Abstract

The present study aims at an approach to Faulkner's novels off the beaten track. It investigates if Faulkner was really indifferent to changes that were taking place around him and opposed to enlightenment. With this view the attention has been mainly focussed on his five major novels: The Sound and the Fury, As I lay Dying, Sanctuary, Light in August and Absalom, Absalom! They are acclaimed by critical opinion to represent his most significant and representative work.

The entire study has been divided into eight chapters:

1. Introduction
2. The Background of Faulkner's Fiction
3. The Vision of Change
4. Myth and Myth Making
5. Psychological Realism
6. Symbolism
7. Art and Technique
8. Conclusion.

The introduction explains why this study has been undertaken. It provides a brief account of his themes to suggest that there are reasons to believe that
Faulkner was aware of the changes taking place in the South and the world, and was concerned about them. It also discusses Faulkner's attitude towards the problems facing the South.

The second chapter briefly describes the Southern situation in the post-bellum and post World War I era to present an overview of the material used by Faulkner for his novels. It also discusses the world of Faulkner's novels based on this material -- Yoknapatawpha.

In the third chapter, his novels have been analysed to find out his attitude towards change. The chapter reveals that the attitude of Faulkner's characters towards change is not Faulkner's attitude. Faulkner was aware of the problems facing South because of the incompleteness of change in the post-bellum period and his lack of concern with the future is a limitation imposed by his material. He has tried to deal in his novels with the reasons why past so obsesses the Southern mind that it has strangulated the present. His own view is that change is an inevitable process of life, but if the concomitant change in values is absent then it leads to as much corruption as the obsession with the past leads to degeneration.

The fourth chapter discusses an important aspect of Faulkner's fiction: his exploration of myths and
his own myth making. It deals with the transformation of historical material into generalized human experience. It especially explores his analogical view of the old and new religious, social and political values. Through larger archetype mythical patterns that he has used, he successfully conveys how obsession with the past and inequality in the Southern society has led to numerous social, religious and political evils which have degenerated the South. It also reveals how the abnormal characters who try to arrest time and go against the motion of life destroy both life and themselves.

The fifth chapter is about psychological portrayal of his characters. His treatment of characters shows how they are affected by their environment and what happens when their natural drives and impulses are vitiated by their conditioned outlook. He presents the psychological analysis of his characters, their tensions, releases, revulsions and hatred as well as their source of strength. The characters also represent various types who have relevance to contemporary history.

The sixth chapter provides a study of Faulkner's use of symbolism. Faulkner adds sub-surface meaning to his statements by using symbols. These symbols when
associated with characters evoke the reader's sympathy or antipathy for that particular character and also indicate which way the writer's sympathies lie. When symbolic significance is attached to a situation, place or action it makes a comment by either implied irony or paradox or reinforcing the meaning.

The seventh chapter is a study of Faulkner's technical innovations and a modern way of communication. He relates the same story and uses the same material in all of his works, however, the mode of presentation differs from one novel to another. In The Sound and the Fury, he has used the modern technique of interior monologue. In Absalom, Absalom! he has used the 'siron' method which helps him to reveal the different shades of mental states of his characters through different angles. In Light in August, though the technique appears to be traditional because of his excessive use of antithesis and polarities in the conception and characters but, infact, he paints the subconscious of his characters like a great psychologist. To achieve his object, he takes the support of sound and silence, mobility--immobility, turbulence-quiescence and tension etc., abundantly. In Sanctuary, he has used the allegory in its modernized form, that is, we are face to face with humanly figures instead of mere abstract
characters as have been introduced in the traditional allegories.

The last chapter presents the conclusion of the study.