

THE TRENDS OF STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS TECHNIQUE IN WILLIAM FAULKNER S NOVEL THE SOUND AND THE FURY”

Chitra Yashwant Gaidhani

Assistant Professor in English,

G. E. Society RNC Arts, JDB Commerce and NSC Science College,

Nashik Road, Tal. & Dist. Nashik, Maharashtra, India.

Abstract:

The term "Stream-of-Consciousness" signifies to a technique of narration. Prior to the twentieth century. In this technique an author would simply tell the reader what one of the characters was thinking? Stream-of-consciousness is a technique whereby the author writes as though inside the minds of the characters. Since the ordinary person's mind jumps from one event to another, stream-of-consciousness tries to capture this phenomenon in William Faulkner's novel The Sound and Fury. This style of narration is also associate with the Modern novelist and story writers of the 20th century. The Sound and the Fury is a broadly significant work of literature. William Faulkner use of this technique Sound and Fury is probably the most successful and outstanding use that we have had. Faulkner has been admired for his ability to recreate the thought process of the human mind. In addition, it is viewed as crucial development in the stream-of-consciousness literary technique. According encyclopedia, in 1998, the Modern Library ranked The Sound and the Fury sixth on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century. The present research focuses on stream of consciousness technique used by William Faulkner's novel "The Sound and Fury". It also tries to well acquaint with term Stream-of-consciousness with the help of four narrators i.e. Benjy, Quentin, Jason, and Dilsey who in overall novel describe the central character Caddy, who is the main focus of the novel.

Keywords : stream of consciousness, interior monologue

Introduction:

The term stream-of-consciousness is invented by Psychologist William James in his research *The Principles of Psychology* in 1890. Many writers like James Joyce employs this technique in his novel *Ulysses*. Another writer who followed James Joyce is Virginia Woolf in her novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. Even in novel *The British Museum Is Falling Down*, David Lodge used same technique, Toni Morrison uses stream of consciousness in 1987 novel *Beloved*. Modernist poet T.S Eliot used this technique in his

famous poem, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. The terms ‘stream-of-consciousness’ and ‘interior monologue’ are used interchangeably by some — but stream-of-consciousness refers more often to a first person narrative which mimics the jumble of thoughts, emotions and memories passing through a character’s mind. That said, interior monologue is not necessarily written in first person. Stream-of-consciousness tends to be less ordered than interior monologue. That’s because consciousness has no beginning and no end — thoughts dart quite randomly from one thing to another. Stream of consciousness is a regular feature of The Psychological Novel. In many cases Faulkner creates characters who are themselves detached witnesses of the main action and whose monologues are interior in form only. Even in genuine stream-of-consciousness passages there are many shifts to ordinary discourse and conventional flash-back description. Although all of the characters narrate through stream of consciousness, they all have different ways of conveying their thoughts and ideas. Benjy, Quentin, Jason, and Dilsey all have something different they are able to bring to the table, showing the Compson family from four different viewpoints. As a literary term, “stream of consciousness” refers to any effort by a writer to represent the conscious and subconscious thoughts and impressions in the mind of a character. This technique takes the reader inside the narrating character's mind, where he sees the world of the story through the thoughts and senses of the central character. The Present research analyzes William Faulkner’s narrative style in “The Sound and the Fury.” It deals with stylistic devices used by the author.

Review of Literature:

Tatiana Vepkhvadze (2013) explained in his research paper how Faulkner implies stream of consciousness technique in a play. And mention it as modernist movement.

Mahmoud Ali Ahmed, Nada Hassan Mohammed Ahmed (2016) mentioned all four section and also describe how four narrators used stream-of –consciousness technique effectively. He also mention the importance and development of this technique in first two sections and the trends of stream of consciousness technique in William Faulkner’s novels

Ramji Lal: *The Sound and Fury* (1986): in his book clarified that the reader sees the dramatic situation only through the minds of several narrating characters. He also explained the difference between the techniques of the first two monologue.

Use of stream of consciousness technique:

William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), which is rich in the stream of consciousness technique, mainly the first three sections. In the first section, Benjy’s section, Faulkner uses the stream of consciousness to reflect the flow of thoughts inside Benjy’s mind. There is no chronological order in

whatever Benjy mentions. Rather, there are fast time shifts for he relates a certain event and then goes on to speak about completely different event. Then he moves back to complete the first event or he might not. In The first section in *The Sound and the Fury* is told from the point of view of Benjy Compson, a thirty-three-year-old “idiot”, and narrates via flashbacks the initial events in the novel. As an idiot, Benjy is the key to the novel’s title, which alludes to Shakespeare’s tragedy *Macbeth*. For the most part, his language is simple-sentences are short, vocabulary basic. Every reader recognizes the simplicity of Benjy’s style of speech, the opening monologue Faulkner gives the impression that an idiot’s unconscious mind is somehow responsible for the narration. But the function of the monologue is to provide dramatic exposition while creating the misleading atmosphere of psychological chaos. A major portion of the monologue is dedicated to actions which cannot understand by the idiot Benjy. Instead of trying to discover an idiot’s mind, Faulkner adopts a narrative point of view which follows Benjy’s action but reports in a separated and impersonal manner what the idiot sees and experiences.

Benjy’s dialogue is basically symbolic and it is absolutely suitable for this section, as symbols come from simple perceptions and feelings, we might suggest that Faulkner presents symbols as alternates for rationally formulated ideas. This can be proved in both Benjy and Quentin sections of the novel. The two kinds of mental deviation represented reveal themselves naturally in terms of images and symbols. Because they are represented as coming directly from a William Faulkner’s Narrative Mode In “*The Sound and the Fury*” Even while using this technique, Faulkner differs it with each section. For example, in the Benjy section, Faulkner’s style is basically simple, which does not mean that the section is simple, but that each individual sentence is a rather simple and uncomplicated one. There are no difficult words because the vocabulary of Benjy would naturally be simple. Since his mind does not function logically, Faulkner records the thinking in terms of basic images. Thus, he is not troubled with the details of life, and he is not concerned with images or impressions. The order and simplicity of his section is a result of his single-minded viciousness.

Faulkner again employs the stream of consciousness technique in the second section of this novel, which is Quentin’s section. Quentin’s section is easier to read than Benjy’s. One can follow with what he is saying whether italics are used or not to indicate his moving to relate a memory from the past. This section opened with Quentin noticing the shadow of the past and his remembering the watch his father gave him and the advice Mr.Compson offered about the need to forget time. Quentin’s father was of the attitude that there were no values worth anything in life that time curse all things. Quentin tried to deny this philosophy but he was unable. He concerned time, he didn’t like his father. Unlike Benjy, Quentin

completes every event that he relates to the very end. However, and like Benjy's section, Quentin's section is characterized by an extreme flow of thoughts when remembering certain memories during his last day before committing suicide.

This is a typical example of the stream of consciousness technique, where there is no punctuation, no capitalization, and no full stops. This helps Quentin to reflect his thoughts without any kind of interruption. In addition, Quentin uses a past stream of consciousness in relating certain episodes in his life. This is due to the fact that the day in which he is speaking is the last day before his death. Quentin will commit suicide soon after the last page of this section. This day is the only present for Quentin; everything else is past for him.

Whereas Faulkner's style is relatively noncomplex in presenting the simple mind of Benjy, when he returns to the complex and intricate mind of Quentin, his style changes drastically. In Quentin's section, we find long, complex, and difficult ideas. Quentin is trying to solve complicated moral issues; therefore his section is more complicated. Likewise, Quentin's mind is a more advanced mind and his thoughts jump from one idea to another very quickly. The technique that Faulkner uses to give order to Quentin's intention to kill himself at the end of his monologue were necessary to intensify the dramatic tension between the past and present throughout Quentin's stream of consciousness. Quentin's stream-of-consciousness narrative turns almost invariably to his shadow, implying an important link between it and black identity.

The stream of consciousness technique is not used in the third section, Jason's section, as much as it is used in Benjy's and Quentin's. Jason is not really passionate with the past as Benjy and Quentin are. He is rather obsessed with his present financial situation; he only thinks of money and how to gain larger amounts of money. He is even ready to steal others if this is the only way for him and this is what he does with his niece, Quentin. He takes most of the money sent by her mother, Caddy, and leaves her very few pennies. Dilsey better describes Jason when she tells him, "You's a cold man, Jason, if man you is" (207). An example of the stream of consciousness technique in this section is when Jason remembers a series of past events such as having an idiot brother and a second brother who is a Harvard student who committed suicide. He also remembers his sister who committed promiscuity and since then it was ordered that her name should not be mentioned anymore in the house:

Faulkner uses the stream of consciousness technique in the first three sections and this narrative technique indeed distinguishes these sections. However, when Faulkner dispenses with it in the last section, he is still able to give Dilsey's section an air of uniqueness. Of all the characters in *The Sound and*

the Fury, Dilsey ‘appeals’ much to the readers. This is something intended by Faulkner in his novel. Dilsey accepts things as they really are; she lives in the real world. As a result, when all the other characters are at loss, Dilsey is “morally active”.

Importance of stream of consciousness technique in the novel

Stream of Consciousness trends to discover and expose the unspoken thoughts of characters. Faulkner reflected this in the novel of *The Sound and The Fury* in Benjy and Quentin sections. The first section in the novel, namely Benjy, served two purposes. They were:

1-it revealed Benjy’s psyche or inner life.

2-it provided an objective record of certain dramatic events in the Compson’s family.

Faulkner inserted the mind of an idiot and strolling in his mind to represent his limited abilities. His body was affected by some physical sensation and that activated his memory of similar experience in the past. There was no chronological order in anything Benjy mentioned. He was unable of concept and generalization. There were many things which made impressions on his mind but he couldn’t connect things. With Quentin he presents us with someone trapped in the past, unwilling to accept the present and who ultimately refuses the future by committing suicide. With the perceptiveness of the imprecise stream-of-consciousness technique and the recognition of Faulkner's subtle hints, one begins to employ, a new way of reading fiction. Having a deep look at the stream-of-consciousness issue, it can be seen that, in creating stream-of-consciousness narration, most writers use a third person observer whose point of view is almost identical with that of the character in question. Faulkner is nearly unique in his choice to employ stream-of-consciousness in first person narration. By using first person narration, Faulkner gains an advantage, which lies in the opportunity to show the contrast between a strong dramatic action and the mental reactions of a character without a narrative disruption or a significant tone difference. In many cases Faulkner creates characters who are themselves detached witnesses of the main action and whose monologues are interior in form only. Even in the genuine stream-of-consciousness passages there are many swings to ordinary discourse and conventional flashback descriptions.

Preconscious associations:

Another aspect that is related to the stream of consciousness technique and is obvious in this section is the association of images or the “preconscious associations” as Kavin so describes it. For example, the sound of the word “caddie” reminds Benjy of his sister Caddy. This shows that the reader is not only reading the novel and following its events, but the reader is also making deductions. Benjy is not saying that “caddie” reminds him of his sister Caddy, but it is the reader who deduces this idea. This is the

role of the reader and this is what makes a psychological novel unique and different; the reader has a role in the novel. The characters do not say that they are using the stream of consciousness technique, but it is the reader who finds out this. In this respect, Kawin points out that, Benjy is not aware that X reminds him of Y and that he has an attitude toward the difference between X and Y (he does not say to himself that he misses Caddy, for instance). But the reader deduces the meaning of the juxtaposition of X and Y, which is his ‘thought,’ and his occasional bellowing can be taken as further evidence (that he misses the Caddy he “thought of” when he heard ‘caddie,’ though he cannot say this). (253). When he heard the golfers called the word Caddie in that time he remembered his sister whom he loved her more than anyone. Time had no meaning for him and the present and the past blended into one response for him. Many of the scenes of the past that he remembered were connected with his sister Caddy in one- way or another. When Luster carried him through the fence, his mind automatically returned to an earlier scene, in which he was involved in the same type of activity. The thought of cold hands reminded him of an earlier episode. Uncle Maury once visited the Compson family for the Christmas holiday. He saw that Benjy was a worry to Mrs. Compson. He asked her to let Versh took him outside. Versh dressed Benjy and told him to keep his hands in his pockets. He went to the gate to wait for Caddy. He remembered Caddy’s smell like tree. His memory caused him to start moaning. Luster couldn’t understand why he mourned so much. On one occasion, some girls came by then and Benjy wanted to say something to them about Caddy just to unburden his mind of the thought of Caddy. But the girls were frightened and ran away. He chased the girls trying to speak to them. His mother and Jason mistook the feelings of Benjy. He remembered these events and started moaning.

Conclusion:

Faulkner used stream of consciousness in his novel as a narrative technique according to the meaning of psychological novel. He concentrated on the internal world of a character. He reflected the trends of stream of consciousness technique in psychological style to present traits of a character. . Faulkner’s handling of stream of consciousness technique allows the narrator to shape a particular version of the character’s consciousness in terms of images, which need not be actual words or thoughts as the character expressed them. It’s almost enough for us to submit that the advantages of the stream-of-consciousness method for this novel are explained by the central role consciousness itself plays in it.

References:

1. Ramji Lall (1986), *The Sound and Fury*, Aarti Book Centre, New Delhi.

2. Dr. Mahmoud Ali Ahmed and Dr. Nada Hassan Mohmmmed Ahmed (2016) Research Paper entitle *The trends of stream of consciousness technique in William Faulkner's novels*, Sudan University of Science and Technology, Sudan
3. Tatiana Vepkhvadze (2013), *William Faulkner's Narrative Mode in "The Sound and the Fury" a Stream of Consciousness Technique or Interior Monologue Used in Benjy's Section* International Black Sea University, Georgia.
4. Faulkner William (1994), *The Sound and The Fury*. W W Norton & Company Incorporated,
5. Wikipedia