

World in Sound, Consciousness in Fury---Comment on The Sound and the Fury

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Abstract:The Sound and The Fury is a work which Faulkner like it best and try his most efforts to write .it is also his first mature novel. There are lots of multiple narrative points of view and stream of consciousness writing technique applied in the novel, which make the novel puzzling illusory, obscure and hard understand, Just as Faulkner's life. ^[1] He experienced many setbacks and impacts in his life so that he wanted to express his inner emotion by creating all kinds of morbid figures telling the turbulent consciousness in the novel. He mentioned Yoknapatawpha Jefferson town many times in his works. It's the world he created. He is the king of the world. He can do whatever he want there just to console himself because the real world he lived is so sound and fury.

Keywords:Sound;World; Fury; Consciousness

1. Introduction

The Sound and the Fury was Faulkner's most famous work. The title of the novel came from the famous lines in act 5 scene 5 of Shakespeare's tragedy "Macbeth" : "Life is like an idiot, full of sound and fury, but do not make any sense."^[2] From this title we learned that Faulkner held a negative attitude towards life, and this negative attitude stemmed from the experience of his life. The Sound and the Fury had gotten wide public concern from the critics since it was published, there have been a lot of scholars analyzed and researched it from the aspect of stream of consciousness, narrative point of view, the religious pattern of Bible, the character analysis and so on. Through their hard work, numbers of valuable things have been excavated. They did make great contributions for the world literature research. The purpose of this paper is to analyze and discuss the effect which Faulkner's family, objective society and the historical background caused in his stream of consciousness writing techniques.

2. World in Sound

2.1 The Family Background of Faulkner

Faulkner was a man came of a good stock. His family is a typical southern family which had a long history and was influential in the local prestigious. His great grandfather William• Clark• Faulkner was a man enriched in the legend color who headed the troops to fight against with the north allied forces and repeatedly performed outstanding service in the battle of the Civil War. He played an important part in Faulkner's growth. But unfortunately, He was assassinated the day he became a congressman. That was a huge suffer for the whole family. When Faulkner's father began to be in charge of the family, the family's financial situation begun to declined gradually. At the beginning, Faulkner's father quit the job in Mississippi State University at Oxford and indulged himself freely with alcohol. At last, he sold the railroad company which was the family fortune, making the family deep in financial difficulties and was penniless and frustrated. The conflict of the family was growing fiercer.Faulkner did not know what to do to respond the fierce family conflict. As a result, he was conscious of a sense of guilt and shame.

2.2 The Growing Experience of Faulkner

In his childhood Faulkner grew to be shorter than the people at his age and was often laughed at by his friends, sometimes even by his father. The division of the declining family and the disadvantage of his body drove Faulkner to develop the imagination to the point of dependence. He thought that the real world was full of pain and misfortune so he wanted to escape it and lived in the world of his imagination.In his youth the fate played jokes with him again and again. In 1918, Faulkner wanted to achieve fame and success in the battle of the World War One, but before he finished the base training and prepared to joined the war, the war was over. Faulkner was frustrated, so he indulged in alcohol and became penniless. In order to change this situation, he decided to devote himself to literature and began to write for a living. But in the early stage of his creative writing periods, he did not make great success.

3. Consciousnesses in Fury

Faulkner was daunted by the pressure which came from the family, school, life and society. The pressure was too heavy to bear for him, so he was deeply engrossed in the imagination and crazed about that. There were lots of multiple narrative points of view and stream of consciousness writing techniques applied in the novel The Sound and the Fury which make the novel puzzling, illusory and obscure. ^[3] Faulkner had a profound mind, he was afraid that he would die of a disintegrating consciousness and mind splitting

and falling apart. In order to avoid this kind of things happened, he became more and more relied on the art. By mixed, added, deleted, altered the consciousness and the imagination in his mind, he endowed his works with a new different look and created many unique images in his art world again and again. In the world which Faulkner created in his mind, the consciousness and the imagination were tumultuous and riotous. In Faulkner's books the time and the places both happened in the past and now, the things that had happened, was happened and will be happen are mixed together.

3.1 The Consciousness of Benjy

The stream of Benjy's consciousness was disordering and unsystematic and the time order in his description was chequered with the past and the present. Faulkner reflected the idiot's mental attitude which was in a state of confusion to our readers ingeniously.

3.2 The Consciousness of Quentin

The second part of the story gave an account of Quentin. He loved his little sister Caddy, but he loved the honor of his family and historical and cultural heritage of the south much more. The humiliation which caused by Caddy made shame to him and the whole family. He felt a guilty conscience of himself and he could not find a friend to open his mind and release from the sorrows. The overweight psychological burden and the depression made him to commit suicide in the end.

3.3 The Consciousness of Jason

In the chapter of Jason, there were only a short paragraph of stream of consciousness when Jason reminded that he was the only one in the family kept a business which going painstakingly to support the family. Faulkner ever said that "Jason was a person without any moral standards or principles. He was an evil man with evil ideas, and led an evil life. He thought the spirit of materialism was the greatest and highest value in his life."

4. The Influence of the Objective World on the Consciousness

The viewpoints of the materialistic and dialectic philosophy proved that "the consciousness is the reaction of human brain to the objective world. The consciousness not only can reflect the world but also can create the world." There was no doubt that the creation of *The Sound and the Fury* was influenced by the life experience of Faulkner. In this novel he created an imagination world and reflected the objective world at the same time. In the particular circumstances, his family and hometown were pounded by the modern civilization and under the contradictory conflict between the ideal and the reality, he criticized the old system of the southern tradition through the brush strokes which were full of anger and doubt, and expressed pity and pains for the south and his family. He wanted to reshape a feeling of homely warmth, the affection between brothers and sisters, tender loving care given by his father and other interpersonal relationships, standards of behavior, morality and ethics. These complicated emotions were reflected brightly in *The Sound and the Fury*.

4.1 Be Skillful at Stream of Consciousness Writing Technique

William Faulkner used "stream of consciousness" to explore ways of literary expression and made outstanding achievements in his work. Stream of consciousness in the novel was the imitation of character's flowing consciousness in the process of narration. To be specific, with the consciousness activities of the character as the central structure, centering around the central consciousness which seen on the face was randomly generated and loosely organized and then showing them by mixing the observation, memory, association feeling, thinking, emotion and willing.

4.2 The Influence of Family Background on the Novel

Faulkner witnessed his family went to ruin and the process that the economy of plantation in the south embezzled by the economy of capitalism in the north. The gap between the honorable achievement of his forefathers and the disappointing achievement of his father was so immense that he could not accept. In *The Sound and the Fury*, we found that the condition and the life of the Compsons were similar to the Faulknors. Faulkner wanted to express his thinking and emotion to the novel.

4.3 The Influence of War on the Novel

Although Faulkner had not taken part in the battle of the World War One, the war caused great psychic trauma on him. *The Sound and the Fury* objectively reflected the historical background of the southern American in the 1920s. In this novel, Faulkner returned to the world he created which named Yoknapatawpha. The outburst of the soul which gave off from the book caused a trembling in people's hearts and souls. It struck a deep chord in our heart. Because Faulkner suffered much hurt and pain from the family and the war, he expressed his suffering in the world he created.

5. Conclusion

Although *The Sound and the Fury* appears just as a tale told by an idiot, to a great extent it was the interior emotion which expressed by mixing the experience of the objective world and the multiple narrative stream of consciousness writing technique. The American woman writer Giuseppe Verdi said that "the novel came from the area of life". The life and the status of a writer and the culture he influenced not only determined what he wrote but also determined how he wrote. The abundant experiences offered Faulkner profound cultural foundation, meanwhile he was sensitive with the condition of people's mind, the relationship of time, and skilled in stream of consciousness writing technique.

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