

The sound and the fury quentin



The Sound and the Fury: Quentin's Section Man is the sum of his misfortune. One day you'd think misfortune would get tired, but then time is your misfortune! (Faulkner) Sartre's ascertainment on Quentin's eminent demise explains in a few sentences the theme of Quentin's character and the style of the author who created him. In The Sound and the Fury Faulkner portrays a continuous paradoxical circumstance consisting of a nonexistent future, a murky present and an all consuming past which in itself shaped his character's, Quentin's, development and doomed him to one possible conclusion. Faulkner's style of storytelling surrounds, while bleak, tells a basic truth of time being man's greatest foe.

Quentin is simply an illustration of this war and the inevitable conclusion of time being challenged. In order to truly analyze Quentin's section it becomes important to understand Faulkner and his form of storytelling, while keeping Sartre's assertion firmly in mind. In reading Quentin's section, Faulkner's own point of view in regards to time becomes prevalent. His whole concept of time is not the traditional, linear, but unconventional and slightly muddled. With this in mind it becomes important to not mistake this for the disregarding of time.

Faulkner puts it as his main theme above all others in this section, and his book as a whole. Traditionally, however, we think of time as three categories: past, present and future. Faulkner only focuses on the present and the past. Benjy has no concept of future and Quentin cannot seem to reach for it. This highly introspective character lives in the past.

While there is some present it is muddled and highly simplistic, with an action by action event sequence, or very seemingly still as if time as stopped for that moment. Outside of these confused moments, the present events are thought of in terms of past, as if as Quentin is living they are already becoming past events. This is the style Faulkner writes in for over a hundred pages. Faulkner's obsession with time is illustrated in his most tortured and caged character, Quentin. Quentin's issue with time is made clear at the very beginning of his passage "I give it [Grandfather's watch] not that you may remember time, but that you might forget it; not spend all your breath trying conquer it; Because no battle is ever won; The field only reveals to man his own folly and despair." (Faulkner 76). While embodying what Quentin must do to survive it also foretells what Quentin will not have the ability to overcome. As he glides through his last day of life we observe the dull gray scale of his present day and the stark contrast it has to his memories.

As Sartre said, "Faulkner's heroes, they never look ahead. They face backwards as the car carries them along". Quentin is floating through his in a seemingly impassive manner as he relives his past. The present moments that do break through his raging thoughts are slow and surreal "she was in tow, the tug nudging along under her quarter, trailing smoke, but the ship herself was like she was moving without visible means" (Faulkner 89).

It's as if moments for Quentin will freeze in time and then fade as more vivid memories flood back in. That present moment that was noticed for but a second will then glide into the past for him to revive later. Interestingly

enough when he thinks on a past occurrence, he becomes focused and sharp ??? I thought all the time they were khaki, army issued khaki, until I saw they were of heavy Chinese silk or finest flannel because they made his face so brown his eyes so blue. Dalton Ames.

It just missed gentility.??? (Faulkner 92). Quentin can have moments of intuitiveness and focus, if not obsession, when looking at memory. He cannot seem to think of what is happening but only of what has already happened. He is trapped by the past and cannot seem to grasp a possible future.

As Quentin??™s day continues we see his mind slowly begin to unravel as time becomes even more confused. ??? Not for a second does Quentin envisage the possibility of not killing himself??|It is not an undertaking, but a fatality??? (Sartre). While seemingly confusing this is simply broken down into the fact that for Quentin the future become the present and the present become the past. Present is so foggy, so filled with and lacerated by the past that at one point the two become interchangeable. When he thinks of his confrontation between him and Dalton Ames he becomes incensed, unable to separate what was happening as he was driving home with his friends and what had happened as he was hitting Dalton Ames. He hits his friend, Gerald, and gets into a scuffle all while still in his head, reliving Dalton Ames. When he finally comes to his senses it only becomes real to him when Shreve tells him what happened. He can only comprehend in terms of past.

His suicide, his future, is not an active choice. It has become his present, something he can neither change or is wholly aware of ??? you cannot bear to think that someday it will no longer hurt you like this??? (Faulkner 177).

Quentin does not think in ??? someday??? terms. ??? Non fui. Sum. Fui. Num sum??? (Faulkner 174) I was not.

Am. Was. I am not. Even as he lives he recognizes that he is no more because his future is his present.

His past is who he is. He has no options or potential for change. Quentin is only what he was and since he can't move forward his only future is an end. He had no other possible fate. Inability to cooperate with time is the inability to survive. Sartre's analysis of this passage, while brief, encompasses the tragedy that is Quentin. A man who spent his life struggling with time and in the end failing, as all do.

It seems that it is not until our time is over that we realize we never had a chance and that we simply idiots telling tale full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.