

Early Twentieth-Century Fiction  
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(Murray 019, Mondays 2:30–4:30)

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

November 3, 2014. Woolf, concluded; Faulkner (1).

## first papers

topic	# papers
Endings	10
Others	8
House	6
Unspoken	5
Minor	3

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author	
Stein	16
Conrad	10
James	9

- ▶ First quartile: 2.6 (B)
- ▶ Median: 2.7 (B)
- ▶ Third quartile: 3.05 (B+)

a comparison: Sayers and Woolf

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- ▶ governing class
- ▶ enigmatic and gruesome death
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- ▶ orders of difficulty
- ▶ indeterminate moral position
- ▶ critique of moral and sexual norms
- ▶ restricted production

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*and yet*

A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction. (Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* [1929])

## thinking in common

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

## resolution?

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

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)

## Comparative moment

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 is; or why not, if not)

Use your thinking from the commonplace book.

consciousness?

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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)

## First person/third person

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Dewey Dell: “He said he knew without the words like he told me that ma is going to die without words, and I knew he knew because if he had said he knew with the words I would not have believed that he had been there and saw us.” (27; qtd. by YT)

is life like this?

- ▶ an ordinary mind?
- ▶ on an ordinary day?
- ▶ urban experience?
- ▶ postwar fracture?
- ▶ aestheticism?

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

next

- ▶ finish *As I Lay Dying*