

Introduction to Twentieth-Century Literature

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Prof. Andrew Goldstone (andrew.goldstone@rutgers.edu)
(Murray 019, Mondays and Wednesdays 2:30–4:30)

May 1, 2017. Morrison (2) and course conclusion.

review

- ▶ Morrison and consciousness: individual perspective, social alienation
 - ▶ “I smiled back, but not too much lest somebody think this visit was the biggest thing that ever happened” (1177).
- ▶ Morrison and voices: the sound of positionality
 - ▶ “recitatif”
 - ▶ “I wonder what made me think you were different” (1184).

agenda

- ▶ Morrison and omission
- ▶ Morrison and history
- ▶ course overview, general questions

in which Morrison (doesn't) tell you the answer

The kind of work I have always wanted to do requires me to learn how to maneuver ways to free up the language from its sometimes sinister, frequently lazy, almost always predictable employment of racially informed and determined chains. (The only short story I have ever written, “Recitatif,” was an experiment in the removal of all racial codes from a narrative about two characters of different races for whom racial identity is crucial.)

Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage, 1992), xi.

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- ▶ What constitutes an identity in this story? Find specific moments of identity-making. (Bonus: Maggie?)

Morrison: the historical imagination



A busing protest and a counter-protest in New York City, June 1959. Press images in Matt Delmont, *The Origins of Antibusing Politics in 1950s New York*.

And just when ABC was about to send up a news crew, the kids settled down like nothing in the world had happened. (1185)

The proportion of black students attending predominantly minority schools rose from 63% in 1988 to 73% in 2005.

Sean F. Reardon and Ann Owens, “60 Years After Brown: Trends and Consequences of School Segregation,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 40 (2014): 203.

1907 James Joyce, *Dubliners*
1915 T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
1916 W.B. Yeats, "Easter 1916"
1921 Virginia Woolf, *Monday or Tuesday*
1922 T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*
1926 Langston Hughes, *The Weary Blues*
1929 Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*
1931 William Faulkner, "Spotted Horses"
1936 Marianne Moore, "The Pangolin"
1938 William Faulkner, "Barn Burning"
1939 W.B. Yeats, "The Circus Animals' Desertion"
1951 Langston Hughes, *Montage of a Dream Deferred*
1957 Samuel Beckett, *Endgame*
1958 Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*
1960 Elizabeth Bishop, "Brazil"
1971 V.S. Naipaul, "One Out of Many"
1974 Leslie Marmon Silko, "Yellow Woman"
1975 Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, "Wedding at the Cross"
1977 Bessie Head, "The Deep River"
1978 Jamaica Kincaid, "Girl"
1983 Toni Morrison, "Recitatif"
1986 A.K. Ramanujan, "Elements of Composition"
1996 Junot Díaz, "Drown"
1999 J.M. Coetzee, "The Novel in Africa"

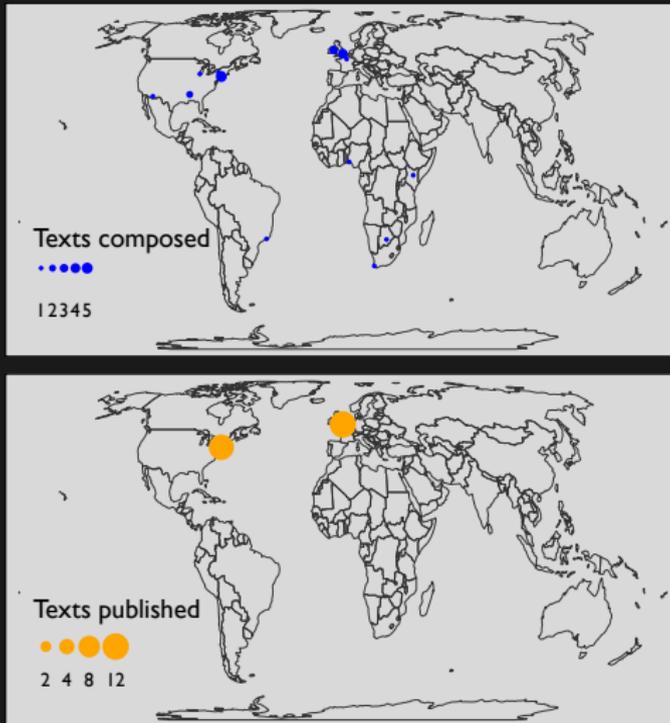


Figure: Texts on our syllabus: places of composition and first publication (more or less)

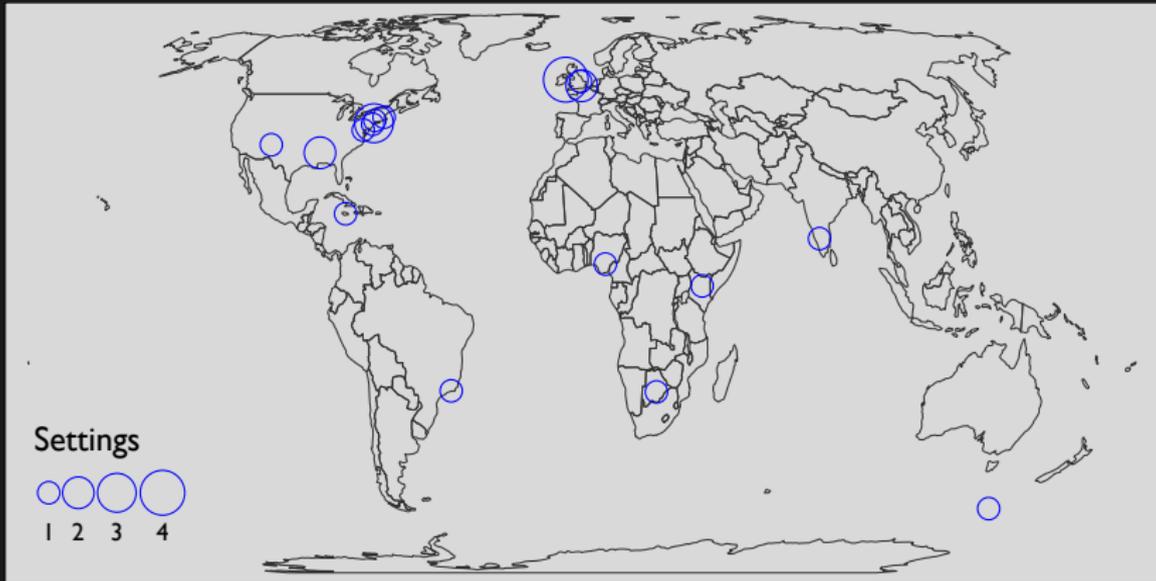


Figure: Settings from our syllabus (more or less)

the literary world

- ▶ it's pretty big
- ▶ but you can traverse it by reading