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ENG 5006-001: English Fiction in Transition

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Eng. 5006: English Fiction in Transition

Goals: The period of the "transition" between Victorian and modernist literature is defined in widely variant ways. We will be reading innovative fiction published between 1883 and 1915 in the hopes of gaining insight into--that particular time period and its authors--the process of literary experimentation and its relation to historical change--the politics of literary periodization and canon formation

Policies: English Department statement on plagiarism: Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author and representation of them as one's original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)--has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of NC for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Requirements: paper (3-10 pp.), final exam, two oral presentations, careful preparation of reading assignments and participation in class discussion

Grades: 25% of the grade will be based on exam
25% on paper
25% on presentations
25% on participation

This class involves a heavy reading load: plan accordingly. I have created a listserv entitled twenbrit. Instructions for subscribing are attached: basically you send a message to majordomo@eiu.edu that says:
subscribe twenbrit
end

Postings to the listserv will supplement your participation grade.

Presentations: Each class will be organized around a group presentation by three students. Among them these students are to:

i. Present information on some issue you feel is crucial to
understanding the novel as a whole. This could be an historical event, an idea, an influence, or the novel's publishing/reception history. Make sure you explain why, given your sense of what the novel as a whole is about, this information is important.

2. Hand out a bibliography for the novel and summarize (in 5-10 minutes) the ONE article you found most illuminating or thought-provoking. Make note on your bibliography of which articles/books are available in the EIU library.

3. Distribute a list of discussion questions (10 or so?) and lead the class in discussing them.

Your goal as a group is to stimulate informed discussion. How exactly you distribute tasks is up to you.

Some advice: COME SEE ME if I can be of ANY help, but particularly if you have trouble finding pertinent books or articles. I have access to many things by interlibrary loan that you might not have time to get. I also own material I’d be happy to let you use.

Tentative syllabus
MSep. 1: no class
MS: Schreiner Gp #1
M15: Hardy Gp #2
M22: Conrad, Lord Jim Gp #3
M29: Conrad, Lord Jim
M6: Conrad, Secret Agent Gp #4
M13: Forster Gp #2
M20: Wells Gp #1
M27: Lawrence Gp #4
MNov 3: Lawrence
M17: Woolf Gp #3
Thanksgiving Recess
MDec 1: Richardson stories
M8: Discussion/review. Paper due.

There will be a final exam during final exam week.
New Historicism


"The writing and reading of texts, as well as the processes by which they are circulated and categorized, analyzed and taught, are being reconstrued as historically determined and determining modes of cultural work; apparently autonomous aesthetic and academic issues are being reunderstood as inextricably though complexly linked to other discourses and practices--such linkages constituting the social networks within which individual subjectivities and collective structures are mutually and continuous shaped. . . . Representations of the world in written discourse are engaged in constructing the world, in shaping the modalities of social reality, and in accommodating their writers, performers, readers, and audiences to multiple and shifting subject positions within the world they both constitute and inhabit." --Louis A. Montrose in Veeser, 15, 16.
Below is a very selective collection of resources. Do come ask if you have questions, particularly about works on individual authors.

SOCIAL HISTORY

IMPERIALISM

WOMEN

LITERARY HISTORY
Modernism
Williams, Raymond. Culture and Society, 1780-1950
* = especially good for getting an overall sense of the period.

For each writer, check MLA bibliography as well as on-line catalog. Autobiographies, letters, and diaries are available for many.

English Literature in Transition is a journal dedicated to the period.

* Ann Veronica has a chronology of the period you may find useful. The web also has valuable resources including Voice of the
Shuttle, Victorian Web, Index of Web Sites on Modernism.

Modernism Timeline. Modernism/Modernity and Modern Fiction Studies are available on-line to subscribers to Project Muse
(includes EIU).

The library also has periodicals from the period. I urge you to browse through one of these for the year or two previous to a
novel you're researching:

Yellowbook
Blackwood's (1902-)
Cornhill (1884)
Edinburgh Review (1900-)
Mind (on psychology and philosophy)
Times Literary Supplement (1902-)
Review of Reviews (1890-)

...
There are girls in the gold-reef city,
There are mothers and children too!
And they cry Hurry up! for pity!
So what could a brave man do? . . .

So we forded and galloped forward
As hard as our beasts could pelt,
First eastward, then trending northward,
Right over the rolling veldt
--Alfred Austin (poet laureate) after the Jameson Raid, 1895

Vitai Llampada (torches of life)
There's a breathless hush in the Close tonight--
Ten to make and the match to win--
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in.
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote--
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

The sand of the desert is sodden red--
Red with the wreck of a square that broke;
The Gatling's jammed and the Colonel dead,
And the Regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks.
And England's far and Honour's a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks:
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

This is the word that year by year,
While in her place the School is set,
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling fling to the host behind--
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"
--Henry Newbolt

Recessional
God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line.
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine--
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet.
Lest we forget--lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies:
The Captains and the Kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
And humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away:
On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
Such boastings as the Gentiles us,
Or lesser breeds without the Law—
Lord God of Hosts, we with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard,
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding, calls not Thee to guard,
For frantic boast and foolish word—
Thy mercy on Thy people, Lord!
—Kipling, 1897

The White Man's Burden
Take up the White Man's burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need:
To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples.
Half-devil and half-child.

Take up the White Man's burden—
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride:
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain,
To seek another's profit,
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden—
The savage wars of peace—
Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease:
And when your goal is nearest
The end for others sought,
Watch Sloth and heathen folly
Bring all your hope to naught.

Take up the White Man's burden--
No tawdry rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper--
The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter,
The roads ye shall not tread.
Go make them with your living.
And mark them with your dead.

Take up the White Man's burden--
And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better.
The hate of those ye guard--
The dry of hosts ye humour
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light;--
"Why brought ye us from bondage.
Our loved Egyptian night?"

Take up the White Man's burden--
Ye dare not stoop to less--
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To cloak your weariness:
By all ye cry or whisper.
By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples
Shall weigh your Gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden--
Have done with childish days--
The lightly proffered laurel.
The easy, ungrudged praise.
Comes now, to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years.
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom.
The judgment of your peers!
--Rudyard Kipling, 1899
Modernism and the Modern Novel

The term modernism refers to the radical shift in aesthetic and cultural sensibilities evident in the art and literature of the post-World War One period. The ordered, stable and inherently meaningful world view of the nineteenth century could not, wrote T.S. Eliot, accord with "the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history." Modernism thus marks a distinctive break with Victorian bourgeois morality; rejecting nineteenth-century optimism, they presented a profoundly pessimistic picture of a culture in disarray. This despair often results in an apparent apathy and moral relativism.

In literature, the movement is associated with the works of (among others) Eliot, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, W.B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, H.D., Franz Kafka and Knut Hamsun. In their attempt to throw off the aesthetic burden of the realist novel, these writers introduced a variety of literary tactics and devices:

- The radical disruption of linear flow of narrative;
- The frustration of conventional expectations concerning unity and coherence of plot and character and the cause and effect development thereof;
- The deployment of ironic and ambiguous juxtapositions to call into question the moral and philosophical meaning of literary action;
- The adoption of a tone of epistemological self-mockery aimed at naive pretensions of bourgeois rationality;
- The opposition of inward consciousness to rational, public, objective discourse;
- And an inclination to subjective distortion to point up the evanescence of the social world of the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie. (Barth, "The Literature of Replenishment" 68)

Modernism is often derided for abandoning the social world in favour of its narcissistic interest in language and its processes. Recognizing the failure of language to ever fully communicate meaning ("That's not it at all, that's not what I meant at all" laments Eliot's J. Alfred Prufrock), the modernists generally downplayed content in favour of an investigation of form. The fragmented, non-chronological, poetic forms utilized by Eliot and Pound revolutionized poetic language.

Modernist formalism, however, was not without its political cost. Many of the chief Modernists either flirted with fascism or openly espoused it (Eliot, Yeats, Hamsun and Pound). This should not be surprising: modernism is markedly non-egalitarian; its disregard for the shared conventions of meaning make many of its supreme accomplishments (eg. Eliot's "The Wasteland," Pound's "Cantos," Joyce's Finnegans Wake, Woolf's The Waves) largely inaccessible to the common reader. For Eliot, such obscurantism was necessary to halt the erosion of art in the age of commodity circulation and a literature adjusted to the lowest common denominator.

Daiches, "The nineteenth century novel was anchored in a world of public value agreed on by reader and writer, and its plot pattern was determined by changes in fortune and status on the part of the principal character." Assumes the "human standards and human motives" can be explained and understood in terms shared by author and reader.
A wide plain, where the broadening Floss hurries on between its green banks to the sea, and the loving tide, rushing to meet it, checks its passage with an impetuous embrace. On this mighty tide the black ships—laden with the fresh-scented fir-planks, with rounded sacks of oil-bearing seed, or with the dark glitter of coal—are borne along to the town of St Ogg's, which shows its aged, fluted red roofs and the broad gables of its wharves between the low wooded hill and the river brink, tinged with a soft purple hue under the transient glance of this February sun. Far away on each hand stretch the rich pastures and the patches of dark earth, made ready for the seed of broad-leaved green crops, or touched already with the tint of the tender-bladed autumn-sown corn. There is a remnant still of the last year's golden clusters of beehive ricks rising at intervals beyond the hedgerows; and everywhere the hedgerows are studded with trees: the distant ships seem to be lifting their masts and stretching their red-brown sails close among the branches of the spreading ash. Just by the red-roofed town the tributary Ripple flows with a lively current into the Floss. How lovely the little river is, with its dark, changing wavelets! It seems to me like a living companion while I wander along the bank and listen to its low placid voice, as to the voice of one who is deaf and loving. I remember those large dipping willows. I remember the stone bridge.

And this is Dorcote Mill. I must stand a minute or two here on the bridge and look at it, though the clouds are

**Eliot, MILL ON THE FLOSS**
The Rev. Septimus Harding was, a few years since, a beneficed clergyman residing in the cathedral town of ——; let us call it Barchester. Were we to name Wells or Salisbury, Exeter, Hereford, or Gloucester, it might be presumed that something personal was intended; and as this tale will refer mainly to the cathedral dignitaries of the town in question, we are anxious that no personality may be suspected. Let us presume that Barchester is a quiet town in the west of England, more remarkable for the beauty of its cathedral and the antiquity of its monuments than for any commercial prosperity; that the west end of Barchester is the cathedral close, and that the aristocracy of Barchester are the bishop, dean, and canons, with their respective wives and daughters.

Early in life Mr. Harding found himself located at Barchester. A fine voice and a taste for sacred music had decided the position in which he was to exercise his calling, and for many years he performed the easy but not highly paid duties of a minor canon. At the age of forty a small living in the close vicinity of the town increased both his work and his income, and at the age of fifty he became precentor of the cathedral.

Mr. Harding had married early in life and was the father of two daughters. The eldest, Susan, was born soon after his marriage; the other, Eleanor, not till ten years later. At the time at which we introduce him to our readers he was living as precentor at Barchester with his youngest daughter, then twenty-four years of age, having been many years a widower and having married his eldest daughter to a son of the bishop a very short time before his installation to the office of precentor.

Scandal at Barchester affirmed that had it not been for the beauty of his daughter, Mr. Harding would have remained a minor canon; but here probably Scandal lied.

A black servant, who reposed on the box beside the fat coachman, uncurled his handy legs as soon as the equipage drew up opposite Miss Pinkerton’s shining brass plate, and as he pulled the bell, at least a score of young heads were seen peering out of the narrow windows of the stately old brick house. Nay, the acute observer might have recognised the little red nose of good-natured Miss Jemima Pinkerton herself, rising over some geranium-pots in the window of that lady’s own drawing-room.

‘It is Mrs. Sedley’s coach, sister,’ said Miss Jemima. ‘Sambo, the black servant, has just rung the bell; and the coachman has a new red waistcoat.’

‘Have you completed all the necessary preparations incident to Miss Sedley’s departure, Miss Jemima?’ asked Miss Pinkerton herself, that majestic lady; the Semiramis of Hammersmith, the friend of Doctor Johnson, the correspondent of Mrs. Chapone herself.

‘The girls were up at four this morning, packing her trunk, sister,’ replied Miss Jemima; ‘we have made her a bow-pot.’
How to give a "command" to Majordomo.

It is pretty easy to give a command to Majordomo. Let's suppose you want to subscribe to an EIU Majordomo list named "bogus@eiu.edu". The command you need to give to Majordomo is "subscribe bogus". Here is how you give the command:

1. Go into your e-mail program, whether elm, pine, Eudora, Netscape, or EM@iler.
2. Start a new e-mail message.
3. Address the message to: majordomo@eiu.edu
4. Enter something on the subject, or title, line. It doesn't matter what it is -- it could be the word "something". Keep it clean -- the list owner may see the subject line, after all.
5. In the body of the message, enter the following two lines of text:
   subscribe bogus
   end
6. Send the message

That is all there is to it, really. In the section "Majordomo for List Subscribers" you can learn about all the subscriber commands. There are commands to subscribe to an EIU Majordomo list, unsubscribe from a list, find the names of public lists at EIU, get descriptions of those public lists, get a list of the subscribers of the public lists or lists you are subscribed to, find out whether the list has stored any archives or digests, and retrieve any of those archives or digests that you want.

Return to Majordomo Top Level

Find out how to apply for an EIU Majordomo list
An Index of Web Sites on Modernism

Welcome to the Annotated Index to Web Sites on Modernism maintained by the Malcom S. Forbes Center at Brown University.

This index will be continuously under construction as new resources become available or as addresses change. If you have any comments, suggestions, or notes please e-mail us. These pages are operated and maintained by Sean Latham through the Malcom S. Forbes Center for Research in Culture and Media Studies at Brown University, Providence, RI.

The following links contain annotated references to web pages and gopher files on artists, poets, novelists, musicians, critics, and philosophers who wrote, created, and composed in the first half of the twentieth century. Please select a topic that you wish to search.

What's New on the Index

Artists A-F

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Artists S-Z

General Resources on Modernism

Electronic Journals and Reading Groups

Due to the fluid nature of the World Wide Web, URL's often change or simply disappear. This page is consistently tested for broken links in an effort to increase its dependability and ease of use as a scholarly resource. If you discover any links that do not work, please e-mail us so that we can delete them from the list.

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