

The Archaic tone of William Faulkner in “The Sound and The Fury”

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Abstract

William Faulkner was born in New Albany; his reputation has soared nationally and internationally. The image of modern society as a wasteland pervades his writing. Throughout his fiction, twentieth century society is seen as the enemy, intruding upon the individual's integrity and humanistic values. In *The Sound and The Fury*, Faulkner presents the degradation, decay, violence and death that have replaced courage, pride, love and honor in the Compson family. It deals with Faulkner's use of the archaic tone in Fictional representation.

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In the writing of fiction, particularly since about 1985, there has been a growing preoccupation with form. Of the twentieth century writers may have never been widely popular, but they have grown into classics almost in spite of the general neglect on the part of the readers. It is as if there were a want of agreement between the novelists and the readers, the writers wishing to produce one sort of thing and their patrons wishing to read a different sort.

William Faulkner, the twentieth century southern writer has understood both the force and unreality existing during his time that he has been able to rise to the heights he has attained in his work. One of the principal reasons for the spirit of tragedy in his work is that he has captured the will full self –delusion of people in the relentless grip of a past that never was and yet continues to believe in it because there was no other way to believe and still remain a part of society.

The image of modern society as a waste land pervades Faulkner's writing. The mechanized, industrialized society dehumanizes man by forcing him to cultivate false hopes.

It encourages atrophy of essential human virtues courage, fortitude, honesty and goodness. Faulkner presents the South with its glory dimmed and with its moral order being replaced by the material order. In the past the Southerners were self-reliant. But the civil – war resulted in the South losing its culture. Faulkner bewails the loss of culture and is sorry that the South has decayed. He states that the remedy lies in a return to post innocence and purity.

In *The Sound and The Fury*, Faulkner presents the degradation, decay, violence and death that have replaced courage, pride, love and honor in the Compson family. By juxtaposing the childhood of the Compson brothers with their present existence, Faulkner develops the theme of deterioration and loss. The family which once had governors and generals is now headed by a dipsomaniac and world-weary cynic, while the mother, a

hypochondriac is forever including in self pity. The character Benjy can be taken as the syndrome of the whole family. Since there is no centre the family falls apart Candace and later her daughter Quentin takes to a promiscuous life. Through the plight of Caddy's brother Quentin, Faulkner shows how the code of honour is now a hindrance to a generation which has lost its capacity for action. Instead of avenging his sister's honor, Quentin, finds an imagined incest with her convenient excuse to take his own life. Faulkner says,

“He loved not the idea of incest, he could not commit, but Presbyterian concept of its eternal punishment.....”

Jason's love for money leads to his fall. He is scornful of tradition and principle of honor. Dilsey, the Negro servant is the only one who provides a measure of hope. The defeat of the old Southern way of life at the hands of commercialism is seen in the effect Herbert Head's business prosperity has on Compson family. The forces that Mr and Mrs Compson represent together are those that have no concern with love and compassion.

Individualism is one of Faulkner's central themes. The novel depicts the numerous threats to Individualism posed by modern society, by taboos and by traditions. He also introduces the theme of alienation. The alienation with which the Compson son suffers from is caused more by circumstances. Benjy by his demented state turns a loner, Quentin by his psychic nature experiences alienation. Jason by his materialistic designs and rationalistic approaches cuts himself off from the others. Caddy due to her promiscuous nature suffers from alienation. Same is the case with the father who tries to escape from reality by drinking and with the mother, who lives in the past and refuses to accept reality. These characters are fatalists who allow them to be defeated. Pessimism is still the main element in Faulkner's philosophical attitude.

Faulkner's greatness as an artist is so great extent, due to his stereoscopic vision, his ability to deal with the specific and the universal simultaneously and to make the real symbolic without giving up reality. His achievement as a writer is due to his narrative structure, techniques and his style.

Stream of consciousness technique was used in first three sections. The stream of consciousness technique is used here not only for reflecting a distinguished culture but also for a way of recording that culture through sense and feeling. The incidents that are seen through the consciousness of the narrators are not merely rational items; they generate powerful feelings and emotions. A few events are told and retold a number of times in all the section with the result that we not only get to know them under various aspects. He has attempted to portray the human situation through skillful handling of the point of view technique and thereby showing how the technique can be a useful and effective means of evoking, defining and illuminating human nature in all its complexity and variety. The differences among the various points of view are heightened by difference in sensibility, style and rhetoric. The total effect of the method employed by Faulkner is to enrich human understanding through variety and to suggest by implication, that truth can be perceived in different ways.

The author gives us a sense of experience in all its native immediacy and primitive freshness and innocence. The language used by Faulkner helps portray the flow of the intellectual and moral debate in Quentin's mind. Apart from the absence of punctuation the writing it offers no difficulty. Faulkner's aim is to show in the very texture of his writing, the simultaneity of past and present. The grammatical structure in

Faulkner's sentences is exerted to create not a sense of cause and effect but motion and stillness, so that the object perceived is held rhetorically static within the development of the narrative.

Each consciousness employed to refract the Compson situation represents a limitation in awareness contributing to the downfall of the family. The Sound and The Fury thus exemplifies Mark Shorer's view of technique as a means of exploring and defining theme. The method employed by Faulkner in this novel underscores the fact that the whole truth can be apprehended only when he get over our limiting sensibilities, predilections and obsessions. The reader finally gets a vision of truth by seeing for himself the limitation of each Compson sensibility said by Dilsey's final perspective on the story of the Compson family. The technique evolved by Faulkner in The Sound and The Fury is a necessary means of projecting his material and helping the reader to grasp it. The perceptions that come to the reader inhere in the process of the occurrence of events. Faulkner's language and his fictional world evoke the past or better, relate the past to the present. Reading Faulkner, one feels involved in a long history of torment, suffering and anguish but also of endurance, dedication and love.

