

Early Twentieth-Century Fiction
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December 1, 2014. Barnes (1).

logistical

- ▶ evaluations next time
- ▶ e-mail if conflicts with final exam

review: Hurston

- ▶ Hurston and the hurricane
 - ▶ historical precision, but not a chronicle
 - ▶ “natural” disaster reveals social division
 - ▶ segregation not immutable but coercively enforced
 - ▶ injustice registered in wry or muted tones
- ▶ Hurston's affirmation?
 - ▶ a black world, diverse and in conflict
 - ▶ margins of the margins: Janie at home on the edge

historical lines: discussion

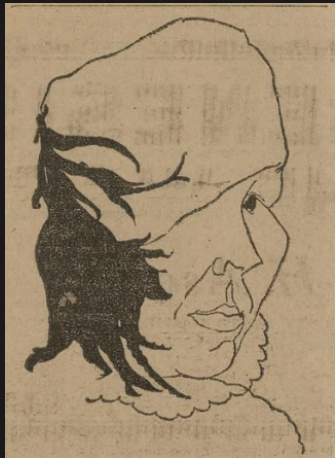
historical lines: discussion

Briefly explain your line to your partner. Then synthesize: what story are you telling about change over time?

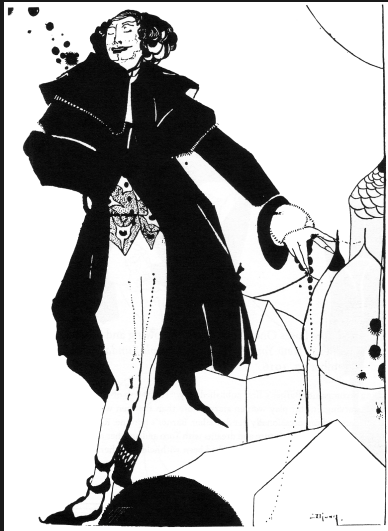
Djuna Barnes



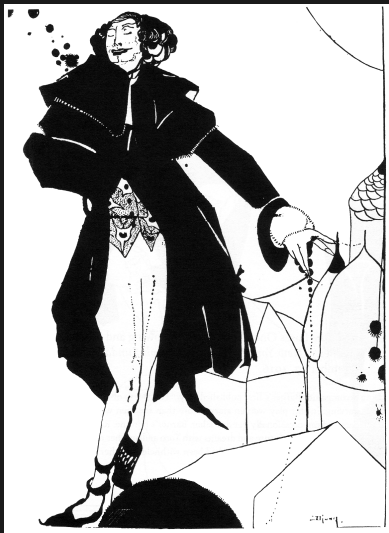
Paris, 1921–22. Wikimedia Commons.



Self-caricature, 1923–39.
<http://hdl.handle.net/1903.1/16835>.



“How the Villagers Amuse
Themselves,” 1916. Wikimedia



“How the Villagers Amuse
Themselves,” 1916. Wikimedia



“How It Feels To Be Forcibly Fed,”
New York World, September 6, 1914.
<http://hdl.handle.net/1903.1/5023>.

late modernism (I)



Vanity Fair, 1922. Wikimedia Commons.



1917-23.

<http://hdl.handle.net/1903.1/8669>.

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readers / positions (I)

It is the whole pattern that they [the characters] form, rather than any individual constituent, that is the focus of interest.

What I would leave the reader prepared to find is the great achievement of a style, the brilliance of wit and characterisation, and a quality of horror and doom very nearly related to that of Elizabethan tragedy.

(T.S. Eliot, introduction to *Nightwood* [1937], xxi–xxii)

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readers / positions (2)

Nightwood lacks a narrative structure in the ordinary sense....And these chapters are knit together, not by the progress of any action—either narrative action, or, as in a stream-of-consciousness novel, the flow of experience—but by the continual reference and cross-reference of images and symbols that must be referred to each other spatially throughout the time-act of reading.

(Joseph Frank, “Spatial Form in Modern Literature” [1945])

readers / positions (3)



Vanity Fair, 1922. Wikimedia Commons.



1917-23.

<http://hdl.handle.net/1903.1/8669>.

readers / positions (4)

[*Nightwood*] is not a minor Modernist masterpiece, a shadow to Joyce's *Ulysses*, but a singular undertaking that addresses woman's place in the patriarchal construct.

(Shari Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank* [1986])

sympathy?

Felix...on the phrase “time crawling” broke into uncontrollable laughter....He began waving his hands, saying, “Oh, please! please!” and suddenly he had a notion that he was doing something that wasn’t laughing at all, but something much worse, though he kept saying to himself, “I am laughing, really laughing, nothing else whatsoever!” (21–22)

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The demonic laugh that he hears comes from somewhere else, a sheer alterity. It is a mirthless laugh, expressing the perplexity of Barnes and her reader, to whom every form of relation to these characters is barred but one, the laughter welling up around Felix. And yet, the position of author and reader is inscribed nowhere else than within Felix himself. (Tyrus Miller, *Late Modernism* [1999])

automatism

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discussion

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How does the narrative direct sympathy? Who does Barnes's writing make us care about? Work together to choose an example passage, and concentrate on the opening chapters.

distanced positions

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The louder she cried out the farther away went the floor below, as if Robin and she, in their extremity, were a pair of opera glasses turned to the wrong end, diminishing in their painful love; a speed that ran away with the two ends of the building, stretching her apart. (68)

next time: teaser

desperado

the grandmother who, for some unknown reason, was dressed as a man,
wearing a billycock and a corked mustache (69)

a tall girl with the body of a boy (50)

the Duchess of Broadback (Frau Mann) (15)