

Twentieth-Century Fiction I

November 4. Woolf, concluded. Faulkner (I).

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Courses in English, master list:

<http://english.rutgers.edu/undergraduate/courses/spring14.html>

Happy to discuss course choices in office hours or by e-mail

review

explaining Woolf's form:

war

aestheticism

aesthetic autonomy (subfield of restricted production)

compare Sayers, a different postwar...

realism about the mind ("Is life like this?")

middle age ("it was over")

metropolis and mental life (stimulation / blasé attitude)

an ordinary mind?—or many?

thinking in public (Elizabeth Dalloway)

Zwerdling: *Mrs. Dalloway* as satire

analysis of a residual social order ("Establishment")

free your mind?

“The social system” Woolf describes in *Mrs. Dalloway* is not likely to be transformed soon enough to allow either of them [Peter or Clarissa] to build their lives on the flow as well as the containment of emotion. (Zwerdling, 81)

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but is it just about changing each individual's inner life?

other minds

Clarissa...could have bitten her tongue for thus reminding Peter that he had wanted to marry her.

Of course I did, thought Peter; it almost broke my heart too, he thought. (42)

other minds

Every power poured its treasures on his [Septimus's] head, and his hand lay there on the back of the sofa... Fear no more, says the heart in the body; fear no more. (139)

She [Clarissa] read in the book spread open:

Fear no more the heat o' the sun

Nor the furious winter's rages. (9)

other minds

Always her body went through it first, when she was told, suddenly, of an accident...But why had he done it?...

Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate; people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them. (184)

other minds

Fear no more the heat of the sun. She must go back to them. But what an extraordinary night! She felt somehow very like him—the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away. The clock was striking. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. He made her feel the beauty; made her feel the fun. But she must go back. She must assemble. (186)

discussion

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Does this constitute a real alternative to the isolated lives and barren postwar attitudes of earlier in the novel?

Faulkner

Q. Mr. Faulkner, why did Vardaman say “My mother is a fish”?

Class conference at UVA, Session 14, May 6, 1957

discussion

Consider the first few chapters of *As I Lay Dying*. Develop several specific connections between *Mrs. Dalloway* and this novel. Pay particular attention to:

how we move from one chapter to the next

how mental life is represented

how it is difficult (if it's difficult)

use your thinking from the commonplace book...

consciousness?

Cora: “I could have used the money real well. But it’s not like they cost me anything except the baking.” (9)

Vardaman: “It is dark. I can hear wood, silence: I know them... It is as though the dark were resolving him out of his integrity, into an unrelated scattering of components—snuffings and stampings; smells of cooling flesh and ammoniac hair; an illusion of a co-ordinated whole of splotched hide and strong bones within which, detached and secret and familiar, an *is* different from my *is*.” (56)

1st person/3rd person

Jewel: “It’s because he stays out there, right under the window, hammering and sawing on that goddamn box.” (14)

Darl: ““Why, Addie,’ pa says, ‘him and Darl went to make one more load. They thought there was time.’” (47)

modernism?

Is life like this?

Urban experience?

Postwar fracture?

Consumer capitalism?

Aestheticism?

Anse: "Durn that road. And it fixing to rain, too." (35)

dialect, idiolect

The first time **me** and Lafe picked on down the row. Pa **dassent** sweat because he will catch his death from the sickness so everybody that comes to help us. And Jewel dont care about anything he is not kin to us in caring, not **care-kin**. (26)

language

And the next morning they found him [Cash] in his shirt tail, laying asleep on the floor like a felled steer, and the top of the box bored clean full of holes and Cash's new auger broke off in the last one. When they taken the lid off they found that two of them had bored on into her face.

If it's a judgment, it aint right. Because the Lord's got more to do than that. Because the only burden Anse Bundren's ever had is himself....I think to myself he aint that less of a man or he couldn't a bore himself this long....

Cora said, "I have bore you what the Lord God sent me." (73)

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next time

the river crossing

Faulkner as mythologist of the South

Faulkner as the global modern novelist

intimations of the Depression; inequality

and

VOTE