CHAPTER – IV

THE SOUND AND THE FURY: CUBIST PAINTING IN WORDS

William Faulkner’s magnum opus *The Sound and the Fury* is a well received classic in American literature. The novel is known for its variety of popular techniques experimented by him in the twentieth century. He was very much a writer who was aware of the ongoing movements in literature. *The Sound and the Fury* is a product of Faulkner’s effort at a crucial movement in his life to understand and depict his personal struggles in an exploratory and definitive way. He confronted his problems with much sensitivity and penetration that they finally acquired a universal significance.

He was greatly influenced by a popular movement known as *Cubism*. *Cubism* is a movement which is related to fine arts. Faulkner experimented *Cubism* in his fiction. Though Cubism is related to arts and sculpture, *The Sound and the Fury* is the result of his experimentation in the Cubist theory. Cubism is basically the art of creating abstract shapes of three dimensional objects on a two dimensional surface. An artist who wants to opt for Cubism should be able to represent an object in multiple planes. Therefore, in simple terms, a Cubist artist is a literary writer or a painter basically shows more than one view at a time. The overall look of a painting that is created in this style appears in the form of little cubes. An artist uses the style of little cubes to depict an object or a person from different viewpoints.

*Cubism* was a twentieth century avant-garde art movement. The word *Cubism* is derived from French by Louis Vauxcelles in 1908 after seeing a picture by Georges Braque. It was pioneered by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. It revolutionized European painting and sculpture, and inspired related movements in music, literature
and architecture. The first branch of Cubism, known as *Analytic Cubism* which was both radical and influential. It was a short but highly significant art movement between 1907 and 1911 in France. In its second phase, *Synthetic Cubism*, the movement spread and remained vital until around 1919, when the Surrealist movement gained popularity.

In Analytic Cubism, artworks or objects are broken up, analyzed, and re-assembled in an abstracted form instead of depicting objects from one viewpoint. The artist depicts the subject from a multitude of viewpoints to represent the subject in a greater context. It was introduced in United States in 1913 at Armory Show in New York.

This movement was a preparation ground for Faulkner to write his classics, *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) and *As I Lay Dying* (1930). They can be read as an interaction with the Cubist mode. Each novel features narratives of the diverse experiences of his multiple narrators, when, taken together they produce a single cohesive body. The impact of Cubism on Faulkner in a short span of time proves that he was a great learner, experimenter and innovator in his fiction. Within a period of sixteen years, Cubism got its full flowering in the fiction of Faulkner. Both emotionally and technically this novel proved to be one of his most powerful ones. Lyle Saxon, writing for the ‘New York Herald Tribune,’ called *The Sound and the Fury* “a great book” (Minter. 1987: ix).

*The Sound and the Fury*, a novel in four movements like Cubist theory, paints the decay of an aristocratic Mississippi family, a dissonant, pessimistic narrative shattered into radically different perspectives. Both the South and the family resonate loudly with the spirit of modernism. The disorganization of the family translates into
the disorganization of life. The South also serves as an appropriate setting to explore failure, order, and temporality. Most of America is a timeless, commercial, Mickey Mouse fantasy world; the land of happy endings is expressed in the novel through the four different narrators. “It is powerful and mature work of fiction in its richness of characterization, the complexity of its interior monologue, the incremental and expansive nature of its structure and resonance of its themes. Basil Davenport described it as original and impressive” (Basil, Davenport. ix). The novel is great because of Faulkner’s use of Cubism, strong creative talent and rich sense to poetic emotion in analyzing the tragedy of disintegrated Southern Compson family of gentle blood which is shown in decay, it’s members, petty failures, drunkards, pathological perverts and idiots.

Faulkner was wise in choosing titles for his novels. The title of the novel is extracted from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. He was very much impressed by the protagonist Macbeth’s soliloquy;

*Life’s but walking shadow, a poor player*

*That struts and frets his hour upon the stage*  
*And then is heard no more. It is a tale*  
*Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,*  
*Signifying nothing.*

(Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* Act-V Scene-V lines 24-28).

In this soliloquy, Macbeth implies that life is a shadow of the past and that a modern man, like himself, is inadequately equipped and unable to achieve anything near the greatness of the past. Faulkner interprets this idea, implying if man does not choose to take his own life, as Quentin does, the only alternatives are to become either
a cynic and materialist like Jason, or an idiot like Benjy, unable to see life as anything more than a meaningless series of images, sounds and memories.

*The Sound and the Fury* literally begins as “*a tale/ Told by an idiot,*” as the first chapter narrated by the mentally disabled Benjy. The tale is made relevant in the words of an omniscient narrator Faulkner through Dilsey who describes Benjy’s wailing voice as “horror, shock, and agony, eyeless, tongueless, and just sound” (Towner 17). The novel’s central concerns include time much like Macbeth’s ‘*tomorrow, tomorrow*’; death, recalling Macbeth’s dusty death; and nothingness and disintegration, a clear reference to Macbeth’s lament that life, ‘signifies nothing.’

*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow*

*Creeps in this petty pace from day to day*

*To the last syllable of recorded time;*

*And all our yesterdays have lighted fools*

*The way to dusty death. Out, out brief candle!*

*(Shakespeare’s Macbeth Act-V Scene-V lines 19-23).*

Additionally, Quentin is haunted by the sense that the Compsons have disintegrated to a mere shadow of it’s former greatness. The phrase ‘sound and the fury’ aptly describes the content of the various monologues in the novel. Time, space, self-interest, subjective perception, and family are the five dimensions through which the novel can be read. Considering it all into a coherent image gives a sense of completion. This novel is far more aural than almost any other novel. Sounds echo at key moments to provide critical meaning. The novel often speaks without sounds, but there is much fury when the words are internal. Some of the sounds, especially
Benjy’s, help to cause the fury. The readers will enjoy the inter relationship of the story with the title.

The novelist has effectively experimented *Cubism* along with narrative techniques in the four sections of the novel which are non-chronological, fragmented and disordered. The four sections which Faulkner has made in this novel are unique and deal with inner workings of the mind of the Compson brothers. But nothing organizes itself vertically into a hierarchy. Like modernist artwork, the horizontal dominates, without a central viewpoint or an objective point of reference, with no portion of the canvas receiving more emphasis than any other. Though the sections are not in chronological order, Faulkner has successfully handled, analyzed, and arranged them in an abstract manner.

The events in this novel occur according to relevance and significance, but not according to time sequence. The first section is titled as ‘April Seventh, 1928, Benjy section’; the second ‘June Second, 1910, Quentin section’; the third ‘April Sixth, 1928, Jason section’; and the fourth ‘April Eighth, 1928, Dilsey section.’ The first three sections of the novel are in the first-person point of view, narrated by the male members of a declining and dysfunctional Southern family, the Compsons of gentle blood; its members, petty failures, drunkards, aristocrats, suiders, and psychological parrots. Whereas in the fourth section, an omniscient mode is adopted by Faulkner. The following lines are exemplary of the use of Cubism in this novel.

*The road rose again, to a scene like a painted backdrop. Notched into a cut of red clay crowned with oaks the road appeared to stop short off, like a cut ribbon. Beside it a weathered church lifted its crazy steeple like a painted church, and the whole scene was as flat and*
without perspective as a painted cardboard set upon the ultimate edge of the flat earth, against the windy sunlight of space and April and midmorning filled with bells (The Sound and the Fury, 1994. 182).

And like Cubism, we get a look at the same events from different perspectives, each not more or less valid than any other.

The features of Cubism are the keys to analyze this novel. The success of the novel is attributed to Faulkner’s arrangement of the incidents in a non sequential and non chronological order which heightens the curiosity of the readers. The reader’s movement through the book is a progression from darkness to increasing enlightenment, and this is natural since we start with the mind of an idiot and go on next through the memories and reveries of the Hamlet, like Quentin, and come finally to the observations of the brittle, would be rationalist, Jason.

Several factors are responsible in making the novel difficult for the readers to understand. First, one of the narrator’s is a person with mental deficiencies. Second, use of an unusual flashback technique in the first section that cannot be understood very clearly until one reads the whole book (perhaps more than once). Third, Faulkner is careful in his clues of how the stories weave together. One has to watch carefully for them. Fourth, the sensibilities of the day mean that much is implied rather than stated overtly. But, we have to understand what those hints are about, or we miss the story. There is much dense Southern black dialect that requires slow reading to capture the sense. Fifth, the interior dialogues are interspaced with external dialogues, which can create confusion. Sixth, there is a lot of crude Stream of Consciousness material which will not enchant us as Joyce’s or Proust’s will. Seventh, the book is heavy with unusual symbolism that is easy to miss. Eighth, the center of the story is
often drawn in by looking at the edges rather than looking directly at the center. *The Sound and the Fury* is a novel which remains to be a challenge to the modern readers. After going through the novel, the reader will be amazed, confused, and psychologically feels that where he is. In case of interested readers who love and admire to get new experiences, they will find the book truly rewarding. The researcher will try to find his way out through the maze of this novel hoping against the hope not to get lost.

Faulkner claims that the novel *The Sound and the Fury* began with as a single idea that an image of a little girl climbing up a tree with muddy drawers and grew into a short story entitled *Twilight*. But, because of Faulkner’s love for Caddy's character, this short story has been developed into an entire 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…, It began with a mental picture. I didn’t realize at the time it was symbolical. The picture was of the muddy seat of little girl’s drawers in a pear tree where she could see through a window where her grandmother’s funeral was taking place…I had already begun to tell the story through the eyes of the idiot child, since I felt that it would be more effective as told by someone capable only of knowing what happened, but not why. I saw that I had not told the story that time. I tried to tell it again, the same story through the eyes of another brother that was still not it. I told it for the third time through the eyes of the third brother that was still not it. I tried to gather the pieces together and fill in the gaps by making myself the spokesman. It was still not complete, not until
fifteen years after the book was published. When I wrote as an appendix to another book the final report to get the story told off my mind. So that I myself could have some peace from it………..

(Faulkner, Qtd in Fredrick, J. Hoffman. 50-53).

The above remarks which were made by Faulkner to Jean Stein, an American author of the two books (American Journey; the Times of Robert Kennedy and An American Biography), and a pioneer of the narrative form of the oral history suggest that “the novel is constructed upon a successive retelling of a single story from four different points of view” (ibid. 52). The facts and figures of the story are very few and fairly easy to record; ‘the death of grandmother’ is the earliest significant event which took place in the year 1898. The next incident is ‘Caddy’s affair with Delton Ames in 1909,’ which is the first series of the affairs, ‘her marriage to Herbert Head in April 1910’ and ‘subsequent birth of her illegitimate child Miss Quentin,’ which causes the breakdown of Caddy’s marriage, ‘the suicide of Quentin in June 1910,’ ‘the death of father in 1913’; and ‘elopement of Miss Quentin with the contents of Jason’s money box,’ and ‘Jason’s futile effort to capture her,’ Easter Sunday of 1928.

*The Sound and the Fury* was the one I anguished the most over, that I worked the hardest at, that even when I knew I couldn’t bring it off, I still worked at it…The others that have been easier to write…I don’t have the feeling toward any of them that I do toward that one…(Faulkner quoted in Gray, Richard. 137).

He continued to say, ‘I like the one which caused me the most trouble,’ he declared in an interview. There was an inner struggle in Faulkner while making a number of drafts of this novel. He wrote it several times and revised and revised till
he felt that it was a work of art to be presented before the readers. The efforts of his work are described in his own words; this time, however, the story soon began to grow into a narrative: a narrative into which, as Faulkner later put it, “I had written my guts” (Faulkner quoted in Gray, Richard. 137).

This novel exemplifies Faulkner’s bold stylistic and formal innovations. It reflects his creation of unforgettable powerfully strong voices and characters, and brilliant insight into the psychological, economic and social realities of life in American South during the transition period from Civil War to the modern era. Because of all these stylistic qualities, innovative narrative techniques, and Faulkner’s deep concern for the people of the South after the Civil War, it has been recognized as the strongest contribution to the fiction of modernism and generated countless critical interpretations in the modern era.

The four sections were arbitrarily and capriciously distorted, and was the point of discussion for the critics and the readers. They were confused by Faulkner's decision to begin the novel with the Benjy section. Many critics felt that Benjy section of the novel, narrated through the mind of a thirty-three-year-old man, presented a number of obstacles to the reader. Some critics thought that the novel should begin with the final section; others suggested that Jason's section should come first. Some of these objections are still offered. It is indeed a difficult task to get through Benjy section without throwing up one's hands in despair. “Faulkner deliberately began with the most incoherent of the four parts of the novel presenting his reader with a puzzle to unravel rather than a narrative exposition of the general situation” (Brooks 45). But still Faulkner was right in his own ways to begin with Benjy section.
As we know, a novel can never be judged by a first reading. It is on the subsequent readings of this novel that we realize how Faulkner presented the story in it’s most effective order. This novel is quite different from any other novel. It is through experience that the reader can drive home the point that the author was right in beginning the novel with Benjy section than any other section.

It is a memorable and sometimes puzzling novel that surprises and absorbs the reader each time it is being read along with James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* and T. S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*. It also signaled the beginning of the major period of Faulkner's own literary creativity. The question of form and technique arises and further generates an unavoidable critical issue in the discussion of it’s structure. There may be possible reasons for the particular arrangement of the four sections and for the use of Stream of Consciousness technique in the first three sections and not in the fourth.

Faulkner was desirous to present Yoknapatawpha, the fictional region of American South. To visualize this mission he felt the downfall of the Compson family as the subject of this novel. The family consists of Jason Compson III and his wife Caroline, their four children Jason IV, Quentin, Canduce (Caddy), and Maury (whose name is changed to Benjamin), and Caroline's brother Maury Bascomb, and their family of black servants: Dilsey and Roskus and their children Versh, T.P. and Frony. In 1928, when the story mainly takes place, two other important characters Miss Quentin, Caddy's illegitimate daughter, and Luster, Frony's son appear.

*The Sound and the Fury*, a novel in four movements, (Cubism) paints the decay of an aristocratic Mississippi family, a dissonant, pessimistic narrative shattered into radically different perspectives. The story of the Compson family, and by
extension, the decline of the old South is narrated in four sections, each focused upon the daughter, Canduce (Caddy) who is seen only through the consciousness of the others. Three of the four sections use the interior monologue, while the fourth, Dilsey section is narrated from an omniscient point of view.

Each of the first three sections of the novel is narrated by a different member of the Compson family in their own perspective; the first is narrated by Benjamin Compson, the second by Quentin Compson and the third by Jason IV Compson. The fourth section is a third person narrative narrated by Dilsey, the Compson's old black servant. Although the novel is narrated by the three brothers and the servant, the focus of the novel is really ‘Caddy Compson’ the sister of Compson brothers and the real missing centre of this novel.

Nevertheless, the Stream of Consciousness was the modernistic technique employed by the novelist which was a matter of concern for the readers during the time of it’s publication. In the first chapter of the novel, Faulkner starts to describe the story of the Compsons through the eyes of Benjy, the youngest son who is severely retarded and also regarded as the idiot of the novel. Benjy, maturely immatured man of thirty three, the real mouth piece of the novelist, expresses himself merely by inarticulate moans and cries. The readers are made to follow him through his interior monologue which is the unique way of Faulkner’s unique experimentation of Stream of Consciousness. A modern critic comments on the attitude of Benjy in the following words;

he cannot abstract or generalize, cannot distinguish between one time and another, [...] a thirty-year difference in time is no difference at all,
and sensations that are actually separated by twenty or thirty years are undifferentiated (Hoffman 53).

Benjy remembers going to sleep the day when his father died in 1912, then a view from his father’s funeral comes to his mind and, finally, in the present of 1928, he begs his caretaker Luster for a ball to play with:

*Dilsey pushed me and I got in the bed, where Luster already was. He was asleep. Dilsey took a long piece of wood and laid it between Luster and me. ‘Stay on your side now.’ Dilsey said. ‘Luster little, and you don’t want to hurt him.’ You can’t go yet, T.P. said. Wait. We looked around the corner of the house and watched the carriages go away. ‘Now.’ T.P. said, Come on, Luster, said, I going to take this here ball down home, where I won’t lose it. Now, sir, you can’t have it. If the men see you with it, they’ll say you stole it. Hush up, now. You can’t have it. What business you got with it. You can’t play no ball* (The Sound and the Fury 20).

Even though readers probably get confused while reading the first chapter of the novel, it introduces them perfectly into Benjy’s curiously fixed world and enables them to actually participate in his experience of time and reality. This way, when they overcome initial difficulties of the Stream-of-consciousness narrative, Faulkner lets his readers plunge in to the family situation so that they get to know what the other members are like.

The innovative techniques experimented by William Faulkner, render the inner life of a character through an unending flow of thoughts, emotions, images, memories and other associations moving through the character’s mind. Faulkner,
therefore, by making use of various narrative devices, guides the reader’s imagination throughout the first section of the novel in such a way that he or she experiences the world of the thirty three year old retarded narrator, Benjy. The past and the present are differentiated by the employment of non-chronological narration, Stream of Consciousness and multiplicity of narrative techniques.

Faulkner intended to tell a tale of the decline of the post Civil War Southern family. To make it more effective, he opted to present it through the characters of the Southern family, to capture the graveness of the situation. He has used the variety of techniques like Stream of Consciousness, Interior monologue and multiple points of view. It is true that the Civil War has had a profound impact on the psyche of the South and its people. The region was completely disturbed mentally, spiritually, economically, socially and culturally. The rich aristocratic families suffered a lot losing hope and faith in their life. The youth started doing nothing except thinking of their past life.

Faulkner gives us multiple perspectives of the disintegrated and disturbed Southern Compson family where the father is cynical and passive. He truly loves his four children, but he had loved to promote his habit of drinking which resulted in the end of his life. In contrast, the mother has no love for her children and continuously demands that she herself be taken care of by her children. She feels inferior, ashamed of Benjy being the mentally retarded son. She is castrated after he begins to exhibit sexual behavior. Quentin, the neurotic and romantic son who goes off to Harvard to fulfill his mother’s life long wish and commits suicide there. Caddy, the only daughter, becomes pregnant while still a teenager and quickly marries a man who turns her out of the house when he discovers that their child is not his. Jason, the
favorite son of his mother loses his chance at a lucrative job because of Caddy’s marriage which resulted in failure. Jason had no other alternative to support his family than by working in a general store. Caddy’s daughter named after her brother Quentin is brought up in the unhappy Compson family. The family is morally supported and taken care by a family of black servants led and held together by the matriarch Dilsey. The story of this novel is very simple but it becomes complex because of it’s multiple perspectives and non chronological order of four sections of the novel.

Faulkner is an innovative artist who has the knack of beginning every section in this novel in his unique way. He builds an image in such a manner that the reader feels that it has come from the unconscious level of his mind rather than intentional conscious plan on the part the artist. This helps us to establish at least some of Faulkner’s stories as visionary. The first sentence of each section reveals a lot about the tone and themes of that particular part; this is especially true with Quentin’s and Jason’s section. In Quentin’s section, the first sentence draws the reader into his obsession with being caught ‘in time’ and includes two most common symbols in the section: time and shadows.

Once a bitch always a bitch, what I say, (The Sound and the Fury, 109) the above line speaks high volume of Faulkner’s unique way of beginning each section of this novel. This line of Jason’s section introduces Jason the man to the readers. We also learn both Jason’s irrational anger not only toward his sister and her daughter, but also towards the world in general. We also learn the rigorous logic that runs through Jason’s section. Jason’s world is dominated by logic. Once a bitch, always a bitch; like mother, like daughter (The Sound and the Fury, 112). Caddy was a whore, so is her daughter. He is furious at Caddy for ruining his chances at getting a job and the way she ruined his chances was to bear an illegitimate daughter; therefore the way he
will get revenge on her and simultaneously recoup the money he lost is through this same daughter. Caddy should have got him a job, but instead she has questions; therefore it is his right to misappropriate the money she sends to Quentin (Caddy’s daughter) in order to make up for the money he lost when he lost the job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sections &amp; Narrators</th>
<th>Section I Benjy</th>
<th>Section II Quentin</th>
<th>Section III Jason</th>
<th>Section IV Dilsey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dates of the Narrations Non Chronologically</td>
<td>April Seventh 1928</td>
<td>June Second 1910</td>
<td>April Sixth 1928</td>
<td>April Eighth 1928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days of the Narrations</td>
<td>33rd birthday, A day before Easter Sunday</td>
<td>The day of his suicide</td>
<td>Good Friday</td>
<td>Easter Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniority among the Compsons existed in the novel Non Chronologically</td>
<td>3rd Compson son</td>
<td>2nd Compson son</td>
<td>1st Compson son</td>
<td>Black Servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point of view of narrations</td>
<td>First person narrator</td>
<td>First person narrator</td>
<td>First person narrator</td>
<td>Omniscient Third person narrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronologically as per date</td>
<td>3rd narrator</td>
<td>1st narrator</td>
<td>2nd narrator</td>
<td>4th narrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronologically as per age</td>
<td>3rd narrator</td>
<td>2nd narrator</td>
<td>1st narrator</td>
<td>Outside narrator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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(Fig- 6)

The above representation shows the dates and days of the narrations narrated by the Compsons and Dilsey chronologically and non-chronologically.

April Seventh 1928, Benjy’s Section:

The first section of the novel is having it’s own significance because it presents the idea of the whole novel in miniature. It also gives us a glimpse of the
character traits of each of his brothers and sisters. If we had one of the other sections first, then it would be an afterthought to return to Benjy’s section and hear about Mrs. Compson’s whining neuroticism. The narration does not move chronologically, that is, it does not begin at the beginning and proceed towards the end. It is told in flashbacks because the reader is made to feel that he is standing firmly in the present and trying to look back at the past. The present and past are so mixed together that the reader often can’t tell the difference between them, than these characters. The reader is tempted to look for guide marks and re-establish the chronology for himself.

The title of this section is April Seventh 1928. It is often referred to as Benjy’s Section because it’s Stream of Consciousness narration is from the point of view of Benjamin Compson. “Faulkner’s decision to head the sections by the novel’s obsession with time and of its subordination of character to time” (Stoicheff.2008). The interior monologue of Benjy clearly shows that this section begins with a direct interior monologue, which represents his psychic content and thought processes;

*Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting. They were coming toward where the flag was and I went along the fence. Luster was hunting in the grass by the flower tree. They took the flag out, and they were hitting. Then they put the flag back and they went to the table, and he hit and the other hit. Then they went on, and I went along the fence. Luster came away from the flower tree and we went through the fence and they stopped and we stopped and I looked through the fence while Luster was hunting in the grass (The Sound and the Fury. 01).*
Benjy narrates this section in his confused and chaotic manner. Though Benjy is thirty three years old, he behaves like a three years child. He does not understand the difference between the present and the past. He treats both equally. He is unable to grasp the concepts like time and space. As a result, his memories are jumbled and disorganized. In his confused state of mind, the events of the past are clubbed with the events of the present on his ‘thirty third birthday’ which falls on April Seventh, 1928, a day before Easter Sunday.

Edmund Volpe an American critic opined that, “Benjy is unable to speak, being forced to communicate by howling, moaning, or remaining placid” (Volpe 87). The monologue ranges in time as far back as Benjy’s memory can carry him. The memory scenes of Benjy are sometimes very long, sometimes only a flash within another memory, which are moved by external stimuli, in the present, which is April Seventh, 1928. A brief passage may be used to illustrate the numerous time shifts that occur in the Benjy section. Luster is speaking to Benjy:

\[\ldots \text{You snagged on that nail again. Can't you ever crawl through here without snagging on that nail. Caddy uncaught me and we crawled through. Uncle Maury said to not let anybody see us, so we better stoop over, Caddy said. Stoop over, Benjy. Like this, see. \ldots Keep your hands in your pockets, Caddy said.}\]

\[Or they'll get froze. You don't want your hands froze on Christmas, do you. It's too cold out there. Versh said. You don't want to go outdoors (The Sound and the Fury 3-4).\]

There are three time levels which are used in this short selection. The first speech is Luster’s, (Dilsey’s grandson and Benjy’s attendant) in the present; the
catching of himself on the nail reminds Benjy of the time he and Caddy had carried a message for Uncle Maury to Mrs. Patterson; which in turn reminds him of a time when Caddy made a remark about time before Christmas when Caddy was still in school. This last time is broadly the same as that in the above quoted passage, but the specific scene, it evokes is the one in which he is waiting for her at the gate.

A few examples of the process of the association which triggers Benjy’s memory of the past scenes which may indicate the extensive use this psychological element has at it’s fundamental level.

*Luster takes off Benjy’s shoes so that he can wade; the water reminds him of the time Caddy and others were playing on the branch and she got her dress wet” (The Sound and the Fury 37). “The golfer calls Caddy and Benjy begins to moan over the loss of his Caddy” (ibid. 73). “Dilsey accuses Luster of allowing Benjy to upset Miss Quentin by simply being near her and then sets Benjy down in front of the fire; the reminder that he is not wanted and the sight of the fire remind him of the time his mother became so disturbed about him and his name change, and Caddy took him away to the kitchen and comforted him (The Sound and the Fury 75). All these occurrences are brought to the present.

Benjy’s memories of the past are prompted by the things he sees and hears in the present. Among the various events he recalls is, his grandmother, Dammudy’s death sometime in 1898. In some ways, Dammudy’s death symbolizes the death of the Compson family’s aristocratic ways and values. After all, Dammudy’s, daughter Caroline Compson is a selfish hypochondriac, and her son-in-law Mr. Jason Compson
is a bitter alcoholic. Continuing to skip back and forth in time, Benjy recalls a trip to the cemetery around 1912 to visit Mr. Jason Compson III, his father and Quentin’s (Benjy’s brother) grave stones. He also recalls his sister Caddy’s descent into promiscuity and her disastrous wedding to Herbert Head, a banker. All these chaotic and disordered memories or recalls of Benjy have the features of Cubism.

Benjy is obsessed with Caddy and her soiled image like his two brothers Mr. Quentin Compson and Mr. Jason Compson IV. Caddy was a stubborn and affectionate girl of the Compson family who was disowned by her family when her husband discovered that she was pregnant with another man’s child and promptly divorced her. Despite being indifferent from Caddy, the Compsons agree to raise her daughter, Miss Quentin. Benjy feels Caddy’s absence deeply and much of his narrative and thoughts center on her moral decay.

Benjy’s present day, April Seventh, 1928 consists mostly of his routine daily activities walking around the Compson property, being spoken to, eating, remembering, preparing for bed and falling asleep. It is the memory of Benjy that comprises the bulk of the narrative. The other activities of his present day, minimal by comparison to the remembered events, are represented sequentially throughout the narrative. When the remembered events are extracted from the narrative, what remains is an intact, relatively short narrative of Benjy’s routine activities that progresses in a sequential manner from the beginning of the day to its conclusion.

Many of the memory scenes of Benjy are told in fragments and being continued later despite the interposition of outer action and other memories. Such a method may at first seem unnecessarily obscure and frustrating, but one should remember that it is the chaotic consciousness of an idiot Benjy is being presented. So,
the first section represents the concern with time through an intricate narrative manipulation of chronology.

With its defective sense of time, Benjy’s mind, then moves without transition to an occasion nearly thirty year’s earlier when he had been snagged on same nail in the pasture and Caddy had been with him.

*Caddy uncaught me and we crawled through, uncle Maury said to not let anybody see us. So, we better stoop over, Caddy said. Stoop over Benjy like this, see. We stooped over and crossed the garden....Keep your hands in your pockets, Caddy said or they’ll get froze. You don’t want your hands froze on Christmas, do you* (The Sound and the Fury 2).

This memory of Caddy worrying over his cold hands makes Benjy’s mind jump again to a time some ten years later than that Christmas. Then Benjy’s mind is brought back to the present by Luster, in the following words. “What you are moaning about”, Luster said. You can watch them again when we get to the branch. Here, here’s you a Jimsonweed. He gave me the flower” (ibid.).

In this way, we are gradually made familiar with Benjy’s mind and begin to recognize the extent to which his chaotic consciousness is governed by a few simple feelings, above all, by his love for Caddy. He is aware of the things which happen literally. He experiences his love for Caddy, but he does not know that it does not have sufficient power of generalization, to say to himself. This is not love nor does he know that it motivates his action, because his mind is incapable of thinking anything. “It is now time for Caddy to come home from school. I love her and want to go to the gate to meet her” (The Sound and the Fury 46). He does not even know that thinking
of Caddy makes him moan aloud; we learn this from Bnejy’s attitudes and his meaningless conversation with others.

Benjy’s narrative is straightforward and many of his recollections are surrounded and interspersed with his present. His recollections form the majority of the sections create the renderings of internal narratives of the impression of a random, unrelated, unorganized chaotic series of events.

There are eighteen recollections in this section which do not appear sequentially but occur in an apparently chaotic fashion. Most of the eighteen past episodes are recalled more than once and some many times. Each recollection is triggered by something that occurs to Benjy during his routine daily activities by something within an event he is recalling. Hearing a word in the present reminds him of hearing it sometime in the past. Experiencing a sensation such as touch or smell can recall a similar past experience. As a result, the section appears to disperse with sequential chronology (with the exception of the embedded short narrative of the present day’s activities) and replaces it with emotional, imagistic and acoustic connectors.

William Faulkner has used the child like voice of Benjy to illustrate the need of a return to innocence for language among other motives. Throughout the novel, Faulkner plays with language and alternate narrative voices to emphasize his desire for the play and innocence of language as well as a certain ‘truth’ that is inherent in modern writing and language. Modern author tends to believe that a truth or message lies within the novel. This message of truth may be different for each reader, but the novel contains some sort of truth. This is merely an example of how the modern
author, emphasizing a truth and innocence may use a child like voice to make associations with and in the language to arrive at an individual truth.

Even while using this technique, Faulkner varies it with each section. For example, in the Benjy section, Faulkner’s style is basically simple; this does not mean that the section is simple but that each individual sentence is a rather simple and uncomplicated one. There are no difficult words because the vocabulary of Benjy would naturally be simple. Since his mind does not function logically, Faulkner records the thinking in terms of basic images. Thus, when Benjy sees the gate or the barn, he remembers another event, that happened at the gate or the barn. Likewise, his thought can be interrupted halfway through a thought; sometimes he can return to it and sometimes the thought is lost forever.

Faulkner achieves a more powerful emotional impact by presenting Benjy’s section first. For example, readers are aware of certain things through these scenes, but they won’t fully understand them as they go through the section. Later, in one of the other sections, there is a sudden and overwhelming realization of what was actually happening in the Benjy section. This impact would lose it’s intensity if Benjy’s section was not presented first. There have also been some unusual justifications for the appearance of the Benjy section first. Among these, Carvel Collins a Professor, writer and authority on Faulkner’s works, interprets that, “Benjy represents the Freudian ‘id’ of the family and since the ‘id’ is the most fundamental aspect of one’s personality, it must come first” (Collins 29).

William Faulkner by choosing to tell his story through the mind of an idiot imposed rigid limitations upon himself that Benjy cannot talk. He can communicate his feelings only by ‘howling, moaning,’ or remaining placid. He reacts to sensual
stimuli; otherwise, the activity of his brain is limited to his memory only. He is incapable of making judgments, or understanding any relationships between ideas or events. At thirty three, he has not learned that fire burns. He places his hand on the hot stove, but makes no association between the pain in his hand and the heat created by the fire. Even he doesn’t have time sense and makes no differentiation between the past and the present. A remembered event is as real to him as an occurrence in the present.

Some critics have suggested that Compson’s rejection of Benjy symbolizes the moral deterioration of their family as reflected by their intrinsic lack of love, denial of self and aristocratic pride. Throughout the novel, Benjy howls with grief when remembering his beloved sister Caddy, one of the few people who had shown him compassion and understanding. Explaining Benjy’s inability to understand Caddy’s absence, Victor Strandberg analyses, “Benjy wasn’t rational enough even to be selfish. He was an animal. He recognized tenderness and love though he could not have named them…. He no longer had Caddy; being an idiot he was not even aware that Caddy was missing. He knew only that something was wrong, which left a vacuum in which he grieved” (Strandberg 43).

In Benjy’s mind, mother and daughter are inextricably confused. Benjy is a three year old in the body of a thirty three year old grown man. The simple syntax of his narration reflects his retardation; the chaotic nature of his story reflects his inability to think logically and to discern past from present. Although chaotic, he is able to distinguish what is right and what is wrong, for he is blessed with the gift of morality in a family. Benjy is incapable of doing sin or evil because he is naturally good. In addition, he has been physically sterilized, a particularly traumatic event in
his life, and thus can never fall in the spiritual sense; in contrast he often falls to the ground because he is clumsy. He never speaks and he will live in the land of innocents because he will never gain knowledge.

In spite of mental inadequacies, Benjy is exceptionally aware of his surroundings. Before Caddy’s loss of virginity, Benjy constantly remarks how “She smelled like trees” (The Sound and the Fury 5). He becomes tremendously distressed when Caddy lets him smell her freshness. Then one day, Caddy no longer smells like ‘trees.’ The beginning of Caddy’s promiscuities, the progression of which forever take Caddy away from Benjy’s life, are vividly recalled by Benjy, in his narrative when he cries;

*Her hand was against her mouth and I saw her eyes and I cried. She stopped again, against the wall, looking at me and I cried and she went on and I came on, crying, and she shrank against the wall, looking at me. She opened the door to her room, but I pulled at her dress and we went to the bathroom and she stood against the door looking at me. Then she put her arm across her face and I pushed at her, crying (The Sound and the Fury 43).*

Benjy understands that Caddy is a changed girl, and he dislikes this change in her. Whereas Benjy has reached maturity at three years old, Caddy continues to grow up and mature, and she rises physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Many years before, when they are very young, the Compson children go far a swim, and Caddy wets her dress in the water. She takes it off so it can dry, 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. “I will run away and never come
back, Caddy was all wet and muddy behind, and I started to cry” (The Sound and the Fury, 19). Because mud signifies their sin while water is the absolution of their sins, this fundamental scene foreshadows precisely what is to come in the later lives of the children. Quentin was angered by Caddy’s fall, and then they try to wash away each other’s sin. Caddy is sinful and though she tries, she cannot rid herself of her sins. She is forced to run away and she leaves Benjy in tears.

For Benjy, time does not exist in the traditional sense of past, present and the future, but rather as a chaotic mix of those senses creating the sensation that his life progresses in a cyclical, rather than linear, motion. Comparing to Quentin, Benjy has no concept of time. While time is of great concern to the reader in Benjy’s section, Olga Vickery an American critic of Faulkner’s novels, has convincingly argued that “Benjy exists outside of time, removed from the limits of the world, and therefore he has no internal struggle with his destiny. Quentin is so bound by time that his future is nothing but unavoidable horror, and seeks to transcend it. Jason, the final Compson brother is the only character truly struggling with the Calvinistic notion of fate and free will, and it is this struggle that causes Jason to spew his caustic bitterness on the people that surround him”(Vickery 288).

Our impression of the Benjy section is that it presents a state of utter chaos and it is the fact that Benjy is an idiot and therefore has a right to be confused. But out of this order two patterns emerge; the one completely independent of public perspective constitutes Benjy’s world, the other serves as the author’s guide for enabling the reader to grasp the fragments as a comprehensible order. With respect to the latter, Lawrence Bowling an American critic has pointed out Faulkner’s use of italics like, “Caddy uncaught me and we crawled through,” (The Sound and the
to indicate shifts in time and the fact that the reasons for such shifts occurring are easily recognizable” (Bowling 155).

A number of events that Benjy recalls are presented in closely spaced fragments, but other events are broken up into episodes scattered throughout Benjy’s section of the novel. Recognition of the relationship between fragments is possible through clues Faulkner provides. The presence of certain characters in certain settings is a clue, but more important is the repetition of key words. T.P’s (Dilsey’s son who is in charge of Benjy in his early part of life) drunken ‘Whooey,’ his mention of ‘Sassprilluh’ (p.14) for instance, immediately identify the fragment as an episode in Caddy’s wedding scene.

Benjy is incapable of association of ideas therefore, his memory is stimulated by a physical sensation a sound or a motion or the sight of an object either in the present or in a scene being relived. Sitting with his feet in the water of creek as Luster searches for a lost quarter, duplicates the sensation Benjy experienced in 1898, and he begins to relive the events of the day his grandmother Dammuddy died. Once he begins to relive a scene, Benjy can be distracted momentarily by something that arrests his attention in the present, such as Luster saying or doing something to him. But he usually continues with a remembered scene unless he is diverted by another memory or unless his attention is arrested by an occurrence in the present.

“This section forces the reader to participate in the novel to become as it were, a surreptitious narrator; otherwise he cannot read it all” (Vickery 110). But the reader must be extremely careful to mark what type of narrator he or she becomes and with what type of prejudices. Benjy’s frustration with words, his trying to say something resembles a more general insufficiency. “In accosting the girls, he cannot speak; he
cannot attain his desire. Even were he to speak, he would be giving out a false name, ‘a better name for him.’ He tries to speak. After the operation, he sees lost golf balls ‘through the fence, between the curing flower spaces,’ (The Sound and the Fury 3) these events have already occurred before we peer with him through the fence spaces” (Howe, 160). So, the opening of the novel reveals an already irremediable loss and further loss follows any attempt to recapture what was lost. In this way The Sound and the Fury forces the reader to participate in the novel not merely as a white under the dominance of chaotic language and canny black but also as an already castrated viewer.

Benjy’s place in time is much defined, however, when studied in the context of the family’s relationship to him. When Benjy is for the family, he finally accepts the fact that he is mentally handicapped. For Caroline Compson, this marks the beginning of the family’s doom; so, he changed from Maury, a Boscomb family name, to Benjamin, the biblical lost born son of Jacob. Faulkner intentionally mixed up several Old Testament stories while referring to Benjy’s name.

The readers can neither praise nor criticize Benjy, for his present is the past and his future is simply not thought of. Faulkner constructed a place for Benjy that exists without the sense of time. “Just as Benjy has no knowledge of the progression of time, he is incapable of good and evil because he had no knowledge of good and evil as stated by Faulkner in an interview with Jean Stein Vander Heuvel” (Minter, 1980.94). Thus, Benjy is ultimately neutral to Calvinism, (Calvinism is called Reformed tradition, the Reformed faith, or Reformed theology and is a Protestant Theological system and an approach to the Christian life) though he is surrounded by a world that insists upon it. He does not adhere to the Southern social norms, has no
sense of destiny, and cannot progress quite simply, a stuck log in the Compson family wheel. As he has no sense of the progression of time, he is bound to the same stories, repeated over and neither he nor his family can ever progress to an ending, a resolution of past problems.

As we search to make sense of Benjy’s garbed thinking, it becomes obvious that Benjy struggles in telling the story not only because of his mental incapacity, but also because of the story he has to tell. His section is a warning of the rest of the story to come, telling us of the irresolution of the Compson family and the lack of ending that each section brings. Due to this, it is even more difficult for Benjy to tell the story in a linear fashion. Hence, his section is repetitive in word choice and thematic, which hinders progression, if not making it impossible to comprehend.

For Compsons, Benjy represents degeneration, a regression that cannot be overcome. As long as Benjy is alive he is a reminder to his family of their fall. During the Easter weekend in which most of the novel takes place, Benjy turns thirty three. Though Benjy does not act as a savior of the Compson family (indeed, we learn from the appendix that he spends the reminder of his life locked up in a mental hospital), he is at once both innocent of sins and a constant reminder of them.

He sees that people are not simple binary opposites, and he doesn’t view life as a simply moving forward to progressions or damnation, but he instead attempts to view the whole picture. Though he is concerned with Caddy’s blatant sexual misconduct, he does not damn her for being responsible for it. He is an idiot, and yet he is possibly the sanest Compson, capable of viewing people holistically.

However, it is important to remember that Benjy does not see himself as a rescuer or view his family as needing such a thing. He views people through the eyes
of innocence, and his judgment of his family’s action is limited. Even when he can perceive, he can only remember having ‘tried to say,’ and not actually saying. Benjy can hear of the family’s doom through the comments of others, and when Roskus (Dilsey’s husband) says that “Taint no luck on this place…. I seen the sign and you is took” (The Sound and the Fury 18-19). One wonders how much of that Benjy understands. Benjy sees the mud that is staining his family but he cannot articulate what mud is, nor can he give the family a complete picture of Caddy. In the end Benjy’s message is muted.

Faulkner has preferred Benjy as the narrator of the first section to give a better insight of tragic events and circumstances of the Compson family history. He wished Benjy to act as a narrator with an objective voice who should not merely serve the purpose of a commentator. Benjy’s objectivity is based on his powerful, innate sense of order and chaos. He interprets the world by comparing his perceptions and experiences to the pattern of order and familiarity that exists in his mind. Benjy immediately notices, especially something involving Caddy, seems wrong or out of place. Any such deviation from Benjy’s pattern of familiarity creates chaos in his mind and upsets him, making him cry or moan. Benjy’s first smell of Caddy’s perfume, for instance, shocks his sense of order. So, Benjy’s narrative gradually gives an understanding of the relationships that govern the Compson household.

Nearly every thread of Benjy’s narrative is included as his section comes to its end. There are seven different time frames represented in this section, from Damuddy’s death in 1898, to the present on April 7th, 1928. Though no rhyme or reason seems to account for the ways that shift from one year to the next and are managed throughout the section, it begins in the present 1928 and ends with the
earliest memory, on the night of Damuddy’s death in 1898, suggesting an overall reverse chronology.

The novelist is aware that he is writing a novel with Stream of Consciousness technique through which he looks into the minds of the characters. He is perfect to opine that the ordinary person’s mind jumps from one event to another, so he has tried for ‘Stream of Consciousness technique to capture this phenomenon. Thus, in the Benjy section, everything is presented through the apparently unorganized succession of images, and, in the Quentin section, everything is presented through random ideas connected by association.

**June Second, 1910; Quentin’s Section:**

Faulkner Shifts his focus from Benjy to Quentin. The following lines are the thoughts which are going on in the mind of Quentin.

> When the shadow of the sash appeared on the curtains it was between seven and eight o’clock and then I was in time again, hearing the watch. It was Grandfather’s and when Father gave it to me he said I give you the mausoleum of all hope and desire; it’s rather excruciatingly apt that you will use it to gain the reducto absurdum of all human experience which can fit your individual needs no better than it fitted his or his father’s. I give it to you not that you may remember time, but that you might forget it now and then for a moment and not spend all your breath trying to conquer it. Because no battle is ever won he said. They are not even fought. The field only reveals to
man his own folly and despair, and victory is an illusion of philosophers and fools (The Sound and the Fury 47).

Stream of Consciousnesses and Interior monologue are repeatedly used by Faulkner to continue his narration and to make the reader shift his mind focus from Benjy to Quentin. Quentin Compson, the brother of Benjy is made to recount through first person narration, the events and unstable emotions he experiences on the day of his suicide. Like Benjy, he is immersed in a rigidly ordered private world and recalls his childhood. If Benjy is unaware of temporal progression and hungers for love and affection, Quentin is incapable of love and is virtually paralyzed by his perception of time as a destructive force. He is obsessed with the past and the only future he can imagine for himself is death.

Quentin is the oldest child of Jason III and Caroline Compson. He narrates an account of the last day of his life in interior monologue before he commits suicide. His thoughts revolve around Caddy’s lost virginity (and his continued virginity) and his desire to have intercourse with her. His thoughts often return to an imagined conversation with his father where he tells his father that he and Caddy had committed incest and that Caddy’s baby is his. In an attempt to defend Caddy’s honor, he picks a fight with Dalton Ames (Caddy’s first boy friend and most probably Miss Quentin’s father) and Gerald Bland (a Harvard student who reminds Quentin of Dalton Ames). He is also obsessed by the nature of time. In an attempt to take himself out of the progression of time, he breaks the glass of a pocket watch that his father gave him and pulls off the hands. The clock continues ticking. In the end, he commits suicide.
Quentin’s section is in the form of an interior monologue which is much nearer to the standard form of Stream of Consciousness method, characterized by discontinuity, privacy, lack of inhibition, free associations (associations of an order more sophisticated than those in the Benjy section), and lack of punctuation and formal syntax. A short quotation, as follows, may illustrate this more complex type of monologue:

It’s not for kissing I slapped you. Girl’s elbows at fifteen Father said you swallow like you had fishbone in your throat what’s the matter with you and Caddy across the table not to look at me. It’s for letting it be some darn town squirt I slapped you, you will, will you now I guess you say calf rope. My red hand coming up out of her face. What do you think of scouring her head into the Grass sticks. Crisscrossed into the flesh tingling scouring her head. Say calf rope say it (The Sound and the Fury, 81).

It may be noted that this passage is in italics, which is used generally in this part to relive past scenes. The present time of this section, dated June Second, 1910, contains monologues of even more discontinuity. Two excerpts, each from a much longer passage, may show this level of consciousness, which is much more closer than Benjy’s monologue:

. . She stood there her eyes like cornered rats then I was running in the grey darkness it smelled of rain and all flower scents the damp warm air released and crickets sawing away in the grass pacing me with a small traveling island of silence fancy watched me across the fence
blotchy like a quilt on a line I thought damn that nigger he forget to
feed her again . . .? (ibid. 168).

Just by imagining the clump it seemed to me that I could hear whispers
secret surges smelling the beating of hot blood under wild un secret
flesh watching against red eyelids the swine Untethered in pairs
rushing coupled in to sea and he we must just stay awake and see evil
done for a little while it’s not always and I it doesn’t have to be even
that long for a man of courage and he do you consider that
courage...(ibid. 195).

The latter excerpt shows much greater incoherence, but its inchoateness is in
keeping with it’s position in this entire section as the last entry into the inner recesses
of Quentin’s mind.

This section like Benjy, combines the psychic content with external action.
The outer events actually are few in number but are detailed; covering his actions on
the day he commits suicide. Such minute accounting for his actions provides a
tangible framework for the continuous and erratic flow of consciousness.”I have
committed incest I said Father it was I it was not Dalton Ames” (The Sound and the
Fury 49).

Quentin repents often after committing incest. This deed of his creates chaos,
confusion, and disorder in his life which further leads him to commit suicide. Through
his memories, we learn that Quentin tried to prevent Caddy’s marriage by telling Mr.
Compson it was he, and not Ames who got Caddy pregnant. His story of incest
suggests an unconscious sexual desire for his sister. One of the many recurring motifs
in Quentin’s chapter is the appearance of his own shadow. This may represent the
illusions he has labored under about the family’s greatness and the need he feels to preserve the old ways that made the Compson’s so successful in the past. The shadow is always there to haunt his steps, much like the past he can’t escape.

Rather than being indifferent to time, Quentin is obsessed with time, watching shadows, breaking watches, dividing his day into clear sections. Moreover, he is obsessed with what time brings, reflecting heavily on the doom time which follows his family, and the expected time which will lead him to commit suicide.

The novelist has made Quentin’s section easier than Benjy’s but it has it’s own unique challenges for the readers, because Quentin is not waiting for a story to unfold or to happen. He is merely going over the things in his life that have caused him to decide to kill himself. “For Quentin, there is no more choice, no more action, only the need to fulfill some predefined destiny. The oncoming suicide which casts its shadow over Quentin’s last day, is not a human possibility, not for a second does Quentin envisage the possibility of not killing himself. The suicide is an immobile wall, a thing which he approaches backwards, and which he neither wants to nor can conceive” (Atsma.2005).

Quentin Compson’s relationship to time is one of a longing for dispossession. He wishes for nothing more than to exist in a timeless state. The structure of the section of Quentin Compson, with it’s two sets of events, one past and the other present, reflects Quentin’s problem. Throughout the day he can proceed quite mechanically with such chores as getting dressed, packing, writing letters and generally tidying up the loose ends of his life at Harvard. To a large extent he can even make the appropriate gestures and speak the proper words expected of him by others, Meanwhile, his mind is occupied with echoes of the past which make them felt
with until they threaten to prevent even a mechanical attention to the details of living through that final day. Quentin cannot escape either his memories of the past or his involvement in the present.

The section of Quentin Compson presents a fixed world which he is desperately trying to preserve for his reasons. Yet, Quentin sees Caddy in much the same way as Benjy. In giving herself to Dalton Ames, she has violated a world that has been fixed before. She has stepped outside an established place and time, which has time and growth and decay going. Quentin also protests in his own way, as violently and as vigorously as Benjy, and also his mission is to save the Compson ‘honor’ by arresting time and thus forcing decay out of the Compson world.

Faulkner is more individual and more undecided. But it is so strong an obsession that he is sometimes apt to disguise the present, and the present moves along in the shadow, like an underground river, and reappears only when it itself is past. When Quentin insults Bland he is not even aware of doing so, he is reliving his dispute with Dalton Ames. And when Bland punches his nose, this brawl is covered over and hidden by Quentin’s past brawl with Ames. Later on, Shreve relates how Bland hit Quentin; he relates this scene because it has become a story, but while it was unfolding in the present, it was only a furtive movement, covered over by veils.

Quentin’s desire for death is, of course, bound up with his consciousness of time and more specifically of memory. Although he cannot control the course of events nor change what has already happened, he can terminate his awareness of it. It is inevitable therefore that Quentin should be in love with death that he should yearn for it like a river, “A quarter hour yet, and then till not be. The peace fullest words. Peace fullest words. Non fuisum. Fui, Non sum” (Vickery 287). He rings changes on
the Latin words trying to probe their full meaning. In a sense the whole history of Caddy lies in his memory and so does her betrayal of Compson honor. “By declining all further participation in life he can isolate himself and his memory of Caddy from the Loud World” (Vickery 287). To watch the gradual changes in his body and yet remain untouched and unmoved to separate himself forever from the circumstances in which he is involved, that is Quentin’s vision of death and significantly, it approximates his own description of Benjy’s mirror. As Sartre points out, Quentin has almost achieved that state even before his actual suicide.

The symbols and recurrent phrases that run through Quentin’s section both intensify the emotional impact and reinforce the meaning. Such names as Jesus, St Francis, Moses, Washington, and Byron not only add a richness of historical and literary allusion but convey the nature of Quentin’s world. Into that world Benjy is admitted as “Benjamin the child of mine old age held hostage into Egypt, and Caddy as ‘Eve’ or ‘little sister death.’ Mr. Compson forces an entry not as father, as friend but as a voice which can juggle words and ideas while insisting on their emptiness. As for Quentin he sees himself as the hero of the family drama the bitter prophet an inflexible corruptness judge” (Vickery 287). Part of his outrage and frustration in connection with Caddy is that neither her husband nor her lover seems worthy in his eyes of assuming a role in his world. Herbert is obviously despicable and Ames refuses to act in terms of Quentin’s preconception.

Time and man’s place in history are specifically related, for Faulkner’s characters to their experience as Southerners. In one way or another, each of his characters must come to terms with the meaning of Southern history. Three approaches to time and history emerge in this novel: First, Quentin involves an
obsession with and entrapment in the past. Quentin, as we shall see, is paralyzed, unable to act in the present, because of a commitment to a view of time which is essentially a form of cyclical determinism. Second, Quentin’s allegiance is to a dead past, the past of his archetypal culture—hero and ancestor, his grandfather General Compson. Third, Quentin is incapable of living in the present because for him, all the truly valuable acts were performed in the past, and the present is but a dim shadow, a poor reflection of that past. He believes himself fated to a repetition of dead gestures and attitudes, a commitment to a dead past and an outmoded code.

Quentin Compson is above all a thinking man. Throughout the novel he is associated with the intellect by his connection with school. As children when Quentin and Caddy are arguing about who knows more, Quentin seems to win the argument when he says, “I am older than that... I go to school” (The Sound and the Fury 20). The watch he breaks on the day of his suicide, and which receives an almost absurd amount of his attention in the beginning of his narrative, is a gift given to him by his father on the day of his high school graduation, and therefore symbolic of his intellectual achievement. Further, Quentin’s hyperawareness of time and struggle against it contrasts sharply with Benjy’s, who as a result of his lack of intellectual capacity, ‘Exists as much outside of space as outside of time.’

As time is a concept of the human mind, Quentin’s obsession with it marks him as a man concerned with order, a thinking man. Quentin’s narrative proves him a man prone to contemplation. He frequently ruminates over previous conversations he has had with his father. His narrative begins with one such memory of a rather philosophical discourse on the nature of time, and human attempt to use it gain the redact absurdum of all human experience. Any conversation which includes Latin is
likely to be a conversation among the learned, the educated, and the intellectual. Quentin and his father speak together of the nature of being. “Father said, a man is the sum of his misfortunes,” (The Sound and the Fury 64) and “…. Father was teaching us that all men are just accumulations, dolls stuffed with sawdust swept up from the trash heaps where all previous dolls had been thrown away ...” (ibid. 218). Still another remembered conversation links Quentin to the life of the mind – a discussion of books” “Father said it used to be a gentle man was known by his books; now a days he is known by the ones he has not returned” (ibid. 99). “This memory comes as Quentin stacks his own books in the sitting room in his dorm, the ones he has brought from home and others” (Browns.2010).

Like Benjy, Quentin has memories of the past that intrude on his narrative constantly and without warning. Quentin’s memory is complicated because it is largely interlined with his fantasies. Sometimes it is difficult to tell which of his memories are based on events that actually occurred and which are based on fantasy or wishful thinking. Quentin’s mind is far more complex than Benjy’s and, unlike Benjy’s he is clearly aware that his flash backs are just memories. Quentin, however, is just as likely as Benjy to associate past events with people or objects from the present.

William Faulkner emphasizes the importance of time and memory in Quentin’s world through the frequent appearances of clocks and watches. Quentin is effectively trapped in time obsessed with his past and memories. He always notices the bells of the Harvard clock tower. The ticking of his watch haunts him even after he breaks the watch against his dresses. Quentin asks the owner of the clock shop whether any one of the clocks is correct, but does not want to know what time it is.
Additionally, Quentin repeatedly mentions walking into and out of shadows which are constant reminders of time, as gauged by the position of the sun throughout the course of the day. Unlike Benjy, who is oblivious to time, Quentin is so obsessed and haunted by it that he sees suicide as the only escape.

Clearly, the main thrust of Quentin’s section is his struggle with Caddy’s promiscuity. Quentin is horrified by Caddy’s conduct and he is obsessed by the stain it has left on the family’s honor. Quentin, like Benjy has a strong sense of order and chaos. However, while Benjy’s order is based on patterns of experience in his mind, Quentin’s order is based on a traditional, idealized Southern code of honor and conduct.

Quentin’s anguish is compounded when he learns that his father really could not care about Caddy’s promiscuity. Mr. Compson is an inarticulate but cynical man, recognizing the source of Quentin’s torment; he discourages his son from taking himself so seriously. Mr. Compson argues that the concepts of virginity and purity, corner stones of Quentin’s paternalistic sense of Southern morality are hogwash.

Quentin's section is slightly more ordered, although his agitated state of mind causes him to experience similar skips in time. Jason's section is almost totally chronological, much more structured than the first two. In order to make reading this difficult novel easier, Faulkner at one time suggested printing it in colored ink in order to mark the different time periods, but this was too expensive. Instead, in the first section, he writes some sentences in italics in order to signal a shift in time. Even with these italics, however, the story is difficult to read.

In the end, Quentin’s attempt to connect the present with the past in a meaningful way is expressed in his suicide. It brings all senses of his experience
together in the meeting of body with shadow in the river, obliterating the differences between a past that he cannot change and the present within which he cannot meaningfully act. In the next section, the narrative act continually suppresses the past and it’s intrusion into the present.

April Sixth, 1928; Jason’s Section:

The Stream of Consciousness technique that Faulkner has used in the previous two sections of Benjy and Quentin continues to work effectively in Jason’s part, though it is different from the first two as they are from each other. Jason’s telling of the tale is straightforward, with less diversion to side stories and less movement in time. Jason’s assessment of his family is much clearer than Quentin’s: “Caddy and Quentin (her daughter) are bitches, Caroline is a sniveling pushover, Dilsey is a lazy maid, Benjy should be locked up, and his brother and his father both drowned in their liquid of choice. Jason’s problems do not rest in his ability to see the world around him clearly (albeit viciously); they lie instead in his reaction to this imperfect world” (Atsma.2005)

Jason is presented to the readers as the third narrator. He is known for his conventionality, selfishness, commercial attitude, malapropism, and the forces, released by the exigencies of transition, interact in the space, represented by Jason who becomes the participant in the general drama of the decline of an ancient family. He is full of bitterness and anger and cares about nobody, but himself. His anger is so extreme that he lashes out verbally and physically on everyone around him. His actions and thoughts are so full of anger that his section is the hardest one in the novel to read. His most outrageous act of revenge is to misappropriate the money that
Caddy sends for her daughter, Quentin. His interior monologue begins with his thought processes:

Once a bitch always a bitch, what I say. I says you’re lucky if her playing out of school is all that worries you. I says she ought to be down there in that kitchen right now, instead of up there in her room, gobbling paint on her face and waiting for six niggers that can’t even stand up out of a chair unless they’ve got a pan full of bread and meat to balance them, to fix breakfast for her (The Sound and the Fury 109).

Jason’s narrative takes place on April 6, 1928, a day before Benjy’s. The head of the Compson household following Mr. Compson’s death, Jason is an angry and bitter individual filled with hatred for the sister who he feels destroyed all his chances at success in life. Apparently, Jason was promised a lucrative banking job by Herbert Head, who rescinded the offer once he discovered Caddy’s pregnancy. Now, fifteen years later, Jason is stuck working at a farm-supply store. As vengeance, he confiscates the money that Caddy sends to Miss Quentin and stows it in a box in his room.

This section is set on Good Friday. Unlike his brothers, Jason is much more focused on the present, offering fewer flashbacks, though he does have a few and he refers frequently to events in the past. The tone of Jason’s section is set instantly by the opening sentence: “Once a bitch always a bitch, what I say” (The Sound and the Fury 109). Jason is a sadist, and this grimly humorous section reveals just how low the Compson family has sunk—from Quentin’s obsessions over heritage and honor and sin to Jason’s near-constant cruelty, complaints, and scheming.
If Quentin Compson’s relationship to time is one of a longing for dispossession and he wishes for nothing more than to exit in a timeless state, Jason on the other hand wants to possess time and claim it for its intrinsic financial value. For a man who cannot find an intrinsic value in life, the only value he can place on it is one of money. For, there is no other means by which he can prove his humanity. As John Mathews comments, “surely one source of Jason’s commitment to his work is that it protests against suicide announcement that time is worth nothing” (Jean Paul 225). Benjy is outside of time and therefore has no internal struggle with his destiny. Quentin is bound by time that his future is nothing but unavoidable horror and he seeks to transcend it. Jason, the final Compson brother is the only character truly struggling with the Calvinistic notion of fate and free will and it is this struggle that closes Jason to spill his caustic bitterness on the people that surround him.

It is the section of Jason which temporizes in an altogether different way. His narrative is characterized by the impression of his order upon that landscape in which he exerts his will. The world in which he lives is not self organizing, it is self imposing. In this sense, his is an impotently literate logic operating in an oral landscape. Hence, Jason is important because he would impose the map of his narrative upon a landscape that he refuses to reflect. Or, in terms of his section more specifically, if the image of his absent sister Caddy is at the center of Jason’s section, then his attempt to map the landscape is doubly thwarted, first by a lack of a center to act as reference point for where to begin, and second, by, the very imposition of his ‘rule’ that Caddy’s name never be uttered in the Compson household.

Jason’s clarity of narration helps to reveal several key plot details that the two previous sections have merely implied. Jason confirms that Benjy has been castrated,
Quentin has been drowned. However, though a relief after the chaotic Stream of Consciousness of Benjy and Quentin’s narratives, Jason’s section is ultimately disturbing in it’s clear depiction of the hatred and cruelty with which Jason runs the Compson family.

It is Jason’s section which appears more readable and more conventional; it’s style, i.e., Stream of Consciousness is more chronological in progression, with very few jumps in time. It reads more like a monologue than a string of loosely connected events, like Benjy’s and Quentin’s sections were. Critics have claimed that the book progresses from chaos to order, from timelessness to chronology, from pure sensation to logical order, and from interiority to exteriority as it travels from Benjy’s world of bright shapes and confused time through Jason’s rigorously ordered universe to the third person narrative of the fourth section. This third section represents a shift into the public world from the anguished interiority of Benjy and Quentin, and a shift into normal novelistic narrative as Jason records the story of the events of the day.

The first sentence that he utters appears in the text without quotation marks indicating direct access to Jason’s mind that resembles the access Faulkner has provided for Benjy and Quentin’s sections. This utterance is followed, however, by narration that registers on a slightly different level than the opening statement. “I say you are lucky if her playing out of school is all that worries you” (The Sound and the Fury, 109). Here, the reader moves from being inside Jason’s mind to the position of an auditor listening to a tale told by a narrator Jason. This is not reported speech but direct utterance; hence the lack of quotation marks. The rest of the section, until the last paragraph, returns to Jason’s unspoken immediate monologue.
Jason's section is also entirely different, because he is not concerned with the deeper issues of life. He is a selfish, angry individual, who is overly concerned with money. He is also disturbed with what Caddy has done, but unlike his brothers, this does not leave him melancholy or reflective. Instead, he is angry and revengeful. His mind is not much involved in contemplative manners. Therefore, his section moves along rapidly and without much complexity. Jason's section is a reflection of his single-mindedness.

Jason’s section is more difficult to describe in the same terms of Benjy and Quentin. We could identify it with interior monologue in the sense that it begins by erasing a narrative distance from the consciousness of its direct speaker (Jason). Even if Jason’s section can be described as immediate monologue, it cannot be described either as hodgepodge or smooth. Perhaps this is so because Jason’s sense of the present suppresses the past as an informing principle for meaning in the ‘here and now.’

This section, like the two that precede it, moves along swiftly in a sequential way. The present is easy to discern in Jason’s section while it must be forcefully extracted from Benjy’s and Quentin’s. Of all of the sections, Jason’s is least troubled by intrusions from the past though Jason angrily thinks about moments from time to time that motivate him in the present to act as he does. These moments however, are completely controlled by Jason’s inner monologue. As he stands at his father’s grave, for instance, with Caddy, he thinks (at some unspecified time separated from the reported moments):

\[
\text{We stood there looking at the grave, and then I got to thinking about when we were little and one thing another and I got to feeling funny}
\]
again, kind of mad or something, thinking about now we’d have Uncle Maury around the house all the times running things like the way he left me to come home in the rain by myself. I say, A fine lot you care, sneaking in here soon as he’s dead (The Sound and the Fury 233).

Every instance of the past in Jason’s section is managed through the narrative filter of his present consciousness. As we see in this instance, as in others, as soon as the past begins to rise up in his consciousness, it is suppressed as his attention turns to economic matters at hand. Jason attempts to manipulate his reality to conform to his sense of what is right. Benjy can neither think nor act. Quentin, the closest thing in Faulkner’s corpus to Shakespeare’s Hamlet, can think but fails to embody his thought in meaningful action. Jason, by contrast, is all action and no thought.

It is Jason only who lives in the world of objective reality where as his brothers Benjy and Quentin live in the world of subjective reality. “Like his brothers, Jason is flawed because of his persistent sense of persecution, libidinous regression and the canalization of psychosexual energy in the sphere of money. Their respective neuroses and imbecilities take shape in the family crucible. It accounts for the resemblances that mark the three brothers” (Singh 71). It is his sister Caddy who is responsible for getting him money, no matter where it comes from. She sends money each month for Miss Quentin’s upkeep; he keeps Quentin clothed, housed and fed, so the money should, go to him. He himself claims that he makes it a rule never to keep a scrap of paper bearing a woman’s hand, and yet he keeps the money from the cheques Caddy sends him; this act fits into his system of logic because he cashed the cheques, literally getting rid of her handwriting while keeping the money. He allows his mother to literally burn the cheques she sends, but only after he has cashed them in
secret. When Caddy gives him 100 dollars to see Quentin a minute he grants her request holding the baby up to the carriage window, as he drives by literally allowing Caddy only a minute’s glimpse. When Luster can’t pay him a nickel for tickets to the show, he burns the tickets rather than give them to him. All these acts fit into a rigid and literally defined logical order with which Jason structures his life.

Some readers see Jason’s logic as a sign that he is more ‘sane’ than the rest of his family. He is not retarded like Benjy or irrationally distraught like Quentin. He is able to live his life in a relatively normal way, with a logical order to both his narrative and his daily activities. However, Jason is just as blind, just as divorced from reality as his brothers. Like them, he tries to control his life through a strictly defined order, and when this is disrupted he collapses into irrationality. Benjy’s system of order is the routine of everyday life where as Quentin’s system of order is the honor and purity he saw in himself and Caddy when they were young but disrupted when Caddy loses her virginity and leaves him. But Jason’s system of order is the rigidity of his logic, most of which has to do with money and with this he tries to control the world around him.

This system is disrupted when he loses his job opportunity (Quentin gets a career boost in going to Harvard, so Jason should get a career boost from Herbert Heat), and again when Quentin refuses to come to dinner, skips school and runs away with his money. For each brother, the system he has established help to control the everyday life, and the way they do so is by controlling Caddy. As long as she is motherly to Benjy, virginal to Quentin and profitable to Jason, their worlds are in order but these controlling mechanisms are inflexible, breaking down entirely as soon as Caddy or her daughter defies them.
Jason is never particularly a good business man because he always obsesses about money. Money is everything for him irrespective of reality and morality. In the course of this one day, he loses $200 in the stock market, for example; he has been warned that the market is in a state of flux and yet he leaves town on a wild goose chase when he should be watching the market and deliberately defies his brokers’ advice by buying when he should sell. He is very much rude and spiteful to his boss which is certainly not the best way to succeed in his business. He buys a car even though he knows that gasoline gives him headaches, and perhaps the clearest indication of his bad business sense is the fact that when Quentin steals his savings in the fourth section, she steals $7000. This is the money that he has been stealing from Caddy and Quentin, and Caddy has been sending him $200 a month for fifteen years. By this point he should have collected upwards of $30,000; where did it all go? Even though he thinks of little else besides money, he is not capable of handling it properly.

It is his mother, Mrs. Compson, who spends much of the time telling Jason that he is different from Quentin and Benjy, in terms of sadism, money grabbing and isolation; in some cases he is similar to his brothers. He is obsessed with Caddy as they are, and she sexually shatters his world just as much as theirs.

The narrative style of this particular section differs from other two sections, technique changes drastically with Jason’s section. His mind is involved but it is the mind of a monomaniac. He is convinced and bothered only with getting money and punishing others. Thus, his section flows along at a rapid pace because he is not troubled with the intricacies of life, and he is not concerned with images or impressions. The order and simplicity of his section is a result of his single minded viciousness. He is not bothered by failing to live up to his ancestor’s greatness.
because he is completely unconcerned with the past. He is wholly focused on the present and on manipulating the present for future personal gain. He does recall the past events but only concentrates on the effects those events have on him here and now. Jason dwells on Caddy’s divorce, for example, only because it has left him in a menial and unfulfilling job. However, despite Jason’s constant attempts to twist present circumstances to his own benefit he does not really have any aspirations. He maintains overwhelming greed, selfishness, and focus on the future gain, but does not use these to work toward any higher goal. Jason is all motivation with virtually no ambition.

The novelist William Faulkner does realistically and accurately represent the cotton culture of the South in *The Sound and the Fury* through the character of Jason Compson who does not have proper knowledge of business. Due to the lack of knowledge, Jason faces much loss in his commercial life.

The New York Cotton Exchange takes a large chunk out of Jason Compson’s day on April 6, 1928. Speculation in cotton futures is just one thing more that confuses Jason and brings to ruin his nickel and dime schemes. For one who craves a profit on every deal, Compson gets a good drubbing in his cotton market trade. “By the end of the day, he suffers a staggering loss from the short sale of one cotton futures contract, the total amount of which no one has yet put a specific dollar figure on. Nor is it clear that Faulkner himself did the math and realized how much Jason actually lost in this trade” (Hobson, Fred and Gwin, Minrose.2009).

Jason does some quick mental maths and gets upset because four points above his short sale price means a paper loss of twenty dollars. “*But hell, they were right there and knew what was going on,*” he says (*The Sound and the Fury*.192). Then he
remembers that he had stopped at telegraph office to wire Caddy a message telling her that everything is all right, allaying her suspicions that the checks she is mailing are not reaching her daughter Quentin, ‘All Well, Q writing today’ (ibid. 193). The ‘Q’ that the telegraph operator queries Jason about puzzles him only in the context of the message. ‘Q’ was the code for the ‘August’ (Hobson, Fred and Gwin, Minrose. 2009).

The real question, after all, is, did William Faulkner himself understand the size of Jason’s dollar loss? In the first edition of The Sound and the Fury’, published by Cape and Smith in 1929, again in the modern library reprint published by Random House in 1946, “Jason’s cotton contact closes at 12.2. Sometimes after 1946, when he made final revisions in the text of the novel, Faulkner changed the closing price from 12.21 to 20.21” (Cobau 257). It is not clear if Faulkner had worked out the math in terms of how much money Jason actually lost either in the original version of the novel or when he revised it. He seems to have focused during his revision entirely on the closing price rather than the day’s high price of 20.62. Nowhere in the novel is the size of Jason’s cotton loss mentioned or even inferred.

The organization of Jason’s sections is based upon his two primary obsessions, his quest for the ‘golden fleece’ of financial profit and his hatred for both Caddy and her daughter Miss Quentin. Much of his monologue narration is devoted to business affairs, in particular his exploitation of the two women and his futile efforts to make money by cotton speculation.

It is characteristic of Jason that he should be the only member of the Compson family who is able to cope with the practical and social implications of Caddy’s defection. Where Compson can only deliciously complain that Benjy is yelling his uncomprehending grief, Quentin commits suicide; Jason can adjust himself to the
situation and turn it to his own advantage and profit. Jason himself is a typical figure, sharing the fundamental characteristics of a legion of other small business North and South alike. Since Jason’s instincts are commercial and materialistic, they are also anti rural and anti traditional. It is this very materialism and selfishness which makes Jason the one male Compson without any practical competence.

Jason Compson’s monologue has been variously described as suspect, egocentric and grimly satiric. Jason’s caustic wit, avarice and harsh rationalism contrast sharply with Benjy’s confused observations and Quentin’s melancholy narrative. “Jason’s long lamentation, though a monologue, is not spoken to himself; rather it is his self – dramatization of his plight in a language devoted to reckless exaggerated criticism of all the ills his flesh is heir too” (Hagopian 45-55) Unlike Quentin, Jason has no reverence for his lost childhood or the irretrievable past. Time for Jason is a commodity to be used, saved, not wasted; expended in a calculated fashion, like money or goods. And also this section brings us again into present, where we look through the mean eyes of Jason, the third brother. His version of the family collapse is colored by his cheapness, bitterness, cocksure ‘realism’ and jealous hatred of Caddy’s memory as expressed in her daughter. We see, him, half mad, pull the shred of his own life to pieces in his effort to destroy her.

During his frantic pursuit of Miss Quentin the nature of the conflict in which Jason is involved becomes explicit. He realizes that his enemy is not his niece or even the man with red tie; rather it is “the sequence of natural events and their causes which causes every man’s brow”(The Sound and the Fury. 165). He learned to believe in whatever he could hold in his hands or keep in his pocket. That alone could be protected from chance and change. The money placed in a strong box, hidden in a
closest, kept in a locked room is the symbol of Jason’s world. Jason is thoroughly
defeated by the rearguards of circumstance which he had challenged by his trip to
Mottson. The contents of his inviolate strong box and Miss Quentin, together the
symbol of his revenge and frustration – disappear from Jefferson, yet his world does
not collapse as Quentin’s does: Like Benjy he violently protects his loss, but also like
Benjy’s his order remains intact despite of the uncertain elements.

Jason is almost an epitome, and at the same time a caricature, of the American
business ethics. In connection with his vindictiveness towards his niece Quentin, who
he unreasonably blames for the loss of the job, promised him by Caddy’s husband, he
says;

After she was gone, I felt better, I says I reckon. You’ll think twice
before you deprive me of a job that was promised me. I was a kid then.
I believed folks when they said they’d do things. I have learned better
since. Besides like I say I guess I don’t need any man’s help to get
along. I can stand on my own feet like I always have (The Sound and
the Fury 124).

He justifies his own greed, and unscrupulousness in terms of self reliance and
‘business is business.’ He uses Quentin’s illegitimacy to blackmail Caddy, he
embezzles young Quentin’s money, he sweats and scrimps and denies himself
pleasures in order to accumulate money. He is isolated, self sufficient and inhuman,
but he is vulnerable. As the isolated self sufficient man he can trust nobody. He
cannot even trust his precious money to a bank.
Jason’s view of time lends itself to a bitingly ironic comic-interpretation in *The Sound and the Fury*. The busy busting Jason is finally reduced to static, thwarted immobility.

_He sat there for some time._ He heard a clack, _Strike the half hour_, than some people began to pass in Sunday and castes clothes. Some leaked at him as they passed at the man sitting quietly behind the wheat of a small car, with his invisible. _Life raveled out about him like a worn out sock* (*The Sound and the Fury* 105).

Jason undergoes a kind of symbolic death. In one of his class sessions at the University of Virginia, Faulkner defined ‘life as motion and death as stasis.’ Jason’s life raveled out, finished. Of course he will continue to be alive but for the moment he is figuratively dead.

As far as style is concerned, it must be admitted that Quentin section seems a deliberate exercise in the Joycean mode while Jason section raises to the level of art the self revelatory interior monologue of the unimaginative man which Sinclair, Lewis had developed in ‘*Babbitt*’(1922) and ‘*The Man who Knew Coolidge*’ (1928).

Still isolated and unrepentant, Jason survives while Quentin is destroyed by the events he can neither accept nor control. On the other hand, that survival is itself futile, for Jason is the last of the Compson line and a childless bachelor. That very childlessness is another indication of his deliberate rejection of any relationship which he cannot control, especially one in which emotions dominate logic and trust replaces contracts.
April Eighth, 1928 Easter Sunday, Dilsey’s Section:

This section is narrated by authorial omniscient voice, much of the action centers on the difference between Dilsey and Jason. Of all the characters, Dilsey is the most Christian. She possesses none of the vicious and troubled characteristics of any of the Compsons, though she has been with them forever. She is consistently a caregiver, a good woman who only wants peace and harmony. It is she who brought peace and harmony in the Compson family. Her narration begins with the following lines.

_In the midst of the voices and the hands Ben sat, rapt in his sweet blue gaze. Dilsey sat bolt upright beside, crying rigidly and quietly in the annulment and the blood of the remembered Lamb (The Sound and the Fury)._

Dilsey’s section of the _The Sound and the Fury_ is the one that gives the narrative frame to other three sections. Since, this includes the presence of a third person omniscient narrator; it is the one that offers full context, ‘the background’ against which full sense of other sections may be made. This is only the section to employ third person selective omniscient point of view and in it we see Faulkner’s effort to ‘get completely out of the book’ in an effort to offer a view that itself can account for the first three sections.

This section of the novel is narrated by William Faulkner himself through Dilsey, the Compson’s black housekeeper. In a posthumously published introduction to the _The Sound and the Fury_ Faulkner described Dilsey as ‘a figure of endurance and stability,’ “There was Dilsey to be the future, to stand above the fallen ruins of the
family like a ruined chimney, gaunt, patient and indomitable and Benjy to be the past” (Faulkner Qtd in Robbins, 1992:105).

The focus here is entirely upon the present-day, Easter Sunday, and to that end, all traces of Caddy, including her daughter and even the very mention of her name, have been removed. The two main narratives presented in this section are fairly straightforward: Jason’s pursuit of his stolen money and his inevitable come-uppance when he insults the wrong man in Mottson; and Dilsey’s attendance at an Easter church service, at which a preacher from St. Louis, Reverend Shegog, delivers a sermon which stirs in Dilsey an epiphany of doom for the Compson family.

This section contrasts with the three preceding monologues in that it is related from an omniscient, third person perspective that many critics have associated with Dilsey’s freedom from obsessive self-involvement. Here, a sense of community, rather than entrapment within the self, is emphasized by the clear, objective description of characters and surroundings. Dilsey, the figure of strength, Christian morality and humanistic decency, encourages peace and order in the embittered Compson household. Her acceptance of reality is symbolized by her sensible attitude toward time; the only member of the Compson household who can tell time by the one handed and from an inaccurate clock in the kitchen, she focuses predominantly on the present. Some critics also have discussed the religious aspects of Dilsey’s character, observing that the last section of The Sound and the Fury occurs on Easter Sunday and ends with Dilsey taking Benjy to church with her.

In this section, Dilsey emerges not only as a Negro servant in the Compson household but as a human being. With nothing to judge but her actions, with no prolonged ethical or religious polemics, her very presence enables the reader to
achieve a final perspective on the lives of the Compson. Mrs. Compson’s nagging self pity, Jason’s carping exactions, Miss Quentin’s thoughtlessness gain a dramatic actuality. Various contrasts between Dilsey and the others are delineated with striking clarity. The contrast becomes actual conflict where Dilsey and Jason are concerned. It is not only that Dilsey ‘survives’ because for that matter, so does Jason, but that her endurance has strength to suffer without rancor as well as to resist, accepting as well as to protest. She is the only one who challenges his word in the household, who defends the absent Caddy, Miss Quentin, Benjy and even Luster from his anger.

The last section of the novel is the first and only straightforward narrative. This section seems to be meant to encompass the character of Dilsey. This section presents a style that is simple, without any comments or complications. As opposed to the other sections in the novel, the last one has a strong sense of organization and control over the entire novel.

Dilsey seems to be the only character of the novel to maintain her virtues without the corrupting influence of the self-absorption which looms over the rest of the family. It is possible that because Dilsey is not actually a family member, she is removed and unaffected by their concerns. Thus, she comes to represent the possibility of hope for the preservation of old Southern values which have been corrupted by families such as the Compsons. While the family crumbles around her, Dilsey prevails as the only character in the novel whose virtue has remained unaffected. Dilsey resurrects the values that the Compsons have abandoned: diligence, endurance, love and faith.

Olga Vickery writes of Dilsey’s organizational abilities in the midst of chaos. “It is Dilsey who creates order out of disorder; by accommodating herself to change;
she manages to keep the Compson household in the same semblance of decency. While occupied with getting breakfast, she is yet able to start the fire in Luster’s inexplicable absence, provide a hot water bottle for Mrs. Compson, see to Benjy’s needs and soothe various ruffled tempers. All this despite the constant interruptions of Luster’s perverseness, Benjy’s moaning, Mrs. Compson’s complaints and even Jason’s maniacal fury” (Vickery 288).

This final section is primarily concerned with Dilsey’s preparation of the Compson breakfast. Here, “the semi omniscient narration seldom leaves Dilsey except to trace Jason’s futile effort to recover the stolen money and to listen to Benjy’s howling as Luster drives him the wrong way around the town Square” (Swiggart 221). “Dilsey’s mere presence, like Benjy’s in the opening narration, is an implicit moral comment upon the behavior of other characters. Mrs. Compson torments Dilsey with selfish requests, calling her name again and again with ‘machine like regularity’ (The Sound and the Fury 286). In one effective sequence Mrs. Compson waits until the aged servant has labored up the stairs to dress Benjy before telling Dilsey that Benjy is still sleeping. “Dilsey said nothing, she made no further move, but though she could not see her save as a blobby shape without depth, Mrs. Compson knew that she had lowered her face a little and that she stood now like a caw in the rain, as she held the empty water bottle by its neck” (The Sound and the Fury 162).

Although Dilsey is a passive witness of Compson decay, she pays active attention to Benjy’s emotional needs and in this way substitutes as best she can for Benjy’s missing sister. She provides Benjy with a cake on his birthday, and near the end of the novel she directs Luster to put a support on the broken stem of Benjy’s narcissus, a flower that is damaged again by Jason.
Dilsey’s ability to endure misfortune is very much strong comparing to the weaknesses of Benjy’s two brothers. She never asks abstract questions and never finds the passage of time a matter of destructive concern. At breakfast time, hearing the old kitchen clock sound fire strokes, she announces “eight O’clock,” (The Sound and the Fury 164) automatically making the proper correction.

In the life of Compsons, Dilsey becomes herself a time symbol, her sunken cheeks representing human events and sliding teardrops—the flow of time. Her role suggests the destructive impact of time and indicates the possibility of a religious vision by which the individual can free himself at least from despair. Dilsey is the prophetic time keeper of the Compson family, even though her role is unrecognized by those she would like to save.

The contrast between Dilsey’s and the Compson’s world is illustrated by the narrative point of view brought to bear upon her actions. In watching Dilsey emerge out of “a moving wall of grey light” (ibid. 281) in to the Compson kitchen, the reader himself seems to escape the gray interior world of aristocratic delusion and decay, yet the artificial rhetoric by which Dilsey and other characters are described is comparable to the filtering of past events through a narrator’s consciousness. Faulkner invests Dilsey with an atmosphere of heroic dignity and at the same time mocks his own narrative technique.

The language of Dilsey’s section suggests the point of view of a reader who has struggled long and arduously with The Sound and the Fury and who now recognizes beneath the ‘cluttered obscurity’ an extraordinary clarity of action and theme, “The reader views events with a double visions on the one hand he recognizes the sordid Compson reality for what it is, and on the other hand he raises the family
tragedy to a universal status. The seriocomic effect of the language brilliantly mirrors the reader’s hesitating acceptance of stylized characters, isolated from realistic social conventions, as symbols for moral order and social stability” (Swiggart 221).

Getting over subjective point of narration or the first person narration, Faulkner turns to the third person narration to end the novel with a happy ending. This section must be third person for some of the same reasons that have determined the other tactics of the book. “We as readers need absolute objectivity. We need day today chronology. We need dynamics of the parts interacting. We need the piece of a story told straight out. We need the kind of the whole world we have been denied. We came for a story and have put up with bits, glimpses, flashes and parts and now we want our sugar cube or our carrot or our fish. Here, in this section, there can be no mistaking about time, place, and every single event” (Reed 83).

Dilsey’s section provides no summing-up final interpretation, no further insight into the apparent center of the book, Caddy, no essential truth we can hold in our heads, as we walk away from the novel. The last section provides us finally with a nihilistic comment and interpretation on life. This interpretation derives from the structure and not from the presence or voice of that section.

The day downed bleak and chill, a moving wall of grey light out of the northeast which, instead of dissolving into moisture, seemed to disintegrate into minute and Venomous particles, like dust that, when Dilsey opened the door of the cabin and emerged, needled laterally into her flesh. Precipitating not so much moisture as a substance partaking of the quality of thin, not quite congealed oil (The Sound and the Fury 158).
In the case of Dilsey’s section, we may be led astray by the urge to attribute the narrative to a character. As the first three sections are first person narratives, both the speaker and principle subject may be represented by a single name, Benjy’s section is his because he is at once the narrator and the narrated. We listen to him as he reports what happens to him. But the last section has no identifiable narrator. The narrative is not produced by a voice speaking in the first person. Most of the readers do agree that the focal attention for much of the section is served by Dilsey Groson. So, the critics have got into habit of referring this section April 8, 1928 as Dilsey’s section.

The objective nature of the fourth section, i.e. Dilsey, one which preludes the use of any single level of apprehension, yet it provokes the most complex response. Dilsey, almost as inarticulate as Benjy, becomes through her actions alone the embodiment of the truth of the heart which is synonymous with morality. The acceptance of whatever time brings, the absence of questioning and petty protests, enables her to create order out of circumstance rather than in defiance of it and in doing so she gains both dignity and significance for her life. In a sense, “Dilsey represents a final perspective directed toward the past and the Compsons, but it is also reader’s point of view for which Dilsey merely provides the vantage point. This fact suggests another reason for objective narration in this section; to use Dilsey as a point of view character would be to destroy her efficacy as the ethical norm, for that would give us but one more splinter of the truth confined and conditioned by the mind which grasped it” (Vickery 109).

One of the reasons for the success of The Sound and the Fury as a great novel involves the intersection of formal and thematic sophistication. On the one hand
Faulkner experiments as an artist with the purely formal aspects of his craft. He saw the works of past impressionists and cubist painters and admired them in the year 1925, during his stay in Paris. After going through their narrative works, Faulkner as a modernist invented new modern narrative techniques just leaving away the conventional narratives. He tries to render the same subject from a variety of angles, telling the ‘same’ story from several narrative techniques.

“In this last section we finally emerge from the closed world of the Compson mile into the public world as represented by Jefferson (Yoknapatawpha County). No longer colored by the subjectivity of a single point of view, the out word manifestations of appearance and behavior assume a new, importance” (Vickery 110).

**Caddy Compson: The Missing Centre**

Caddy Compson of Faulkner is one of the most admirable characters of the novel. The novelist himself calls her as ‘My Heart’s Darling.’ He spoke of Caddy outside the novel with an intensely passionate devotion. “To me she was the beautiful one,” he said at the University of Virginia, that is why I wrote the book about and I used the tools Caddy” (Qtd from Faulkner in an Interview).

The centrality of Caddy Compson to *The Sound and the Fury* is one of those critical commonplaces that may become blurred through the years. Every reader respects Caddy’s importance; Faulkner himself told us the book was about Caddy. It began with the “image of the child in the tree, muddy drawers clearly in view, and grew into his most important and most moving novel” (Faulkner, 1959:6). William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* a novel in four sections each of which represents a different point of view, attempts in each section is to capture an image of the novel’s
central character Caddy Compson. Caddy is the central character who is fully responsible for the breakdown of the Compson family. “It is Caddy’s sexual relationship with Delton Ames before her marriage to Herbert Head which has become the real cause for the mental imbalance of her brothers and also for their attitudes towards their life” (Hinrichsen 23).

In everybody’s life obsession is common but in the case of Compson children it is more active and dynamic. It is obsession that makes Benjy and Quentin to lead fruitless life. Caddy Compson remains the centre of attraction of her brothers, who themselves are narrators in the novel. Faulkner uses Caddy’s character to create this effect for the readers. In this novel, all the three brothers of Caddy are longing for her. Her love for Delton Ames, her marriage with Herbert Head, divorce from her husband, birth of a child to her named Miss Quentin, these incidents of Caddy’s life form the substance of the novel which becomes the focal point.

What we’re left with, then, is something like a one thousand piece jigsaw puzzle missing the last piece. The picture almost makes sense – but we’re certain that it would look completely different if we could just find that piece! That’s our novel without Caddy. We hear so much about her. We just never actually get up close and personal with the wild, passionate, loving girl that captured the hearts of all her family members. Interestingly, she captured Faulkner’s heart, too. When he talked about The Sound and the Fury later in his career, he called Caddy his "heart’s darling." She’s the image that generated his novel. And the sense of loss that we feel as readers that nagging feeling that there must be something that could make this novel make sense is what’s left in the wake of her absence. It’s what’s left at the end of the novel.
Each brother remains irrationally connected with the past, particularly with memories of Caddy. Benjy relieves his memories of Caddy all the time, making no distinction between the present and the past, Quentin goes through the routines of life washed in a sea of memories of Caddy and Jason, for all he seems to have cut himself off from her entirely by refusing to mention her name is, perhaps, the closest of all to her. Not only is he surrounded by reminders of her in the shape of her daughter and her money, but he is also constantly reminded of her in his anger. It has been eighteen years since she lost him, his job opportunity, and yet he remains as angry with her as he ever was, certainly this is no way to forget her. Five years after the publication of this novel, Faulkner wrote, “When I began the book, I had no plan at all. I wasn’t even writing a book” (An Introduction to The Sound and the Fury 414). He goes to describe the image of Caddy and her muddy drawers with her brothers looking up at her.

The central action of the plot depends on Caddy’s climbing the tree. As Faulkner does not give voice to the central character, the disintegration of the Compson world is the result of a void in it’s center. She must then be seen through somebody else’s eyes, and her image and action are their own meaning - a meaning that remains unexpressed and unapprehended by especially Quentin and Jason. To come to terms with her meaning, then is the central concern of each of the sections of the novel, though Dilsey’s ‘vision’ as a result of Reverend Shegog’s sermon incorporates a world larger than the narrow vision of Benjy, Quentin and Jason can or will admit.

If the entire story is ‘all there’ in Benjy’s section, it is only there as an unprocessed vision unaffected by the mind’s ability to interpret. Caddy is both a
presence and a spectral absence in Benjy’s experience and the narrative threads in his section vacillate between the two. Yet perhaps Benjy’s innocence consists in this lack of filtering ability and so constitutes a vision of Caddy ‘as she is’ in such a way as to present the entire symbology of the Fall. Faulkner’s language seems to circle around Caddy’s symbolic representation of the Fall from grace into shame and death, which the Christian paradigm in Shegog’s sermon at the end is crucially concerned.

So, how do we talk about a character that pulls a major disappearing act? Well, here’s what we do know: she’s fearless as a child, braving the prospect of whipping in order to play in the creek. Of course, she also offers up a pretty good foreshadowing of her fate in this scene (play ominous foreshadowing music here). Caddy declares that she will run away and never come back. Of all the Compson children, Caddy and Benjy are the most comfortable in their bodies. Just as Benjy depends on bodily sensations to tell him about the world around him, Caddy depends upon the pleasures of her body (and her developing sense of desire) to lead her into a new world of experiences. Unfortunately, these experiences quickly become more than she can control. As she explains to Quentin: "There was something terrible in me sometimes at night I could see it grinning at me I could see it through them grinning at me through their faces it's gone now and I am sick. (The Sound and the Fury. 214).

All that’s left, then, are Benjy’s memories of Caddy as the girl who "smelled like trees,"(ibid. 5) and Quentin’s obsessive convictions that he can clear all of Caddy’s sins by convincing their father that they’ve committed incest. Faulkner never really lets Caddy choose her own fate. Sure, we know he likes her a lot. But we never get to hear much of her side of the story. The one time that she does explain her sexual activity to Quentin, she does it through her body, by getting Quentin to feel her
pulse when she hears the words Dalton Ames. After all, novels are about language, words. And Caddy isn’t always so good at using words. For a ‘heart’s darling,’ she sure gets the short end of the stick.

Caddy is the character who prompted Faulkner’s writing of the novel. He had previously written a short story with her in it and felt she needed a place of her own. Ironically, she does not have a voice of her own. She is not included among the four narrators who tell us the story of the Compson family. Caddy is the second child of Jason (III) and Caroline Compson. Because her parents are emotionally unavailable, she becomes a surrogate Mom for Benjy and Quentin who both become obsessed with her. Of the Compson’s, she is the most understanding and caring for Benjy.

Apart from Caddy, Dilsey is also the most admired character of the novel. She is the only loving member of the household, the only character who maintains her values without the corrupting influence of self abortion. She thus comes to represent a hope for the renewal of traditional Southern values in an uncorrupted and positive form. At the end of the novel, Dilsey emerges as the torch bearer for these values, and, as such, the only hope for the preservation of the Compson legacy. In short, the Compson family is the embodiment of the South after the war. The values that once held a great family together have somehow got lost in the chaos of the post war, emancipated world. Slowly, the decay of the family spreads, till there is nothing left but the sound and the fury of the idiots’ cries.

We can come to the conclusion that, in the modern age, a man doesn’t have a peace of mind because of psychological pressures like being awake, asleep, hyper alert, tension, mental struggle for existence, daydreaming, hypnotized or intoxicated. The novel *The Sound and the Fury* reflects all these features among the four children
of the Compson family. It is a novel of individuation. Each of the four narrators represents a different aspect of a greater whole, the artist's self and then because the work is visionary, by extension it becomes the collective self of human kind. This gets reflected in Jung’s concept of the Mandela and the four psychological functions demonstrated in each of the Compsons.

The progression from Benjy’s section to Jason’s section through Quentin’s is accompanied by an increasing sense of social reality. Benjy is remote in his idiocy and innocence, Quentin moves from the isolation of his half mad idealism into total withdrawal leading to suicide, but Jason is wholly in the world, acutely sensitive to social values, swimming with contemporary commercial current. The action of the novel is thus presented increasingly in terms of social, economic and political perspectives; it is Jason who first refers, however ironically, to the family’s more distinguished past.

In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner uses the Stream of Conscious impressions of four very different members of the Compson household to relate the events of their life as a family. He leaves the reader to piece together a family portrait and history of what actually happened based on these various impressions of Compson family life. The effect is similar to that of Cubist art where we see a portrait from all viewpoints at the same time. It would be nice to think that by seeing all sides of something at the same time people would be presented with the most impartial and most accurate way of viewing it. However, the result is actually more confusing and less clear than if we were only exposed to one viewpoint. Faulkner actually facets, like a cubist painting, the design of this novel. Here, we have a work of fiction that comes remarkably close to being an exercise in pure design, a cubist novel.
The modern novelist, Faulkner like the Cubist painter has explored the ways in which form can concentrate the meaning. In the simplest terms, the Cubist novel is one in which a linear narrative is broken so that the structure or arrangement of it’s parts itself form a level of meaning, which results as much from the patterning of the four sections as from the ‘story’ of the decline of the Compson family.
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