

Early Twentieth-Century Fiction

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October 11, 2017. Faulkner (2).

review: narration

- ▶ interior monologue, but the “stream” is not all “consciousness”
- ▶ problems of perspective (bias, confusion, vision)
 - ▶ It was the sweetest thing I ever saw. (21)
 - ▶ Like somehow you was looking at yourself and your doings outen his eyes. (125)
- ▶ problems of reference
 - ▶ they diminish and disappear (104)
 - ▶ “In a couple of days now it’ll be smelling,” he says. (108)
 - ▶ or if it wasn’t just knowing it was what it was (118)
- ▶ dialect, idiolect (character’s, author’s)

reading dialect

- ▶ languages have many varieties
 - ▶ they vary in lexicon, pronunciation, grammar
 - ▶ variation is often along lines of geographic and social division
 - ▶ dialects: associated with particular places/groups
- ▶ some varieties have prestige as standards
(school, government, media)
- ▶ every variety has a grammar and is equally expressive
- ▶ some varieties are stigmatized
("broken," "ignorant," "dialect")
- ▶ dialect writing uses conventions to represent dialect speech,
especially regional and minority speech

the good talker

His [Whitfield's] voice is bigger than him. It's like they are not the same. It's like he is one, and his voice is one, swimming on two horses side by side across the ford and coming into the house, the mud-splashed one and the one that never even got wet, triumphant and sad. (91)

whose language?

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[Darl:] He [Peabody] has pussel-gutted himself eating cold greens. (40)

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The rain rushes suddenly down, without thunder, without warning of any sort; he is swept onto the porch upon the edge of it and in an instant Cash is wet to the skin. Yet the motion of the saw has not faltered, as though it and the arm functioned in a tranquil conviction that rain was an illusion of the mind. (77)

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13. It makes a neater job. (83)

global Faulkner

Faulkner thus helped a primitive and rural world that until then had seemed to demand a codified and descriptive realism to achieve novelistic modernity: in his hands, a violent, tribal civilization, impressed with the mark of biblical mythologies, opposed in every respect to urban modernity...became the privileged object of one of the most daring exercises in style of the century.

Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M.B. DeBevoise (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2004), 337.

mi maestro William Faulkner

Gabriel García Márquez, Nobel lecture, 1982, nobelprize.org.

Faulkner's technique dazzled me....For a Latin American writer, reading his books at the time I did was very useful, because they provided a valuable set of techniques for describing a reality that, in a certain sense, had a great deal in common with Faulkner's reality, that of the South of the United States.

Mario Vargas Llosa in 1989, qtd. in Casanova, 344.

language: discussion

Before us the thick dark current runs. It talks up to us in a murmur
become ceaseless and myriad, the yellow surface dimpled monstrously...
(141)

What is the significance of language to the river-crossing scene? Range forward from the start of Darl's chapter. Use formal detail to answer the question.

“It’s been there a long time, that ere bridge,” Quick says.

“The Lord has kept it there, you mean,” Uncle Billy says. “I dont know
ere a man that’s touched hammer to it in twenty-five years. (88)

“tour de force”

Sometimes technique charges in and takes command of the dream before the writer himself can get his hands on it. That is *tour de force* and the finished work is simply a matter of fitting bricks neatly together, since the writer knows probably every single word right to the end before he puts the first one down. This happened with *As I Lay Dying*....

I simply imagined a group of people and subjected them to the simple universal natural catastrophes which are flood and fire with a simple natural motive to give direction to their progress.

Faulkner, interviewed by Jean Stein, *Paris Review* 12 (Spring 1956).

next

- ▶ finish the novel
- ▶ commonplace again, from the last 100 pp.