BIBLIOPHILES Meeting #17

It was **THE SOUND AND THE FURY** by William Faulkner that was the basis for an active and extended discussion on Wednesday November 7, 2012. Almost everyone found this to be a very deep and difficult read for many reasons to be elaborated below.

Lee Myers commented that its *free association* writing style, based on the works of James Joyce, was one that Faulkner adopted, and which had become a trend adopted by several fiction writers in the early 20th century. It was based, in part, upon the efforts of writers to compete with the introduction of film media, which had captured popular attention. This style of broken prose, italicized backward in time reflections, and an absence of punctuation, were some of the obstacles that confronted our brave band of Bibliophiles.

Faulkner created fascinating word pictures revealing in excruciating detail, the life of the people of the Deep South, especially the collapsing southern aristocracy, alongside the poverty stricken black slave population. The book is an examination of cultures, included failed ones. It raises questions about the corruption of certain cultures, and the relationship of individuals to their prevailing culture. Each person in Faulkner's narrative is color-coded in someone's mind, and this serves as their signature throughout life.

Time is portrayed as an artificial creation and convenience which each of the primary characters lives and views from different perspectives.

The old and declining Deep South was an agrarian society, rooted in small town culture, populated by Scottish Calvinist immigrants, who were fiercely independent and distrustful of any governmental authority. These miscreants lived in conjunction with a white landed aristocracy that ran vast plantation estates, saw themselves as “cavaliers”, and modeled their behavior upon the English gentry.

Faulkner could not have anticipated the massive northern migration of freed black slaves to northern cities, which would later become a basis for the modern civil rights movement of the 1950's.

One of the insights from this classic novel is that the distinctive regional culture of the south was a pervasive way of life. Many of it's residents have never accepted the outcome of what they still call the “War of Northern Aggression.”
Our next great read was recommended by veteran book-clubber Harold Kosowsky. It is *THE SWERVE: How the World Became Modern* by Stephen Greenblatt, a noted Shakespearean scholar at Harvard U. This is a widely acclaimed, current paperback. It will be our subject for discussion when we meet again at 11:30 at Canigilias on **Wednesday, January 9**.

Bob Runyon  
rrunyon@unomaha.edu  
[http://www.unomaha.edu/bookclub/](http://www.unomaha.edu/bookclub/)  
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