

Quentin's Distracted Mind in Faulkner's
The Sound and the Fury:
A linguistic Analysis of His Stream of Consciousness

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Abstract

The present study attempts to analyze the linguistic potential of Quentin's stream of consciousness submerged within his interior monologue that makes the second section of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. Quentin, who is the sole narrator of this section, is on the verge of madness as he speculates his family's degeneration and prepares for his own suicide. His interior monologue shows all the signs of madness and mental disorder. He breaks his sentences, leaves them incomplete, flouts grammar, and neglects the usual traditions of writing or even speaking. However, his linguistic output, which seems to be lacking in discipline, is found to pack itself up into regular patterns of peculiarities or distortions. This study is an attempt to uncover and elicit as well as sort these peculiar patterns that are obviously Quentin's specific. The narrative functions of these deliberate distortions are also touched upon as well as their thematic thrust which contribute to the overall symphony the three Compson brothers compose.

1. Introduction

In reply to a question asked about the reason behind writing a second section to his novel, Faulkner asserts that Quentin's section is designed to fill in gaps left by Benjy, the idiot-narrator of the first section. Faulkner manipulates Quentin to clarify what his idiot brother has made vague. Since Quentin is no less mad than Benjy, his