

Tradition, History, Community and Ambition in William Faulkner's Select Works

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Abstract

William Faulkner was an American writer, known for his short stories and novels. The setting for his works is usually the fictional Yoknapatawpha County. William Faulkner is one of the most famous writers of American literature. Faulkner is also considered a great writer of Southern Literature. This paper studies some of the author's critically acclaimed works.

Keywords: William Faulkner, The Sound and The Fury, As I Lay Dying

I. INTRODUCTION

William Faulkner was an American writer, known for his short stories and novels. The setting for his works is usually the fictional Yoknapatawpha County. William Faulkner is one of the most famous writers of American literature. Faulkner is also considered a great writer of Southern Literature. Southern Literature refers to American Literature that is written about the southern regions of the United States. Southern literature also refers to the literature written by the authors from those regions of the South. Southern Literature often emphasizes on the importance of family and community. The presence of social classes and Christianity as the dominant religion, are important themes in Southern Literature. Faulkner's most famous novels are The Sound and The Fury and As I Lay Dying. Both of these novels have received immense praise in the literary world.

II. THE SOUND AND THE FURY

The Sound and The Fury is a novel by William Faulkner, published in 1929. Multiple narrative styles are included in the novel. The novel also employs the Stream of Consciousness technique for the purpose of narration. The Sound and The Fury is a Southern Gothic novel. Southern Gothic works are influenced by the American South and Gothic elements. The setting of the novel is Jefferson, located in the state of Mississippi. The novel revolves around the fictional Compson family. The members of the Compson family were once Southern aristocrats. They are now struggling with the dissolution of the family and their reputation. The family faces enormous financial ruin. In a span of thirty years, many members of the family die tragically. The Sound and The Fury consists of four narratives. The first narrative is from the perspective of Benjamin Compson. Benjamin Compson is an intellectually disabled man, who is thirty years of age. The second section focuses on Quentin Compson, who is Benjamin's brother. Quentin dies by suicide. The third section is written from the point of view of Jason, who is Quentin's younger brother, and he is portrayed to be quite cynical. The fourth section uses a third person omniscient narrator. Traditional Southern values are an important theme in the novel. Tradition, history, community and ambition are the core themes.

III. AS I LAY DYING

As I Lay Dying is a Gothic novel by William Faulkner. It is considered as Southern Gothic novel and a Black Comedy. A Black Comedy is a style of comedy that makes fun of topics that are generally considered to be taboo and quite serious. The Stream of Consciousness technique is employed for the purpose of narration. There are multiple narrators in the novel. As I Lay Dying consists of fifteen narrators, spread over fifty-nine chapters. The novel revolves around the death of Addie Bundren. She belongs to a rural and poor family. Her family tries to honour her wish i.e., Addie had wanted to be buried in Jefferson, which is her hometown, located in the State of Mississippi. At the beginning of the novel, Addie is alive, but is very sick. She watches

as her son, Cash makes her coffin. After she passes away, her family puts her non-embalmed body in a coffin, and start to trek by a wagon.

The family encounters several difficulties along the way. On the way, Cash even breaks his leg. Twice in the novel, the Family almost loses Addie's coffin. The first such instance occurs when the family cross a river on a washed-out bridge. The second such occurrence happens when an expected fire starts in the barn where the coffin is stored. The family eventually reaches Jefferson after nine days. The novel is set in Yoknapatawpha County in the State of Mississippi. Tradition, history, community and ambition are the core themes.

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