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William Cuthbert FaulknerA preeminent figure in twentieth-century American literature, Faulkner created a profound and complex body of work in which he often explored exploitation and corruption in the American South. William Faulkners writing most commonly set in Yoknapatawpha County, a fictional area based on his homeland of Mississippi. Explore the history of the South while making thorough observations of Human Character.

The purpose of Faulkners writing style is to demonstrate a heart in conflict with itself. He did this using a plethora of narrative viewpoints to enrich the struggle. (Galenet, Introduction)William Faulkners writings are all written with an extremely unique style.

The exuberant and tropical luxuriance of sound which Jim Europe's jazz band used to exhale, like a jungle of rank creepers and ferocious blooms taking shape before one's eyes—magnificently and endlessly interwoven, glisteningly and ophidianly in motion, coil sliding over coil, and leaf and flower forever magically interchanging—was scarcely more bewildering, in its sheer inexhaustible fecundity, than Mr. Faulkner's style. One of the unusual points of Faulkners writings is his obsession and repetition of certain uncommon words. Words like sonorous, latin, vaguely eloquent, myriad, sourceless, impalpable, outrageous, risible, and profound.

Faulkner was able to compensate for the over use of these words by using an over elaborate sentence structure. His sentences often included clause after clause or parenthesis after parenthesis as if he had just decided to tell us every thing he possibly could. They remind one of those brightly colored Chinese eggs of one's childhood, which when opened disclosed egg after

egg, each smaller and subtler than the last. It is often that by the end of the sentence one doesn't know what the subject of the verb is and after going back and rereading everything you find that the subject has very little bearing at all. However despite these few annoying writing habits in the end it keeps the reader involved and looking to the next sentence for meaning, until he drops in the final sentence, which brings everything together and unites them. (Conrad Aiken, 200) You would be very much forsaken if you said that Faulkner's style lies in his grammar alone. He is instead much more known for writing from several points of view.

By narration through the mentally deficient, psychologically disturbed, and the romantic idealist Faulkner is able to display events in new and previously unheard of ways. Faulkner never abandoned the advantages of the omniscient author but tried various limitations of omniscience, always with the purpose of getting inside a character and involving the reader as fully as possible. (Elizabeth M. Kerr, 264) Another unique thing about Faulkner's point of view writings is that he often makes no clear attempt to tell the reader what really happened, instead you are forced to see the events through the unusual eyes of several onlookers. The reader is forced to go along and see as each person sees and adjust the truth to their point of view. If you are lucky enough one of the narrators will resemble not only your lifestyle, but also personal opinions. If so you are forced to take a look and examine how you think through certain events. In many of his books he takes you on a journey much resembling a circle.

You are forced to run around the outside trying to look in on one central event. With every step you view the event from a different time or viewpoint.  
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This gives you by the time the novel is finished an all encompassing view of a central event, yet leaves with no absolute truth about anything.

It offers you events and truths from each view that get disproved time and time again by the offering of other events and truths. The final result being that you must read intently until every last bit of information has been given to you in order to form the perfect image of the event in your mind. (Conrad Aiken, 205) Faulkner loved his hometown and people and did not want to offend them by writing out right about the gossipy and close minded way in which they viewed events. To escape doing this Faulkner often put a romantic or gothic tone to his writing to make protect his people. The important thing to remember about his novels is despite their apparent genius and often romantic viewpoints the events at which they centered around were primarily gothic. Many times in his writings Faulkner produced images that can be compared to Gothic castles such as the Sartoris plantation house in Sartoris and Sanctuary; the ruins of the Old Frenchman's place in Sanctuary and The Hamlet; the Compson house, in a state of dilapidation, in Absalom, Absalom! and The Sound and the Fury; Sutpen's Hundred in Absalom, Absalom! from creation to destruction; Miss Burden's house in Light in August; the McCaslin plantation, still a going concern, in Go Down, Moses and Intruder in the Dust; the Backus plantation in decline in The Town and as transformed by Mr. Harriss in " Knight's Gambit" and The Mansion; the old De Spain mansion as transformed by Flem in The Town and The Mansion. All of these are castles in state of decline.

They also are frequently equipped with slave or servant quarters. Only the novel Intruder in the Dust lacks a castle instead it has a middle-class home <https://assignbuster.com/william-he-often-explored-exploitation-and-corruption-in/>

where a family lives happily. There are also in his books the classic gothic character types in just about every novel. The Romantic, Byronic, or Faustian heroes, the courtly lovers, the tragic villain-heroes, the revenge villain-hero, the rational villains, and the villain seducer seem to take the key roles in Faulkners tales. Let us not forget about the grotesque. A huge part in all gothic novels is the commonly disfigured characters. Faulkner did not use his grotesque in an evil manner like most gothic writers. Instead he used them to evoke pity and sympathy.

Faulkner was much more than just a gothic writer. By never telling his gothic stories in first person or from the heroes point of view he was able to disassociate himself from common gothic writers. (Elizibeth M. Kerr, 264)When discussing Faulkners writing style no conversation is complete with out a lot of time spent on Faulkners use of time in his works. One may describe Faulknerian time as a continuum: time flowing from past into present and from present into past. One of things made apparent in Faulkners writings is that time in itself is irrelevant.

The important thing is that events happen not when they happen. He has no objection at all to leaving what he is talking about to take you back to something happened much earlier and then moving past what you were talking about to what happens in the future. He is also known to skip certain events in his stories. This is used to add shock and importance to other events, which would seem unimportant or irrelevant. His use of time is so unique that it often breaks down to that fact he denies that a past exists.

When he does this you are forced to concentrate on the present and go by moment by moment with him. As the story moves you become aware of the <https://assignbuster.com/william-he-often-explored-exploitation-and-corruption-in/>

past slowly. It is not unusual for him to lead you to thinking one way and then he as if on a side not dictates you a small part of history which discounts everything and changes the whole story.

So Unique is his use of time that it not only is defied in the novel itself, but in the series of novels. The novels written about Yoknapatawpha County are not written in chronological order like one would expect when reading a series. Instead the novels are an intricate web of different times bound together only by the setting. Several of the novels take place at exactly the same time, but the events are viewed in a different manner, which in turn brings new light and interest worthy of duplicating. This is extremely obvious when you compare Absalom, Absalom! to The Sound and the Fury the novels themselves both tell the same story. In spite of this both books manage to stand apart from each other. The key isnt that the events are the same, but rather the viewpoints arent.

This use of time is one of the main reasons that Faulkner was considered a genius in his own time. (Frederick J. Hoffman, 17)Faulkner writings brought about a lot of characters. It was most likely Faulkners opinion that he could represent every kind of person using the concentrated population of Mississippi. In his short stories he presents just about every imaginable combination from Indians who owned slaves to 49ers who were unsuccessful and were forced back to move back to the South.

Faulkner uses his characters in a variety of ways, but most commonly he pelted them with steady moral judgment. One of the best examples of this is in the short story A Rose for Emily in which an old maid falls in love with a

Northerner. The old maid kills her lover and keeps his body upstairs in her bedroom. This is not discovered however until after the old maid dies and they are able to get inside the house. Despite this rather gruesome image the focus of the story is not concentrated on it at all, instead the point of the novel is on the old maid and what she thought about how much the world was changing.

Or in the short story *The Evening Sun* the story is concentrated on a Negro woman who is impregnated by another man and lives with the terror of it every day. The narration is done through a small boys point of view this gives you an innocent but honest look at her life and the terror she must endure. These are just examples of how Faulkner is able to throw you in to not only situations but into people as well. The result is an extremely unique look at a large portion of the Southern lifestyle. The key to understanding Faulkners characters is not by looking at their actions, but to pay attention to how they are presented by the narrators.

If they are a narrator, let yourself delve into their mind to try to understand why they think the way they the do. (Alfred Kazin, 154) In closing, Faulkner writing style is in essence his writing. The events that take place in Faulkner novels are often, no matter how big they might seem, unimportant. The crucial part of his writing is that you are thrust in to whole new ways of looking at things.

You are forced to give in and look at things through not so rose-colored glasses. In essence he manipulates your whole way of thinking and makes you think like any given character he wants you to. This brings about several

revelations and shows you events in new lights until at last you are left with an all-encompassing view.