

Twentieth-Century Fiction I

October 17. Sayers, concluded. Hemingway, *In Our Time* (I).

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review

Joyce and literary autonomy

Joyce's distance from Stephen

...via the same techniques Stephen advocates

“silence, exile, and cunning”

indeterminacy of Joyce's stance *is* the way to autonomy

review

describing the opposition between “high” and “popular”
not a priori evaluative
1890–1945: institutionalization of this distinction

large-scale

Entertainment

Ease

Escape/Pleasure

Repetition/Genre

Ephemerality?

Popularity (sales, readers)

restricted

Seriousness

Difficulty

Experiment

Singularity

Permanence?

Renown
(specialist)

Autonomy?

[symbolic capital]

not modernism?

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Ease

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Ephemerality?

Popularity (sales, readers)

Realism

Renown
(general)

modernism

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[symbolic capital]

literary modernity

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[symbolic capital]

review

Sayers: the status of the story

the detail as genre's "specific device": the clue
literary apparatus...for the lulz

preoccupation with range of literary forms

popular forms ("shillin' shocker")

high forms (quotations; "*edizione rarissima*")

"the real artist and blighter with imagination"

self-consciousness

“Of course, if this were a detective story, there’d have been a convenient shower exactly an hour before the crime and a beautiful set of marks which could only have come there between two and three in the morning, but this being real life in a London November, you might as well expect footprints in Niagara.” (44)

“I crawl, I grovel, my name is Watson.” (30)

[About Sugg:] “He’s like a detective in a novel.” (13)

detection

When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.

Holmes in Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of Four* (1890)

“It’s impossible,” said his reason, feebly; “*credo quia impossible*,” said his interior certainty with impervious self-satisfaction. (92)

discussion

What is the historical explanation for the difference in detective methods between Wimsey and Holmes?

believing the impossible

“Thought we’d had the last of these attacks,” he [Bunter] said. “Been overdoin’ of himself. Asleep?” (94)

“I took up these cases as a sort of distraction. I had a bad knock just after the war, which didn’t make matters any better for me, don’t you know.”

“Ah! you are not married?”

...

“You must learn to be irresponsible, Lord Peter.” (120–21)

believing the impossible

Of this realization of a great city itself as something wild and obvious the detective story is certainly the *Iliad*....The romance of the police force is thus the whole romance of man. It is based on the fact that morality is the most dark and daring of conspiracies. It reminds us that the whole noiseless and unnoticeable police management by which we are ruled and protected is only a successful knight-errantry.

G.K. Chesterton, “A Defence of Detective Stories” (1902)

contradiction

“No, Bunter, I pay you £200 a year to keep your thoughts to yourself. Tell me, Bunter, in these democratic days, don’t you think that’s unfair?”

“No, my lord.” (10–11)

Hemingway

from the restricted subfield to market success and fame



- 1899 b. Oak Park, Illinois
- 1918 volunteers in Italy; wounded
- 1917–23 journalism
- 1921 moves to Paris; little magazines
- 1924 *in our time* (Paris: William Bird)
- 1925 *In Our Time* (New York: Liveright)
- 1926 *The Sun Also Rises*
- 1929 *A Farewell to Arms*
- 1940 *For Whom the Bell Tolls*
- 1954 Nobel prize
- 1961 d.

Stein and Hemingway

When I first knew her...she had published three stories that were intelligible to anyone. One of these stories, "Melanctha," was very good and good samples of her experimental writing had been published in book form and had been well praised by critics who had met her or known her.

...She also discovered many things about rhythms and the uses of words in repetition that were valid and valuable and she talked well about them.

A Movable Feast (written 1957–60, published 1964)

Stein and Hemingway

Miss Stein, Mr Anderson, and Mr Hemingway may now be said to form a school by themselves. The characteristic of this school is a naïveté of language often passing into the colloquialism of the character dealt with which serves actually to convey profound emotions and complex states of mind.

Edmund Wilson, *Dial* review of *in our time* (1924)

Stein and Hemingway

Hemingway's short stories belong with cubist painting, 'Le Sacre du Printemps', and other recent work bringing a feeling of positive forces through primitive modern idiom.

Paul Rosenfeld, *New Republic* review of *In Our Time* (1925)

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“She had discovered many things”

Across the open mouth of the tent Nick fixed cheesecloth to keep out mosquitoes. He crawled inside under the mosquito bar with various things from the pack to put at the head of the bed under the slant of the canvas. Inside the tent the light came through the brown canvas. It smelled pleasantly of canvas. Already there was something mysterious and homelike. Nick was happy as he crawled inside the tent. He had not been unhappy all day. This was different though. Now things were done. There had been this to do. Now it was done. (139)

Parataxis

opposite: hypotaxis

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Variation

the secret of the prepositional phrase

Across the open mouth of the tent Nick fixed cheesecloth to keep out mosquitoes. He crawled **inside under** the mosquito bar **with** various things **from** the pack **to put at** the head **of** the bed **under** the slant **of** the canvas. Inside the tent the light came through the brown canvas. It smelled pleasantly of canvas. Already there was something mysterious and homelike. Nick was happy as he crawled inside the tent. He had not been unhappy all day. This was different though. Now things were done. There had been this to do. Now it was done. (139)

discussion

Consider Chapter V (“*They shot the six cabinet ministers at dawn...*”). Identify the syntactic characteristics of the passage. Then think about the effects of this style. What is emphasized? What is left out? What kind of narratorial persona is created? What kind of reader is implied?

“show don’t tell”

For his mastery of the art of narrative, most recently demonstrated in *The Old Man and the Sea*, and for the influence that he has exerted on contemporary style.

Swedish Academy, 1954

It would be hard to overestimate the influence of Hemingway on postwar writers.

Mark McGurl, *The Program Era* (2009)

“show don’t tell”

But just as importantly, as a poet of brooding masculinity, Hemingway came to represent the noble pathos of understatement.

The combination, in [later] Hemingway, of first person narration with a more or less rigorous application of the rule of “show don’t tell” makes it clear that what is being restrained in the craft of his fiction is, precisely, self-expression, enough of which must remain to produce the aesthetic pleasure of its active restraint.

Mark McGurl, *The Program Era* (2009)

show don't tell?



Ernest Hemingway, American Red Cross volunteer, recuperates from wounds at ARC Hospital, Milan, Italy, September 1918.

nobelprize.org

next time

In Our Time

(bonus exercise: try mapping the structure of the chapters
as we did with *Portrait*)

commonplace from Hemingway

recommended: begin Woolf