Man Fearing the "Feminine in Man": An Examination of The Sound and the Fury and Going After Cacciato

Man Fearing the "Feminine in Man":
An Examination of *The Sound and the Fury* and *Going After Cacciato*

Steve REDFORD

This paper discusses the theme of man's fear of the "feminine in man" (a quotation from Melville's *Billy Budd*), in two twentieth-century, male-penned novels, *The Sound and the Fury* and *Going After Cacciato*. The similar patterns of development in the two novels are analyzed: male-dominated worlds in which key male characters have been traumatized are presented; while the seemingly "normal" but traumatized males seem incapable of finding paths to healing, the mentally-challenged child-like men (Benjy and Cacciato) are able to "recognize" the beauty of the "feminine" characteristics of the key female characters (Caddy and Sarkin); in the end, the male-dominated worlds reject the feminine-and readers feel the tragedy of traumatized men, unable to recognize or admit the need for the feminine in themselves, "cling[ing]," as Griffin puts it, "to the old damaged way of being."