

Strive for accuracy, spontaneity, and mystery.

...that quality that Alfred Kazin once called "the marginal suggestiveness which in a great writer always indicates those unspoken reserves, that silent assessment of life, that can be heard below and beyond the slow marshaling of...thought."

(from NYTBR clip abt Jonis Agee novel in Speech & in'view material, top file drawer, gray cabinet)

wh Space/
Technique

show reactions occasionally by having the speaker comment on facial reaction of the hearer, such as: "What's the matter?" "What's so funny?"

--use this to cut down on facial descriptions, people looking at one another, etc.

(I did some of this in Prairie; don't repeat those)

Wk Space/
Technique

"I'm not having any of your (political sermons), thank you all to hell anyway you
sonofabitch."

(Not sure this can work typographically, but the effort is to convey loss of control
by speaker there at the end of sentence.)

--in Montana dialogue, occasionally use end-of-sentence reiteration as Jick did in the trilogy, such as "He could make himself more comfortable around a campfire than anybody else I ever knew, my father could."

--or it doesn't have to be exact reiteration but an added emphasis, such as:
"He ^{don't} doesn't know sic 'em, that guy."

OO was sure (he knew) what OO would do. (describe course of action)

(next graf shows he was wrong, the other character is doing something entirely different than predicted.)

#? Prepared, OO...

#? Unprepared, OO...

or 2 people going to do something together?

a OO, a OO, an OO. (technique: desc. something with series of metaphors w/ the final "an"--instead of "a"--as intensifier.)

Fowler, 599:

aposiopesis: 'falling silent'. Significant breaking off so that the hearer must supply the unsaid words.

Fowler, 601

brachylogy: 'short speech'. Irregular shortening down of expression. "Less sugar" instead of "less of sugar".

Fowler, 607:

hendecasyllable: 'eleven syllable'... (as) imitated by Tennyson:

"Look, I come to the test; a tiny poem
all composed in a metre of Catullus."

Am. Her., 631

homophone: A word having the same sound as another word but differing from it in spelling, origin, and meaning...example, sum and some...

FOWLER, 608

hyperbaton: 'stepping over.' Transposition of words out of normal order...
Shakespeare's 'That whiter skin of hers than snow.'

Fowler, 610

litotes: 'frugality'...rhetorical understatement in which for the positive notion required is substituted its opposite with a negative. In 1 Cor xi., 17, 22, 'I praise you not' has the effect of an emphatic I blame; 'not a few' means a great number; 'not bad, eh?' after an anecdote, means excellent.

meiosis: 'lessening'. The use of understatement...to enhance the impression...'This is some war.'

Fowler, 622

syllipsis: 'taking together,' 'yoking'...He lost his hat and his temper....The flood of ~~flowers and~~ enthusiasm and flowers was terrific....She was seen washing clothes with happiness and Pears' soap.

Fowler, 614:

prolepsis: 'anticipating'. Anticipatory use of an epithet, i.e. the applying of it as if already true to a thing of which it only becomes true by or after the action now being stated. A strong example is:

So the two brothers & their murder'd man
Rode past fair Florence

i.e., the man who was afterwards their victim. More ordinary examples are 'He struck him dead, Fill full the cup, etc.

a guy at ~~OX~~ Powell's bksgng Oct 03, who'd asked qn about "Prairie House" TV stuff,
left me a note posing this:

"Learning something ~~had~~ that had been wholly unknown changes some things entirely.
Other things are entirely unchanged no matter what we learn. What does this say
about us, and how might it reflect through "the prism" of your one-room schoolhouse-to-be?"

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Graph out the frequency of characters (and possibly the "booms" of action etc.) as Fred Schepisi does for his movies, as desc'd in Dec. 20, '93 New Yorker.

--One flexibility I can that print has over movies: a catching-up, a what-this-character-has-been-up-to-while-out-of-sight. Perhaps use w/ Rhonda, or Neil, or Hugh?

Gordinin, a Sport of Nature

- does not bother to describe faces etc.

p. 4, charges Olga in a single sentence

pp. 45-6: repeated words in dialogue to convey emotion

sense of smell

--imbue The Whistling Season with it; Tony Angell could help.

Wk Spacy
technique

The Argument--

probably shdn't be capitalized, but this cd be the device--probably within Darius, although maybe it takes other form(s) in Owen and Kate as well--for interior debate: the politics of the time within Darius, the upward climb within Owen, the split love within Kate.

--cd be a chapter lead, maybe even ch. 2, leading into the dam, the river.

Bucking the Sun

review Malcolm Cowley's intro to ANNA KARENINA

Atmospherics: the smells (and possibly sounds and light) of an area, maybe just outside a house or a town, as something is going on with the characters.

ch. 3 technique:

Cass playing poker in back of plane

flashback of her and Ben *B arrives to E. Base thinking it's alt Deems*

Ben w/ his mother; info on parents' bgnd; he leaves for base

Cass flying

Ben and Howie

Cass and Ben: tells her he's flying north w/ Howie; she tells him she's ferrying
to Edmonton; "traffic jam"

Ben and Howie crash

Ben back on the job; new ass't; folder: Carl Friessen was dead.

Section 8 discharge?

Section 11?

from Eng Crk file

from Mark Wyman:

"Whenever one reads the revisionist historians of the recent past, they seem to have forgotten so much of what it was like at the time; or perhaps, many of them being so young, never knew. They are able to write of the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine, for example, as if it is of little account that Europe in that terrible winter of 1947 was a hell frozen over. They forget that Europe had collapsed as an organized industrial and political community, and that this was the reality that faced the Americans who had to decide and act. The trouble with the revisionists is that they seem to have only the documents. They appear to have no memory; not only no memory of their own, but no sense of historical memory. They work busily on the documents, but with no historical imagination. They fail to take into account the voices of the ordinary people who lived through that time."

--New Republic, Jan. 27, '82, pp. 17-18

from Edna O'Brien NYTBR Toni Morrison review in Book Reviews/Techniques file:

...I miss the emotional nexus, the moment shorn of all artifice that brings us headlong into the deepest recesses of feeling, moments such as in Faulkner's "Light in August," when the fugitive Joe Christmas takes to the road knowing that it will run on forever "between the savage and spurious board fronts of oil towns," or when...poor, crazed Anna Karenina, observing the bolts and irons of the oncoming train, asks God to forgive her.

....(M'son) hesitates to bring us to the last frontier, to a predicament that is both physical and metaphysical, and which in certain fictions, by an eerie transmission, becomes our very own experience.

read over the ms for:

rhythm

verbs

modifiers

plot connections

leads:

Sky: Soon before daybreak on my sixth birthday, my mother's breathing wheezed more raggedly than ever, then quieted. And then stopped.

WBros: His Name was James Gilchrist Swan, and I have felt my pull toward him ever since some forgotten frontier pursuit or another landed me into the coastal region of history where he presides, meticulous as a usurer's clerk, diarying and diarying that life of his, four generations and seemingly as many light-years from my own.

Runners: A high-nosed cedar canoe, nimble as a seabird, atop a tumbling white ridge of ocean.

EngCreek: That month of June swam into the Two Medicine country.

RFair: To say the truth, it was not how I expected--stepping off toward America past a drowned horse.

Mariah: Click. From where I was sitting on the bumper of the Winnebago I was doing my utmost to outstare that camera of hers, but as usual, no such luck.

Heart: In that last winter of the war, she knew to use pointblank ink.

Bucking: Selfmade men always do a lopsided job of it, and the sheriff had come out conspicuously short on the capacity to sympathize with anyone but himself.

Mtn Time: Lexa ^McCaskill ran both hands through her coppery hair, adding up appetites.

Prairie: A story wants to be told a certain way, or it is merely the alphabet badly recited.

The last ringleted girl had finished off the ballad on a hopeful note--she would have given her ears for a praising word from Miss Duff--and night and quiet came again to the house on Highland Street.

Whistling Season: When I visit the back corners of my life again after so long

• a time, littlest things jump out first.

Wk. Space/
technique

system for 100 pp./Divide, Sept. 29-Dec. 12 '97:

--write 2 pp., typewriter and pencil, each morn.

--afternoons, enter those fresh 2 pp. and 2 pp. from existing Divide rough draft onto computer disk. (Goal: 40 pp., combined, by Oct. 10)

--do at least 2 bluesheets daily as "lighted fuses" toward next day's work

--dialogue: riffle through the file cards every day

study McBain's 87th Precinct bks, perhaps particularly Killer's Choice, for
how to use dialogue without attribution.

--study Trevanian's THE MAIN for sense of scope, of life of a community

Opening page of Trevanian's THE MAIN: detail is so well done and continuous that it is compelling, a bit hypnotic, as it portrays the street scene. Do something similar to describe the people at work on Fort Peck dam?

--possible flashback to a year or two before the opening scene of the bodies; back to an FDR visit?

--could then flashback from there to the Duffs starving off the land in the Depression, into work on the dam.

study "Dry Storm" in St. Pierre's SMITH AND OTHER EVENTS for behavior of
an SOB rancher.

In final go-throughs of ms, look for:

- spots to use brief strong descpts of weather, sky (sunrises, for ex) and landscape.
- consistency in dialogue "fingerprints", such as Hugh's "Eh?"...

Fireflies

winnow the 3 Bucking the Sun yellow pads for phrasing & lingo

--also yellow pads of other books?

Faulkner's power of fast narration: scene of the dog Lion jumping the bear, pp. 356-7
in "The Bear" in Six Great Modern Short Novels.

possible technique:

have Jick go into present tense narration, gaining the immediacy of say, Trevanian's THE MAIN, when he's taken over by memory. A test version of the Shirley episode, pp. 24-25, is in the Mariah Pt. 1 leftovers binder.

--This shouldn't be used if it seems obtrusive.

possible narrative voice:

This is the story of my mother and the man I have every reason to believe is
my father.

considerable

WA Spacy
Technique

an English Creek "plot" filecard reads:

This book has to show the motion of a mind--Jick's.

from English Creek "plot" filecard category

WA Spacy
Technique

Think - & feel - my way into Jack's situations.

Wa Special
Technique

Where workaday dialogue is necessary--as in Proxy's little gibe to drifty Darius, "Think the rain'll hurt the rhubarb?"--redeem the language promptly with a good turn of phrase or description, some surprise to the reader; in this case, describe Proxy or Darius some compelling way from the other's point of view.

Wh Spanish
Technique

For Whom The Bell Tolls

Robert Jordan is from Red Lodge and is an instructor in Spanish at U. of Montana. H'way's main Montana references in the book:

p. 165--"I wonder how they will like Maria in Missoula, Montana? That is if I can get a job back in Missoula. I suppose that I am ticketed as a Red there now for good and will be on the general blacklist. Though you never know. You never can tell."

p. 207--"Robert Jordan explained the process of homesteading. He had never thought of it before as an agrarian reform." (Considerably more abt big and small landholders on this p.)

p. 209--"Are you truly a professor?"

"An instructor."

"But you teach?"

"Yes."

"But why Spanish?" Andres asked. "Would it not be easier to teach English since you are English?"

"He speaks Spanish as we do," Anselmo said. "Why should ne not teach Spanish?"

"Yes. But it is, in a way, presumptuous for a foreigner to teach Spanish,"

Fernando said....

over

Mln T (plot)
was space/technique

the undertow (of this book)

Wh Space
Technique

possible scene of all the Duffs at their dam jobs simultaneously. Do it on some engineering basis, vectors or lines of elevation? (i.e., contour lines, as on USGS map? The ~~Duff~~ who is a diver on the bottom of the river, the one who is an engineer on the highest point of construction... In mapping the dam this day, this moment, the Duffs are the contour lines, the points of fix.)

--do this early, in description of the dam work, without naming them. Conclude, (maybe including the women, in some gathering of their own) ~~Every~~ one of them a Duff.

- use w/surveying for irrigation project. >

W.A. Space/
Technique

The Afterlife of George Cartwright--by John Steffler

--exceptional example of linking lead and ending of novel:

...from p. 1: "...the same route he's taken every day since his death in 1819."

---final line; p. 293: "The bear's white head is a wide pointed brush, moving from side to side, painting him out, painting the river, the glittering trees in."

Wk Spacy
+ technique

Frank Swinnerton, in Arnold Bennett, characterizes B's hesitant speech (impeded by a stammer):

"I...believe so." "I have...written six hundred words this morning."

(or use dash: I - believe so.)

Wh Space/
Technique

In final go-throughs of ms, look for:

- spots to use brief strong descpts of weather, sky (sunrises, for ex) and landscape.
- consistency in dialogue "fingerprints", such as Hugh's "Eh?"...

flesh people out by showing small unadmirable character traits.

Mont. novel: bring brief characters to life as Conrad's were--in a graf or so.

Make sure the ms has occasional vivid visuals, such as the clothes colors stuck to the truck window in Bucking.

Micahel Ondaatje, PW interview, Oct. 5, 1992:

p. 48--When he was working on Lion, he saw the murals by Diego Rivera in Detroit and Mexico City. Their technical scope convinced him that one could pattern and echo events or gestures by subtle means. "In one mural, Rivera shows a factory worker holding a wrench in a certain way. Across the room in a linked mural, we see a foreman holding a pencil in a certain way. (Likewise) a story can be knit together by images...."

--In The English Patient Ondaatje often suggests that dialogue is too flimsy to carry the depths of feeling. His habit of relying on interior monologue gives a romantic cast to his characters, ordinary people who come to seem profound and even heroic in his hands. "I'm drawn to the kind of people who behave as though there were a finite number of words," he explains.

Burger's Daughter, Nadine Gordimer, p. 85:

"This quick realization within my mother would be signalled by that sudden seizing glance, sideways, without turning the head, showing the whites of those eyes shaded not only by their dreamy sockets but also the darkening skin round them, as my mother grew older. I know it well, I'll always know it, that look my mother was unconscious of and that would have amazed--disquieted her: it was a glance that slipped the leash."

study Brian Moore, The Magician's Wife

see Richard Eder piece about Penelope Fitzgerald's subordinate clauses,
in "Writing about Writing" file

19 Aug. '82: I must beware the East of Eden syndrome; not overfill English Creek with characters, plot, virtually everything, as Steinbeck did with his big, long-intended book.

--trying so hard, on the best and most personal material, that the book got away from him, distended.

5 June: show some intra-family tensions, as in Ebenezer LePage; and perhaps unexpected alliances, fondness between husband and mother-in-law, for ex.

use present tense, particularly in opening scene?

technique

show a reaction as reflected through a third person--Whit or Adair, maybe--as per this from Empire Falls:

(Walt)

"Miles just stared at him, and what occurred to Otto Meyer was that if Miles had worn that expression while talking to him, he by God would have done as he was told."

"The first sentence of every novel should be: 'Trust me, this will take time but there is order here, very faint, very human.'"

--Michael Ondaatje, *In the Skin of a Lion*, p. 146

Mamet's filecard technique for plot, in NYorker piece in Writing about Writing file.

~~Wes Susan @ French dinner~~ a teasing pace like RLS's church flirtation in Weir?

As conclusion to a section, repeat a phrase recently used; as in Kathleen Windom's All Things Considered tale of her brother and chums eating all of Miss Jody's chicken pie, and were grown men before they ever dared admit it. "Grown men." she concluded the story.

reference to novel w/ intense descptns of Paris in The Writers Craft, Birmingham.

--Peggy Mann, A Room In Paris

not in Suz

pp. 204-8

Sharon

13 - large social scenes allow characters to come together: external stitching

- internal stitching: characters depending on a single contrast

14 - "if plot is 1st actualization of idea in a novel, character is 1st means of modulating idea, exploring its complexities."

15 - ^{core} "great scenes ... book derives its real movement & life

- also, serial movement, from social idealism to social fact

15-18: 3 kinds of characters: caricatures, unchanging

- objects of ironic sympathy, some self-recognition

- caricatures of sentiment, growing into awareness

18 - "The testing pressure of social circumstance on individual choice."

19 - The final proportions of novel seem not to have been demonstrated in materials of novel.

- two difficulty woul have been solved if Dorothy & Ladislaw had been made to operate & actively in full plot.

Shores/2

20 - unity of language : metaphorical

23 - style ... externalizes a mind

- " of novel shares intimately w. method of novel, which allows author to be everywhere.

24 - metaphorical model & method together ... splendid force

Oldfield

71 - "dramatic ventriloquism"

- idiom as a sensitive register of characters' nature

71+: Bulstrode conceals himself & abstract preachers etc

Lygate: scientist has clarity of expression

Casaubon: "scholar" accumulates pieces of language

Vincy's unpretentious speech establishes his genuine nature

76 - ^{more} urgency & force of utterance in Dorothea than any other character

78 - her speech atrophies after marriage to Casaubon

79 - her rhetorical questions dramatize her dangerous isolation