

# Реферат на тему: "Оригінальність методів Вільяма Фолкнера (англ. мовою)"

## Вільям Фолкнер

Реферат на тему:

### THE ORIGINALITY OF WILLIAM FAULKNER'S METHOD

The awarding of the Nobel Prize to Faulkner in 1950 brought home to the American public that in Europe he was considered the foremost living American author.

Faulkner is sometimes considered an agrarian naturalist in the manner of Erskine Caldwell. Actually he is more meaningful and profound, as well as more artistically original, than any of the American naturalists. His novels are generally laid in rural settings, but the problems they treat are psychological and moral rather than physical.

The protagonists of his novels are the decayed aristocrats of the "Sartoris" type. Whether their names are Sartoris, Compson, McCaskin, or Stevens, they are old Southern families past the peak of their prosperity and riddled with moral decay. Yet they are finer than their antagonists, the "Snopes" clan — the efficient, materialistic carpet-baggers, merchants, and entrepreneurs — who are gradually superseding them. A third class of characters are the blacks, often more heroic and admirable than either Sartoris or Snopes. The writer's mission is to preside over the spiritual death of the old South and to study the forces that are preparing its awakening.

Faulkner is greatly concerned with erotic passions, with cruelty, and with the connection between the two. His cult of violence is twisted, melancholy, and guilty. His characters are seldom moved by normal urges: Quentin Compson (*The Sound and Fury*) is in love with his sister, Popeye (*Sanctuary*) is impotent, the idiot Ike Snopes (*The Hamlet*) is in love with a cow, and Joe Christmas (*Light in August*) becomes the paramour of a spinster a generation older than he is.

Faulkner does not relate these horrors for mere shock effect. He is interested in aberration as a symbol of Southern decline.

Many of Faulkner's characters, though diverse, tend to fall into a set of clearly defined groups. There are moody younger sons, reckless and rebellious but proud of their family backgrounds (Quentin Compson, Banyard Sartoris); there are naive country girls, easily exploited by town slickers (Dewey Dell, Lena Grove); there are rebellious and nymphomaniacal young girls of aristocratic families (Temple Drake). Although Faulkner sometimes recreates the same characters, he seldom repeats his stories. With a tremendous inventiveness he finds a new situation, plot, or structure for each novel.

There is little overt political content in Faulkner's work. But it is apparent that his sympathies are with the aristocratic and highly principled Sartorises, as decadent as they may be. At the beginning of his literary career he was wrongly accused of condescension

toward blacks. In *Intruder in the Dust* he offers a positive solution to racial problems, and since then he frequently condemned racism, violence, and the activities of "White Supremacy" groups in the South. His approach to the racial problems is largely aesthetic, psychological, and physiological, although underneath, it is also moral. He describes both Sartoris and blacks as they appear to him without idealizing them for didactic purposes. His strongest condemnation of slavery is perhaps that found in the long version of *The Bear*, where he develops the idea that the fertile land of the South has been eternally cursed by the unnatural domination of man over land and man over man and by the sexual and psychological evils that have come out of it.

In spite of the fact that Faulkner's works are ostensibly concerned with the South, as deeply rooted in place as Joyce is in Dublin, the problems of the South, people's relationship to land, the moral wrong of possession, people's relationship to people, the vulgarization of materialistic age with the loss of old courtesies and values, are the problems of the nation as a whole are the problems of the twentieth century world. Yoknapatawpha Country of Faulkner's novels is the world's universal image. Otherwise the early European enthusiasm for Faulkner would be incredible.

Faulkner always used a double frame of reference in his fiction (which helps to universalize it). Casual references to scriptures are meaningful to the people of his stories: Absalom, the affair of Noah's sons used in *The Bear*, the nativity, the passion, as well as the dominant denominations of the South — Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians. The second frame is formed by the classical inheritance of the South — the modified Greek columns, the Grecian urn, Clytemnestra, the sense of Greek' tragedy.

Faulkner is a highly individual author, and therefore difficult to classify. His earlier works represent naturalistic regionalism, slightly influenced by the style of Sherwood Anderson and demonstrating as well a personal lyrical quality that was to become more prominent in his later novels. Beginning with *The Sound and Fury* his work may be described as "symbolic naturalism", and his style a radical form of stream of consciousness utilizing difficult and highly original experiments in chronology and point of view.

The trend away from realism continued throughout his career. The beginning of *Absalom, Absalom!* is the best examples of expressionism in American fiction. Because of his interest in stream-of-consciousness techniques Faulkner may also be considered a psychological novelist. In both *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August* the action centers round the events of a single day, but previous and subsequent incidents are filled in through recollections of the characters and through adroit and complex flashbacks, in either case seen internally, through the often semiconscious reaction of the characters are involved. The interest of the author is not so much in the incidents themselves as in complicated mental reactions they evoke in the characters. Here Faulkner resembles Proust and Joyce more than he resembles American naturalists.

From another point of view Faulkner is a regionalist, although his region is an imaginary one based on reality: "Yoknapatawpha County" with its county seat of Jefferson. Since Jefferson is described as seventy-five miles south of Memphis on the Illinois Central

Railroad, it can easily be identified as Oxford, Mississippi, where Faulkner passed most of his life. At the same time Yoknapatawpha County is a fictional region only loosely related to real Mississippi County of Lafayette. But when Faulkner departs from Yoknapatawpha territory, his fiction loses a measure of its grass-roots strength and significance.

Though some incidents, like the murder of old Colonel Sartoris, are drawn from family traditions, in the main Faulkner's characters are the product of his own imagination. For this reason Faulkner is able to create characters of great diversity: the gangster Popeye, the spinster Miss Burden, the rebellious Temple Drake, and the brooding Harvard student Quentin Compson are equally forceful, real, and meaningful.

Where Faulkner's style is most difficult and the narrative line most complex, he demands the active participation, of the reader in the creative process. As Quentin tries to get at the truth of the past in *Absalom, Absalom!* by a compulsive telling and retelling of the story, bringing in new historical sources including interviews and letters, finally bringing the Canadian Shreve McCannon into the reconstruction as well, so is the reader drawn in. The demands on the reader are great — you may have to puzzle out an impossible sentence or go back to pick up a lost thread, but the rewards are great. Among other prose writers who make similar demands are Joyce in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, Proust, Kafka, Gertrude Stein. As has been said of some of their work: it does not have to be difficult to be good, but it helps.

The language of presentation is purposely chaotic. The action does not generally develop chronologically but in jerks. The story is related in retrospect by diverse speakers and sometimes it is difficult to understand who the speaker is. The events in the novels may range within a hundred years. For a character like Quentin Compson who is seeking the truth and is continuing to love the South in spite of its shame it is of no importance when the event occurred. Well known is Faulkner's "theory of time": "There is no "was" — there is only "is". If "was" existed the bitterness and suffering would have disappeared."

Another element in Faulkner's fiction is its capacity for comic vision, as in *Hamlet*, *The Town*, and *The Mansion*. It is Joycean in style but thoroughly indigenous and American. His last novel, *The Reivers*, published shortly before his death, is hugely comic.

When Faulkner was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature he delivered a brief speech of acceptance before the Swedish Academy which has become a classic in our time. Often reprinted it contains important clues to Faulkner's work:

"Our tragedy today is a general and universal fear so long sustained by now that we can even bear it. There are no longer problems of the spirit. There is only the question: When will I be blown up? Because of this, the young man or woman writing today has forgotten the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself which alone can make good writing...he must learn them again. He must teach himself that the basest of all things is to be afraid, and, teaching himself that, forget it forever, leaving no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart ... — love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice."