

Early Twentieth-Century Fiction
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Prof. Andrew Goldstone (andrew.goldstone@rutgers.edu)

(Murray 019, Mondays 2:30–4:30)

CA: Evan Dresman (evan.dresman@rutgers.edu)

(36 Union St. 217, Wednesdays 12:00–2:00)

December 4, 2014. Barnes (2).

the final

- ▶ distributed Monday, December 15, at 9 a.m., on Sakai due Tuesday, December 16, at 3 p.m.
- ▶ 3 essay questions, one hour each
 - ▶ 2 cover whole course (multiple titles each, some choice)
 - ▶ 1 focuses on Hurston, Barnes, Narayan
 - ▶ the exam is about *interpreting textual evidence*
 - ▶ open books, slides, notes; nothing else
- ▶ honor code
 - ▶ no collaboration
 - ▶ maximum work time is 4 hours
- ▶ submit in person in Scott 216, 12 p.m.–3 p.m. 12/16 or to Sakai (notify me by 12/10)

next semester

- ▶ for modernism aficionados:
358:352 Modernism and the World (DiGiacomo)
- ▶ for what happens next:
358:363 When Literature Falls Apart (Dresman)

next time

- ▶ syllabus gives the reading order for *Malgudi Days*
- ▶ come with general questions and overall observations
- ▶ start looking over the class commonplace book

review

- ▶ Barnes in literary history: as modernist
 - ▶ difficulty and innovation
 - ▶ an expat writer (like Joyce and Stein)
 - ▶ violating rules for plot, sexual decorum...
- ▶ Barnes in literary history: as *late* modernist
 - ▶ difference from Joyce and Stein
 - ▶ no celebration of artistic consciousness
 - ▶ consciousness and interiority relegated
- ▶ characters are so *relatable*

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distanced positions

The world and its history were to Nora like a ship in a bottle; she herself was outside and unidentified, endlessly embroiled in a preoccupation without a problem. (59)

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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)

unassimilable

Her flesh was the texture of plant life, and beneath it one sensed a frame, broad, porous and sleep-worn, as if sleep were a decay fishing her beneath the visible surface. About her head there was an effulgence as of phosphorus glowing about the circumference of a body of water—as if her life lay through her in ungainly luminous deteriorations—the troubling structure of the born somnambule, who lives in two worlds—meet of child and desperado. (38)

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catachresis (misuse)

outsiders all

Nora

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Robin

Her clothes were of a period he could not quite place. (46)

Sometimes in these moments of insurmountable grief Robin would make some movement...by which Nora was informed that Robin had come from a world to which she would return. (63)

outsiders all (cont.)

Guido (junior)

“People say that he is not sound of mind. What do you say?” (128)

outsiders all (cont.)

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Dr. Matthew Mighty O'Connor

“The reason the doctor knows everything is because he's been everywhere at the wrong time and has now become anonymous.” (89)

outsiders all (cont.)

Guido (junior)

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Felix

heavy with impermissible blood (4)

there was no function in the world for which he could be said to be properly garbed (11)

the Jew seems to be everywhere from nowhere (10)

not derogatory

“Exactly right. With Guido, you are in the presence of the ‘maladjusted.’ Wait! I am not using that word in the derogatory sense at all; in fact my great virtue is that I never use the derogatory in the usual sense.” (124)

all together?

The more amiable actresses of Prague, Vienna, Hungary, Germany, France and Italy, the acrobats and sword-swallowers, had at one time or another allowed him their dressing rooms....

There was a Princess Nadja, a Baron von Tink, a Principessa Stasera y Stasero, a King Buffo and a Duchess of Broadback: gaudy, cheap cuts from the beast life, immensely capable of that great disquiet called entertainment. (14)

Discussion

What kind of community is this?

gay identity?

“And am I to blame if I’ve turned up this time as I shouldn’t have been, when it was a high soprano I wanted, and deep corn curls to my bum, with a womb as big as the king’s kettle, and a bosom as high as the bowsprit of a fhsing schooner?” (97)

what is gender in *Nightwood*?

It was to the Duchess of Broadback (Frau Mann) that Felix owed his first audience with a “gentleman of quality” (15)

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

(billycock: a kind of...hat)

gay solidarity?

“I said, Jenny is so greedy that she wouldn’t give her shit to the crows. And then I thought: Oh, the poor bitch, if she were dying, face down in a long pair of black gloves, would I forgive her?” (112–13)

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“Oh,” he cried, “A broken heart have you! I have falling arches, flying dandruff, a floating kidney, shattered nerves and a broken heart! But do I scream that an eagle has me by the balls or has dropped his oyster on my heart?”...

“Listen,” Nora said. “You’ve got to listen!” (164)

“Yes,” she said, “but—”

“Now, wait a minute! It’s all of a certain night that I’m coming to, that I take so long coming to it,” he said, “a night in the brancy pitch of fall—the particular night you want to know about—for I’m a fisher of men and my gimp is doing a saltarello over every body of water to fetch up what it may. I have a narrative, but you will be put to it to find it.” (104)

the arc of history is long but

“‘One dog will find them both.’” (113)

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Then she began to bark also, crawling after him [Nora's dog]—barking in a fit of laughter, obscene and touching. (179)

evaluations

- ▶ 01:358:358:02
- ▶ instructor name: ??????????

your thoughtful responses are most helpful to the people who will read this: my colleagues, future students

volunteer: close envelope, sign flap “completed,” return these to Leandra Cain in Murray Hall 104