

Early Twentieth-Century Fiction
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Office hours: Monday 2 p.m., or by appointment

March 4, 2021. Faulkner (3).

review

- ▶ Faulkner's language
 - ▶ style provides figures for individual thought
 - ▶ ...especially when thought is barely discursive
- ▶ the river crossing
 - ▶ Darl's language magnifies the event
 - ▶ ...while diminishing the human participants
 - ▶ it's a metaphor for ...something?

plot!!!

[Moseley:] “We’re doing the best we can,” the father said. Then he told a long tale about how they had to wait for the wagon to come back and how the bridge was washed away and how they went eight miles to another bridge and it was gone too so they came back and swum the ford and the mules got drowned and how they got another team and found that the road was washed out and they had to come clean around by Mottson, and then the one with the cement came back and told him to shut up. (204)

“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).

“I simply imagined”

“If ever was such a misfortunate man,” pa says. He looms tall above us as we squat; he looks like a figure carved clumsily from tough wood by a drunken caricaturist. (163)

disenchanted or enchanted?

[Whitfield:] It was His hand that bore me safely above the flood, that fended from me the dangers of the waters. My horse was frightened, and my own heart failed me as the logs and the uprooted trees bore down upon my littleness. (178)

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“He is my cross and he will be my salvation. He will save me from the water and from the fire. Even though I have laid down my life, he will save me.”.... Then I [Cora] realised that she [Addie] did not mean God. (168)

Faulkner: magic realist?

[Peabody:] That's the one trouble with this country: everything, weather, all hang on too long. Like our rivers, our land: opaque, slow, violent: shaping and creating the life of man in its implacable and brooding image. (45)

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Darl had a little spy-glass he got in France at the war. (254)

“natural”

[Moseley:] He said the wagon was stopped in front of Grummet's hardware store, with the ladies all scattering up and down the street with handkerchiefs to their noses, and a crowd of hard-nosed men and boys standing around the wagon, listening to the marshal arguing with the man. (203)

Pa said flour and sugar and coffee costs so much. Because I am a country boy because boys in town. Bicycles.... “Why aint I a town boy, pa?” I said. (66)

[MacGowan:] Them country people. (243)

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It takes them that runs the stores in the towns, doing no sweating, living off of them that sweats. It aint the hardworking man, the farmer. Sometimes I wonder why we keep at it. (110)

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Cash's justice

It's like some folks has the smooth, pretty boards to build a courthouse with and others dont have no more than rough lumber fitten to build a chicken coop. But it's better to build a tight chicken coop than a shoddy courthouse, and when they both build shoddy or build well, neither because it's one or tother is going to make a man feel the better nor the worse. (234)

Sometimes I aint so sho who's got ere a right to say when a man is crazy and when he aint.... It's like it aint so much what a fellow does, but it's the way the majority of folks is looking at him when he does it. (233; cf. 238)

Addie: “words”

- ▶ What does the Addie chapter suggest about interpreting language in this novel?

short break

the opposite of language

He [Anse] had a word, too. Love, he called it. But I had been used to words for a long time. I knew that that word was like the others: just a shape to fill a lack. (172)

And so when Cora Tull would tell me I was not a true mother, I would think how words go straight up in a thin line, quick and harmless, and how terribly doing goes along the earth, clinging to it. (173)

With Jewel...the wild blood boiled away and the sound of it ceased. Then there was only the milk, warm and calm, and I lying calm in the slow silence, getting ready to clean my house. (175)

what we don't see

[Addie:] I believed that the reason was the duty to the alive, to the terrible blood, the red bitter flood boiling through the land. (174)

When we pass the negroes their heads turn suddenly with that expression of shock and instinctive outrage. "Great God," one says; "what they got in that wagon?"

Jewel whirls. "Son of a bitches," he says....It is as though Jewel had gone blind for the moment, for it is the white man toward whom he whirls. (229)

"Thinks because he's a goddamn town fellow," Jewel says. (229)

We mount again while the heads turn with that expression which we know; save Jewel. (231)

next: something completely different

- ▶ begin Sayers, *Whose Body?*, at least through chap. 5
- ▶ commonplacing, group B (Mc–Z):
 - ▶ choose a passage that suggests a relationship between the mystery narrative and a *social* problem
- ▶ one other thing, what was it...

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- ▶ paper due Saturday 10 p.m. on Sakai.