

Early Twentieth-Century Fiction

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(Office hours by appointment this week)

October 25, 2016. Hemingway (2); Woolf introduced.

discussion

Consider Chapter V (“*They shot the six cabinet ministers at dawn...*”). Identify the syntactic characteristics of the passage. Then think about the effects of this style. What is emphasized? What is left out? What kind of narratorial persona is created? What kind of reader is implied?

review

- ▶ the paratactic style
- ▶ strategic vagueness
- ▶ the secret of variation (prepositional phrases)

“show don’t tell”

For his mastery of the art of narrative, most recently demonstrated in *The Old Man and the Sea*, and for the influence that he has exerted on contemporary style.

Swedish Academy, 1954; nobelprize.org.

It would be hard to overestimate the influence of Hemingway on postwar writers.

Mark McGurl, *The Program Era: Postwar Fiction and the Rise of Creative Writing* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2009), 65.

“be a man”

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But just as importantly, as a poet of brooding masculinity, Hemingway came to represent the noble pathos of understatement. (McGurl, 245)

What is being restrained in the craft of his fiction is, precisely, self-expression, enough of which must remain to produce the aesthetic pleasure of its active restraint. (*ibid.*, 102)

sensitive man

His tongue was very sensitive. (140)

It had been a very fine experience. (140)

He did not want to rush his sensations any. (151)

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He had been solidly hooked. Solid as a rock. He felt like a rock, too, before he started off. By God, he was a big one. By God, he was the biggest one I ever heard of. (151)



Ernest Hemingway, American Red Cross volunteer, recuperates from wounds at ARC Hospital, Milan, Italy, September 1918. [Nobelprize.org](https://www.nobelprize.org).

wounds

Nick sat against the wall of the church where they had dragged him to be clear of machine-gun fire in the street. Both legs stuck out awkwardly. He had been hit in the spine. His face was sweaty and dirty. The sun shone on his face. The day was very hot. (63)

As he smoked, his legs stretched out in front of him (135)

“laziness versus discipline”

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“That’s what you are. That’s what you all are,” Miss Stein said. “All of you young people who served in the war. You are a lost generation....You have no respect for anything. You drink yourselves to death.”...

I thought of Miss Stein and Sherwood Anderson and egotism and mental laziness versus discipline and I thought who is calling who a lost generation?

(*A Movable Feast* [written 1957–60, published 1964])

pulling the line taut

pulling the line taut

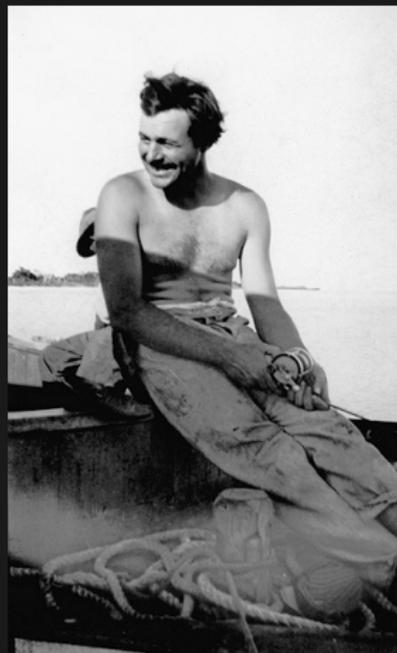
It had been a hard trip. He was very tired. That was done. He had made his camp. He was settled. Nothing could touch him. It was a good place to camp. (139)

He put on the reel and threaded the line through the guides. He had to hold it from hand to hand, as he threaded it, or it would slip back through its own weight. It was a heavy, double tapered fly line....

He tested the knot and the spring of the rod by pulling the line taut. It was a good feeling. (147)

inside out

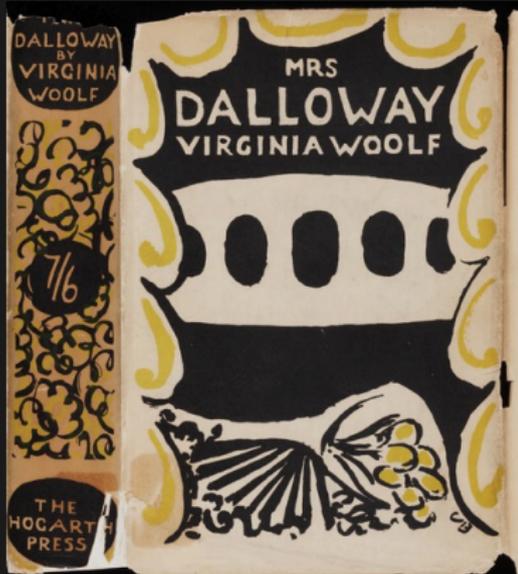
All the insides and the gills and tongue came out in one piece....All the insides clean and compact, coming out all together. (155)



Hemingway in Key West, 1928.

Nobelprize.org.

Virginia Woolf (1882–1941)



What happens on the first page?

Dust jacket of *Mrs. Dalloway*, Hogarth Press 1st ed., 1925. Illustration by Vanessa Bell. [Beinecke Library](#).

reported discourse

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2. For Lucy had her work cut out for her.
3. What a lark! What a plunge!
4. For so it had always seemed to her...

Woolf pushes free indirect discourse into stream of consciousness.
("kt22")

reported discourse (2)

For Heaven only knows why one loves it so, how one sees it so, making it up, building it round one, tumbling it, creating it every moment afresh; but the veriest frumps, the most dejected of miseries sitting on doorsteps (drink their downfall) do the same; can't be dealt with, she felt positive, by Acts of Parliament for that very reason: they love life. (4)

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big and small

Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness. Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small.

Woolf, “Modern Fiction,” 150.

“#WhyHerStory” (tag by [Sean](#) on the introduction of Septimus, 14)

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Discussion

“For it was the middle of June” (4). In this paragraph, what is big and what is small? What is significant about the distribution of attention?

next

- ▶ Aim to finish *Mrs. Dalloway*