existent, but simply more subtle. For the most part, Jason's fixation with Caddy manifests itself in his abuse of his niece, Quentin II. Jason responds to his sister's departure, illegitimate child, and subsequent divorce with anger and hostility. For the most part, Jason blames his anger on his loss of the job promised to him by Herbert Head, Caddy's husband. The couple divorced when Head learned that Caddy's child was not his own; it is due to their separation that Jason never gets the job. He continues to hold his sister fully responsible, and because Caddy is no longer close within his reach, Jason lashes out to her daughter. Quentin II is not only similar to her mother in looks and behavior, but she is also the one possession of Caddy's that Jason can touch and hurt.

In light of these reasons for Jason's treatment of Quentin II, his stealing of the monthly check that Caddy sends for her daughter can be interpreted in a several different ways. In the material sense, Jason believes the money is owed to him because of the job he couldn't have. This appears to be the justification Jason himself uses for his actions. Yet whether consciously or not, his stealing is also a way for Jason to hurt both Caddy and Quentin II. He also sees it as compensation he deserves for the suffering he believes he's endured in his life. In addition to feeling cheated out of the job promised by Herbert Head, Jason feels cheated -- in a larger way -- out of the life he might have led. "I never had time to go to Harvard or drink myself into the ground. I had to work" (Faulkner, 114) says Jason, referring to Quentin, who was sent to college with the money the family earned by selling their land, and to his father, a drunkard. Jason views himself as a hard worker who suffers to support his family, yet he despises every member of it. Within the Compson household, Quentin II becomes the main object of Jason's anger, and she is the primary victim of his cruelty.

Ultimately, Jason's actions are his attempt to compensate not only for the loss of his job or the lack of his education, but also for the loss of his sister and the disintegration of his family. In this chapter, Jason appears to have little sympathy for any person. He was no different as a child; several examples of his cruel actions, even as a young boy, surface throughout the novel. He tattles on Caddy and Quentin when they play in the mud, and he cuts up Benjy's paper dolls. Throughout the novel there are many examples of Jason's cruelty, especially directed toward Benjy and Caddy. Because of Jason's apparently heartless nature, we can infer that his loss of Caddy influences him and causes him to become even meaner as an adult. As Benjy and Quentin are driven deeper into their own psychological problems, Jason is as well. Yet there is a distinct difference between the emotional loss of Caddy, which affects all of the brothers, and the material loss, in a financial sense, which Jason sees himself as experiencing. Matthews responds

to this distinction, noting that it is only the financial loss which Jason attempts to make up for:

[Jason has] apparently satisfied himself with an elaborate financial compensation for the inaccessibility of Caddy. Yet his incessant frustration feeds on the necessary failure of the supplement to recover the thing itself. (qtd. in Bloom, 80)

Matthews implies that Jason's bitterness and anger is provoked as much by his emotional loss as by his financial losses. This quote suggests that Jason has in some way appeased himself, and actually believes himself to be recompensed for his losses. Yet the second sentence implies that no such appeasement is made and no real satisfaction gained from Jason's actions. I believe that it is this false sense of satisfaction, the attempt to make a material replacement for an emotional emptiness, which is actually the cause for Jason's frustrations. Because his emptiness is so complete, and even more so for his inability to recognize it, Jason is set apart from his two brothers. Quentin is trying to make up for his loss by somehow returning to it. Benjy is unable to communicate his loss, yet Jason is not even aware of the depth of his feelings, and he cannot even comprehend the extent of their inability to be alleviated.

The Other Brother

While there are only a few similarities between Benjy and Jason, the parallels between Jason and his brother Quentin are more apparent. Both men appear to have a sexual aspect to their feelings: Quentin in his feelings for Caddy and Jason in his feelings

for Quentin II. As Bleikasten says, "Jason is indeed as compulsively preoccupied with his niece's promiscuity as Quentin was with Caddy's"(158). Bleikasten's use of the word compulsive is appropriate here; both Quentin and Jason dedicate an unreasonable amount of time to the thoughts and actions involved in the love lives of these two women. Quentin used the excuse of his role as Caddy's brother, and his protection of his sister's honor, to justify his overbearing interest. Jason excuses his actions by saying that he cares about Quentin II's behavior because he wants to uphold the Compson name. Jason claims, "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"(Faulkner, 146). What Jason is actually angry about is the fact that his sister has already dishonored the Compsons, and the fact that he is now attracted to her daughter. Jason now uses the pretense of honor to justify his ridiculous treatment of his niece, which includes chasing her through town, and driving after her and her boyfriend. As Bleikasten notes, "Jason is so sincerely outraged by the girl's escapades that a hypocritical care for propriety will hardly do for an explanation"(158). The truth is, Jason is rendered out of control for many of the same reasons that Quentin was, and both brothers poorly attempt to justify their unreasonable interest. Jason was younger than Quentin when Caddy left home: he either never had time to develop sexual feelings for her, or else he never had an understanding of them as Quentin did. Yet he still feels anger towards her sexuality, and needs to find a way to express it. Quentin is overcome with his emotions, with his feelings of loss and his agony. Finally, he kills himself as an answer to his despair. Jason takes a different route: he tries to repress his agony, but this is ineffective; his emotion overtakes his entire person, and is expressed in his anger and bitterness for life. The sexual feelings he might have had for his sister are revealed when he is confronted with a reminder of her – in her looks, and in the loss of his prospective job -- every day. The immense hatred Jason feels towards the world he blames on Caddy and, because Caddy is far away, he takes his anger out on her daughter. As Quentin II

has become the family's one connection to Caddy, Jason has transferred much of his anger for Caddy onto her daughter. Just as his brothers were obsessed with Caddy, Jason is also fixated on his sister, but he transfers his obsession to his niece instead.

There are several indications in the text of Jason's obsession with Quentin II and of the sexual nature of his feelings for her. At times, subtle sexual descriptions indicate this sexual emotion. This usually becomes apparent in scenes that also display Jason's violence towards Quentin II: "I dragged her into the dining room. Her kimono came unfastened, flapping about her, dam near naked"(116) Jason's violent act is emphasized by his observation of Quentin's body. Yet this indication of Jason's sexual interest seems to be exactly what infuriates him. Again, Jason mirrors his brothers in their interactions with Caddy. Quentin becomes enraged with Caddy when he suspects her of sexual contact with another man. Benjy becomes uncontrollable when he smells a difference in Caddy. Similarly, Jason becomes outraged at any indication of Quentin II's sexuality. As with the other two brothers, we can interpret Jason's anger as resulting from his inability to sexually possess Quentin II. He believes that if he cannot have her, no man can have her. Jason and Quentin both justify their extreme emotions as a means of protecting the women -- protecting their honor, their virginity, and most of all the Compson family name.

In the scene that follows the quotes above, Jason tries to beat Quentin II with his belt in a scene that can almost be read as an attempted rape. Jason remarks on Quentin II's kimono several times, as she ties and reties it tightly around her body. When Mrs. Compson walks down the stairs and disrupts Jason's attempt to beat Quentin II, the girl "stumbled back against the wall, holding her kimono shut"(117). Quentin II's self-defense indicates the hidden sexual nature in Jason's violence, and shows that she is not unaware of this undertone.

Although Quentin admits to his desire for Caddy, in his chapter Jason can never admit that his niece is the object of his sexual interest. At certain points he appears to

recognize his feelings, and to become even more angry and violent towards Quentin II, as if he is enraged at her for exiting his interest. The quote above shows this anger; other examples in the novel reflect both Jason's violence, and his sexual interest in his niece. Before school one day, Jason observes, "You don't look all the way naked . . . even if that stuff on your face does hide more of you than anything else you've got on" (Faulkner, 118). Jason consistently finds ways to insult his niece while at the same time revealing the sexual aspect of his interest in her.

Another Defeat

Having established the similarities and differences between Jason and his brothers regarding their desire, I now turn to the recurring theme of impotence in each of the brothers. Like Quentin, Jason attempts to conceal his actual lack of power or control regarding either Caddy or her daughter. Instead of admitting to his weakness, he treats Quentin II poorly, orders her and the family servants around, and constantly laments his position as the sole supporter of the family. Yet at the same time, Jason is stealing Quentin II's money, and lying to her, Caddy, and his mother about it. His bitter, angry attitude towards the other characters is Jason's attempt to assert his power and disguise his underhandedness. As the chapter continues, his true lack of strength becomes apparent.

In the first two chapters, the brothers' weaknesses become evident in parallel scenes resulting from their jealousy of Caddy's lovers. This event is crudely replayed a third time in Jason's chapter. Angry at the mere idea of another man's interest in Quentin II, Jason becomes enraged when he realizes she is actually sneaking around with someone. He goes to the extent of following his niece when she is with her boyfriend. In

his rage, his thoughts turn violent, encompassing everything from Quentin II's disrespect for him, to her choice of clothes. Once again, his attention appears directed toward her body; his rage seems to be less about what clothes she is wearing, than about how much of her body they show. Jason regards this with increasing anger, bitter that she should be so disrespectful yet so desirable at the same time.

[S]o I stood there and watched her go on past . . . a dress . .
. with no more than that to cover her legs and behind . . .
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. (Faulkner, 145)

Just a few seconds after he says this, Jason himself is standing on the street, and could very well be one of the men whom he chastises.

The climactic event in Jason's chapter is his frantic pursuit of Quentin II in his car. Quentin II and her boyfriend drive into the woods in the country. Jason leaves his job to follow them, then walks through bushes and briars in his futile search. Not only is he left dirty and entirely defeated when he returns to his car, but he also discovers that the young couple has let the air out of his tires, leaving him stranded and powerless.

I never thought . . . I kind of thought then that the car was
leaning a little more than the slant of the road would be, but
I never found it out until I got in and started off . . . Well, I
just sat there. (Faulkner, 151)

This scene is a definite, symbolic representation of Jason's impotence. Because Jason never even meets Quentin's lover face to face, he seems even more weak and hopeless than his brothers, who were at least able to confront Caddy's partners.

The extent of Jason's impotency is represented most significantly by his car-induced headaches. At first, he is empowered by his ability to pursue Quentin II in his car; he speeds after her, partially playing the role of protective father or brother, but mostly imitating an angry lover. Yet in all of his anger and empowerment, Jason disregards his serious condition, "I saw red . . . I forgot about everything. I never thought about my head even until I came to the first forks and had to stop" (Faulkner 149). His pain is so great that he is forced to delay his chase. His debilitating headache, and its result in his inability to carry through with his authoritative actions, is deeply representative of Jason's true weakness -- something that he cannot hide with any amount of severity or meanness.

While all three Compson brothers share some similarities regarding their interest in Caddy, Jason stands out in the novel for the strong tone of his chapter, and for his mean nature. His desire, as well as his frustration, also has a slightly different nature than that of his brothers: while Benjy and Quentin share a similar frustration in their unattainable desire for their sister, Jason is troubled by the simple fact that he *has* desires. Jason's chapter is significant partially because it introduces the idea of an insufficient replacement for a deep loss. Jason attempts to make up for his emotional losses with money, while Faulkner tries to make up for his loss by writing his novel. Both men fail, due to misunderstanding their emotional needs.

Although Jason seems to be the most dominating of the brothers, he actually experiences the most devastating feelings of weakness. The reason for this is Jason's inability to accept the fact that he possesses desire in the first place, compounded by his

inability to satisfy that desire.

Conclusions

While Faulkner's novel is full of complex themes and characters, its most defining trait is its ability to form itself around the image of an absent character. In order to construct his novel in this way, Faulkner offers four perspectives on a single story, the first three each in a different first-person narrative. The effect of these first three chapters is to symbolically mimic the novel's originating image of three boys looking at their sister. Partially because the boys' perspective, and not Caddy's, is portrayed in the novel, and partially because throughout the book Caddy is only briefly actually in the present tense of the story, it is not surprising that the novel appears to form itself entirely around her absence. What this essay has attempted to establish is that the novel not only functions within the *lack* of Caddy, but its true success results from its function within the *want* of Caddy -- within the desires and passions inherent to the novel, and to its author.

This desire is apparent in every chapter in the novel: each of the brothers inherits Faulkner's passion, and this becomes evident in their respective chapters. Although each brother embodies Faulkner's basic deferral of self-gratification, they do so in different ways. In Benjy, Faulkner expresses feelings of loss and emptiness. Benjy represents an innocent character, and his chapter's significance relies greatly on physical sensation and raw emotion. In this chapter Faulkner reveals his deep desire to fulfill an emptiness in his life. Faulkner's loss is mirrored in Benjy's own loss, and Faulkner's unsuccessful attempt to possess the character of Caddy is reflected in Benjy's inability to communicate once his sister has left.

In Quentin, Faulkner develops a character much like himself. Quentin is a confused character with many conflicting emotions involving his sister. The contradiction that is expressed in Quentin's character is one of the most significant ways

in which he represents the author. Quentin bases his world around his sister, immersing himself in his despair over her. He becomes fixated not only on her but on her condition, and on his desire for her; he becomes more attached to this obsession than to Caddy herself. Similarly, Faulkner's emotions while writing the novel are so strong that he becomes quite attached to it -- despite its difficulty -- and to the emotion that writing it elicits in him. As Quentin is obsessed with his desire for Caddy, Faulkner becomes obsessed with his passion for the novel. It is not an accident that much of his passion derives directly from his own desire for Caddy. Both men seek this character, and both men fail. Quentin fails partially because he can never attain what he believes he desires, he can never have a sexual relationship with Caddy. His failure is also the realization that he can never feel an unending passion and emotion for his sister -- not as long as he lives. His suicide is therefore interpreted as the only way he can find to forever retain his emotion and despair. Faulkner fails because, although he writes and rewrites his 'story' five times in the form of four chapters and one Appendix, he still cannot preserve the emotion, the ecstasy and even the pain that he felt during its initial creation. Quentin's chapter is the representation of this frustration within the author, and its reflection in his character. Faulkner's contradiction lies in his belief that he cannot be satisfied with his story because it isn't perfect. In fact, his novel cannot satisfy him because he desires to live forever inside its formation, inside the very emotion he feels while writing the book.

Jason's chapter is significant because in it he displays a different frustration from that of his brothers'. Jason's is the frustration of an unwanted desire. Although he represents an extreme character, his emotions signify a real aspect of Faulkner's own emotions. Like Benjy, Jason experiences the emptiness of loss. His grief is as real as Benjy's, but while Benjy is simply unable to comprehend his emotion, Jason is angered by the very presence of his feelings. He attempts to elicit financial compensation for his emotional loss, which proves his true lack of understanding of himself and his emotional state. While Benjy is unable to articulate his grief, Jason is unable even to understand or

admit to any loss he feels for his sister. Instead, he attempts to make up for the financial loss he believes himself to experience. In addition to his feelings of frustration over the desire he feels, Jason becomes frustrated by his inability to use material means to make up for his emotional loss. Similarly, Faulkner realizes that his novel cannot make up for the losses in his life. Although a success, the novel is a failure to Faulkner because, like the money Jason steals, the material gain can never adequately satisfy his emotional loss.

William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* is an original, emotional piece of writing. The striking uniqueness of the novel's structure belies its actual significance in the book: it was not written in the form of four chapters and one appendix for you, the reader to enjoy it; it was written for the author himself. This structure, and each of the chapters, reveals the energy exerted by Faulkner as he attempts to create a piece that will satisfy his desire. Each time he tries, he fails, and tries again, until finally he put the book away; it was published in 1929. Even then he could not put it away for long; the Appendix was written fifteen years after the first publication of the novel, as Faulkner briefly entertained a hope of its conclusion. Yet this last effort fails too, and it is this very compilation, four chapters and one appendix, which is now read and analyzed by many. Indeed, Faulkner's work fails, in his mind, to accomplish what it sets out to do. Yet it is precisely in this failure, in the trying, and failing, and trying again; in the frustration, the passion, the dissatisfaction, that *The Sound and the Fury* gains its tremendous success. This is because it is in the emotion that drives Faulkner, and the characters in the novel, to fulfill their desires and achieve the satisfaction they desperately want that the novel is filled with a deep, emotional energy. When asked which book he considers his best, Faulkner replied that *The Sound and the Fury* was "the one that I worked at the longest, the hardest, that was to me the most passionate and moving idea, and made the most splendid failure. . . ." (qtd. in Bleikasten, *xii*). The energy that suffuses the novel is what makes it succeed, even as it fails in what it attempts, as an incredible representation of the passions, hopes, desires and emotions exploding from one single person.

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