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The Novel, Modernism and Technique in William Faulkner's 'The Sound and the Fury'

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Abstract:

Previously, aspects of prose fictional writing had been in existence as narratives, essays journal, memoirs and diaries. In the 19th century the novel became a distinguished and stable genre. In its conventional form, it is a continuous narrative of storytelling mode with defined plot, developed characters and realistic setting and events the novel has many forms and this has rendered it flexible to experimentation. As a historical phenomenon the form of the novel has been affected by the events of the twentieth century which gave rise to the widespread modernist movement. The paper uses a typical Modernist novel; The Sound and The Fury to examine the intensity of technical experimentation with form and content in the novel as is characteristic of modernist writing.

Keywords: Evolution of the novel, Modernist movement and Technical Aspects in the Modernist novel

1. Introduction

The twentieth century has been shaped by great world events especially the world wars 1&2. The ensuing war displaced and overturned the ideals of the enlightenment period. Western civilization reached its peak in knowledge, rational reasoning and ideological principles in the age of enlightenment, but with the presence of the wars, 'long-held assumptions concerning reasoning, historical progress and moral autonomy of human beings were plunged into crisis' (Habib p. 189) These unfortunate events were to shape Literature. This period also witnessed the stabilization of literary criticism as scholarly activity and a genre, the distinction and isolation of literature as category from other discourses of morality, history, and religion also concretized in this time.

The twentieth century form the background to modernist Literature. The movement enveloped Europe and America, major proponents of modernist writing were Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, W.B. Yeats, William Faulkner, Franz Kafka and others. The devastation caused by war on the psyche of individuals and society caused writers to attempt to represent and employ human experience in literature. Modernist writers used various symbols and experimented with literary modes to portray the decay and rot that characterised human relations and life in economically depressed and war-torn Europe and America. Habib substantiates that the 'Modernist writer occupied a world that was...fragmented, where the old bourgeois ideologies of rationality, science, progress and civilization, and imperialism had been somewhat discredited' (p.195)

2. The Rise of the Novel

Prose fictional writings have existed from very early in European and American literary art. These forms were mixed and interspersed with historical and philosophical treatises, biographies, essays, diaries and memos. Prose fictional writing of the 17th and early 18th century centred around factual stories and experiences of the authors. The novel as a genre of prose fiction evolved in the 18th century. The period also witnessed the emergence of the middle class, the increase in literacy and a reading culture which became the past time the elite. From its early beginning the novel has appeared in many different forms. These are; the pseudo-factual novel exemplified by Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, the biography also Defoe's *Moll Flanders*. Others are the epistolary novel form written Samuel Richardson; *Pamela and Clarissa*. The picaresque novel has Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* as a prominent example, there are also the historical novels of Scott, namely, *Waverley*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, *Old Mortality* and *Ivanhoe*.

In the late 18 to early 19th century the industrial revolution gave rise to the middle and working class. A category of people working in the industries this was one of society's innovations that replaced aristocracy and the land holding system. The advances in print technology occasioned mass production in books, magazines and newspapers these catered to the taste of the rising literate middle class, these category of readers sought after close-to-life stories, they were no longer satisfied with the fantasy and romantic stories. The period also shaped the subject matter of the novel. Content material no longer celebrated the aristocrats and royals but writers dwelt more on the daily challenges and experiences of the middle and lower class in society. The novel genre during this time attained distinction as a fictional narrative of continuous writing. Jowitt defines the novel as 'a prose fiction of a certain length (e.g.) greater than that of a short story), with credible characters and realistic setting and concerns (p. 144)

The period also witnessed the era of the American classics also known as the renaissance. In this period of the emergence of the novel as a stable form literary criticism was recognized as a form of professional and critical discourse with Edgar Allan Poe as a seminal writer. Writers like Walt Whitman, Samuel Clemens Emily Dickinson Stephen Crane were able to fictionalise American literary content. A characteristic style of 19th century writing was the use of 'bold images, colloquial speech and symbols drawn from workday life to capture a truth greater than the individual' (Miller Jr et al p. 299) American folk tradition in the form of songs tales and ballads were incorporated in the plots of novels. Novelist used realism as a tool to portray the lives of ordinary people as they lived in daily experience. A prominent realist writer is Samuel Clemens, he is said to have written his novels in 'an easy going style' while relaying heavily on folk material i.e.

2.1. *Huckleberry Finn*

Washington Irving and Fennimore Cooper, Cooper wrote historical novels that portrayed America's turbulent history. Examples are *The pioneers*, *The Last Mohicans* and *The Pathfinder* all revolve around the historical motif to capture the tense and often explosive social and economic relations between the North and South of America. The ideals that were spreading the Northern America of America as the land of freedom were resisted by the racially sensitive and slave-holding communities of Southern America. Consequently, volatile social relations resulted in the American civil war. Cooper used satire and allegory as camouflage to portray crises such that the novels are mostly rendered as tales of adventure with animal and grotesque non-human figures featured. More realistic depiction is evident in the novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry James and Mark Twain also the autobiographical narratives of Fredrick Douglass: a former Afro American slave.

In the late 19th century the realist novel became the dominant form of novel writing. Its narrative structure was the conventional form of story-telling with a structured, time-bound plot. Howthorne's novels capture in real terms human relation especially love relations between men and women. A case in point is the *Scarlet Letter*, the text tells the tragic story of a love relationship between Hester Prynne and a Young clergy, Dimmesdale which results in a child. The novel is set in an environment with puritan values; The woman is made to wear a capital red letter 'A' which stands for adulteress. Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne) novels deviated from the autobiographical genre but the stories are highly influenced by his life as a boy. He portrays in his novels *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry* 'a stoical boy' as hero. Henry James' novels also adopt the realist mode but they are romantically inclined especially in the portrayal of physical and sensual attraction between people in love with each other. In *The Portrait of a Lady* and *Ambassador* the author explores the dynamic of love relations with fully developed and complex themes that reflect industrialised society. Jowitt concludes that Henry James has 'developed a highly refined, allusive abstract complex style' (243) In time the form of the novel was affected by the happenings of society affected by economic depression and wars.

3. Modernism and the Novel

Modernism as a literary movement is an umbrella term for the many artistic experiments of the late 19th and early 20th century; these are realism, symbolism, futurism, the advangarde and surrealism. Theses sought to portray the disruption of social and economic life which resulted from the industrial revolution and the age of enlightenment that made people question the very essence and values of life. In literature this found expression in the writing of the time. Spender captures the modernist artistic mode thus:

There is the determination to invent a new style in order to express the deeply felt change in the modern world. Industrial machines, revolutions and scientific thinking are felt to have altered the texture of living. Every day language and taste reflect this change even though the image in the mirror is ugly (p.83)

In line with the above quotation, the modernist novel contravenes already established conventions of the novel, it sets its own features by which modernist writing is recognised. The change in plot sequence to a fragmented or plot less narrative is to reflect that event in real life do not follow a chronological order. The unconventional nature of the novel presents life without a pattern or certainty.

Modernism demonstrates a shift in artistic aesthetics from 19th century writing which portrayed a realist and ordered perspective of life. T.S. Eliot argues that 19th century aesthetics could no longer capture the 'immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history. 'In order to portray the theatre of war that modern society was immersed in' (Cliffnotes p.2) The 19th century novel adopted mostly a chronological order of beginning, middle and end. The modernist novel deploys a non-linear plot the narrative is relayed through the stream of consciousness. This presents an illusion of 'the story ...going nowhere' (Cliffnotes p.2) which Barth in the 'Literature of Replenishment' posits is captured 'essentially in the disruption of linear flow of narrative...the deployment of ironic and ambiguous juxtaposition. And a preoccupation with a narcissistic (self- absolved) interest in language and its processes.' (p.68) The medium of communication also reflects the lack of orderliness of life. Language is fragmented and obscure so that in writing such as this obscurity becomes the celebrated norm to portray the disharmony and the meaninglessness of man's existence.

There is the psychological state of man explored through the stream of consciousness technique. Writers use this mode to portray that so many different things occupy the mind at the same time. Faulkner deploys abundantly modernist techniques, such that it is almost impossible to make a distinction between theme and form in his writings because he is preoccupied with the novel as form. The novel as revelation and continuous story telling does not matter to him. He views the narrative as without an end.

The historical era from 1915-1945 in American history was the period of two world wars and the depression. The period was also considered 'strange and complex' such that it might have overwhelmed artistic imagination but American writers of the time had the imaginative power to take on the challenge. The generation that lived and wrote during the

world wars and great depression have been referred to as the lost generation their writing and live styles capture a 'war-weary' mood and cynicism. (Miller et al 382)

Modernist writers deployed particular artistic techniques to capture the mood of despair. For Faulkner his narrative is situated in the mythical country of Yoknapatawpha situated in the state of Mississippi. Faulkner makes abundant use of the stream of consciousness. It was in Scott Fitzgerald's *The Sun also Rises* that modernist writers and their works were portrayed as the 'lost generation' while Hemingway centres most of his novels on the devastation of war on the lives of soldiers and their loved ones, examples are *A Farewell to Arms* and *Another Country*. Another modernist writer, the social critic Richard Wright attacked the twin forces of racial discrimination and 'the dehumanizing forces of urban slums' in industrial American societies. (Miller et al, p. 383) All these approaches were aimed to capture the depravity of humanity in time of war

4. Technique in the Sound and the Fury

The setting of Faulkner's works is in the South of America. The South is dense with 'traditions, myths and historical conflicts.' Still when studied with modernist ideologies Faulkner's novels assume a national and universal significance especially because he is preoccupied with the human condition brought on by war and its severe consequences such as 'alienation and loss of values' (Miller et al p.83)

The novel *The Sound and the Fury* discusses the lives of members a degenerate family. The legendary family of the Compsons, where almost every ill that exists in society is found. The family is a symbol of the general society that is mentally and physically disabled, neurotic, morally decayed, unreasonable, brutal, indifferent, weak and loveless. In his portrayal Faulkner is interested in minds and emotions, the interaction of characters and how the incidents affect individuals and their relationship to one another.

The novel is divided into four parts. The first is told by Benjy. In Benjy's character Faulkner personifies the absurd by creating a congenital imbecile. A man of thirty- three years whose development has not advanced beyond babyhood. He has no sense of time, he cannot distinguish between significant and non- significant things, actual and imaginary events. His mind and words are those of a child, probably a mentally retarded child. His thought process is associative for example he says: Uncle Maury went away Versh also went away (Faulkner p.5) which in mature speech will be; Uncle Maury and Versh went away. Again in his mind he merges what happened in the present and that which happened twenty years ago. There is no separation and sense of history to delineate events. Another example: Can't you never crawl through there without snagging on that nail...Caddy uncaught me and we crawl through (p. 4). The former sentence is a reprimand from Luster, Benjy's nurse. In the latter one the event happened twenty years ago when he caught his clothing on a nail while with Caddy (his sister) to his mind all these are one happening. Benjy's uninterrupted and seamless flood of thoughts enables the author to portray a general and confused picture of his whole subject.

The state of society which is off balance is epitomised by Benjy whose life registers a form of continuous alienation. He is of that family yet not a part of it, he does not understand and cannot comprehend events, the only thing that holds some sort of reality for him is his devotion to his sister, Caddy. Benjy only knows that he loves Caddy, beyond that he has no further understanding of her life that is; her immoral behaviour, her wedding and the humiliating divorce that came as a result of Herbert Head's discovery of her pregnancy from an illicit relationship before their marriage. When she goes away never to return and lives as a mistress to a general in the German occupied French territory, his absolute devotion to her makes him still haunt the golf course in the hope of hearing her name. He also looks expectantly at the gate from which he sees the other children returning from school with the hope that she will be among them. This is from an abnormal and underdeveloped mind set. In the character of Benjy the mood of 20th century life is captured by the atheist Theodore Dreiser, he regarded life as 'a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' (Quoted in Carnegie p. 169)

The second part of the novel is told by Quentin, the second of the Compsons sons. Quentin is sensitive, an introvert, he is pathologically devoted to Caddy but his is not the uncritical devotion of Benjy. His relationship with Caddy is realised through his stream of consciousness. Quentin is a purist who cherishes virginity yet he says that: 'purity is a negative state and therefore contrary to nature.' (The Sound...p. 116). This is probably a reaction to what happens around him as exemplified by the immoral behaviour of Caddy. His disagreement with Caddy's behaviour makes him to hate one of her lovers, Dalton Ames, passionately. Unlike the character of the 19th century novels who are portrayed as coherent entities. The 20th century novel creates characters who are psychologically disoriented. Quentin, a student at Harvard, whose family wealth has been sold to provide for his education is unable to tell who he truly is. He voices: 'Thinking I was not who was not who was not who' (Faulkner p. 170) He is unable to shape his thoughts into a coherent pattern while he upholds chastity, he still thinks about committing incest and considers talking it over with his father in the hope that he will be relieved of his anguish. In Quentin is captured the modernist anti-heroes who find it difficult to preserve their identity and also stabilize personal and social relations between the self and the world around them. This typical feature of the Modernist characters is replicated by other writers; Albert Camus in *The Outsider* and Franz Kafka in *The Trial*. Their anti-heroic characters, Mersault and Josef K. are immersed in the legal complexities of their degenerate societies and are tragically unable to comprehend their circumstances or indeed make concerted attempts to wrestle to be free. Instead they foster absurd situations that propel them to their tragic ends.

In *The Sound...* Quentin is critical of his loveless family. This still explore through the abundant use of interior monologue. In his disillusionment he constantly talks about going away to where no one knows him. The children of the Compsons home grew up deprived of love in a home built by a cold and weak mother and an alcoholic and resigned father. Quentin holds his mother partly responsible for Caddy's behaviour. He regrets: 'my little sister had no if I could say

mother.' (P.117) he is also disgusted at Benjy and complains. 'Why don't you feed him in the kitchen, its like eating with a pig' and Jason who is no more loving than Quentin retorts 'if you don't like the way we eat, don't come to table.' (p.70) Quentin is no less guilty than other members of his family that he indicts. He is intelligent but is incapable of mutual affection and tenderness. In Quentin is an example of the mind's break down when faced with circumstances it cannot control. He says of himself:

I seemed to be laying neither asleep nor awake looking down a long corridor of grey half-light where all stable things had become shadowy paradoxical (p.170)

Quentin haven degenerated to insanity, there is the consistent imagery of the shadow which acts as the fore knowledge of his death. Quentin is presented stepping into the shadow, at other times the shadow is before him, then he senses death around him. And in exasperation he pronounces 'But now I know I am dead, I tell you' (p.114) Towards the end of Quentin's life he is accused of molesting a little Italian girl who attaches herself to him as he wanders in the little town of Cambridge. But concerning the accusation he is vouched for by his friends Spoade and Sheve. Quentin recounts: 'I went on. Then I looked back. She was behind me. Do you live this way? She said nothing. She walked beside me...we went on' (p112) although he knows nothing about this girl and she too says nothing to him he calls her 'sister' This provoking question would be that, could it be that meeting with this girl invoked in him thoughts of his sister, Caddy and in his neurotic state he did not see a difference between the little Italian girl and Caddy, because even when he is charged of kidnapping the girl, he tries attack one of his accusers as a way of protecting the girl he also makes reference to Dalton Ames, one of Caddy's lovers whom he hated. He is 'Caught' and charged to court for a girl he goes all over town trying to locate her family. Shreve, Quentin's roommate sees the whole thing as crazy when Quentin is asked to pay six dollars and the case against him is dismissed. Shreve asks 'what's that for (p.144) No reason or receipt is given for the six dollars.

There is an absurdity to the whole thing as Faulkner makes a comment about the meaninglessness and decay of life and the corrupt justice system. Nadel draws example from seminal works of modernist novelist, William Faulkner, Franz Kafka amongst others. She argues that "injustice, not justice dominates the legal literary landscape' (Abstract). Indeed, the legal system with its plethora of loose ends yields its self as a ready tool to foreground absurdity in modernist writing. In the preceding example major characters are embroiled in legal contradictions where the ounce of proof of guilty may rest with the prosecution or defendant. The deployment of arbitrary adjudication is subject to the judge (s) which may be determined by factors extraneous to the case.

Modernist novel antiheros; Josef K, Mersault and Quentin are already condemned even before trial from the stand point of a social consciousness, for they are alienated from the environments from the onset of narratives. They know they are doomed and so they do not put up a fight, again this quality of non-resistance is viewed with contempt by the justice system that condemns them. In *The Sound...* Quentin already on the edge and finding no meaning in existence ends it all. He justifies that he has learnt from his unloving family that all men are just an accumulation of dolls stuffed with saw dust; without substance.

In the third part of the novel the reader is made to view the world through the petty sadistic lunacy of the last of son of the family, Jason. He has not got an education and works as a clerk in a county store. Jason is traumatised by his loss of a promised bank job and he blames it on his sister's pre-marital pregnancy and divorce. It is through Jason the we learn of the death of Mr. Compson, Caddy's divorce and her visits to Jefferson to visit her daughter, Quentin (named after the Compson's second son) Jason equally bitter and dissatisfied fumes about young Quentin's promiscuity and likens her to her mother. He also fails to accept responsibility that he has contributed to making the house she lives in loveless. Jason uses the child's illegitimacy and her mother's absence to blackmail Caddy, as he covets the money that Caddy sends for her child's maintenance. When she suspects fowl play she backs out: 'I want to see the bank statement I want to see myself where the checks go' (p. 208) He in turn accuses her of a lack of trust in their mother, who is ignorant of his dishonesty. Jason lives in denial of self-investigation and reflection. When Quentin breaks into his room and makes away with seven thousand dollars; four of it her legitimate money and the other three from his savings, he acts with compulsive aggression. In his hot pursuit of Quentin and her lover, he is frustrated and nearly got his skull split by the little old man with the butcher's knife.

The last part of the novel is told in the third person narrative by the Author. He emphasis the role of Disley; The Compson's devoted cook and housekeeper. A woman of the black race, she represents some sense of harmony by her devotion and respect to members of the Compson family. Her life is portrayed as coordinated while that of her white folks is in a fragmentary disintegrated state. From a critical point it is viewed that Faulkner broke with the political atmosphere of the South of America where the state of Mississippi is situated an area that was troubled by racial tension. To portray a black woman in the legendary Compson household as a source of relief is to turn certain values on their head and to entrench unconventionality not only from an aesthetic point but also ideologically.

Faulkner while dividing the novel into parts deploys the multiple perspective mode to tell his story. The author confesses that he tried to see the family through the eyes of Benjy but it wasn't right then he tried Quentin then Jason and finally himself. Faulkner's submission is humorous, his writing exists as one of the classic example modernist experimentation and anti-logicality with the novel genre. His is a deliberate attempt to presents a layered perspective of viewing issues from many different points and still not arriving at a rounded picture. In *The Sound and the Fury* Caddy is viewed from various perspectives. Benjy see her with an uncritical mind, she is his angel who 'smelled like trees' Quentin wishes Caddy will be pure, he loves her so much that he is jealous of her lovers, also as part of a protest to her immorality, he commits suicide. Jason harbours a degraded opinion of Caddy and sees her as whore, who must be psychologically tortured and cheated, he feels for Caddy and her daughter a consuming hatred. In answer to why he did not let Caddy tell her story, Faulkner admits that he loved Caddy enough not to let her tell a painful story, but he used whatever tools he

thought were available to draw a picture of Caddy. In Modernist writing, the refusal by writers to arrive at a coherent submission serves to establish the atmosphere of disorganised and uncertain life which war and economic depression wrought on the populacethus, modernists argue that the human condition defies logical and meaningful explanation.

In modernist writing symbolism is contextualized as a literary mode. The symbolist movement exists as one of the many discourse of the modernism alongside surrealism and the avangarde. The movement began in France where, the term symbolist was first used by Jean Moreas (A French critic). The term, derived from the word symbol- which means a sign, icon used to portray something else. Its use was evident in the works of Charles Baudelaire, Stephen Mallarme and Paul Verlaine; all of them poets of French descent. The aim of symbolism is to adopt an indirect way to represent a circumstance. Taylor establishes that, Symbolism like all modernist forms reacted against conventional modes like naturalism and realism and: anti-idealistic styles which were attempts to represent reality in its gritty particularity and to elevate the jumble and ordinary over the ideal. Symbolism on the other hand favoured spirituality and imagination and dreams (p.2)

In modernist writing, the use of symbols to relay experience was most prominent in poetry, the genre of poetry uses symbols for compact and layered form. In American literature the poems of T.S Eliot, W.B. Yeats are examples where decay, degeneration and dehumanization of society's values are portrayed by the deployment of symbols. There has been a seamless appropriation by novelist who deploy symbolism as aesthetic tool in prose fiction because modernist writers share and propagate the theory's ideology.

There is copious use of symbols in the text. The very first use of symbolism is the title of the novel. Faulkner informs that he initially intended the book to be titled *Twilight* but as he viewed Benjy's whimpering as sound as fury, that became more suitable as a title. Indeed, in relating the events of the novel sound and fury represented as incoherence, vagueness emptiness, anger, lack of love and disenchantment characterise the Compson's home. The Compson family is herself a symbolic representation of the larger society whose values have decayed.

The is the symbolism of dirt, Caddy muddy behind is captured from her brothers' view who looked up the apple tree where Caddy had climbed to look through the window at her grandmother; Damuddy's funeral. The deeper meaning of this physical dirt is to reflect the moral dirt of her, which lead one brother to commit suicide and another to misuse money meant for her daughter's care.

The consistent presence of the shadow in and around Quentin and the over powering smell of honey suckle which dazed Quentin's senses and left him in a state of semi consciousness all foreshadow his impending death. Images of dirt, filth and decay are captured in Quentin's disgust at Benjy's feeding habits. These at the macro level signify his disgust and disillusion with his family and life. In the environment 'unpainted houses...a ban broken-backed, decaying quietly and the Compson's home with its 'square paintless and rotting portico' are all relics of a dehumanized and degenerate society which lacks beauty and is taken over by filth, also the image of the broken flower in Benjy's hand crowns the theatre of man's hopeless condition.(p.133)

In modernist fashion, Faulkner deploys the concept of time and appropriates it to unconventional use; incoherently and in reverse. Instances are drawn thus; Part one of the novel is dated seventh of April, Nineteen Twenty Eight (07/04/1928) while in part two, the events are back to Second of June Nineteen- Ten (02/06/ 1910). In the third part of the novel the date is recorded as Sixth April Nineteen Twenty-Eight (06/04/1928) and the fourth part of the novel relates the events of the text in the present on Eight April Nineteen Twenty Eight (08/04/1928). Even then the events related on those dates are not told as they happened, they are related through the stream of consciousness which thrives on interior monologue and flashback. Here The Author portrays that the present is submerged in the past the past pressurises the present. As an experimental form of time Faulkner operates at a level where he writes on two or more concurrent planes, shifting to one or the other as it suits him. He sums up his impression of time in what Quentin's father said to him when he gave him his grandfather's clock as a present.

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 (p.76)

Habib justifies Faulkner's narrative on time thus:

Time is not conceived in a static model which separates past, present, and future as discrete elements in linear relation; rather, it is viewed as dynamic, with these elements influencing and changing one another. (P. 196)

Modernist literature does not privilege direct usages of language to relate experience, they seek to create alternative codes to reflect the fragmented nature of society and an elusive reality which is still shattered by human barbarism. They depend on allusions, symbols and images to portray unsuccessful life, gloom and degeneration. Therefore, modernist literature in its unconventional nature consciously breaks with traditional forms. Beasley asserts that modernism question the basic assumptions of literature and seeks to 'make it new' (1) Furthermore the experimentation with 'form and expression' is described using Ezra pound's maxim of 'make it new' (1) Faulkner asserts that the author has the prerogative to create his own language, he goes on justify Eliot and Joyce who found that language as it stood did not suit their purposes in their portrayal of the human condition; Faulkner reinvents the rules of grammar by writing for long stretches without punctuation marks of comma or full stop. The mode also serves to intensify the stream of consciousness. He also deploys a technique known as synthesis which in medical parlance is known as synaesthesia, a neurological condition where one sense perception stimulates other senses. As a literary technique it is used to violate Concorde thereby creating fresh meaning, for example Quentin's nose can 'see' gasoline and his hands can 'see' the door. (Faulkner p. 173) There is also a subversion of mechanics; capital letters are replaced by lowercase letters on proper nouns, i.e. names of people, places and on the pronoun I. The use of the small letter for the pronoun i in Quentin's section signifies the

eventual death of Quentin. This assertion is generalised for other sections of the novel because even those who did not commit suicide died physical and spiritual deaths-Damuddy, Mr Compson of whom physical death is recorded and Benjy, Caddy, Jason, Mrs. Compson were all morally and spiritually dead.

5. Conclusion

Modernism shaped the novel and other artistic genres, writers sought to understand and portray societal reality through experimentation with content, form and technique. A prominent feature of modernist novel is the overturn and disregard for linear narrative. Writers are concerned with a condensed attention on artistic skills to distinguish the literary art as an instrument that is used to portray and capture societal disintegration, thus the novel and other genres represent a radical break with conventional tropes. Faulkner's works represent a conscious break with the traditional forms especially of the 19th century novel. In addition to *The Sound and the Fury*, his other texts; *As I Lay Dying* and *Light in August* ride on the motif of legendary and materialistic, families whose crumbling social values are a reflection of the contemporary society 'that was becoming meaningless through the loss of certainties' (Jowitt p. 281)

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