

Call for Papers
Faulkner: The Returns of the Text
July 20-24, 2008

For a number of years Faulkner criticism, in keeping with literary study generally, has emphasized the significance of various historical and cultural forces as the determining factors of what texts say and how readers interpret them. More recently, there have been signs of a shift re-affirming the formal dimension of literature, the way in which texts assert an original response to culture through their formal qualities. The result has been a fresh attention to the act of reading, that submission to the full complexity of the text that generates what one writer has referred to as “the basic materials that form the subject matter of even the most historical of investigations.” The newer emphasis by no means ignores the cultural context, but instead of approaching the literary text as a reflection, a representation of that context—historical, economic, political, and social—it stresses the role of the text as a challenge to the power of external ideological systems to dictate textual expression.

The 35th annual Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha conference will examine Faulkner’s fiction in terms of the texts’ unique renderings of, and responses to, the historical and cultural conditions in which they were made. Given the extent of Faulkner’s originality, his apparent effort to reinvent prose fiction with each new novel and story, we anticipate a wide range of discussion. What, for example, is the relationship between his specific strategies of narrative, character, setting, and voice and the construction of original meaning? What generic conventions does Faulkner employ and how does he manipulate them according to the presence of specific historical context? In what ways does Faulkner’s language move beyond the limits of “argument” toward “performance,” replacing ideologically inflected commentary with a more subjective, freer expression? In short, what we have called the “returns” of the text embrace a return to textual priority, a return that registers a textuality sensitive to the historical/cultural context, and return as the profit that such consideration can yield.

We are inviting 40-minute plenary papers and 20-minute panel papers. Plenary papers consist of approximately 5,000 words and will appear in the conference volume published by the University Press of Mississippi. Panel papers consist of approximately 2,500 words.

For plenary papers the 14th edition of the University of Chicago Manual of Style should be used as a guide in preparing manuscripts. Three copies of manuscripts must be submitted by January 31, 2008. Authors whose papers are selected will receive a waiver of the conference registration fee, and lodging at the Inn at Ole Miss from Saturday, July 19, through Thursday, July 24. For short papers, three copies of two-page abstracts must be submitted by January 31, 2008. Authors whose papers are selected will receive a reduction of the registration fee to \$100. All manuscripts and inquiries should be addressed to Donald Kartiganer, Department of English, The University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677-1848. Telephone: 662-915-5793, e-mail: dkartiga@olemiss.edu. Panel abstracts may be sent by e-mail attachment; plenary manuscripts should only be sent by regular mail. Decisions for all papers will be made by March 1, 2008.