

# Twentieth-Century Fiction I

November 5.

Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*; Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (I).

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# Housekeeping

**Paper assignment to be distributed Thursday**

**Paper deadline moved to November 26**

This week: blog and attendance amnesty

# Review

## I. Woolf: the war

- a. generational cleavage: “so insidious were the fingers of the European War”
- b. policies and cases: “provision in the Bill”
- c. Septimus: idealism and madness
- d. Clarissa: also a casualty
- e. Thus: the past is not even past

# Review

2. Woolf: the moment
  - a. “life; London; this moment of June”

# a single moment

In people's eyes, in the swing, tramp, and trudge; in the bellow and the uproar; the carriages, motor cars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass bands; barrel organs; in the triumph and the jingle and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead **was** what she loved; life; London; this moment of June. (3)

# Review

2. Woolf: the moment
  - a. “life; London; this moment of June”
  - b. “the most exquisite moment”

# a single moment

Then came the most exquisite moment of her whole life passing a stone urn with flowers in it. Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world might have turned upside down! The others disappeared; there she was alone with Sally. And she felt that she had been given a present, wrapped up, and told just to keep it, not to look at it—a diamond, something infinitely precious, wrapped up, which, as they walked (up and down, up and down), she uncovered, or the radiance burnt through, the revelation, the religious feeling!—when old Joseph and Peter faced them. (35–36)

# a single moment...?

She loomed through a mist. For she hadn't looked like *that*, Sally Seton, when Clarissa grasped the hot water can, to think of her under this roof, under this roof! (171)

# Review

## 2. Woolf: the moment

- a. “life; London; this moment of June”
- b. “the most exquisite moment”
- c. the past is not even past (Clarissa; Peter; Septimus)

# stream of consciousness

again

multipersonal representation of consciousness (536)

Exterior events have actually lost their hegemony, they serve to release and interpret inner events. (538)

a transfer of confidence: the great exterior turning points and blows of fate are granted less importance (547)

Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis* (1942–45)

# Why?

At the time of the first World War and after—in a Europe unsure of itself, overflowing with unsettled ideologies and ways of life, and **pregnant with disaster**—certain writers...find a method which dissolves reality into multiple and multivalent reflections of consciousness. That this method should have been developed at this time is not hard to understand. (*Mimesis*, 551)

or...

The psychological foundation upon which the metropolitan individuality is erected is the intensification of emotional life due to the swift and continuous shift of external and internal stimuli...

There is perhaps no psychic phenomenon which is so unconditionally reserved to the city as the blasé outlook.

Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1903)

# connection

Today in an intellectualized and refined sense the citizen of the metropolis is “free” in contrast with the trivialities and prejudices which bind the small town person....It is obviously on the obverse of this freedom that, under certain circumstances, one never feels as lonely and as deserted as in this metropolitan crush of persons.

Simmel

# connection

The young man had killed himself; but she did not pity him; with the clock striking the hour, one, two, three, she did not pity him, with all this going on. There! the old lady had put out her light!...The words came to her, 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)

or...

Consciousness in Woolf's writing is...social consciousness, in the sense that the absolute privacy of consciousness is unobtainable.... This phenomenon is encountered in everyday life as the experience of "the market."

"The market" is at least as much an aesthetic phenomenon as it is anything else.

Jennifer Wicke, "*Mrs. Dalloway Goes to Market*" (12)

# consumer capitalism

“Glaxo,” said Mrs. Coates... (20)

It was toffee; they were advertising toffee, a nursemaid told Rezia. Together they began to spell t...o...f...

“K...R...” said the nursemaid (22)

Ah, but that aeroplane! Hadn't Mrs. Dempster always longed to see foreign parts? She had a nephew, a missionary. It soared and shot. (27)

or...

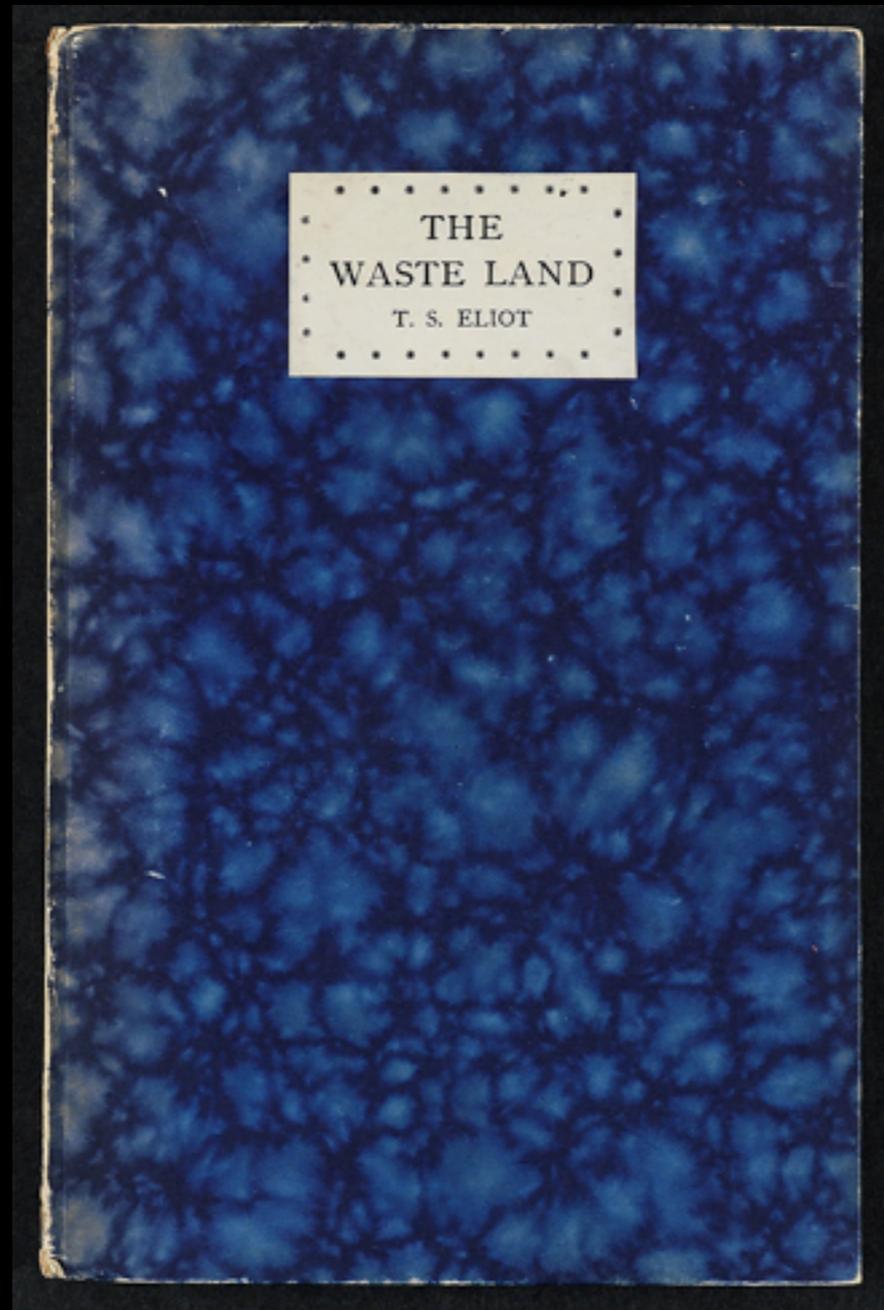
The leaden circles dissolved in the air. (4, 48, 94, 186)

Fear no more (9, 30, 39, 139 [Septimus], 186)

*leitmotive* again

compare also: Peter and Clarissa / Odysseus and Penelope?

# restricted production



# restricted production

Hogarth Press (1917–41): operated by hand by Leonard and Virginia Woolf (VW is compositor)

“for all our friends stories”: Publishes Bloomsbury authors and affiliates (Woolves, Eliot, Forster, Mansfield, Fry); subsequently psychoanalysis, political pamphlets

“The only woman in England free to write what I like”

# Onwards to 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)

# multipersonal

Is it consciousness?

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

Is it third-person?

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

Urban experience? Postwar fracture? Consumer capitalism? Aestheticism?

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

# 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. Wheny 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)

# language: discussion

And when you are filled with sleep, you never were. I don't know what I am. I don't know if I am or not. Jewel knows what he is, because he does not know that he does not know whether he is or not. He cannot empty himself for sleep because he is not what he is and he is what he is not. Beyond the unlamped wall I can hear the rain shaping the wagon that is ours, the load that is no longer theirs that felled and sawed it nor yet theirs that bought it and which is not ours either...I am *is*. (80–81)

How does the play on  $\sqrt{be}$  work through both sound and sense? And what does it have to do with a rainstorm?

# next time

consider another generative atom of language: **“it”**

the rainstorm

Faulkner as mythologist of the South

Faulkner as the global modern novelist

intimations of the Depression; inequality

and

VOTE