

Twentieth-Century Fiction I

September 16. “Modern,” concluded.
Henry James, “The Beast in the Jungle.”

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Office hours

AG today 3–5 p.m., Murray 031

IB Thursday 1–3 p.m., Murray 027
(but e-mail ahead this week)

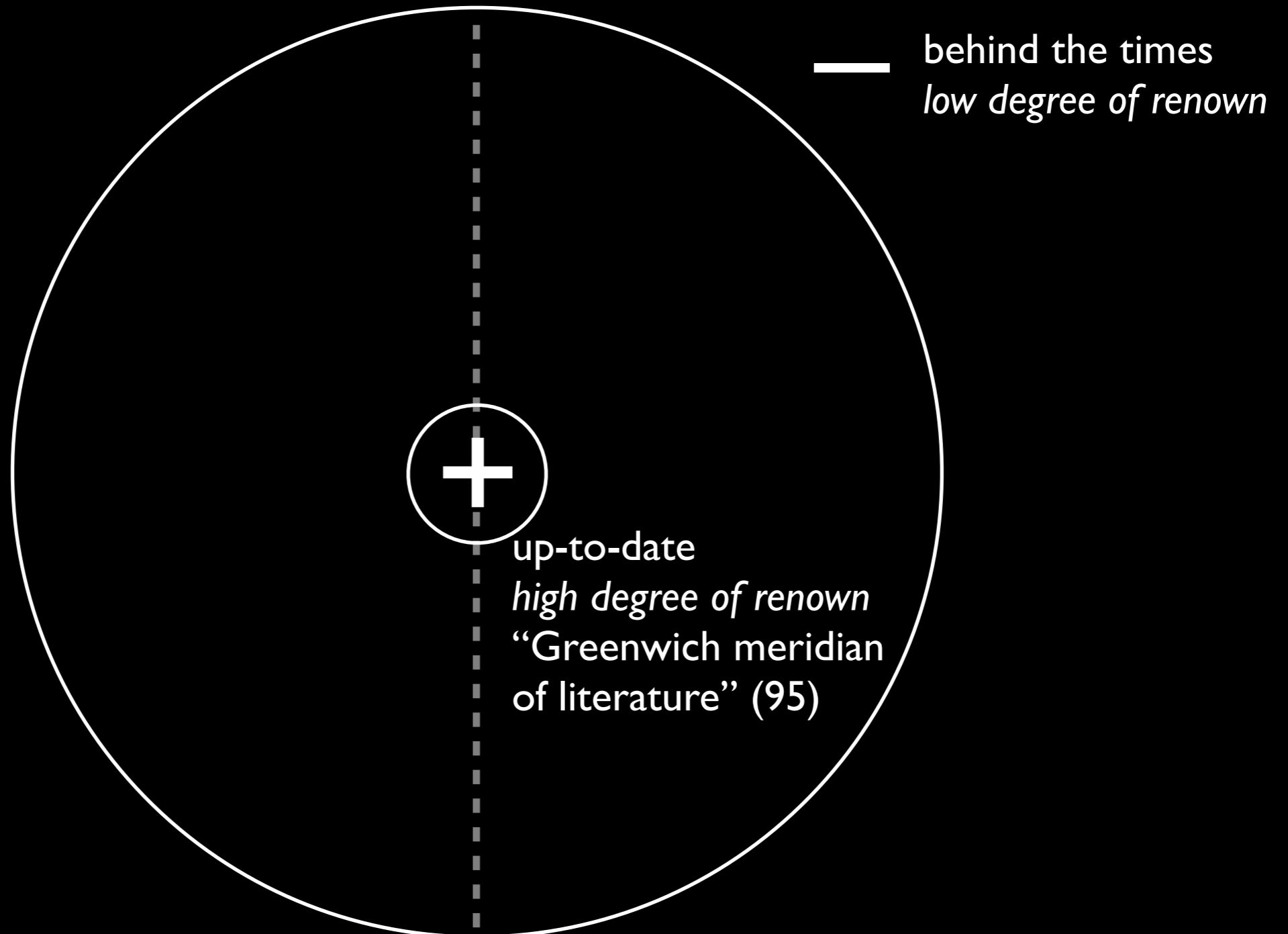
Review

Describing/prescribing what is “modern”

1. Woolf: it is/should be about inner life
“An ordinary mind on an ordinary day”
2. Wilson: it does/should join Symbolism and naturalism
Overcome solipsism in favor of “practical” concerns
3. Bürger: it tries/should try to reintegrate art into life
Down with the museum and the solitary reader!
4. Casanova...

Casanova

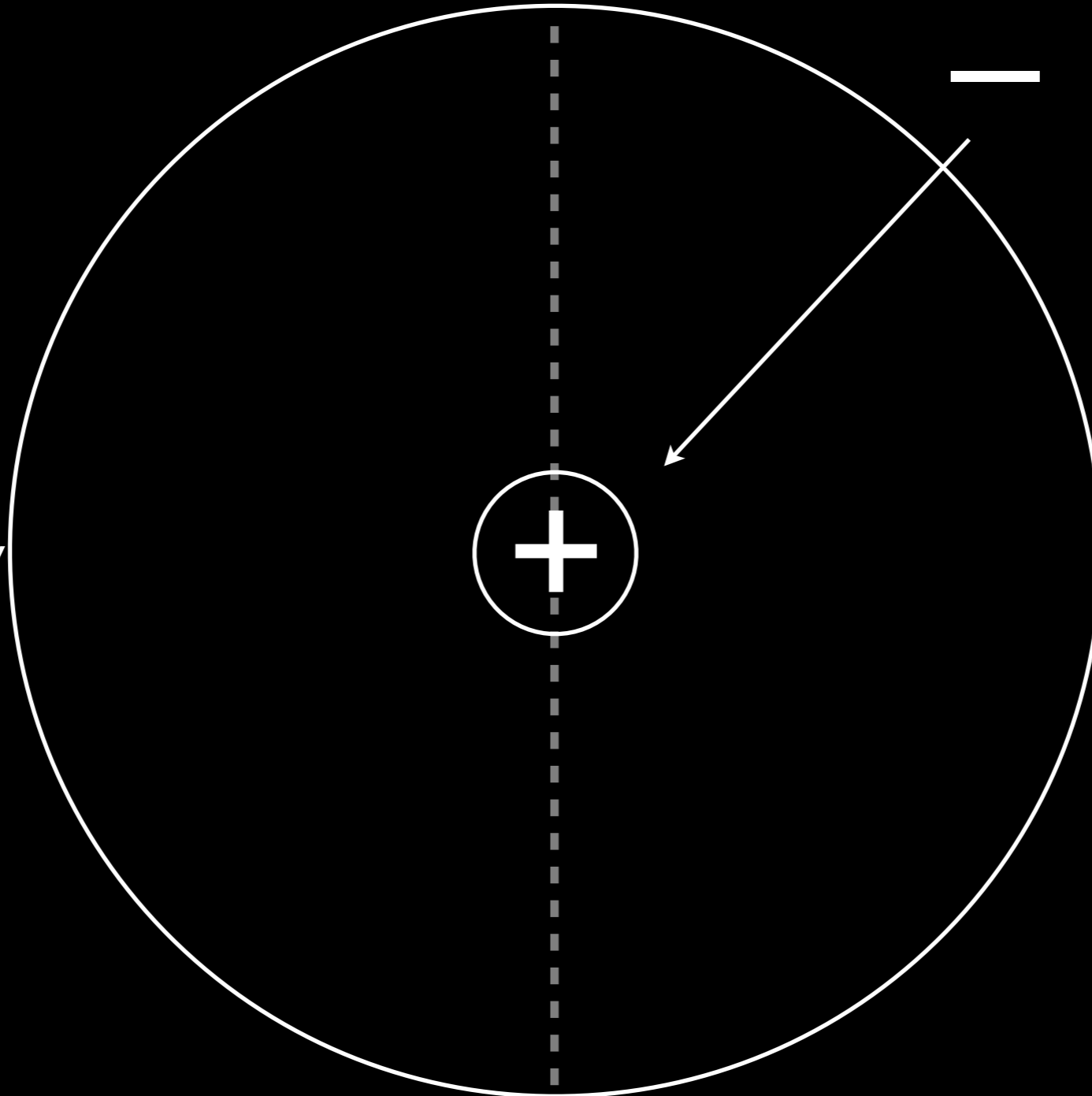
The World Republic of Letters, 1999 (trans. 2004)



Casanova

The World Republic of Letters, 1999 (trans. 2004)

The only true
moderns, the only
ones to fully
recognize and know
the literature of the
present, are those
who are aware of...
this system of literary
timekeeping. (94)



Casanova

The World Republic of Letters, 1999 (trans. 2004)

If English and American criticism have sometimes shown themselves at a loss when confronted with the work of certain recent writers, it is partly because the work of those writers is the result of a literary revolution which occurred outside English literature. (Wilson, 20)

Casanova

The World Republic of Letters, 1999 (trans. 2004)

We only know that certain gratitudes and hostilities inspire us; that certain paths seem to lead to fertile land, others to the dust and the desert. (Woolf, 146)

The success of newcomers to literary space and time in breaking into the ranks of the established moderns, and earning for themselves the right to take part in debates over the definition of the latest modernity, therefore depends to some extent on their familiarity with the most recent innovations in form and technique. (Casanova, 91)

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One more modernity

1. “I have assumed as axiomatic that a creation, a work of art, is autonomous.” (T.S. Eliot, 1923)
2. “Making the modern world possible for art” (T.S. Eliot, 1923)

What happens?

We must grant the artist his subject, his idea, his *donnée*;
our criticism is applied only to what he makes of it.

“Art of Fiction,” 584

What happens?

If a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose...there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style, and perhaps not a single button sewn on as the Bond Street tailors would have it.

Woolf, "Modern Fiction, 150

Style

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“delayed specification of referents” (Ian Watt, 1960)

Style

When they were two
they either mingled their sounds of ecstasy or
melted into silences of even deeper import,
so that there were
aspects of the occasion
that gave it
for Marcher
much the air of the “look round,”
previous to a sale highly advertised,
that excites
or quenches, as may be,
the dream of acquisition.

Discussion

Find another example of the delayed specification of referents (sentence or paragraph-level). Analyze how it creates delay. Then consider the significance of this delay.

Style

As this was his first impression of that, it made a kind of date. (464)

Style

He had had, all along, to-day, the sense of her keeping something back, and he still had it. *As this was his first impression of that, it made a kind of date.* The case was the more marked as she didn't at first answer; which in turn made him go on. "You know something I don't." (464)

“late afternoon of life”

1843 born New York in wealthy family
raised Paris, London, Geneva; invalid, doesn't fight in Civil War
goes to law school, doesn't finish
1875 in Paris, crucial year
1876 moves permanently to London (UK citizen 1915)
1878 “Daisy Miller” makes him famous
1895 disastrous attempt at drama
1900–“Major Phase” (so called by F.O. Matthiessen)
1902 writes “The Beast in the Jungle” (pub. 1903)
1907–9 deluxe revised “New York Edition” of his work
1916 dies

“late afternoon of life”

I have not the least hesitation in saying that I aspire to write in such a way that it would be impossible to an outsider to say whether I am, at a given moment, an American writing about England or an Englishman writing about America...and so far from being ashamed of such an ambiguity I should be exceedingly proud of it, for it would be highly civilized. (HJ to William James, 1888)

centers of consciousness

character-bound focalization (“third person limited”)

He...caught himself...*really* wondering if the great accident would take form now as nothing more than his being condemned to see this charming woman, this admirable friend, pass away from him. He had never so unreservedly qualified her as while confronted in thought with such a possibility; in spite of which there was small doubt for him that as an answer to his long riddle the mere effacement of even so fine a feature of his situation would be an abject anticlimax. (468–69)

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Discussion

What is Marcher's Beast? What is the crisis that he misses? Develop a plausible answer, supporting it with evidence from the text.

A fluffy orange kitten with large blue eyes is sitting on a reflective surface. The kitten's reflection is visible on the surface below it. The background is dark and out of focus.

im in ur jungle

springin as u didnt guess

Discussion

What is Marcher's Beast? What is the crisis that he misses? Develop a plausible answer, supporting it with evidence from the text.

For next time

We'll wrap up "The Beast," so bring that in.

Read all of *Heart of Darkness*.