Popular Culture, Thomas Beer, and the Making of "The Sound and the Fury"

Lynn Dorsey Define

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POPULAR CULTURE, THOMAS BEER, AND THE MAKING OF

THE SOUND AND THE FURY

A Thesis

Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of English
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
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by

Lynn Dorsey Define

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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Lynn Dorsey Define

Approved, December 1994

Walter Wenska

Adam Potkay

Christopher MacGowan
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THESIS</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Abstract

This thesis discusses some elements of popular culture in the 1920's and their influence on William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. Attention is given to how popular attitudes towards Babe Ruth, the circus, women, and Ford cars, all contribute to Faulkner's writing of the novel. Popular fiction also plays a part in the composition of *The Sound and the Fury*, particularly the work of Thomas Beer. Beer, now little known, was a popular writer for the *Saturday Evening Post* during the 1920's, publishing seven stories in the magazine between January and July, 1928. Beer's stories fall into cycles bound together by recurrent characters, families, places, and institutions, much like Faulkner's novels and short stories. Faulkner admitted his indebtedness to Beer in an interview at the University of Virginia in 1957, but the connection between Beer and Faulkner has been heretofore ignored. This thesis seeks to remedy that defect by focusing in particular on the correlations between Faulkner's novel and Beer's stories published during the spring and summer of 1928, when Faulkner was writing the novel.
POPULAR CULTURE, THOMAS BEER AND THE MAKING OF
THE SOUND AND THE FURY
This thesis proposes to examine William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* in relation to some elements of American popular culture in the 1920's, particularly the stories by Thomas Beer published in the *Saturday Evening Post* in early 1928. Faulkner wrote *The Sound and the Fury* in the spring and summer of 1928 and made all of its revisions by October of the same year. When he completed the novel he flung the manuscript onto Ben Watson's bed and said: "Read this, Bud. It's a real son-of-a-bitch" (Blotner, *Biography*, 590). Later Faulkner would comment: "I worked so hard on that book that I doubt if there's anything that didn't belong there" (Blotner, *Biography*, 589-590). Although much criticism has aimed at showing how the different sections of the novel are integrated or how Faulkner adapted the modernist technique of stream-of-consciousness in both Benjy's and Quentin's sections, relatively little work has explored the relationship of popular culture to themes, characters, and incidents in the novel.

Faulkner's literary borrowings and parallels have been thoroughly discussed. Cleanth Brooks, for example, has devoted much energy and scholarship in pointing out literary borrowings from and parallels in Faulkner's work to A. E. Housman, T. S. Eliot, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, e. e. cummings, Edgar Allan Poe, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and John Keats (*William Faulkner: Toward Yoknapatawpha and Beyond*, 346-359). Gail M. Morrison has also commented on Faulkner's use of literary sources in her article, "The Composition of *The Sound and the Fury*":

And rob, borrow, beg, or steal he did, consciously or unconsciously -- and not just from Shakespeare and Milton, Keats and Shelley, Flaubert and Dostoevski, Lawrence and Joyce, Conrad and Hardy,
Swinburne and Eliot, Housman and Wilde, Yeats, Hemingway, Anderson and Fitzgerald, but from Freud, Jung, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, and others -- drawing not only on specific literary works but the rich social and cultural milieu of the the 1920's and indeed of all Western Civilization to make clear that what he called his carpenter's workshop was not contained in a cultural vacuum in these blackened, barren, Mississippi hills (37).

Morrison's point about Faulkner not being trapped in a cultural vacuum is important, but should be extended. Faulkner did not just borrow from established literary figures and all of "Western Civilization"; he borrowed as well from popular culture and his not-so-eminent peers. Brooks has also argued that Faulkner was influenced by a well-known writer of the time, Irvin S. Cobb. Brooks notes that Cobb was "immensely popular: Faulkner as a young man must have read his Cosmopolitan and Saturday Evening Post stories, and Cobb's example may have helped confirm Faulkner in using what was to become his characteristic material" (William Faulkner: Toward Yoknapatawpha and Beyond, 375).

Faulkner's "borrowings" have also been the subjects for several conferences. In 1982 the topic of the International Colloquium on Faulkner was "Faulkner and Intertextuality." Among the papers delivered were John T. Matthew's "Intertextuality and Originality: Hawthorne, Faulkner, Updike," and Kenzaburo Ohashi's "Motion and Intertextuality in Faulkner's Fiction," both of which explore Faulkner's use of other texts in The Sound and the Fury. In 1984 the topic at the eleventh Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference was "Faulkner and Humor." M. Thomas Inge's "Faulkner Reads the Funny Papers" examines Faulkner's novels
for comic strip references and finds that Faulkner took from the funnies but used the material in his own way, working in a way that was distinctively his own. In his article, Inge comments on the importance of researching not only Faulkner's literary borrowings from "high" culture but those from popular culture as well:

In assessing the work of a great writer of the twentieth century, it can be informative to examine the cultural contents in which the author lived and worked. No writer works entirely in a vacuum, and a work of literature relates to and is influenced by the things a writer reads, sees, and experiences. Since this century has witnessed the complex development of massive media environment and new forms of popular culture that reach people at all social and economic levels in all regions, it is necessary to examine not only the classics and so-called "high" culture of a writer's time but the popular mass culture as well (53).

And accordingly in 1988, the topic of the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference was "Faulkner and Pop Culture." The papers delivered that dealt with The Sound and the Fury were limited to Faulkner's relationship with his publisher Harrison Smith and the use of neon lights in his works as a sign of modernization.

The extent, however, to which Faulkner actually borrowed from "the popular mass culture" in his writing of The Sound and the Fury has barely been researched. None of the papers delivered at the conference dealt with, for example, Babe Ruth, golfing, the circus, or popular magazines and their pot-boiler writers. The importance of such research lies in what it reveals about the influence of popular culture on Faulkner's writing of The
Sound and the Fury. At this point in his career, Faulkner was particularly depressed over his inability to sell Flags in the Dust, a work he considered "THE book." Blotner reports that in December of 1927, Faulkner wrote to Boni & Liveright that he would begin working on another novel and some short stories despite the fact that not one of his stories had been accepted by magazine publishers, and that Boni & Liveright had just recommended that Faulkner never publish Flags in the Dust (Biography, 560-561). Perhaps what motivated Faulkner to continue writing was the work being written by the successful magazine writers of the late 1920's. Perhaps in copying their styles he would also be copying their financial success, something that Faulkner to this point sorely lacked. There is, in fact, circumstantial evidence that Faulkner might have used some of the themes, incidents, and characters from stories appearing in the Saturday Evening Post from January to June of 1928, the time when he was working on The Sound and the Fury. There are substantial parallels between Faulkner's style and themes and those of the popular short story writer Thomas Beer, whose work appeared frequently in the Saturday Evening Post.

In an interview at the University of Virginia in 1957, Faulkner remarked that he "got quite a bit" from Beer. Yet nothing has been written on the connection between the two authors, or what he "got" from Beer. Part of the resistance to connecting the two writers is that Faulkner's reputation is that of a high modernist writer, while Beer's reputation is that of a supplier of comforting fictions for middle-brow audiences. Dan Piper accurately reflects this attitude when he writes:
Anderson encouraged him to write prose fiction and arranged for the publication of his first novel, *Soldier's Pay*. At this time Faulkner was still very much under the influence of the literary wits of the era: James Branch Cabell, Aldous Huxley, and Thomas Beer. It would be several years yet before he would recognize his unsuitability for this kind of effervescence and turn to subject matter he knew and find a style that suited it best (68-69).

Thomas Beer's writing is more than effervescent, however, and, as I will argue, might have inspired Faulkner to write an interrelated series of stories and novels centering on Yoknapatawpha County and its inhabitants. A second reason for nothing having been done on the connection between Faulkner and Beer is that Beer's work currently is only available in two books: *Mrs. Egg and Other Barbarians* and *Mrs. Egg and Other Americans*. These collections include only thirty-three of Beer's stories; he wrote over one-hundred and fifty. Thus in order to find the connection between Faulkner and Beer - to explore what Faulkner might have meant when he said he "got quite a bit" from Beer - one has to go back to the old editions of the *Saturday Evening Post*, and read the stories as Faulkner might have read them.¹
I.

Almost every critic dreams of discovering some great work that has been neglected by other critics. Someday he might come upon an author whose reputation is less than his achievement and in fact is scandalously out of proportion with it, so that other voices will be added to the critic's voice, in a swelling chorus, as soon as he has made the discovery. That is the dream (Cowley, 3).

Malcolm Cowley is the critic most responsible for reviving interest in Faulkner's writing. Although Cowley admits that he was not responsible for rediscovering Faulkner's works, his effort in putting together the Viking Portable Faulkner in the 1940's was crucial to the reconsideration of Faulkner as a major twentieth-century writer. Similar to the elation described by Cowley above is the pleasure derived from uncovering information from history or popular culture that explains or highlights some aspect of a novel. Since popular culture includes the gossip and beliefs, the attitudes and trivia and ephemera of a generation, it is hard to obtain. The contemporary critic can only consult informal history books and popular magazines in hopes of gleaning some tangible piece of information that may shed light on a writer's work.

Usually, Faulkner disliked talking about the artistic development of his novels, oftentimes even burning his notes to hide any evidence of the actual forging of his novels. With The Sound and the Fury Faulkner was different; he commented frequently on it as being his favorite novel, "the one that caused me the most anguish and is to me the finest failure" (quoted in Minter, 237), as well as on its genesis:

It began with a mental picture. I didn't realize at the time it was
symbolical. The picture was of the muddy seat of a little girl's drawers in a pear tree where she could see through a window where her grandmother's funeral was taking place and report what was happening to her brothers on the ground below. By the time I explained who they were and what they were doing and how her pants got muddy, I realized it would be impossible to get all of it into a short story and that it would have to be a book (quoted in Minter, 240).

Faulkner considered the novel to be a failure because he tried to tell the same story four times, each time from a different perspective, yet he still couldn't get it right. Faulkner may be being disingenuous in these remarks; in any case, the novel itself is ingenious. Faulkner plays with the modernist technique of stream-of-consciousness in both Benjy's and Quentin's sections, and incorporates the philosophy of pragmatism in Jason's section. As a result, the novel has elicited a plethora of high-culture criticism, ranging from New Critical and structuralist, to psychoanalytical and feminist deconstructionist. On a less elevated plain, the 1988 Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference focused on what Faulkner took from and gave to popular culture through his writing.

In her introduction to *Faulkner and Popular Culture* (the collected papers delivered at the conference), Doreen Fowler suggests the problem of exploring Faulkner's relationship to popular culture: "his very name seems almost to connote high modernist art. What possible connection could there be between this towering genius and the masses?" (ix). In fact, the papers delivered at the conference on *The Sound and the Fury* are quite conservative and avoid, for the most part, connecting the genius and the masses. Tom Dadis explores Faulkner's relationship with Faulkner's
publisher Harrison Smith in "Harrison Smith: The Man Who Took a Chance on The Sound and the Fury"; and William Brevda concentrates on the use of electrical signs in "Neon Lights in August: Electric Signs in Faulkner's Fiction." Although both essays are useful and informative, they only begin to suggest the extent to which Faulkner incorporated popular culture in his novels. Neither paper explores how popular culture bears on Faulkner's artistry in The Sound and the Fury.

Such silence is easy to understand for a number of reasons. First and foremost, what is popular culture? In a letter to Joseph Blotner, Ray Browne offers a description of what this subject entails:

Popular Culture is the everyday life blood of the experience and thinking of all of us: the daily, the vernacular, common cultural environment around us all, the culture we inherit from our forebears, use throughout our lives and then pass on to our descendants. Popular Culture is the television we watch, the movies we see, the fast food, or slow food, we eat, the clothes we wear, the music we sing and hear, the things we spend our money for, our attitude toward life. It is the whole society we live in, that which may or may not be distributed by the mass media. It is virtually our whole world (5).

Second, given that Faulkner wrote The Sound and the Fury in 1928, how does one go about collecting "the life blood of experience" of the 1920's? Since popular culture, as Browne describes it, is the "common knowledge" of the times, it is not recorded (and not thought worth recording), and this knowledge is often forgotten half a century after the publication of a novel. Although these problems are daunting, they are not insurmountable.
Recovering forgotten bits of the popular culture of the past can add to the understanding of a work that might be lost in a 1990's reading. It can also raise new possibilities of interpretation that have been overlooked, or qualify existing interpretations.

An interesting example of how a knowledge of popular culture can qualify prior interpretations of the text can be seen in the reason why Jason Compson hates Babe Ruth. John T. Matthews has argued that there are two reasons for Jason's hatred of Ruth. First, Jason masochistically delights in losing, in seeing himself as victimized, and second, Ruth plays on the Yankees: "No one who rails as widely as Jason does against New York brokers and "Yankee" exploitation could root for a team from the hub of Northern financial dominion" (75). Although Matthews's first argument could find support in the text, his second cannot. Jason says he does not like any team that Ruth played on; so it is not the Yankees Jason hates, but Ruth:

"Well," Mac says. "I reckon you've got your money on the Yankees this year."
"What for?" I says.
"The Pennant," he says. "Not anything in the league can beat them."
"Like hell there's not," I says. "They're shot," I says. "You think a team can be that lucky forever?"
"I don't call it luck," Mac says.
"I wouldn't bet on any team that fellow Ruth played on," I says. "Even if I knew it was going to win."
"Yes?" Mac says.
"I can name you a dozen men in either league who're more valuable than he is," I says.
"What have you go against Ruth?" Mac says.
"Nothing," I says. "I haven't got any thing against him. I
don't even like to look at his picture."7

Besides saying that he "wouldn't bet on any team that that fellow Ruth
played on," Jason says that he can't stand to look at Ruth's picture,
insinuating that there is something about Ruth's appearance that he
dislikes. Why Jason does not like Ruth's appearance can be ascertained by
considering contemporary attitudes about this major league baseball
player.

According to Robert W. Creamer, who wrote a biography of Babe Ruth,
Ruth's nickname at St. Mary's School for Boys was "Nigger Lips." Creamer
states: "Ruth was called nigger so often that many people
assumed he was indeed part black and that at some point in time he or an
immediate ancestor had managed to cross the color line" (185). The rumor
was somewhat validated in 1923 when Ruth got into the papers for fighting
with Giants infielder Johnny Rawlings. Rawlings called Ruth "nigger"
during the game, to which Ruth replied: "Don't get me wrong fellows, I
don't mind being called a prick or a cocksucker or things like that. I expect
that. But lay off the personal stuff" (270).

Contributing to Jason's attitude is the falling condition of the Compson
fortunes. Before the Civil War, the Compsons were a wealthy aristocratic
family. After the war, the Compsons' fortunes had diminished to the point
where Jason IV has to clerk for his livelihood. Since Jason's present
misfortune is at least partly attributed to the Civil War, it is understandable
that Jason would be antagonistic to a black man who is monetarily
successful. Ruth was also a notoriously big drinker as well as sexually
promiscuous. As rumor had it, in the locker room after games Ruth would get phone calls from women who wanted to meet him. Ruth would only agree to meet these women if they agreed to have sex with him. Ruth's good fortune, drinking habits, and licentious behavior serve as painful reminders of Jason's problems. Mr. Compson's drinking problem hastened the further demise of the Compson fortunes, and Caddy's promiscuity led to the loss of Jason's job in Herbert Head's bank. These associations might explain Jason's comment that Ruth's luck has got to run out sooner or later; Jason is envious of the luck Ruth has experienced, because he - a white man - has had none. Popular culture - what people of the time knew of Babe Ruth - thus gives a more precise and credible explanation of why Jason dislikes Ruth than Matthews's purely psychological/geographical explanation.

The influences of popular culture are elsewhere apparent in the novel. For instance, golf was not a popular sport in 1910 when Faulkner had the Compsons selling Benjy's field to a golf club to pay for Caddy's wedding and Quentin's year at Harvard.8 Golf did not become a truly popular sport in America until the Open Championships of 1913 when Francis Ouimet beat British celebrities Harry Varden and Ted Ray (Wind, 46). In 1913, fewer than 350,000 people played golf, and there was only about one golf course in each state (Wind, 118). Thus, from an historical perspective, it is highly doubtful that Mr. Compson would have been able to sell his land to a golf club in 1910. By the end of the 1920's, however, there were three million golfers and thousands of golf courses. In fact, there were more golf courses in the late 1920's than there were savings banks and libraries (Wind, 230).
Faulkner was an avid golfer and it is highly probable that he decided to have Mr. Compson sell the field to a golf club because of the popularity of the sport in the nineteen twenties.

Thematically, the use of golf contributes to the artistic unity of the novel. Not only does the golf motif work logically to explain Benjy's confusion over "Caddy" his sister and the golfer's caddy, but it also clarifies the pun on Benjy's "lost balls" and the subordination of pastoral America (The Sound and the Fury, 80). However, if Faulkner intended the novel to be a case study of the breakup of the Southern rural aristocracy and the inception of the New South that replaced the agrarian economy with mercantile capitalism, it is fitting that Mr. Compson sells the land before it is truly valuable. For if the Compsons had any luck, they would have been selling the land at a huge profit in 1913, or later, not 1910. Such mistiming also explains Jason's anger at the golfers who have time to play while he has to work.

Faulkner's use of historical dates in the novel has also been thoroughly analyzed from a high-culture or historical perspective. Arthur F. Geffen's article, "Profane Time, Sacred Time, and Confederate Time," discusses the novel in light of Mircea Eliade's concept of sacred and profane time. Geffen begins by focusing on significant dates in Confederate history such as the date of the Confederate Memorial Day, which in most Southern states is celebrated on Jefferson Davis's birthday, or June third, the day before, or perhaps of, Quentin's suicide. John T. Matthews adds to this discussion by citing C. Vann Woodward's declaration that the date of the old South's termination was June 3, 1910. In Mississippi, however, Jefferson Davis's
birthday is celebrated in April, which relates to the other dates in the novel (Easter Week in April). The work of these critics is valuable in that each aims at detailing the unity of the novel and demonstrating Faulkner's craft. Historians of the popular culture of the time, however, provide other insights into the novel.

Frederick Allen's *Only Yesterday* outlines the social and cultural life of the 1920's in providing an informal history of this period. For instance, according to Allen, women were a major topic of this decade, particularly their new uninhibited sexuality which was putting the traditional moral code in jeopardy. According to the moral code of the early 1920's:

Women were the guardians of morality, they were made for finer stuff than men and were expected to act accordingly. Young girls must look forward in innocence to a romantic love match which would lead them to the altar and to living happily-ever-after; and until the "right man" came along they must allow no male to kiss them (Allen, 88-89).

Allen traces the shift in women's attitudes away from this ideal and discusses the use of cosmetics, bobbed hair, short skirts, advertising, Freud, and the automobile -- all as fueling the disillusioned spirit of the Post-War generation. The Post-War feminine ideal was not one of fruitful maturity or ripened wisdom of practiced grace. On the contrary, the quest of slenderness, the flattening of the breasts, the vogue of short skirts, and the juvenile effect of the long waist, all were signs that, consciously or unconsciously, the women of this decade worshiped not only youth, but unripened youth:
they wanted to be - or thought men wanted them to be - men's casual and light-hearted companions: not broad-hipped mothers of the race, but irresistible playthings. . . In effect, the women of the Post-War decade said to man, "You are tired and disillusioned, you do not want the cares of a family or the companionship of mature wisdom, you want exciting play, you want thrills of sex without their fruition, and I will give them to you." And to herself she added, "But I will be free" (Allen, 108-109).

In this context, the promiscuity of Caddy and of her daughter Quentin is better evaluated. Miss Quentin's behavior in running around town with men in cars is not as scandalous as her mother's was in 1909, given the fact that most teenagers acted in this manner. The fact that Miss Quentin's actions were typical adolescent behavior for the times does not take away from the tragic aspect of her life growing up in a house with no love, but only underscores the immersion of the New South in new attitudes and the Compsons' inability to deal with them. As Faulkner put it, the problem with the Compson family is "they are still living in the attitudes of 1859 or '60" (quoted in Minter, 244). The uninhibited sexuality of women during the twenties gives added point to Caddy's tree-climbing activity in 1898. In the novel, Caddy climbs the tree during her grandmother's funeral to find out what is happening. Through the window she sees literal death, perhaps symbolic of the death of the old South, and her muddy drawers obviously prefigure her later sexual "soiling." She and her actions thus represent a change that was happening culturally in the twenties; yet while Caddy is able to face this change, her family is not.

This change could be what Faulkner referred to when he said that The
Sound and the Fury is "a tragedy of two lost women: Caddy and her daughter" (quoted in Minter, 240). Aristotle defined tragedy as a plot that will move one by pity and terror: "The plot ought to be constructed that, even without the aid of the eye, he who hears the tale told will thrill with horror and melt to pity at what takes place" (translated in Benet, 1133). The story of Caddy and her daughter is tragic because, although they face the truth and are conscious of the changes occurring around them, they are shunned for their boldness by others who are not willing to make the transition. The novel is unified by the two women: not only do they accept the changes happening around them, they represent the change in the moral/cultural code regarding women. Caddy's tree-climbing action began the breakup of the Compson family; Miss Quentin's climbing down the same tree brings it to a finish: "de first en de last" (The Sound and the Fury, 301).

The behavior of women was not the only change occurring during the twenties. Political disillusionment and social changes ran so high in the early nineteen twenties that people were looking for a scapegoat for their frustrations. In 1922, Henry Ford gave American society such a scapegoat. Ford made anti-semitic remarks blaming the Jewish race for almost every American affliction: high rent, the shortage of farm labor, jazz, gambling, drunkenness, loose morals, and short skirts. Although these remarks were made six years before the publication of The Sound and the Fury, Ford released the Model A in the spring of 1928. This car's extreme popularity brought renewed attention to Ford and his previously voiced sentiments about the Jewish race. Both anti-semitic remarks and Ford cars are in the
novel: Jason dislikes the New York brokers: "I just want my money back that these dam jews have gotten with all their guaranteed inside dope" (The Sound and the Fury, 234-235), and the car Miss Quentin drives is a Ford.

These are just a few examples of how Faulkner perhaps drew from popular culture in the novel. They represent the unseen - because popular and "taken for granted" - background of the novel. Though this background can never be fully recovered, and its relevance to the novel - as in the case of the New Woman of the twenties - will to many seem very general, the remainder of my thesis will aim at showing parallels in Faulkner's work with stories in the Saturday Evening Post published in the first half of 1928, the year he wrote the novel.
II.

In an interview at the University of Virginia Faulkner remarked:

The writer is primarily concerned in telling about people, in the only terms he knows, which is out of his experience, his observation, and his imagination. And the experiences and the imagination and the observation of a culture - all people in the culture partake of the same three things more or less (quoted in Minter, 248).

Even though it is impossible to prove that Faulkner read the Saturday Evening Post during his writing of The Sound and the Fury, a few things are certain. First, the Saturday Evening Post was extremely popular in the 1920's, and when Faulkner was Postmaster from 1921 to 1924 he spent most of his time reading the popular magazines that came in for distribution, rather than actually sorting mail: "The more interesting periodicals he kept several days in the back of the post office, where he had established a reading room for the enjoyment of the postmaster and his friends" (Minter, 42). Similarly, Joseph Blotner reports that in this reading room "lay the latest magazines: Scribner's, Harper's, the Saturday Evening Post, and the Atlantic Monthly" (Biography, 339).

Second, Faulkner was depressed over his inability to sell his first novel Flags in the Dust. In a letter to his publisher dated October 16, 1927, Faulkner wrote: "At last and certainly I have written THE book, of which those other things were but foals. I believe it is the damndest best book you'll look at this year, and any other other publisher" (Blotner, Biography, 557). The response from Boni & Liveright was not so jubilant. In a letter to
Faulkner dated at the end of November, Horace Liveright wrote: "It is with sorrow in my heart that I write to tell you that three of us have read Flags in the Dust and don't believe Boni & Liveright should publish it. Furthermore, as a firm deeply interested in your work, we don't believe you should offer it for publication" (Biography, 559). Given the fact that Flags in the Dust was a disappointment to his editors and that Faulkner was in financial troubles, perhaps Faulkner decided to put his energy into short stories. In fact, during the time that Boni & Liveright were rejecting Flags in the Dust, Faulkner was working on a series of short stories including: "That Evening Sun" and "A Justice," both centering on the Compson family.11 Furthermore, Faulkner has said that The Sound and the Fury began as a short story. It seems likely that Faulkner would have been interested in what types of short stories were selling to the popular magazines, what people were reading, and read them in hopes of finding a formula that would sell.

There are also uncanny parallels between Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and other short stories in the Saturday Evening Post. For instance, in the January 14th issue of the Saturday Evening Post there is a story by Day Edgar called "Snob's Progress."12 The story centers on a sophomore, Andrew MacDonald, who is returning to college for his sophomore year. MacDonald's only concern is if he will receive a bid from a prominent social club. Although MacDonald is unlike Quentin in characterization or psychological state, there is a parallel between the train scene in Edgar's story and the one in The Sound and the Fury. In "Snobs Progress," MacDonald is met at the train station by a black porter, Tom,
who helps the sophomore with his luggage. Likewise, Deacon in *The Sound and the Fury* is a colored man who makes his living by befriending the newly arriving students and helping them with their baggage. Compare the following two passages, the first from Edgar's story and the second from *The Sound and the Fury*:

"Mistuh MacDonald, Right heah! Mistuh MacDonald!"

Smiling indignantly, MacDonald yielded his baggage to Tom, the stout colored man whose memory for names had similarly profited him during twenty similar Septembers. He followed the waddling negro to the cab, which soon sped up the slope from the station ("Snob's Progress," 11).

That was the Deacon, all over. They said he hadn't missed a train at the beginning of school in forty years, and that he could pick out a Southerner in one glance. He never missed, and once he heard you speak he could name your state. He has a regular uniform he met trains in, a sort of Uncle Tom's cabin outfit, patches and all.

"Yes, suh. Right dis way, young marster, hyer we is," taking your bags. "Hyer, boy, come hyer and git dese grips" (*The Sound and the Fury*, 97).13

Both Tom and Deacon are Southern blacks who make their livelihood by helping college students. Edgar's inclusion of the scene reinforces MacDonald's characterization as a snob. For Faulkner, however, Deacon greeting Quentin at the station reinforces the breakup of the old South. Here Deacon is shown exploiting the stereotype of the congenial black servant to college students for his own profit. This change in the relationship between blacks and whites, along with the problem of honor which Quentin struggles with in relationship to his sister's virginity, are
fundamental to the the novel.

The inclusion of the character of Deacon underscores the burden of the South in accepting the outcome of the Civil War as well as the breakup of the Southern Aristocratic families. Faulkner was very aware of this theme because of its parallel to his own family, as Blotner has pointed out. In the larger picture, Edgar's story is insignificant. The possibility exists that porters were predominantly black and the coincidence of Edgar's character being named Tom and Faulkner's allusion to "Uncle Tom's cabin" in his description of Deacon is merely coincidental. However, the importance of Edgar's story to The Sound and the Fury exists in the possibility that Faulkner might have been reading the Saturday Evening Post while writing The Sound and the Fury. Faulkner has acknowledged that the subjects he wrote on came from experience, observation, and imagination. In the scene involving Deacon and Quentin at the train station, the possibility remains open that Faulkner took these incidents from his own observation, experience, and imagination, or someone else's. But if Faulkner did create Deacon's character because of Edgar's Tom, why did he do so? If one ponders this question along with Faulkner's inability to sell Flags in the Dust, it is highly probable that Faulkner intentionally borrowed from other writer's "observation, and experience, and imagination" so as to hit on the right formula that would make him likewise successful. There is also a story in the January 21st issue of the Saturday Evening Post which has some bearing on The Sound and the Fury. The story is by Margaret Weymouth Jackson, entitled "Mattie's Machine." The story begins "Love came to Mattie like the sound and fury of the fire sirens" (5). At this time in
January of 1928, Faulkner was writing *The Sound and the Fury* under the working title of "Twilight." It would not be until April that he changed the title to *The Sound and the Fury*. Although light and "twilight" are an important part of the novel, it is a title better suited for a work such as "Mayday," which Faulkner had written in 1926. The reference to "the sound and fury," from *MacBeth*, is well suited for Faulkner's novel since the line "a tale told by an idiot" obviously applies to Benjy's section. The possibility remains open that Jackson's story might have influenced Faulkner into changing the title from "Twilight" to *The Sound and the Fury*. 
III.

We can only speculate whether Faulkner read the stories by Edgar and Jackson. We are on surer ground with Thomas Beer. James Blotner writes in his biography of Faulkner that "an author engaging Faulkner's attention about this time particularly through the pages of magazines that came into the post office was Thomas Beer, whom Faulkner would later say he read as a young man and who 'influenced me a lot'" (Biography, 352). In an interview at the University of Virginia, Faulkner responded to a question about influences on his writing. Although he acknowledged that Conrad did influence him, he stressed that it was Thomas Beer who added to the development of his style.

Quite true. I got quite a lot from Conrad and I got quite a lot from a man that probably you gentlemen, young people never heard of - a man called Thomas Beer. . . Yes, I got quite a lot from him - was to me a good tool, a good method, a good usage of words, approach to incident (Faulkner in the University, 20).

He also added:

I think the writer, as I said before, is completely amoral. He takes whatever he needs, wherever he needs and does that openly and honestly because he himself hopes that what he does will be good enough so that after him people will take from him and they are welcome to take from him as he feels that he would be welcome by the best of his predecessors to take what they've done (Faulkner in the University, 20).

Faulkner's "amoral" lifting of another author's works is usually limited in
literary analysis to how the literary borrowing reflects some modernist strain. For example, Patrick Samway's "June, 2, 1910 An Historic Day" shows how Faulkner was mimicking James Joyce's stream-of-consciousness style in *Ulysses* in the Quentin section of *The Sound and the Fury*, and Michael Cownan's "Twentieth Century Interpretations of *The Sound and the Fury*" discusses the "ultimate ambiguity" as well as the naturalistic quality of the novel. Countless articles have been written on the parallels between Faulkner and Conrad's style as well as on Dickens' influence on Faulkner's characters.

One of the hallmarks of Faulkner's fiction, however, is his creation of Yoknapatawpha County. The genesis of these stories set in the same fictional setting is usually accredited to Sherwood Anderson and his classic *Winesburg, Ohio*. Just as Anderson had immortalized his hometown of Clyde, Ohio, in his series of tales, Faulkner made his hometown of Oxford, Mississippi, the subject of his works. Faulkner, like Anderson, wrote about his own native soil: "I discovered that my own little postage stamp of native soil was worth writing about and that I would never live long enough to exhaust it" (Introduction to *Flags in the Dust*, viii).

Faulkner's works fall into cycles bound together by recurrent themes, characters, places, and institutions. Likewise, four-fifths of all of Beer's stories fall into recurring cycles. Beer's stories center on two imaginary towns: Carmsville, New York and Zerbette, Ohio. Like Faulkner's, Beer's characters are conscious of their ancestors and what these ancestors did, good or bad, that allowed the characters to be where they are now. The sense of history, even an imaginative one, is real.
There were two basic families that Beer built his stories around: the Eggs and the Shillitos. The Egg family has an uncanny resemblance to the Compsons. The Eggs are a distinguished family living in rural Zerbette, Ohio, much like the once-influential Compsons from Jefferson, Mississippi. Furthermore, the Egg family is composed of Mr. and Mrs. Egg and their four children Adam, Pansy, Violet, and Fern, much like Mr. and Mrs. Compson and their four children Caddy, Quentin, Jason, and Benjy. Mrs. Egg is a robust woman who holds her family together with a strong sense of pride. Her determination to raise her family and her ability to withstand crises are qualities that recall Dilsey - the functioning mother in *The Sound and the Fury*. Mrs. Egg is an effective parent: nourishing, caring, compassionate. Her very name, Mrs. Egg, connotes these qualities.

Whereas Beer's characterization of Mrs. Egg reflects the early 1920's notion of the "broad-hipped mothers of a race," Faulkner's "mother" is incompetent. However, if Faulkner's intent was to show the breakup of the Southern aristocratic family, then his decision not to make Mrs. Compson like Mrs. Egg is important. He cannot have Mrs. Compson a strong woman if the Compson family is to fail. Mrs. Compson is a sickly woman, who worries more about her own health than the health of her children. Her inability to raise a strong family, to raise the Compson family, results in its demise: Benjy is an idiot, Quentin commits suicide, Jason never marries, and Caddy never returns. Faulkner's characterization of Mrs. Compson as an ineffective, rather than strong, mother thematically makes sense.

Despite this change in the mothers of the two families, there is a
significant parallel between Mr. Egg and Mrs. Compson that allows for the possibility that Faulkner did use the Eggs as a model for the Compsons. Like Mrs. Compson, Mr. Egg is often sick and spends most of his time in bed, and typically says and does very little in the stories. Although Mrs. Compson does have a significant part in *The Sound and the Fury*, she does not say or do much in Faulkner's other stories about the Compsons.  

The Eggs' only son, Adam, is a strong, silent figure. He is the epitome of the good son: independent, caring, and financially successful. Adam is the dominant male figure in the stories, replacing the often sickly Mr. Egg. Like Adam, Caddy takes on the role of a parent when she mothers Benjy because of Mrs. Compson's ailments. Similarly, whereas Adam (nicknamed Dammy) is praised for his ability to confront change and crisis (like Caddy), his sisters Fern, Pansy, and Violet cannot deal with change and problems (like the Compson brothers). If Faulkner based the Compson family on the Eggs, it is interesting to note the gender reversals. Caddy and Adam are comparable: both characters are independent and strong. Yet, whereas Adam's independence is praised, Caddy's similar independence and boldness is part of the Compson's tragedy. By giving these qualities to Caddy instead of her brothers, Faulkner is able to comment on the failed (male) descendants of the Old Southern aristocracy and to challenge such Old-South chivalric notions as courage, honor, and virginity. The novel is not about Caddy's tragedy, but about the tragedy of the Compsons' inability to accept change.

As for the three Egg daughters, they too are similar to the Compson boys. Pansy is usually concerned with honor, as is Quentin; Violet is
stupid, as is Benjy; and Fern is concerned with money, as is Jason. Another interesting parallel between the two families is the name of Adam's wife, Benjaminia (nicknamed Benjie) and Aunt Patsy's annoying daughter, Natalie. These names, taken together with Adam's nickname "Dammy," which is close to grandmother Compson's name "Damuddy," raises more than suspicion that Faulkner drew his inspiration for the Compsons from the Eggs.

The other major family that Beer created centers on a single, young man, Harmon John Shillito. Harmon John is the guardian of his cousin Shilly Watson, who is a rambunctious seventeen-year-old. Casimir Smith is a former vaudeville man who ends up running away with Shilly to marry her. Harmon John is similar to Jason in that both are guardians of seventeen-year-old-girls; however, whereas Jason is deceptive and mean to Miss Quentin, Harmon John is caring to his ward. The change in characterization again serves to emphasize the fall of the Compson family. There is no love; there are no family ties. Shilly is similar to Miss Quentin in that she too runs around town with different men and has adolescent outbursts. Casimir plays a larger part in Beer's stories than does the "vaudeville man" in The Sound and the Fury, but the similarities are apparent.

Harmon John, Shilly, and Casimir Smith appear in three of Beer's stories, "The Grander Casuistry," "The Philosophy of C. J. S. Smith," and "Cat Act," that were published in the Saturday Evening Post during the time Faulkner was working on The Sound and the Fury. These stories have parallels to incidents and situations in The Sound and the Fury.
though usually - as with the Eggs - in inverted form. In "The Grander Casuistry," Harmon John returns to his family after being away for four years. On his return, he learns that he is Shilly's guardian, and that they are both the inheritors of the Shillito fortune. This recalls Jason and Miss Quentin's situation after Mr. Compson died. In a way, they are both the benefactors of Caddy's money, even though the money belongs solely to Miss Quentin. Harmon John is different from Jason not only in how he treats his ward, but in his relation to his family and in his economic position. Harmon John returns to his family because he misses them:

Doctor Henry said slowly: "If you're coming home just because you think you're a failure - at twenty-six - you'd better run along. The judge can settle the estate. He and Kate dote on Shilly and they'll go on looking after her. It's no good coming home that way. But if you're coming home because - let's not be sentimental - because it gives you pleasure to come, all right."


Jason, in contrast, does not like his family. He resents living with them because he is reminded of their fallen estate:

I haven't got much pride, I can't afford it with a kitchen full of niggers to feed and robbing the state asylum of its star freshman. Blood, I says, governors and generals. It's a dam good thing we never had any kings and presidents; we'd all be down there at Jackson chasing butterflies (The Sound and the Fury, 230).

Money means everything to Jason, and Miss Quentin is the embodiment of his lost job in Herbert Head's bank. Jason is also different from Harmon
John in the advantages he has not experienced. Harmon John left his family to pursue a career in music; he followed a dream. Jason would have liked to have gone to college (The Sound and the Fury, 196), but has to work in the Jefferson hardware store because his aspiration to be a banker was destroyed when Caddy left Head. Here as elsewhere, Faulkner's modifications emphasize the decline of the Compson family.

In "The Philosophy of C. J. S. Smith," (May 5, 1928) Shilly's character is more developed, and the parallel to Miss Quentin is more apparent. The story opens with Harmon John repeating to his girlfriend, Kate, how their neighbor Mrs. Van Dralen is upset by Shilly's behavior:

The old cow got out of her car and lectured me on lettin' Shilly run around with - lectured me about let-ting Shilly run around in her car with Casimir Smith. 'S if I could help it! ("Philosophy of C. J. S. Smith," 16).

Faulkner opens Jason's section with Jason similarly frustrated about his ward's behavior:

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

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

"Well," I says. "You can't can you? You never have tried to do anything with her," I says. "How do you expect to begin this
late when she's seventeen years old" . . . .

"But something must be done," she says. "To have people think I permit her to stay out of school and run about the streets, or that I can't prevent her doing it . . ." (The Sound and the Fury, 180).

The parallels between two single men being guardians of seventeen-year-old girls who run around town suggest that Faulkner was probably reading Beer's stories.

Another parallel exists in Beer's story "Cat Act" (May 19, 1928). In this episode, Shilly runs off with Casmir to be married; "Casmir John Sobieski Smith, formerly the Diving Kid, the second son of Helena the Human Seal" - is a vaudeville man ("Cat Act," 21). In The Sound and the Fury, Miss Quentin steals all of Jason's money and runs off with the vaudeville man. Circuses and "vaudeville acts," it should be noted, were not popular during the 1920's. The golden era for the circus was from 1871 to 1915. According to Earl Chapin May, the golden age of the circus ended when the big shows abandoned the free street parades. The circus would not become popular again until the 1930's when the Ringling brothers regrouped (224). Given this fact, it seems significant that Faulkner has a circus come to town in The Sound and the Fury just as Beer did in his stories. Furthermore, why have Miss Quentin run off with a vaudeville man? Why not a traveling business man or a local man? Why doesn't she run off in search of her mother? Perhaps in Beer's stories Faulkner found something he "needed to take."

Before moving on to further similarities between the Eggs and the Compsons, there are some interesting peculiarities in Faulkner's novel
that also appear in Beer's stories. Casimir - the Diving Kid - left his father because the man spent all of Casimir's earnings on whiskey:

"His father was an awful piece of work," Harmon John said. "I remember him out in San Francisco. He managed the kid. Yes, he drank up the boy's money. Always wore pink silk shirts an' red neckties" ("Philosophy of C. J. S. Smith," 16).

Jason comments in *The Sound and the Fury* that his father drank up his inheritance:

Like I say, If he had to sell something to send Quentin to Harvard, we'd all been a dam sight better off if he's sold that sideboard and bought himself a one-armed straight jacket with part of the money. I reckon the reason all the Compsons gave out before it got to me like Mother says, is that he drank it up (*The Sound and the Fury*, 197).

Wasting a family's money on alcohol is not a novel incident; however, this statement, taken together with the mention of the "red necktie," suggests something more than coincidence. Jason dislikes the pitch man Miss Quentin runs around with because he wears a red necktie: "The first thing I saw was the red tie he has on and I was thinking what the hell kind of man would wear a red tie" (*The Sound and the Fury*, 232). The color red works symbolically to represent Jason's anger in this section of the book. Red ties, however, were not popular in the 1920's. Loud, patterned ties were popular, but not red ones. So where did Faulkner get the idea of the red necktie and Mr. Compson's drinking problem? It is worth noting that Mr. Compson doesn't drink in the earlier Compson stories, "A Justice" and
"That Evening Sun."

Beer's story "Pragmatism" (January 21, 1928) also has parallels to Jason's section of the novel. Pragmatism, of course, is a philosophical approach which holds that the truth of a statement - and the merit or demerit of an action - are to be measured by their practical consequences. In Beer's story, Mrs. Egg is not worried about principles but about their logical consequences. For instance, Mrs. Egg is not worried if her grandson has possibly stolen a pie, but is afraid the boy will be ill from eating the whole pie ("Pragmatism," 190). In The Sound and the Fury, Jason is a similar pragmatist; he is concerned with matter-of-factness, not principles. William James, the founder of pragmatism, wrote that right and wrong are developed from the "cash value" of a decision; there is no inherent meaning in the world. Jason is such a pragmatist. For Jason the future equals money, and the loss of money is equal to the loss of his future. This is true when in relation to God, his anger at Caddy for the loss of the job in Head's bank, and at the "Jews" up North who are stealing his money in the stock market. Jason also has no morals; he is just mean: he tells on Caddy swimming in the creek, he cuts up paper dolls, he drops free tickets to the circus in the stove, and he steals money from Miss Quentin; yet Jason has a rational excuse for everything. His excuse is that he has to be responsible for the sinking Compson family - a job he would not have had to do if Caddy hadn't ruined everything.

Jason's section of the novel is notable for its clarity and colloquialness. For instance, Jason frequently quotes himself so as to make it clear what he is thinking:
"Sure," I says. "That's all right too. Mind what I say, now. After number 17, and I tell them."

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 to me. I was a kid then. I believed folks when they said they'd do things. I've learned better since. Besides, like I say I guess I dont need any man's help to get along I can stand on my own feet like I always have (The Sound and the Fury, 206).

Faulkner's decision to write Jason's section in this manner thematically reflects Jason's practical, anti-chivalric side. It is a technique that Beer also used in his writing. Although Beer does experiment with interior monologues, in his stories revolving around Mrs. Egg he emphasizes the practical and colloquial.

Sweetheart, I'm fifty years of age, an' when much younger I gave up worrin' about principles. If you raise three girls, all dumb as goats, you quit bein' scared about morality. What you want is peace. . . It relieved me when Dammy never bothered about a thing bein' immoral. He just did it or ate it or fought it an' learned what not to do without askin' nobody. I dunno if he's got any principles or not ("Pragmatism," 190).

While it is possible that Faulkner developed Jason's pragmatism because it was a philosophy that suited his character, the possibility remains that Beer's story may have contributed to Jason's "philosophy" and his manner of speaking.

If the stories involving the Shillitos and Mrs. Egg's pragmatism are reflected in Jason's section, Beer's story "Apotheosis" (March 3, 1928) features certain themes and incidents that appear in Quentin's section.
An apotheosis is the act of raising a person to the state of a god: to apotheosize is to deify, to glorify, to idealize. In "Apotheosis," the fidelity of Mrs. Egg's daughter-in-law to her son is brought into question. Charlie Hoffman, a friend of the family, makes passes at Benjie Egg when he is drunk. He also writes her, asking her to run off to Paris with him. He will know if she wants to go with him if she wears his corsage to the dance that night. The dilemma for Benjie is not that she wishes to leave her husband, but that the corsage Charlie has sent her is of the same type that her husband has given her for the dance. Mrs. Egg asserts her role as protector of her family and solves the problem. For this reason, her nephew says she will have an apotheosis: "Your apotheosis. They'll eventually make you into a goddess, darlyn, and paint you on the ceilings like Minerva or the Spirit of '76 ("Apotheosis," 234). The act of deifying Mrs. Egg for her actions is a bit melodramatic, but Faulkner also uses the term apotheosis in a similar way in The Sound and the Fury. Faulkner mentions "apotheosis" in relation to Quentin and his thoughts about Gerald.

Except Gerald. He would be sort of grand too, pulling in out of noon, up the long bright air like an apotheosis, mounting into a drowsing infinity where only he and the gull, the one terrifically motionless, the other in a steady and measured pull and recover that partook of inertia itself, the world punily beneath their shadow on the sun (The Sound and the Fury, 138).

Although Quentin sees Gerald as being apotheosized, Faulkner also uses the word to explain Quentin's relation to Caddy. As Father observes, Quentin desires to make his temporary state of mourning permanent, "an
apotheosis"; by committing suicide he can protect his devotion to Caddy from further erosion. Quentin's desire to protect his sister's honor is much like Mrs. Egg's desire to protect Benjie's honor; both result in an apotheosis.

It is also interesting to note that just as Beer constructs a showdown between Mrs. Egg and Charlie Hoffman, Faulkner creates a showdown between Quentin, defender of Caddy's honor, and Dalton Ames:

I came to tell you to leave town... I said you must leave town. Did she send you to me I say you must go not my Father, not anybody, I say it... Then I heard myself say I'll give you until sundown to leave town (The Sound and the Fury, 159).

In Beer's story, Mrs. Egg confronts Charlie about the rumor of his affair with Benjie Egg; she tells Charlie to quit drinking, to apologize, and to leave town, all of which he does. Quentin's showdown is unsuccessful; he faints on the bridge, making a fool of himself, and is not able to protect or save Caddy's honor (The Sound and the Fury, 161-162). Faulkner's reversal of the failed showdown underscores Quentin's inability to uphold the Southern chivalric code of honor to which he is dedicated.

Whereas parallels of incidents and characters can easily be indicated, it is much harder to demonstrate thematic borrowings. Themes come from a variety of sources and to attribute them to one author or story is probably unwise. But in his story, "To the Living and the Rest of Them" (June 2, 1928), Beer changes from his typical family stories and optimistic themes to write a more cynical story. Beer's theme is nihilistic; his main character
ponders on the absurdity of life. In the story, officer PhilibetGran reflects on the events of the war:

Amusing humanity! We are all like the comic serial in your Sunday papers. Little figures running and playing dirty jokes on each other, throwing bricks and talking nonsense. . . . His voice thickened: "Courage, Monseigneur! Voilá la bonne comedie! ("To the Living and the Rest of Them," 136).

This cynical attitude toward life is similar to Mr. Compson's:

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 never 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, 76).

The idea of life being a "comedie" or "reducto absurdum" was a popular theme in the writings of the Post-War generation. Faulkner, however, rewrote the first section of Quentin's section, changing it to the beginning just cited. The following (reprinted in Michael Millgate's The Achievement of William Faulkner.) is the manuscript version which Faulkner changed:

The shadow of the sash fell across the curtain between 7 and 8 o'clock, and then I was hearing the watch again, and I lay there
looking at the sinister bar across the rosy and motionless curtains, listening to the watch. Hearing it, that is. I don't suppose anybody deliberately listens to a watch or a clock. You don't have to. You can be oblivious to the sound for a long while, then in a second ticking it can create in the mind unbroken the long diminishing parade of time you did not hear. Where up the long and lonely arrowing of light rays you might see Jesus walking, like. The true Son of Man: he had no sister. Nazarene and Roman and Virginian, they had no sister one minute she was

Beyond the wall Shreve's bedsprings complained thinly... (94).

The change from the original accomplishes many things. First, the alterations improve certain phrases and emphasize Quentin's insistence on time. Second, it makes reference to Mr. Compson, who will occupy much of Quentin's thoughts on the last day of his life, just as Caddy does. Third, and most importantly, it contrasts Quentin's romantic idealism with Mr. Compson's cynical realism. This contrast is never fully resolved even when it reappears in Absalom, Absalom.

The emphasis of the cynicism is important. Given that Beer wrote about this cynicism, it reinforces the suggestion that Faulkner was reading Beer's stories. Beer was a successful writer and Faulkner was struggling to get his books published. If the editors of the Saturday Evening Post felt it appropriate for their audience to read such cynicism ten years after World War I, then perhaps Faulkner could also employ this cynicism in his novel with similar success. It is also interesting to note the correlation in dates: "To the Living and the Rest of Them" was published on June 2, 1928, and Quentin's section takes place on June 2, 1910.

Narrative methods are, like themes, difficult to discuss in terms of
influences. For instance, the stream-of-consciousness method was a technique being employed by many modernist writers, most notably Joyce. It is the narrative technique used by Faulkner in both Benjy and Quentin's sections, and to a lesser extent in Jason's section. But whereas Faulkner has been hailed for his use of stream-of-consciousness, particularly by critics in the 1940's and 1950's, Beer was criticized by his critics for employing this method. In a review of his novel The Road to Heaven (1928), Margaret Whipple writes:

There is, however, no hope in side-stepping the fact of Lamon's emotions, and how Mr. Beer treats them by the stream-of-consciousness method - a method unfair to the reader who wants to know what a character's emotions are about as well as what they are, and unfair to the characters because, although he may have formulated the words of his passions, he would have never spoken or written them (541).

Despite Whipple's criticism, Beer was very adroit in using this narrative technique, frequently repeating words or phrases. The following two excerpts are from the "The Grander Casuistry" (March 24, 1928) and are particularly reminiscent of Faulkner's use of repetition of words and phrases in the interior monologue that is Quentin's section:

Harmon lighted a cigarette and walked through the door into so much sun he sneezed twice. The sneeze produced a thought in his mind. It came from nowhere: he was now just the ghost of a pair of hands. He was nothing. And it soothed him to be nothing. A whole pyramid of things fell off his head - smells of dressing rooms, the noise of snoring, arguments about women, tunes,
underclothes, women, drink, women, and the cost of shoes. . .
The cat went into the office of Smith and Smith. Where did office
cats get their meals? Someone ought to write a whimsical essay on
that for a magazine. . . I'm so tired I could yell. I'm so tired,

Compare this with a section from The Sound and the Fury:

The shell was a speck now, the oars catching the sun in
speckled glints, as if the hull were winking itself along him along.
Did you ever have a sister? No but they're all bitches, Did you ever
have a sister? One minute she was. Bitches. Not bitch one minute
thought all the time they were khaki, army issue khaki until I saw
they were of heavy Chinese silk of finest flannel because they made
his face so brown and his eyes so blue. Dalton Ames, it just
missed gentility. Theatrical fixture. Just papier-mache, then
touch. Oh Asbestos. Not quite bronze (The Sound and the Fury,
92).

The use of interior monologues and repetition of key words are techniques
Faulkner, and other modernists like Stein and Hemingway, used. It may
simply be coincidence that Beer also used them; however, Beer's concern
with women, with their underclothes, and their relationship to men, as
well as his concern with time (Harmon John being so tired, tired) are
preoccupations that Faulkner was working into his novel at this time.

Although this study has been limited to only these stories by Beer that
appeared in the Saturday Evening Post, while Faulkner was writing The
Sound and the Fury, other correspondences between Faulkner and the man
he "got quite a lot from" Thomas Beer, are worth pursuing. In addition to
the remainder of the one hundred and fifty stories that he wrote, Beer published a novel *Sandoval*, in 1924, that centers on two brothers' quest to learn the history of their ancestors - almost an archetypal Faulknerian plot. There are parallels in this novel to both *Flags in the Dust* (1927) and *Absalom, Absalom* (1936). Beer's use of dialect to capture the regional flares of his fictional towns also resonates in Faulkner, as does his technique of withholding information. Together with the stories in the *Saturday Evening Post* by Edgar and Jackson, Beer's stories illustrate the way popular fiction for a mass market as well as popular attitudes towards women's sexuality, Babe Ruth, and the like, can be used and transmitted by even the most highbrow and high-modernist of writers.
APPENDIX

Thomas Beer was born in Council Bluffs, Iowa on November 22, 1889. He was the only son of William Collins Beer and Ann Alice Baldwin Beer. When Beer was seven, the family moved from Bucyrus, Ohio, to Yonkers, New York. In 1907, Beer entered Yale. At Yale, Beer was active in student publications and was named class poet in 1911. He studied law at Columbia University and became the sixth generation of his family to become a lawyer.

From 1913-1917 he practiced in his father's law office. His father was a friend and associate of Marcus A. Hanna, and Beer would later write a biography of Hanna. When the United States entered World War I, Beer served in France as a first lieutenant of field artillery. It was on his return to America that he began to write seriously and he was soon able to drop his law practice altogether.

Beer never married. He spent his time writing in his winter home in Yonkers or his summer home on Nantucket. Most of his energy was given to the hundred and fifty stories he submitted to popular magazines. The last seven years of his life he had been in ill health, and he was able to write little. At the time of his death, he was working on a new novel to be called The Wall and the Arrow and a critical work, Form, Color, and Design. He died of a heart attack on April 18, 1940.

According to Wilson Follet, who wrote the introduction to Mrs. Egg and Other Americans, Beer led a "double life" (vii). Whereas he was quite popular for his short stories: "For a decade and a half he had been printing short stories that reached an immense audience . . . and uncounted
persons of all ages and both sexes had the habit of looking at each week's issue of *The Saturday Evening Post*, with the hope of seeing his name" (Follet, Introduction, xi); his more serious works were often disregarded. It was only with reluctance that he anthologized his short stories. He had been selling short stories for over fifteen years before he sanctioned one volume of his work. He invented a title to suit his dissatisfaction with creating such a volume: *Mrs Egg and Other Barbarians*.

Beer's published books include: *The Fair Rewards*, 1922; *Stephen Crane: A Study in American Letters*, 1923; *Sandoval*, 1924; *The Mauve Decade*, 1926; *A Road to Heaven*, 1928; and *Mark Hanna*, 1929. Very little is known about Beer's life. Two of his classmates from Yale, Monty Wooley and Cary Abbott, wrote an article on Beer after his death in which they report that he was a rather quiet man and that he would write his stories in his pajamas while lying on his bed. Information on Beer's life has been taken from *Twentieth Century Authors: A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Literature* (p. 19) and Wilson Follet's "Introduction" in *Mrs. Egg and Other Americans*. 
1Although this paper will focus only on popular culture and the writer Thomas Beer, James Branch Cabell’s novel Jurgen: A Comedy of Justice (which Faulkner had in his library) also has significant parallels to The Sound and the Fury. Like Faulkner and his Yoknapatawpha County, Cabell invents an imaginary land in his novel: for Cabell it is the medieval court, Poictesme. The theme of Jurgen is that man is a victim of illusions; the notion that women are paragons of virtue and honor is likewise an illusion. One of Jurgen’s lovers, Queen Guineivere, is promiscuous, a fact which bothers Jurgen. Guineivere’s father lectures Jurgen that women will be that way and, that it should not bother him so much. This attitude recalls Mr. Compson’s remark to Quentin: "it is men who invented virginity not women" (The Sound and the Fury, 78).

Jurgen’s shadow is prominent in the book, as is Quentin’s in The Sound and the Fury, and Cabell repeatedly uses the word "twilight," the original title of The Sound and the Fury. Finally, Jurgen reflects that: "Life was a dream that has no sense to it" (Jurgen, 222-223) and observes: "Many lands we have visited and many sights we have seen and at the end all that we have done is a tale that is told and it is a tale that does not matter" (Jurgen, 314). These lines are similar to the ones from MacBeth which Faulkner took the title of his novel from:

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 (Shakespeare, Macbeth, V. v. ll. 23-28).

In his introduction to Mayday, Carvel Collins explores the parallels between Jurgen and Mayday. See also: William L. Godshalk, "Wherein Is Set Forth A Brief Account of Cabell’s Early Career, With a Few Even Briefer Comments on Faulkner"; Joseph M. Flora, "Cabell and Faulkner: Connections Literary and Otherwise"; and Carvell Collin "Likeness Within

2See Cowley p. 3-7.

3See William Faulkner's interviews at the University of Virginia reprinted in James B. Meriwether and Michael Millgate, eds., Lion in the Garden: Interviews with William Faulkner and Frederick Lewis Gwynn and Joseph Leo Blotner, eds., Faulkner in the University.

4See Cleanth Brooks's, "Man, Time, and Eternity" for a New Critical approach to the novel and Phillip M. Weinstein's "If I Could Say Mother: Construing the Unsayable About Faulkner Maternity," for a feminist deconstructive reading. Brooks focuses on the four different points of view in the presentation of the break-up of the Compson family, directing attention to the stream-of-consciousness of the three narrators (Benjy, Quentin, and Jason) as a progression from "murkiness to increasing enlightenment" (Brooks, 325). Brooks's criticism is important because its focus on the problems of time, love, the fall of the South, and the disintegration of modern man set the table for much subsequent discussion of the novel.

Weinstein's deconstructive feminist reading of the novel views Faulkner's rendering of Mrs. Compson as "uniquely punitive" (Weinstein, 3). Weinstein defines Mrs. Compson's "unsayable" feminist basis as a "portrait of maternity crazily arrested in the virginal phase of the virgin Mary model" (Weinstein, 10). According to Weinstein, "the ideal silent nourisher has degenerated into a non-nourishing, non-stop talker" (Weinstein, 10).


6See James Blotner's Introduction to Faulkner and Popular Culture.
7William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (New York: Vintage Book, 1984), 252. All references to *The Sound and the Fury* are from Noel Polk's corrected text, and will follow the quoted material in parentheses. In "Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury" (The Explicator, Fall 1980, 24-25) Thom Seymour discusses the Yankees' winning record and Jason's dislike of Jews; he does not say anything about Babe Ruth.


9Allen reports that automobiles "were the new houses of prostitution" (Allen, 100).

10Henry Ford's anti-semitic remarks spread across the country to such a point that people would not rent to Jewish people and Harvard even discussed limiting the number of Jewish students (Allen, 64).


12Day Edgar, "Snob's Progress," (Saturday Evening Post, 14, January, 1928) 10+. All references to this story will follow the quoted material in parentheses.

13There is evidence that Faulkner developed Deacon from his own experience at Yale in the spring of 1918 when he was visiting his friend Phil Stone. In a letter to his mother dated June 2, 1918, Faulkner wrote about a black man he saw in a Decoration Day parade in New Haven; this incident recalls another scene involving Deacon in the novel. The first
quote is from Faulkner's letter, the second is from *The Sound and the Fury*:

> And if Mammy could have seen that Decoration Day parade. The color troops were there; veterans of the Civil War, dolled up in blue suits and cigars and medal until they all looked like brigadiers.

> When the veterans passed, a fellow named DeLacey who was watching the parade said to me- "Well, Bill, you ought to salute the old boys. It was your grandfather and his friends who put him that way." I told him that I thought they should salute me, for had it not been for my grandfather and his friends they would not have had any war to go to (Faulkner, in *Thinking of Home: William Faulkner's Letters to His Mother and Father*, edited by James G. Watson, 61-62).

I remember where I had last seen Deacon. It was on Decoration Day, in a G.A.R. uniform, in the middle of the parade. But the last time was the G.A.R. one, because Shreve said:

> "There now. Just look at what your grandpa did to that poor old nigger."

> "Yes," I said. "Now he can spend day after day marching in parades. If it hadn't been for my grandfather, he'd have to work like white folks." (*The Sound and the Fury*, 82)

There are also parallels that support the notion that Faulkner's experience at Yale was Quentin's at Harvard. For instance, Quentin's concern to wear a hat derives from the Yale tradition then allowing only seniors to go bare-headed (*The Sound and the Fury*, 95). The surnames of Quentin's adversary, Gerald Bland, and of Caddy's husband, Herbert Head, originate in a letter of Faulkner's from New Haven to his mother describing a Captain Bland and the Brick Row Book Shop poet Arthur Head. In other letters dated 1918, Faulkner mentions to his mother his excitement about seeing the Harvard-Yale boat race, which is mentioned in Quentin's section (*The Sound and the Fury*, 77, 84).

14See William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom* and "That Evening Sun."
15 Natalie is the name of the girl Quentin kisses in The Sound and the Fury, 134.

16 Thomas Beer, "The Grander Casuistry" (Saturday Evening Post, 24 March 1928) 8+, "The Philosophy of C. J. S. Smith" (Saturday Evening Post, 5 May 1928) 16+, and "Cat Act" (Saturday Evening Post, 19 May 1928) 20+. All references to the stories will follow the quoted material in parentheses.

17 See Diana de Marly's Fashion for Men: An Illustrated History (119-130) and Joan Nunn's Fashion in Costume 1200-1980 (174-182.) Nunn states that the "link between fine arts and dress has probably never been more apparent than in the first three decades of the 20th century" (Nunn, 174). According to Nunn, Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles along with Cubism and African art influenced patterned fabrics and clothing styles of the 1920's (Nunn, 174). Nunn also states that neckties of red, white, or blue were popular at the beginning of the century before World War I (Nunn, 176). The events that happen in the novel are in 1928, years after red ties were in fashion.


19 See Anthony Flew, Dictionary of Philosophy, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984) p. 184. According to Flew, James claimed that "ideas must have 'cash value:' an idea is right and true if it has fruitful consequences" (Flew, 184).

20 Thomas Beer, "Apotheosis," (Saturday Evening Post, 3 March 1928) 14+. Rpt. in Mrs. Egg and Other Barbarians (New York: Alfred, Knopf, 1947) 221-258. All references to the story will follow the quoted material in parentheses.

21 See The Sound and the Fury, 177.
Joseph W. Reed, Jr., in "Narrative Technique in The Sound and the Fury" (in Minter's Norton Critical Edition of The Sound and the Fury.) suggests that Quentin's clear articulation of the showdown with Dalton Ames is done so that Quentin makes clear the fragments of his past and realizes not only the climax of his life, but why he can now die. Thus, according to Reed, the showdown with Dalton Ames would in fact be successful in so much as it allows Quentin to finally die.

We move into the central reconstruction of his conversation with Dalton Ames and Caddy, fully realized down to the minute, so fully realized that it makes irrelevant his life on the present level, and he moves out of his dreams into reality by striking Gerald. This is not a case of his dramatic awakening to what a fool he has been, not an awakening of embarrassment, but a clear transition out of the past because he has come to the climax and can not let it alone. He has make a whole past by turning upon fragments which pursue him like furies and making them into a whole. It has given him assurance over his doubts, despair out of his fragmentary regrets. He can now become a true "temporary," go back to the room, clean up, and arrive at three-quarters past the hour with absolute purity of the absolutely arbitrary (Reed, 355).

Thomas Beer, "To the Living and the Rest of Them" (Saturday Evening Post, 2 June 1928) 16+. All references to the stories will follow the quoted material in parentheses.

The original manuscript can be found in Alderman Library at the University of Virginia.
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13.

VITA

Lynn Dorsey Define

Born in Salem, Massachusetts, July 13, 1967. Graduated from Marblehead High School, in that city, June 1985. Received Bachelor of Arts from Boston College in 1989 with a double major of Philosophy and English and with the distinction Scholar of the College.

Entered the Master of Arts in English Program at the College of William and Mary in 1990 after taking a year to teach in the inner city of Milwaukee in the Jesuit Volunteer Program.

In September of 1992, the author began teaching at Stuart Hall in Staunton, Virginia, where she now lives and works. In 1993, she was made Head of the English Department at Stuart Hall, and in August of 1994, she was married to William G. Define.