

Faulkner's Influence on Robbe-Grillet: The Quentin Section of *The Sound and the Fury* and *La Jalousie*

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Although more than twenty years have elapsed since the publication of Alain Robbe-Grillet's *La Jalousie* and much has been written about William Faulkner's influence on the "nouveau roman,"¹ a direct and detailed comparison has not yet been drawn between *La Jalousie* and the Quentin section of *The Sound and the Fury*.² The number of obvious and underlying similarities between the two works is great—so great in fact that one is tempted to suggest Faulkner's novel as a major source of the subject matter, the psychological portrayal of the protagonist, and much of the imagery of Robbe-Grillet's novel.

The levels of influence and comparison between the Quentin section and *La Jalousie* which will be discussed here include both thematic and structural elements: obsession, time, and repetition. The boundaries of these three inter-related elements often merge; the handling of time and the use of repetition frequently serve to illustrate the depth and variety of a character's obsession. More specifically, both works depict the distorted psyche of a jealous protagonist; time, but not chronological time, is usually emphasized; repetition is used not only as a structural technique, but also in certain images which are common to both works. An illustration of the interweaving of some of these strikingly similar elements is evident in the beginnings of the two works:

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" (*SF*, p. 93).³

Maintenant l'ombre du pilier—le pilier qui soutient l'angle sud-ouest du toit—divise en deux parties égales l'angle correspondant de la terrasse. (*J*, p. 9).⁴

Both passages use the shadows of objects to tell time, as on a sundial, indicating the importance both authors assign to the temporal consciousness of their protagonists. The object casting a shadow in Faulkner's novel may have suggested to Robbe-Grillet the title of his novel; one of the meanings of

¹Sartre's seminal essay, "A Propos de *Le Bruit et la Fureur*: La Temporalité chez Faulkner," *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, 52 (June 1939), 1057-61, stimulated an awareness of Faulkner in France and may well have originally drawn Robbe-Grillet's attention to the novel. Since that time an extensive critical bibliography has grown around the subject of Faulkner's influence on the "nouveau roman."

²The original idea for this paper was suggested to me by Dr. Emma Kafalenos of the Comparative Literature faculty at Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri.

³William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (New York: Modern Library-Random House, 1956), p. 93. Further quotations will be identified by *SF* and a page number in parentheses referring to this edition.

⁴Alain Robbe-Grillet, *La Jalousie*, (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1957), p. 9. The letter *J* and a page number in parentheses indicates a quotation from this text.

"jealousie" is jealousy or Venetian blind, which permits only inhibited viewing. Much of the action reported in *La Jalousie* takes place on the other side of the blinds behind which the narrator hides. The narrator's observations of his wife are to some degree obstructed, physically by the blinds and mentally by his jealousy. Both of these obstructions combine to emphasize the narrator's limited and unreliable narrative. Thus the title intimates both "blind spots" in the narrator's perspective.

The other meaning of "jealousie" is, of course, "jealousy," which indicates the subject matter of the two texts. Both construct and explore the psyche of a man obsessed with jealousy; as a result of this both show some generally recognized psychological disturbances accompanying the obsession, such as a severely low self-esteem and a probable fear of impotence. The constant focusing on time and the distortion of time is also crucial to the mind preoccupied with jealousy, as will be seen. Many of the effects achieved are due to the many repetitions of certain scenes and images which torment the protagonists of both novels. Images of stains, knives, and shadows (common symbols relating respectively to sexual infidelity, potency, and the mysterious world of unreality) figure prominently in both works.

Obsession influences not just the portrayal of the characters but also, in a sense, establishes the writing style of the two works. The use of stream-of-consciousness techniques in *The Sound and the Fury* is confined largely to the Benjy and Quentin sections. Robert Humphrey, in *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel*, elaborates on the suitability of this method for portraying two types of minds: the limited and the obsessed, both of which are represented in Faulkner's novel.⁵ Benjy belongs to the first type; he is a 33-year-old idiot with a three-year-old's mind. Quentin is an example of the second type, a suicidal young man obsessed with jealousy. He is jealous of the purity of his own ideal of Southern honor which he sees decaying. His dread of this decay is realized in his anxiety over his sister Caddy's lost virginity.

The perspective of the protagonist of *La Jalousie* also produces a narrative "tainted" by obsession; as Robbe-Grillet himself acknowledged: "Non seulement c'est un homme qui . . . décrit toute chose, mais c'est le moins neutre, le moins impartial des hommes: engagé au contraire *toujours* dans une aventure passionnelle des plus obsédantes, au point de déformer souvent sa vision et de produire chez lui des imaginations proches du délire."⁶ In *La Jalousie*, the narrator reveals his suspicions through his minute observations of his wife A's behavior as well as through detailed attention to objects.

Obsession molds and dictates not only the style but also the ordering of events of the works themselves. The single most important difference between twentieth-century novels and their predecessors is probably the movement from the chronology of external plot to the internal logic of human thought where the thought processes of a character are portrayed by techniques of time distortion. The distortion is a result of the fact that the internal workings of the mind do not run a course parallel to that of chronological time. This is for the sake of historical, but of psychological veracity. Robbe-Grillet addresses this problem when he speaks of "notre propre mémoire, qui n'est *jamais* chronologique."⁷ In

⁵Robert Humphrey, *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel* (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1954), pp. 19-20.

⁶Robbe-Grillet, *Pour un nouveau roman* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1963), p. 149.

⁷Robbe-Grillet, *Pour un nouveau roman*, p. 150.

the case of obsessed characters, who repeatedly fixate on certain moments, this time distortion becomes even more important. Thus it is evident that obsession, time, and repetition are inextricably linked in both works since time is part of the protagonists' obsessions and is portrayed by repetition.

In the Quentin section and in *La Jalousie* time functions on both an inner (psychological) and an outer (structural) level. As part of the characters' psyches, the awareness of time may help them "get back" to reality but it simultaneously perpetuates their fixation. The constant evocation of time as a focus and as a reference point becomes yet another symptom of abnormality, an added compulsion. Quentin uses time to hold on to external reality and to distract himself from his internal reality. The extent and manner of this dependence are especially evident for Quentin since it is the last day of his life (he intends to drown himself at midnight). The entire section spans this last day from seven or eight o'clock in the morning to midnight. Quentin recalls: "And so as soon as I knew I couldn't see it [the watch], I began to wonder what time it was. Father said that constant speculation regarding the position of mechanical hands on an arbitrary dial which is a symptom of mind-function. Excrement Father said like sweating" (*SF*, p. 94).

Just as Quentin is obsessed with his sister's purity, he is obsessed with referring to outer reality ("and I was in time again, hearing the watch," *SF*, p. 93) by noting each passing minute. The narrator of *La Jalousie* is equally engrossed in "constant speculation regarding the position," number, and detail of "arbitrary" objects as a "symptom of mind-function." The narrator passes time by enumerating the objects he sees; e.g., he tediously counts rows of banana trees. He uses the naming of objects almost as an incantation against the return of his overriding jealousy. This "symptom of mind-function" gives him a brief respite from torment. But the outcome of this dependence on naming objects is that he is further plunged into his disturbed state. The narrator's preoccupation with an exact description of exterior reality is also his only means of determining an answer to his question—has his wife been unfaithful to him? Only the strictest attention to detail can ultimately constitute the proof or lack of proof of her infidelity.

As a structural device, time distortion appears in the Quentin section through scene changes and flashbacks. Robbe-Grillet adds to these techniques imagined future scenes (e.g., A's auto accident) as well as variations of scenes already described (e.g., the centipede scene). It should be noted that Faulkner's structural use of time can always be rearranged chronologically. Although the Quentin section switches from the day of the narrative to undetermined times preceding that day, the events in the present are told in the order in which they occur. As an aid to the reader in both the Quentin and Benjy sections, Faulkner indicates a change in time by using italics as a method of transition. However, the climax of the Quentin section is an exception since it eliminates type changes, transitions, and punctuation altogether. Even without the italics to mark time changes, a close reading reveals some element which is common to two different scenes and which serves as a psychological pathway from one to the other (e.g., a nail catches on Benjy's shirt, this plunges him into a flashback).

The time sequence in *La Jalousie* goes one step beyond Faulkner's ultimately ordered chaos; it cannot be calculated with certainty. The amount of time which elapses within *La Jalousie* is probably from one to two weeks but the author makes sure that the reader will never really know. Robbe-Grillet wrote: ". . . il était absurde de croire que dans le roman *La Jalousie* . . . existait un ordre

des événements, clair et univoque. . . . Le récit était au contraire fait de telle façon que tout essai de reconstitution d'une chronologie extérieure aboutissait tôt ou tard à un serie de contradictions, donc à une impasse."⁸ This impasse is achieved structurally by the repetition and variation of scenes. Because of these frequent scene changes, one is never sure of the sequence nor of the number of events which actually take place in the novel. This uncertainty, coupled with the unreliability of the obsessed protagonist's narrative, forces the reader to question the validity of any particular scene.

Repetition is not only a structural device but also a method that both Faulkner and Robbe-Grillet use to portray the interior landscape of an obsessed mind in particular images. The major group of images already discussed concerns Quentin's continual references to time: watches, clocks, sundials, ticking and chimes. Another repeated image, the smell of honeysuckle, evokes thoughts of Caddy's sexuality and the night of their proposed double suicide. However, everything ultimately leads him back to time and he is aware of it with all of his senses. He even uses his own body as a sundial; by speculating on the length or absence of his shadow he is able to calculate the time of day.

Thinking of his future suicide Quentin himself becomes a shadow; in this sense he is already an unreality, removed from life. Quentin's fascination with time and his thoughts of death come together in these images of his own shadow. He thinks in terms of "tricking" his shadow, i.e., making it disappear; this is another name for suicide: "The shadow of the bridge, the tiers of railing, my shadow leaning flat upon the water, so easily had I tricked it that would not quit me. . . . It twinkled and glinted, like breathing, the float slow like breathing too, and debris half submerged, heading out to sea. . . ." (*SF*, pp. 110-11). Since his humiliating confrontation on a bridge with Dalton Ames, Caddy's lover, Quentin contemplates again and again the interchangeable images of his death, shadows, and time, while standing on a bridge looking into the water: "Where the shadow of the bridge fell I could see down for a long way, but not as far as the bottom. . . ." (*SF*, p. 143).

In *La Jalousie* a similar scene is repeated several times. A native man positioned on a bridge looks attentively into the water. The attitude of the observer and occasional floating debris are the only variations added to the scene. But it seems apparent that, whether the man is looking for something or merely trying to see through to the bottom, he is unable to do so. The last entry concerning the man on the bridge stresses the immobility and the still uncertain objective of his search; this is precisely the narrator's predicament: "L'homme est toujours immobile, penché vers l'eau boueuse, sur le pont en rondins recouverts de terre. . . . Il a l'air de guetter quelque chose, au fond de la petite rivière—une bête, un reflet, un objet perdu," (*J*, pp. 182-83).

In both works, these scenes of the observer on the bridge and the repetition of images of shadows, silhouettes, and outlines suggest the interpretation of objects as sundials. Both works contain an interplay and balance between light and shadow. The existence of shadow defines the extent of light and vice versa; what cannot be seen takes on a reality of its own. Just as the sundials bring the protagonists back into temporal reality, shadows, outlines and silhouettes plunge them into their shadowy inner world. The characters try to "see" through obscuring media. These obscuring media illustrate the restrictive nature of the protagonists' obsession. In the case of the man-on-the-bridge scenes described above, the water functions as an obscuring medium in the same way that the

⁸Robbe-Grillet, *Pour un nouveau roman*, p. 167.

narrators' obsession does. In *La Jalousie* the narrator automatically projects his neurosis onto others and thereby transfers his questioning obsession to the native on the bridge. The shadows that Quentin sees are often his own and are evidence to him of his temporality. These images in both novels are silent indices of the texts' mystery. They pose the question: can one see to the bottom, through obscurity to the end, the answer to the mystery? In *La Jalousie* the crouching observer, as seen through the eyes of the obsessed narrator, is not able to answer the question. Does he see the "bête" of obsession; is it his own reflection exposing the possibility that it is all imagined; or is it the reality that his wife's fidelity is an "objet perdu"? The water flows, debris passes by, but the answer remains inconclusive. In Faulkner, Quentin sees his own shadow and the answer to his question is clear: *he* is at the bottom of the river. That is Quentin's solution although he never actually states that he will drown himself. Both the husband-narrator and Quentin are finally unable to state, to name. In *La Jalousie* both the husband-narrator and his wife are unnamed.⁹ The fact that the two main characters are not named indicates, among other things, the nonexistence or, at least, the uncertainty of their relations. The obsessed can never make their ultimate thought concrete for to name is to *Know*, and knowing is too horrible.

It is self-knowledge that each protagonist fears and avoids. In both works the protagonists' sense of self is precarious, undermined by insecurities due to jealous obsession. The "I" in the Quentin section disintegrates although it is still the traditional "I" of first person narrative. André Bleikasten in his recent book *The Most Splendid Failure* comments on Quentin: "The very fragmentation of his speech, its dreamlike incoherence and obsessive redundancy belie the postulate of a stable "I" presiding over it. What Quentin's 'monologue' actually records is the process through which the entire fabric of a self is unraveled and comes apart. Insofar as there is still an ego at play, it is . . . an ego which is the locus of alienating identifications rather than the location of identity."¹⁰ This disintegrating "I" of Quentin's narrative comes to his own natural conclusion in self-destruction. The whole section is, in fact, told by a dead man. But in *La Jalousie* the disintegrating "I" is carried one step further, it is absent from the beginning. Any identity of the self is entirely avoided and the narrative concentrates on the details of external reality. However, just as shadows define the existence of light, the "tainted" narrative of the "absent-I"¹¹ gives a distinct profile of the obsessed narrator.

In addition to shadows, other images which figure prominently by repetition in both works are stains and knives. The sexuality implied by these symbols of adultery, infidelity, promiscuity, and the phallus is much dreaded by the protagonists. In both Benjy's and Quentin's narratives reference is made to seven-year-old Caddy's muddied, wet "behind." This childhood scene prefigures Caddy's loss of virginity and subsequent promiscuity which so torment her brother. During the climactic scene (pp. 185-203) Quentin mentions this stain several times, reliving his offer to Caddy of a double suicide: he would stab her and then himself in this highly sexual scene. He wants Caddy to hold and touch his knife before he pushes it into her. She refuses to help him and he is unable

⁹A common feature of the contemporary novel is the tendency to blur the distinction between characters and the corresponding tendency to blur the identity of individual characters. This is often partially achieved by the author's choice of names for his characters. Faulkner's use of homonymic characters in *The Sound and the Fury* (Quentin the uncle and Quentin the niece) is a good example of the first tendency. It also provides a background for the deliberate blurring of an individual character's identity; the unnamed narrator of *La Jalousie* and his wife, A, are examples of this.

¹⁰André Bleikasten, *The Most Splendid Failure* (Indiana: Indiana Univ. Press, 1976), p. 95.

¹¹Bruce Morrissette, *The Novels of Robbe-Grillet* (New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1963), p. 112.

to fulfill his intention. Quentin painfully contemplates and half believes that he has committed incest with Caddy. The gravity of this crime would, he reasons, buy a place alone for them in hell. There Caddy would be eternally his, out of reach of her suitors. But he is unable even to lose his own virginity to a local girl; he loses instead his knife, his phallic masculinity, and searches for it in the darkness (*SF*, p. 190).

In *La Jalousie* both of these images and their attendant dread can be found, but Robbe-Grillet, with his aversion for the traditional symbol, introduces them in an unusual way. The stain or "tache" is a multitude of unlikely things. The main "tache" described is in the shape of a question mark left by the crushed centipede on the dining room wall. Other stains appear in the form of Franck's white shirt in the darkness and as A's silhouette outlined in a window; on the tablecloth there is a stain left by Franck's sauce which lies next to his knife. The ideas and symbols of bed and board and marriage are psychoanalytically interchangeable. The same connotation applies to a table and the nuptial bed. Thus a stain on the table near Franck's knife prefigures the narrator's hallucination in the climactic scene (pp. 143-182) and efficiently incorporates the love triangle involving a married couple.

The phallus-knife imagery comes into play also in the variations of the centipede scene. First, A's reaction upon seeing the insect killed is to clench her table knife; her breathing becomes more rapid. In the last variant (*J*, p. 166) A clutches at the tablecloth which has become, in the narrator's mind, the sheets of the bed she is sharing with Franck. The table knife and the insect stain become linked in the husband's mind with his wife's supposed adultery, and possibly with his uncomfortable memory of Franck's aggressive act—his killing of the centipede—in contrast to his own passive role as observer.

While these images do not function as pre-established symbols, they become recast with their own peculiar meaning in the narrator's psychological makeup. Bruce Morrissette uses T. S. Eliot's term "objective correlative" to apply to those objects which become "supports for the passions" of Robbe-Grillet's characters.¹² Through repetition, Robbe-Grillet develops this image and others which are not generally considered symbolic of anything until they *become* meaningful for the narrator. In contrast, Faulkner's use of symbolism is generally straightforward and traditional, e.g., Caddy's soiled underwear is readily interpreted as a symbol of her soiled purity and the double suicide scene is clearly representative of an incestuous consummation which is potentially as hazardous and as final as death would be.

In both works there is also a ritual removal of stains, a common compulsion among obsessive neurotics. Quentin, bloodied by his first-fight with Bland, is overly concerned that his suit is stained. His supreme act of redemption, suicide, cannot be performed in unclean vestments. He hurries home and painstakingly rubs the spot with gasoline. The narrator of *La Jalousie*, in order to help exorcise the fear of A's adultery and in order to cease the endless multiplications of the scene he relives each time he sees the centipede stain, works on the spot, first with an eraser and then with a razor blade to remove the traces.

The techniques of repetition used by both authors to represent the obsessed mind are also used in a larger sense, structurally as sub-plots or "mises en abyme" which Bruce Morrissette describes as "inner duplication."¹³ This is

¹²Morrissette, p. 130.

¹³Morrissette, p. 119-120, note 4.

employed in both cases as a method of reflecting major concerns of the work on a secondary level. In the Quentin section the parallel plot is his encounter with, and his attempts to get rid of, the little Italian girl. He calls her "sister" immediately. Later he is arrested for kidnapping and is forced to fight the girl's brother who acts as guardian and defender of her chastity. Just as Quentin tried to avenge the disgrace of Caddy's promiscuity by fighting Ames, the girl's brother attacks Quentin. There are two "inner duplications" in *La Jalousie*, the native's song and the African novel. The song of the native, which seems to begin in the middle, is abruptly cut off and resumes periodically, acts in a reiterative capacity by imitating the circular structure and uncertain flow of the novel. The African novel that A and Franck are reading acts as a recapitulation of thematic material as it concerns a love triangle. The narrator hears only fragments of the novel's action from conversations between A and Franck and struggles to reconstruct it, much as he struggles to detect the truth of his wife's affairs. He stresses the illogical aspects of the novel (he does not read it in the order in which it is written) and the aesthetic value of its construction over the implications of the love-triangle plot. It is from this same perspective that Robbe-Grillet has constructed *La Jalousie* and from which he views the modern novel in general. The construction and techniques used in writing the novel are emphasized more than the plot.

The tendency to reinforce major concerns in a literary text by presenting a parallel situation or "mise en abyme" becomes more significant in the modern novel as it becomes more necessary to illustrate often complex and confusing narratives. As characters become less clearly delineated and plot ceases to be central, these "inner duplications" aid in interpretation and, as is the case of the African novel, give the tools necessary for criticism of the work as a whole.

Both works show a similar progression in the development of the obsessions. The protagonist's increasing lack of discernment—witnessed in Quentin's growing inability to recognize his "incest" with Caddy as fabrication—can also be seen in *La Jalousie*. The narrator adds more incriminating evidence to scenes which he has repeatedly recalled (e.g., the appearance of the letter in Franck's shirt pocket, *J*, p. 107). These alterations contribute to the progress toward the dramatic climax. In each one of the climactic sections, both characters so completely lose hold of reality that they hallucinate. So riveted are they on one thought that there are almost no time or scene changes. Both crises are followed by a continuation of the narrative; but the manner is subdued and somewhat listless.

In the first two thirds of the Quentin section italicized flashbacks allow the reader to assume that Quentin can still distinguish between reality and fantasy, since he keeps coming back to time. But during the climax, characterized by an absence of punctuation and flashbacks, Quentin lives his memories to such an extent that he is convinced he is standing before Ames and not Bland. He is not counting minutes; inner time is alive, his past becomes present, and it overpowers him. While reliving his fight with Ames, he provokes Bland and is soundly beaten. The reader does not learn of the actual occurrence of the fight with Bland until the crisis section is concluded. Then, as before the climax, Quentin counts the minutes and mechanically finishes preparations for his suicide. The remainder of Quentin's narrative takes on its former structure by the resumption of italicized flashbacks.

In *La Jalousie*, the turning point in section seven has almost no time or scene changes in comparison to the high frequency of change in the rest of the novel. It takes place on the evening of the full day of A's trip to town with Franck. The

crisis consists of the narrator's waiting, straining his ears for sounds of her return. As the hours pass, the narrator becomes increasingly agitated. He goes to A's room and scrutinizes the imprints left on her writing pad; he rifles through her desk; he goes to the dining room, sees the centipede stain, then "sees" the centipede. This time the insect is enormous. He "sees" Franck getting up to crush it, and A's hands grasping the tablecloth. Franck comes back from the insect not to the dining table, but to a bed in a hotel room. A's hands pull the bed sheets and the sudden jolts of the pair in bed rush them toward an orgasmic climax which does not reach fulfillment. The movement becomes the jolting of a car out of control on a bad road. The car runs off the road, crashes and bursts into flame with A and Franck inside. As in the Quentin section, the reader does not realize that this entire series of events has occurred in the narrator's imagination until after the resumption of the narratives's former "reality." The husband-narrator continues his speculations in a more subdued tone, still waiting for A's return and still waiting for his questions to be answered.

The major similarity between these two climaxes, aside from the protagonists' hallucinations, is the prolonged absence of time and scene changes. These fixations on one moment or thought, as well as the compulsion to count seconds and to position objects, are symptomatic of the obsessive-compulsive neurotic. The frozen tableaux of the climax scenes are only extensions of the heavy usage throughout both works of images of immobility. It is as if the protagonists' mental fixation is literally transferred to the page of the narrative. What we as readers see is a repeated series of frames around scenes, memories, thoughts which are frozen and impressed upon our minds with all the force of the characters' obsessions themselves.

It should be apparent at this point that there are a number of similarities between the two works, not only in general structure and technique but in specific images. There are, of course, ideological differences which lie outside textual construction¹⁴ but there are also structural differences which should be mentioned. In *The Sound and the Fury* Faulkner is using innovative stream-of-consciousness techniques to portray abnormal characters, but his use of the first person narrator is still traditional. Robbe-Grillet, on the other hand, uses an unnamed narrator, an "absent I." Robbe-Grillet is ostensibly doing this for more than novelty's sake: it is to give the reader a first-hand view, to bring him even closer to the narrator's outlook by letting him "become" the jealous husband.

A second basic contrast is in the verb tense used. *The Sound and the Fury* is told entirely in the past. This is in accordance with Quentin's obsession with the past and the theme of faded Southern glory. When the section ends Quentin and his memory end with it in a definitive conclusion. The section begins in the morning and ends at night. The last paragraph begins with the clock chiming midnight, "The last note sounded. At last it stopped vibrating and the darkness was still again," (*SF*, p. 222). *La Jalousie* also uses one verb tense exclusively, but it is the present. This emphasizes the narrator's sense of immediacy as he constantly repositions the framework of his question. This immediacy can be seen in the last line of the novel which, like the Quentin section, ends at night, but not in silence: "la nuit noire et le bruit assourdissant des criquets s'étendent de nouveau, maintenant, sur le jardin et la terrasse, tout autour de la maison."

¹⁴Faulkner's work is inseparably bound to Southern tradition and its significance in a modern world. Robbe-Grillet, while presumably making at least an indirect comment on the psychological, existential condition of modern man, is not bound so passionately to a particular subject matter. He is more concerned with creating a new medium for fiction.

La Jalousie is circular. Unlike the Quentin section, it begins where it ends; the question mark still hangs in the narrator's mind. He goes on endlessly observing, passively speculating.

There are also other qualities in *La Jalousie* which set it apart from Faulkner's novel, qualities which the modern reader usually associates with the "nouveau roman." For the reader, there is confusion concerning the narration. The inherent atmosphere of mystery is enhanced for the reader by the deliberate distance and impersonality engendered by the mechanical precision with which objects are described. There is an inability to pinpoint an external time sequence, and a related confusion between what is true and what is imagined. In Faulkner's novel, the reader must work to piece together time sequences and to assign conversations and flashbacks to their proper places, but it can be done. In Robbe-Grillet's novel the reader is more important; on one level he creates the novel by selecting the parts he wants to believe, by choosing particular things as meaningful out of the virtual catalogue of objects presented to him.

Many of the general techniques used by Faulkner are antecedents of the "nouveau roman." Some of these brought out in previous criticism are: the influence of the detective novel, the portrayal of obsessed characters and their "tainted" representation of narrative, the confusion in identifying characters, the distortion of chronological time, the repetition of key phrases and scenes fixed in frozen tableaux. Faulkner's influence in shaping the "nouveau roman" is a well-accepted fact. His techniques have been extended and developed to an extreme degree by many modern, especially French authors. It is therefore not surprising to find a preponderance of similarities between particular works of Faulkner and Robbe-Grillet.

However, the similarities between *La Jalousie* and the Quentin section of *The Sound and the Fury* are much greater than those generally explained by Faulkner's influence on the "nouveau roman." The works are comparable on a variety of levels. Externally they have almost identical beginnings as well as similar lengths. On an internal level the parallels between not only the subject of jealousy and the psychological portrayal of the main characters' obsession, but a similar use of the specific imagery of shadows, stains, and knives all seem to suggest more than coincidence. Whether Robbe-Grillet was consciously aware of these parallels as he wrote *La Jalousie* is as yet unknown. It is my contention however that, consciously or unconsciously, Robbe-Grillet must have drawn from his memory of Faulkner's text as a source of the techniques and imagery used in the construction of *La Jalousie*. The finished product might be considered a rewritten version of the Quentin section as a "nouveau roman."