WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *THE SOUND AND THE FURY*

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow
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.
Life's but a 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.

Macbeth

Discussing *The Sound and The Fury,* Faulkner said once that he «struggled and anguished with it for a year.»[1] He wrote his greatest book in 1929; the Appendix on the Compsons was written for *The Portable Faulkner,* in 1946. The title of the book comes from *Macbeth.*[2] *The Sound and The Fury* has been compared to *The Brothers Karamazov,*[3] which is also about the dissolution of a family; and the intellectual, obsessed, introvert Quentin Compson has been considered akin to Stephen Daedalus.[4]

The Sound and The Fury unfolds like a symphony: the Benjy section being the opening movement striking the theme, Caddy, that will recur like a leit-motiv throughout the following three sections. The second book centers around Quentin: it is the reflective movement, the adagio. The third book brings in a comic relief after the tension created by the first two sections, and centers around a superb comic figure: Jason, it is the allegro. In the fourth book we get the great finale with Dilsey acting as a chorus.

Caddy is the unifying thread that runs throughout the work.

She is the eternal feminine that will reflect like a mirror the various points of view of the men surrounding her. She is one of the greatest tragic heroines in American literature, a sister of Hester Prynne, whose capacity to love has been thwarted, truncated, degenerated. The tragic destiny of Caddy is symbolized in an image we get early in the book: the muddy bottom of her drawers when, as a little girl, she climbs into the apple tree to look in the window.

The first book is «a tale told by an idiot,» but signifying a great deal. The mind of the idiot is timeless: Faulkner experiments successfully with synesthesia to show how past and present get confused in Benjy's consciousness; the shift from present to past is marked by the use of italics. Benjy's mind does not distort or color any of the events that happened; through the freshness of his experience rendered through synesthesia, we get a complete and faithful social history of the Compson family. The Benjy section is most important of all, and a major *tour de force*. What makes the idiot such a pathetic and human figure is his capacity for disinterested love. A study of the idiot with the narcissus had appeared earlier in the *New Orleans Sketches*;[5] with Benjy, the character of the idiot is developed to its outmost perfection. Instead of the idiot's pathetic attachment to the narcissus, we get in this book Benjy's love for the pasture, for Caddy, and for fire. Benjy is associated with the land, which is perennial and endures; he is also associated with fire, and this symbolizes his capacity to love. Benjy is one of the three characters whose humanity is most developed in *The Sound and The Fury*, the other two being Caddy and Dilsey. The first, third and fourth books take place on April 7, 6, and 8, 1928. These dates recall the Calvary. But it seems to me that it would be far fetched to say that Benjy is a Christ figure, because he happens to be thirty-three years old. These three dates: April 7, 6, and 8, should be considered the epitome of Faulkner's deep interest in the ritual of Christianity.

As the book opens Benjy is looking at the pasture he loves, which was sold to a gulf club to pay for Caddy's wedding and to send Quentin to Harvard. As one of the players says: «Here, caddie;»[6] Benjy starts moaning: past and present are blurred in the idiot's consciousness, the shift to the past is marked by the use of italics: «*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. ... Keep your hands in your pockets, Caddy said. Or they'll get froze.»[7] Faulkner experiments successfully with synesthesia: Benjy «smells the cold;» for Benjy Caddy «smells like leaves;» and «like trees.»[8] Thus Caddy is associated with the fertility of earth. The «jimson weed,»[9] that Luster gives Benjy when he moans recalls the narcissus of the idiot in the earlier story. In a later work, *The Hamlet*,[10] we'll get the idiot in love with a cow, as a further variation of Benjy's devotion to the land and to Caddy. The cow, just like the land and Caddy, will symbolize what is permanent and eternal in nature, and celebrate the perennial life cycle. In 1928, Benjy still lives in the past: his consciousness reflects without any distortion the freshness of experience that took place before 1910, when Caddy was still there. It must be observed that the most important events in Benjy's life center around Caddy. The gate symbolizes for him Caddy's departure: after Caddy's wedding he stands at the gate of the Compson house, crying; two or three years later he gets out of the yard and is accused of «attacking» some girls coming home from school; but in reality Benjy is broken hearted and looking for Caddy : «They came on. I opened the gate and they stopped, turning.I was trying to say, and I caught her, trying to say, and she screamed and I was trying to say and trying and the bright shapes began to stop and I tried to get out. I tried to get it off of my face, but the bright shapes were going. They were going up the hill to where it fell away and I tried to cry. But when I breathed in, I couldn't breathe out again to cry, and I tried to keep from falling off the hill and I fell off the hill into the bright, whirling shapes.»[11]

The «bright shapes» are associated in Benjy's consciousness with fire, and with Caddy. They are also associated with sleep: «The shapes followed on. The ones on the other side began again, bright and fast and smooth, like when Caddy says we are going to sleep.»[12] Caddy «smells like trees;» he «smells» the cold; he «smells» the sickness in his mother's room; Quentin «smells» like rain; his hands «see the slipper;» through synesthesia we get untwisted the fresh impressions permeating Benjy's consciousness. The episode where he burns his hand is handled with great skill: «I put my hand out where the fire had been... My hand jerked

back and I put it in my mouth and Dilsey caught me.... «Get that soda,» Dilsey said. She took my hand out of my mouth. My voice went louder then and my hand tried to go back to my mouth, but Dilsey held it. My voice went loud She sprinkled soda on my hand.»[13] Early in the book Benjy and Luster watch the golf players; they look for the «ball»; Luster finds it and hides it; later on he tells Benjy: «*You cant have it. What business you got with it. You cant play no ball.*»[14] The whole episode symbolizes Benjy's castration, in 1915: «*I got undressed and I looked at myself, and I began to cry. Hush, Luster said. Looking for them aint going to do no good. They're gone.*»[15] In Benjy's section we get various indications of what is going to happen later on: the Compson children play in the water, Caddy squats down and gets her dress wet, she says she will take it off to have it dry: «You just take your dress off,» Quentin said. Caddy took her dress off and threw it on the bank. Then she didn't have on anything but her bodice and drawers, and Quentin slapped her and she slipped and fell down in the water.»[16] This childhood scene is prophetic of the ambiguous relationship that will develop between Quentin and Caddy, and of his morbid obsession with her; when Caddy climbs up into the tree, the other children watch the muddy bottom of her drawers, which symbolize her ultimate fall; Jason keeps his hands in his pockets, later on in life he will love money above all; Jason cuts up Benjy's dolls, this is a symbolic gesture: later on he will have his idiot brother gelded.

The mother, Mrs. Compson, is a despicable character, devoid of loving kindness. It is Dilsey who holds the family together, because the mother is incapable of taking care of her own children. She is ashamed of her son being an idiot and changes his name :

«*His name's Benjy now, Caddy said.*

How come it is, Dilsey said. He aint wore out the name he was born with yet, is he.»[17]

The mother is a snob, proud of her family connections: «Nicknames are vulgar. Only common people use them, Benjamin.»[18] The irony of it all is that the sickly Mrs. Compson keeps calling Benjy «the baby.» When Caddy wants to take Benjy out into the cold without overshoes, Mrs. Compson is afraid that he'll get sick when the house is full of company. When Caddy

gets her illegitimate child and gets a divorce, it is Mrs. Compson who does not want her back. She has no capacity to forgive, just as she has no capacity to love.

With great art, Faulkner shows the dissolution and degeneracy that has taken place in the Compson family by 1928, through the different treatment Benjy gets from Caddy's daughter, Quentin: «*Has he got to keep that old dirty slipper on the table, Quentin said. «Why don't you feed him in the kitchen. It's like eating with a pig.*»[19] Juxtaposed to this passage, we get Caddy's affectionate treatment of Benjy: «I'll feed him tonight.» Caddy said. «Sometimes he cries when Versh feeds him».[20] When Benjy discovers Caddy making love with a boy in the backyard, he cries. Caddy sends the boy away: «I wont anymore, ever. Benjy. Benjy. «Then she was crying, and I cried, and we held each other.»[21] Caddy goes into the kitchen, takes the kitchen soap and washes her mouth at the sink, in a perennial ritual of purification. Then follows immediately in italics a shift to the present, and we get Quentin's harsh treatment of Benjy. Quentin who is in the backyard with her boy friend gets angry when Benjy and Luster come there, she tells Luster that she will make Dilsey whip him because he lets Benjy follow her. The shift from past to present in Benjy's consciousness is very subtly handled:

«Caddy smelled like trees.

I kept a telling you to stay away from there, Luster said. They sat up in the swing, quick. Quentin had her hands on her hair. He had a red tie.»[22]

The deterioration of personal relationships indicates the ultimate dissolution of the Compson family. In the Benjy section we get the social history of the Compsons from the early 1900's until 1928. The Benjy section has an all round perfection about it: the dominant symbol is the «golf ball,» the cries of «caddie» remind Benjy of his sister, and we get the shift in time from present to past. Through synesthesia and flashbacks in memory, Faulkner conveys to us in all its freshness the chaotic experience that permeates Benjy's consciousness. As I have already observed, fire and earth are also two recurrent symbols: Benjy is associated with these two elements. The forebodings of the Negroes prepare us for the death motif that will dominate the second book: «I

heard a squinch owl that night.» T.P. said. «Dan wouldn't come and get his supper, neither. Wouldn't come no closer than the barn. Begun howling right after dark.»[23]

The second book centers around Quentin: it comes after the Benjy section, which is one of the most brilliant achievements in experimental writing in American literature, and precedes the Jason section which is high comedy. Perhaps that is why the second book has not been sufficiently appreciated: there is certainly an all round perfection about the Benjy section, but I do think that the second book is by no means inferior to the following two books. The whole episode of Little sister Death, in particular, is very successfully handled. Faulkner dealt earlier with the same motif in the *New Orleans Sketches:* the sketch «The KidLearns» ends when the gangster confronts a girl, «with her young body all shining and her hair that wasn't gold and her eyes the color of sleep,»[24] and learns as he dies that she is »Little sister Death.»[25] The «Praises of the Creatures» or, as it is now commonly called, «The Canticle of the Sun»[26] of Saint Francis of Assisi probably inspired it. The dominant symbol of the book is the shadow of death. Other recurrent symbols are clocks, honeysuckle, and water. Quentin is associated with water, just like Benjy is associated with earth and fire. Faulkner uses the elements to show that Benjy and Quentin are both close to nature. In the third book, Jason is associated with money which is an invention of civilized society; Jason has fallen out of touch with nature, that is what makes him a great comic figure. In Quentin's obsessed mind, time assumes a fixed, indestructible character, just as it did in the blurred consciousness of the idiot. The river in which Quentin drowns himself symbolizes time that flows and ultimately destroys him. The honeysuckle imagery gets thicker and thicker as the book develops: it is a sex symbol that reminds us of Quentin's morbid attachment to his sister, of his obsession with incest and virginity. The various watches in the window of the jeweler, each with a differend hour, show that for Quentin time is out of joint.

In the second book we switch back to June 2, 1910, and the first sentence strikes the dominant note of time and eternity, i.e., death: «When the shadow of the sash appeared on the curtains it was between seven and eight oclock and then I was in time again,

hearing the watch.»[27] When Quentin takes the watch, that had belonged to his grandfather, breaks the glass and twists the hands off, this gesture shows the fixed character that time has assumed in his obsessed mind. The jeweler that Quentin visits has a glass in his eye, «a metal tube screwed into his face»;[28] this violent image conveys the artificiality of chronological time. Quentin remembers his father's words: «only when the clock stops does time come to life.»[29] Because of his preoccupation with time and eternity, Quentin Compson can be considered a God intoxicated man: his is a mystical yearning to become part and particle of the One, the Absolute. Faulkner achieves a major *tour de force* in creating a dream-like quality throughout this book: Quentin is the center of consciousness and we see everything through his obsessed, morbid mind. The shadow that follows Quentin throughout the second book is a recurrent death motif: «The shadow hadn't quite cleared the stoop. I stopped inside the door, watching the shadow move. It moved almost perceptibly, creeping back inside the door, driving the shadow back into the door.»[30] The ship that Quentin meets when he gets off the street car is compared to a «ghost in broad day,»[31] thus striking a stronger death note.

The climax of this section covers about twenty pages and deals with «Little sister Death»: «'Hello, sister.' Her face was like a cup of milk dashed with coffee in the sweet warm emptiness.»[32] While he walks with the child, Quentin thinks of children and of his sister who expects an illegitimate baby: «Seen the doctor yet have you seen Caddy I dont have to I cant ask now afterward it will be all right it wont matter.»[33] The following paragraph expresses Faulkner's ambivalent attitude toward women: women are tempting and associated with the «odour of honeysuckle,» yet, there is a «periodical filth»: «Delicate equilibrium of periodical filth between two moons balanced..... Liquid putrefaction like drowned things floating like pale rubber flobbily filled getting the odour of honeysuckle all mixed up.»[34] The Quentin section is the one where the voice of the author intrudes most, speaking through the Father. Earlier in the book, Quentin remembers Mr. Compson's words: «Man the sum of his climactic experiences Father said. Man the sum of what have you. A problem in impure properties carried tediously to an unvarying nil:

stalemate of dust and desire.»[35] This attitude that accepts man as the «sum of his climactic experiences» echoes Faulkner's statement at the University of Virginia: «Also, to me, no man is himself, he is the sum of his past. There is no such thing really as was because the past is. It is a part of every man, every woman, and every moment.»[36] The little girl follows Quentin and looks at him «serene and secret,»[37] she lives in one of the houses by the river where Quentin will drown himself, and to get there they have to cross a symbolic bridge. Quentin leaves her when the road curves out of sight beyond a wall, and runs away; but death follows him like a shadow: «The wall went into shadow, and then my shadow, I had tricked it again. I had forgot about the river curving along the road. I climbed the wall. And then she watched me jump down, holding the loaf against her dress. I stood in the weeds and we looked at one another for a while. Why didn't you tell me you lived out this way, sister?»[38] She is «friendly,» and «inscrutable.»[39] The irony of it all is that Quentin is accused of trying to kidnap the little Italian girl; thus the whole episode acquires a deeper significance: Quentin who secretely wishes to commit incest with his sister Caddy, and tries to convince his father that he did so, is charged with meditated criminal assault against the «little sister.» Quentin's incestuous desire toward Caddy is all the more painful because he is Calvinist to the core and has a vivid sense of hell and damnation: but he dreams of a hell where the two of them would be alone: «*If it could just be a hell beyond that: the clean flame the two of us more than dead. Then you will have only me then only me then the two of us amid the pointing and the horror beyond the clean flame.*»[40] Honeysuckle imagery gets thicker and thicker as the book develops together with memories of a conversation Quentin and Caddy had once about committing suicide together: «her face looked at the sky it was low so low that all smells and sounds of night seemed to have been crowded down like under a slack tent especially the honeysuckle it had got into my breathing it was on her face and throat like paint her blood pounded against my hand I was leaning on my other arm it began to jerk and jump and I had to pant to get any air at all out of that thick grey honeysuckle."[41] Time is out of joint for Quentin, as past and present get more and more confused in his morbid mind, he hits Gerald Bland thinking that he is Dalton Ames: «listen no good taking it so hard its not your fault

kid it would have been some other fellow did you ever have a sister did you no, but theyre all bitches.»[42]

The long sentences we get, page after page, convey to us Quentin's stream of consciousness: time *is*, there is no past, and hence, no future. In the last part of this section, Faulkner omits capitals, thus Quentin, who will die soon, seems even more removed from life and reality :

«... and he did you try to make her do it and i i was afraid to i was afraid she might and then it wouldnt have done any good but if i could tell you we did it would have been so and then the others wouldnt be so and then the world would roar away and he and now this other you are not lying now either but you are still blind to what is in yourself to that part of general truth the sequence of natural events and their causes which shadows every mans brow even benjys»[43]

The whole episode of the trout which hangs «delicate and motionless among the wavering shadows,»[44] is rather far-fetched. Obviously, Faulkner is trying to say that the fish can keep up its balance within the motion of the water, while Quentin cannot keep up with time. But the symbolism strikes me as being awkward, and the second book might have been better off without it.

Quentin communicates with the Negro on a human level. At first he is amused by the Deacon who would meet trains in a sort of Uncle Tom's cabin outfit, and later on would appear «wearing a cast-off Brooks suit and hat with a Princeton club I forget which band that someone had given him and which he was pleasantly and unshakably convinced was a part of Abe Lincoln's military sash.»[45] But when he gives the Deacon the envelope before drowning himself, the scene is very touching: «... and suddenly I saw Roskus watching me from behind all his white-folks' claptrap of uniforms and politics and Harvard manner, diffident, secret, inarticulate, and sad.»[46] Quentin is deeply attached to the land: the Negro he sees on a mule when the train stops in Virginia and to whom he gives a quarter is a symbol of the land. He suffers because they sold the pasture Benjy loved to send him to Harvard: «*He lay on the ground under the window, bellowing. We have sold Benjy's pasture so that Quentin may go to Harvard.*»[47] Quentin's despair stems from a profound sense of doom: he feels

the family's forthcoming dissolution; the father kills himself drinking, the mother is not able to be head of the house, the family goes to pieces. When he tells Caddy: «theres a curse on us its not our fault is it our fault,»[48] he implies all the Compsons. The last image of the second book recalls Quentin's virginity neurosis with the symbolism of Shreve's paste: «I found my toothbrush and got some of Shreve's paste and went out and brushed my teeth. I squeezed the brush as dry as I could and put it back in the bag and shut it, and went to the door again.»[49]

The Jason section is one of the great comic books of all time. We get a comic relief after the long sustained tension of the first two books. What makes Jason an unforgettable character, and in a sense superior to Faulkner's notorious villains, i.e., Flem Snopes, Popeye, Whitfield, is his acute consciousness. His racy language colors the whole section; the opening paragraph of the book sets the tone:

«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 here in that kitchen right now, instead of up there in her room, gobbing paint on her face and waiting for six niggers that cant even stand up out of a chair unless they've got a pan full of bread and meat to balance them, to fix breakfast for her.»[50] The dominant symbol of the third book is money. Jason has fallen out of touch with nature, he is sterile, incapable to communicate with his fellowmen. He is the one who decides that Benjy should be gelded. The closest relationship Jason can establish is the one with Lorraine; Jason evaluates everything in terms of money, he pays Lorraine and gets his money's worth, so he feels safe with her, he feels that he is not cheated: «... because I've got every respect for a good honest whore.»[51] Flem Snopes represents evil in its most dangerous form: static, immobile, working like a spider; but Jason Compson is in a state of constant agitation. He is also a sadist and enjoys to destroy things. He thinks that the sparrows are as big a nuisance as the pigeons: «If they'd just put a little poison out there in the square, they'd get rid of them in a day.»[52] Jason is dehumanized, he has no capacity for love; he can love neither people nor animals. He is aggressive, has a violent temper and suffers from frequent headaches. As the book develops Jason becomes more and more gro-

tesque: his great plans to destroy other people never work and end up in self-destruction; his consciousness amidst all his frustration makes him a great comic figure: «With the sun and all in my eyes and my blood going so I kept thinking every time my head would go on and burst and get it over with.»[53] He follows his niece and her boy friend, but cannot find them. They play tricks on him, when he comes back to his car he realizes that they let the air out. While he is looking for them and gets his violent headache he is in a state of furious anger: «I had gotten beggar lice and twigs and stuff all over me, inside my clothes and shoes and all, and then I happened to look around and I had my hand right on a bunch of poison oak. The only thing I couldn't understand was why it was just poison oak and not a snake or something.»[54] The whole episode is handled with great skill; we never feel sorry for Jason, we just think he is grotesque. He is never a victim, we can never sympathize with him :

the main reason for that is Jason's acute consciousness, he realizes that providence is against him and plays tricks on him; another reason is the fact that Jason never gives up his great evil plans which, somehow, never work. He never appears as a victim, but rather, as the frustrated, petulant aggressor. Another comic trait about him is his utter helplessness; his seventeen year old niece Quentin does not pay any attention to him; his mother does not let him send Benjy to the Jackson asylum; he cannot get rid of Dilsey who will not leave even when he stops paying her weekly wages. He is afraid of Dilsey who passes judgment on him: «You's a cold man, Jason, if man you is,» she says. «I thank de Lawd I got mo heart dan dat, even ef hit is black.»[55] Jason becomes a thief because he likes money too much. He steals the money order that Caddy sends to her daughter; he gives Quentin ten dollars and keeps the other forty. He steals the two hundred dollars that Caddy sends every month to her mother for Quentin: Mrs. Compson thinks that she destroys the check when in reality it is a blank check. Jason is most abject when he takes one hundred dollars from his sister, promising to show her the baby: «...I saw her standing on the corner under the light and I told Mink to drive close to the walk and when I said Go on, to give the team a bat. Then I took the raincoat off of her and held her to the window and Caddy saw her and sort of jumped forward.»[56]

Mrs. Compson relies upon Jason. She hates the Compsons and keeps telling him: «We Bascombs need nobody's charity.»[57] She has a self-righteous morality and does not want Caddy to come back home, claiming that it is for Quentin's sake. She keeps saying: «I can bear it,»[58] when, in reality, she cannot bear anything. She is ineffectual, and so is her brother, Uncle Maury.

Quentin is a very unhappy girl, she feels rejected, insulted by her uncle. She is bad because she is unhappy: «I'm bad and I'm going to hell and I dont care.»[59] The difference existing between Caddy and her daughter shows the degeneracy that has taken place in the Compson family in one generation: Caddy has loving kindness, but Quentin is self-centered and does not seem capable of genuine interest toward anybody; Caddy has compassion for Benjy, but Quentin is very harsh to her idiot uncle; when she gets a letter from her mother with a money order, Quentin is more interested in the money, the letter is not so important for her; mother and daughter are both promiscuous, but while Quentin is primarily interested in the titillation of her senses, Caddy has also a capacity for love. Jason's deep rooted resentment against his sister and his niece stems from the fact that he lost his job with Herbert's bank because Caddy gave birth to Quentin. Jason has a populistic attitude: he is anti-Eastern, anti-jew, anti-foreigner: «Well, I reckon those eastern jews have got to live too. But I'll be damned if it hasn't come to a pretty pass when any damn foreigner that cant make a living in the country where God put him, can come to this one and take money right out of an American's pockets.»[60] At the end of the third book, Jason is counting the money he has stolen from his niece, and is hiding in a box in his room. The book gives us Jason's point of view, and the dominant symbol is money.

The Jason section took place on April 6, 1928. The fourth book develops on Easter Sunday: April 8, 1928. It centers around Dilsey, and it is omniscient. There is a wonderful pictorial quality about the first paragraph that opens with a description of Dilsey: «She wore a stiff black straw hat perched upon her turban, and a maroon velvet cape with a border of mangy and anonymous fur above a dress of purple silk, and she stood in the door for awhile her myriad and sunken face lifted to the weather, and one gaunt hand flac-soled as the belly of a fish, then she moved the cape aside

and examined the bosom of her gown.»[61] With its sense of doom, *The Sound and The Fury* is akin to Greek tragedy, and Dilsey plays the part of the chorus:

> «I've seed de first en de last,» Dilsey said.
> «Never you mind me.»
> «First en last whut?» Frony said.
> «Never you mind,» Dilsey said. «I seed de beginnin, en now I sees de ending.»[62]

Dilsey strikes a prophetic note in the Benjy section, when she says: «You'll know in the Lawd's own time.»[63] With her profound humanity and her endurance, Dilsey holds the Compson family together; all along she knows that they are doomed. Luster says: «Always cold Easter.»[64] The statement has a deeper significance. The Compsons cannot partake of the spirit of Easter, it does not mean much to them, and in their home it is a cold Easter. It is only Benjy who goes to the Negro church with Dilsey and her family. When Frony says that people talk because Dilsey takes Benjy to the Negro church, she rebukes her daughter: «Tell um de good Lawd dont keer whether he smart er not.»[65] Now that Caddy is gone, Dilsey is the only one left to treat Benjy with affection and understanding. In Benjy's consciousness, the gate is associated with Caddy's departure: he wails and moans when they come near the gate, but he ceases when they pass out the gate. Dilsey says that «He smellin hit.»[66] In the Benjy section, when the idiot moans, Mrs. Compson is helpless and does not know what to do. But Dilsey knows how to quiet him down: «'Give him a flower to hold,' Dilsey said. 'That what he wanting.'»[67] The climax of the fourth book is the church episode; there is a surrealistic quality about the church: «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 a midmorning filled with bells.»[68] The whole episode shows the strong hold that the ritual of Christianity has on the Negro. When the visiting preacher speaks like a white man, his voice «devel and cold,»[96] he does not impress his audience. It is when his pronunciation becomes negroid that they start swaying in their seats. We get a black Christ image when the preacher is described with «his monkey

face lifted and his whole attitude that of a serene, tortured crucifix that transcended its shabbiness and insignificance and made it of no moment.»[70]

The description of Benjy in this section recalls the idiot with the narcissus in *The New Orleans Sketches*. The eyes of Benjy are described as «clear, of the pale sweet blue of corn-flowers.» [71] In the earlier version we get: «his eyes were clear and blue as cornflowers.»[72]

When Luster tells him «Caddy, Caddy,» Benjy starts moaning: «But he bellowed slowly, abjectly, without tears; the grave hopeless sound of all voiceless misery under the sun.»[73] To quiet him down, Luster brings him a single broken narcissus, he puts a splint on the flower stalk with a twig and two bits of string, and then gives it to Benjy. In the earlier version the idiot weeps bitterly over his broken narcissus; a spectator volunteers a string, and the flower stalk is splinted: « ... the ineffable blue eyes of the idiot dreaming above his narcissus clenched tightly in his dirty hand.»[74] Benjy is described as sitting in the midle of the seat, «holding the repaired flower upright in his fist, his eyes serene and ineffable.»[75] The last image of the book conveys to us with great skill the peculiar order that exists in the chaotic impressions permeating Benjy's consciousness. When Luster drives to the left of the monument of the Confederate soldier, instead of driving to the right as Benjy expects him to do, the idiot starts bellowing. But when Luster drives to the right of the monument, Benjy quiets down: «The broken flower drooped over Ben's fist and his eyes were empty and blue and serene again as cornice and façade flowed smoothly once more from left to right; post and tree, window and doorway, and signboard, each in its ordered place.»[76]

We get the «key» symbolism with Jason trying to open locked doors: «He looked back at the door, as if he expected it to fly open before he could get back to it with the key he did not have.»[77] The key metaphor reminds us that Jason is incapable of communicating with other people. He has fallen out of touch with nature; he is attached above all to money and keeps it behind locked doors. Jason emerges as an utterly dehumanized character; hence when we witness his total defeat, we are unable to sympa-

thize with him. His frustration stems from the fact that his niece and the money she has taken symbolize for him the job in the bank lost before he ever got it. The sheriff asks Jason what he was doing with three thousand dollars hid in the house and refuses to go with him. Jason feels cheated by Providence and becomes more and more of a comic figure: «He looked at the sky, thinking about rain, about the slick clay roads, himself stalled somewhere miles from town. He thought about it with a sort of triumph, of the fact that he was going to miss dinner, that by starting now and so serving his compulsion of haste, he would be at the greatest possible distance from both towns when noon came.»[78] Providence watches the total defeat of Jason Compson on Easter Sunday through «the eye with an electric pupil,»[79] the sign in electric lights that Jason sees at the station.

The symbolism of the saw that Luster is holding, and the blade he strikes with the wooden mallet, reminds us of Benjy's predicament: «He put the saw away and brought the mallet to her. Then Ben wailed again, hopeless and prolonged. It was nothing. Just sound. It might have been all time and injustice and sorrow become vocal for an instant by a conjunction of planets.»[80]

The fourth book is omniscient. The «voice» of the author is heard when he passes judgment on Mrs. Compson: «Mrs. Compson said nothing. Like so many cold, weak people, when faced at last by the incontrovertible disaster she exhumed from somewhere a sort of fortitude, strength.»[81]

The ultimate message of *The Sound and The Fury* is that man is doomed, driven to the wall: there is no hope, no exit.

Leylâ Kermenli

[1] *Faulkner in the University*, edited by Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner, Charlottesville, Virginia, The University of Virginia Press, 1959, p. 207.

[2] William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, edited by Alfred Harbage, Baltimore, Maryland, Penguin Books, 1960, Act V, scene v, p. 107.

[3] Richard Chase, *The American Novel and Its Tradition*, New York, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957, p. 221.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 223.

[5] William Faulkner, «The Kingdom of God,» *New Orleans Sketches*, New York, Grove Press, Inc., 1961, pp. 111-121.

[6] William Faulkner, *The Sound and The Fury*, New York, The Modern Library, 1946, p. 23.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] William Faulkner, «The Long Summer,» *The Hamlet*, New York, Vintage Books, 1960, pp. 157-273.

[11] William Faulkner, *The Sound and The Fury*, p. 72.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

[24] William Faulkner, «The Kid Learns,» *New Orleans Sketches*, p. 167.

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] «Praised be my Lord for our sister, the bodily death,
From the which no living man can flee.
Woe to them who die in mortal sin;
Blessed those who shall find themselves in Thy most holy will,
For the second death shall do them no ill.
Praise ye and bless ye my Lord, and give Him thanks,
And be subject unto Him with great humility.»
«The Canticle of the Sun,» *The Writings of Saint Francis of Assisi*, Philadelphia, The Dolphin Press, MCMVI, p. 153.

[27] William Faulkner, *The Sound and The Fury*, p. 95.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 144.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 147.
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] *Ibid.*, pp. 142-143.
[36] *Faulkner in the University*, p. 84.
[37] William Faulkner, *op. cit.*, p. 148.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 153.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 161.
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 135.
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 170.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 179.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 195.
[44] William Faulkner, *The Sound and The Fury*, p. 136.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 116.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 118.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 113.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 176.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 197.
[50] William Faulkner, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 251.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 265.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 259.
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 258.
[55] *Ibid.*, p. 225.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 223.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 237.
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 238.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 207.
[60] *Ibid.*, p. 210.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 281.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 313.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 44.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 291.
[65] *Ibid.*, p. 306.
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 304.
[67] *Ibid.*, p. 30.
[68] *Ibid.*, p. 308.
[69] *Ibid.*, p. 309.
[70] *Ibid.*, p. 310.
[71] *Ibid.*, p. 290.
[72] William Faulkner, «The Kingdom of God,» *New Orleans Sketches*, p. 113
[73] William Faulkner, *The Sound and The Fury*, p. 332.
[74] William Faulkner, «The Kingdom of God,» *New Orleans Sketches*, p. 119.
[75] William Faulkner, *The Sound and The Fury*, p. 334.
[76] *Ibid.*, p. 336.
[77] *Ibid.*, p. 297.
[78] *Ibid.*, pp. 320-321.
[79] *Ibid.*, p. 327.
[80] *Ibid.*, pp. 303-304.
[81] *Ibid.*, p. 315.