

NEW EXISTENTIAL MAN IN RICHARD FORD'S THE SPORTSWRITER

Dr.Chitra Dhanapal

Assistant Professor of English

Science and Arts College for Girls –Al Majardha

King Khalid University

Abha – Saudi Arabia

Abstract

The main aspect of analyzing Richard Ford's fiction *The Sportswriters*, his careful depiction of domestic life .this novel especially attention to the middle-class life of a man. The novel subject is sometimes serious and other aspects of life. Particularly Ford's fiction in light of some of the tenets of existentialism. In this novel, Ford clearly demonstrated the domestic life in a unique way. The story took place at Haddam, suburbia at New Jersey and begins with Frank Boscombe and his wife "X" at their son Ralph's grave. Frank internal conflicts occur throughout the novel. Ford's characterization of Frank demonstrates a balance between hope and indeterminacy In different suburban locations. Finally, Frank meets a point of emptiness and envisions of himself. But the transformation is different from him, he feels that he got an identity and clear about himself. The identity what he felt comes from confronting. Ford's work flouts traditional narrative expectations by refusing to offer definitive ends, each sequel necessitates a reassessment of the closure implied by the ending of previous things and any forms resolution that might be accepted as contingent, unstable and infinitive because of an established pattern of re-negotiability. Ford's existentialism, attuned as it to contemporary life, complicates and modifies the prototype of modern existential man absurd in the suburbia.

Keywords: New Existential, domestic life, depiction, narration etc

His writing received great acclaim from the reader, though he has authored a number of other work he is well known for his third novel *The Sportswriter* and its sequel *Independence Day*, which won him Pulitzer prize. As well he is known for his short stories and won Rea award for his short story collection. One main aspect in Ford's writing is a depiction of domestic life, significantly focusing attention to the middle-class suburban life. My major concern to analyze Ford's *The Sportswriter* is the integration of all the aspects of life in one novel and this novel primarily focused of attitudes towards life especially elements of marriage, love, death and divorce.

In this novel, Ford clearly demonstrated the domestic life in a unique way. The story took place at Haddam, suburbia at New Jersey and begins with Frank Boscombe and his wife "X" at their son Ralph's grave. The novel is about a failed novelist turned then sportswriter who undergoes an emotional crisis throughout the story. Frank longing toward life is not a strange thing as well he wanted stability for a traditional life.

Frank, 38 years old sportswriter, who is part of a divided family. He lives alone and where his wife and their children live across the town. He meets his ex-wife temporarily, together for their son Ralph birthday, who died from Reye's syndrome. Frank as writer admires athletes because he thinks, they approach life in a different way that guarantees more satisfaction and stability in life.

Frank Boscombe notes for athletes in *The Sportswriter*:

In fact, athletes at the height of their powers make literalness into a mystery all its own simply by becoming absorbed in what they are doing. Years of athletic training teach this; the necessity of relinquishing doubt and ambiguity and self-inquiry in favour of a pleasant, self-championing one dimensionality which has instant rewards in sports. (60)

Frank internal conflicts occur throughout the novel. Ford's characterization of Frank demonstrates a balance between hope and indeterminacy in different suburban locations. Though it is possible to argue suburbia is one of the significant element but its loss as a subject of matter. The second chapter of the novel focused on the extension of Frank's identity in a slandered society, his transformation is not an escape but it's an act of embrace his sense of identity.

Throughout the novel, Bascombe reflects his past life, over his son's death and his divorce. Later he meets up with Vicki Arsenault his girlfriend; Vicki uses accompanying him in his sports writing an assignment. But Frank whenever finds him alone, he gets into the thoughts of his son's death and his own complications in life. Frank finally gives up his cautious constructed acceptance of life, he meets a sober crisis point :

Tears and more tears come fairly flooding. Rage, frustration, sorrow, fatigue, self-approach.(517)

Frank accepts the things need to be accepted in life: that he has cancer, his wife left him and his son died; as well he is not a good father that he has small life and he concludes by understanding what is hardest to accept:

And of course, the answer is plain...: that your life is founded on a lie, and you know what that lie is and won't admit it, maybe can't. Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Deep in my heart space, a breaking is. "Oh-uhh." The sour tidal whoosh the dead man exhales. "Oh-uhh. Oh-uh." So long have I *not* accepted, by practising the quaintness of acceptance...Yes, yes and yes. No more no's. No more no's. No more no's. (522)

Finally, Frank meets a point of emptiness and envisions of himself. But the transformation is different from him, he feels that he got an identity and clear about himself. The identity what he felt comes from confronting. The novel further proceeds with the balance of how the perceives Frank and how he himself perceives. But at the end, he accepts all his selfhood aspects and tried to readjust of his self-awareness.

Richard Ford tried to portray Frank continuation in the trilogy, as well he continued the overcome of uncertainty, silence and despair which Frank often encounters. And he confronts things that contradict his perspective. The novel depicts Frank as ultimately seeking out and embracing a final traditional identity. Ford's work flouts traditional narrative expectations by refusing to offer definitive ends, each sequel necessitates a reassessment of the closure implied by the ending of previous things and any forms resolution that might be accepted as contingent, unstable and infinitive because of an established pattern of re-negotiability. Ford's existentialism, attuned as it to contemporary life, complicates and modifies the prototype of modern existential man absurd in the suburbia.

References:

- Beuka, Robert. *SuburbiaNation: Reading Suburban Landscapes in Twentieth-Century Fiction and Film*. New York: Palgrave and Macmillan, 2004. Film. New York: Palgrave and Macmillan, 2004.
- Ford, Richard. *Independence Day*. London: Bloomsbury, 2006.
- *The Lay of the Land*. London: Bloomsbury, 2007.
- *The Sportswriter*. London: Bloomsbury, 2006.