

2202441 British Fiction from the Twentieth Century to the Present
Semester II, 2019
Thursday, February 27, 2020
Review and Test Practice (135 minutes)

Review: Identifications (closed book; 60 minutes) Identify as thoroughly as you can (by author, title, speaker, location within the work, etc.) 12 of the following 20 selections and write two brief sentences on its significance.

1. I was astounded at the work I must have put into the construction of the book, at the intricate tangle of references and cross-references.
2. The restlessness of writers forces upon fiction from time to time forms that are foreign to it, but when it has been oppressed for a period by obscurity, propaganda or affectation, it reverts, and returns inevitably to the proper function of fiction, which is to tell an interesting story.
3. He told her that I had remarked on her endurance.
“I shall pay for it to-morrow,” she said to me in her plaintive way. “I shall be at death’s door.”
“I sometimes think that you’re quite strong enough to do the things you want to,” I murmured.
I had noticed that if a party was amusing she could dance till five in the morning, but if it was dull she felt very poorly and Tom had to take her home early. I am afraid she did not like my reply, for though she gave me a pathetic smile I saw no amusement in her large blue eyes.
“You can’t very well expect me to fall down dead just to please you,” she answered.
4. “But why—why—”
“Why did I play a lone hand?” She smiled a little, remembering the last time she had used the words.
“Such an elaborate comedy!”
“My friend—I had to save him. The evidence of a woman devoted to him would not have been enough—you hinted as much yourself. But I know something of the psychology of crowds. Let my evidence be wrung from me, as an admission, damning me in the eyes of the law, and a reaction in favour of the prisoner would immediately set in.”
5. To ride; to dance; she had adored all that. Or going long walks in the country, talking, about books, what to do with one’s life, for young people were amazingly priggish—oh, the things one had said! But one had conviction. Middle age is the devil. People like Jack’ll never know that, she thought; for he never once thought of death, never, they said, knew he was dying. And now can never mourn—how did it go?—a head grown grey...From the contagion of the world’s slow stain...have drunk their cup a round or two before.... From the contagion of the world’s slow stain! She held herself upright.
6. That all standards of taste and good sense have gone by the board and vanished completely from the popular plane, is generally accepted among us. What I expounded, upon those lines, by the method of verbatim quotation from book or newspaper, demonstrating the affiliation of the sublime and the ridiculous, in my paper *The Enemy*, and in my critical books, is now being expounded by a host of people, from Mr. I. A. Richards (and his appendix the Leavises) down to every bottle-washer in Fleet Street. But

it is always the *other fellow*—never Number One—who is bereft of criteria and standardless: though it is pretty clear that if things are in a bad way upon one plane of a finely homogeneous, very thoroughly *levelled*, civilization, they are liable to be in a bad way up in the “highbrow” loft as well as down in the “low-brow” basement. Is not, however, “the present writer,” as are all other writers, suspect? Certainly he is! Time alone can show which of us, of all these figures engaged in this pell-mell confusion, has preserved the largest store (and at the best it must be modest) of what is rational, and the least affected with rank bogusness.

7. It is the first time I have heard him laugh, and it sends a shiver down my spine, coming as it does so inappropriately upon the tragic death of his old friend. “Poor blighter,” he says quietly, “and last night he was so curious about it all. It’s very queer, chums, I always think. Naow, ’e knows as much about it as they’ll ever let ’im know, and last night ’e was all in the dark.”
8. *For that day we all must labour,
Though we die before it break;
Cows and horses, geese and turkeys,
All must toil for freedom’s sake.*
9. Words of this kind are often used in a consciously dishonest way. That is, the person who uses them has his own private definition, but allows his hearer to think he means something quite different.
10. K.15 wasn’t playing fair.
11. White planes no trace shining white one only shining white infinite but that known not.
Light heat all known all white heart breath no sound.
12. The train pulled up. The soldier leaped down and waved. As the train started again, I unpacked my abstract funeral and looked at it for a few moments.
“To hell with the idea,” I said. “It’s a real funeral I want.”
“All in good time,” said a voice from the corridor.
“*You* again,” I said. It was the soldier.
“No,” he said, “I got off at the last station. I’m only a notion of myself.”
“Look here,” I said, “would you be offended if I throw all this away?”
“Of course not,” said the soldier. “You can’t offend a notion.”
13. They went outside to inspect the buildings and the orchard. There’d be a good crop of damsons, he said, but the apple-trees would have to be replanted. Peering through the brambles, she saw a row of mouldering beehives.
‘And I’, she said, ‘shall learn the secrets of the bee.’
He helped her over a stile and they walked uphill across two fields overgrown with gorse and blackthorn. The sun had dropped behind the escarpment, and swirls of coppery cloud were trailing over the rim. The thorns bit her ankles and tiny beads of blood burst through the white of her stockings. She said, ‘I can manage,’ when he offered to carry her.
The moon was up by the time they came back to the horses. The moonlight caught the curve of her neck, and a nightingale flung liquid notes into the darkness. He slipped an arm around her waist and said, ‘Could you live in this?’

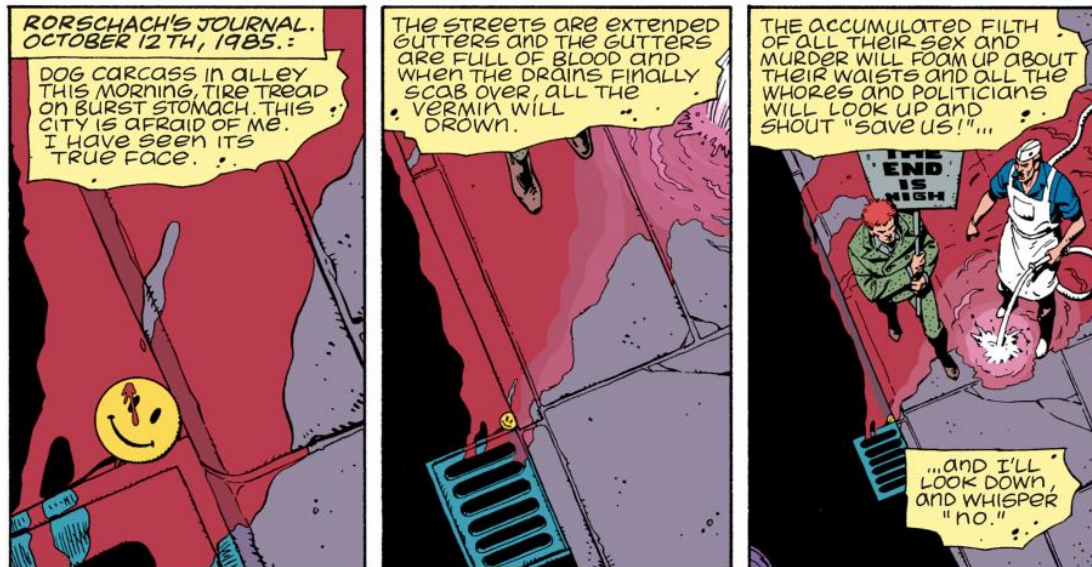
‘I could,’ she said, turning to face him, as he knotted his hands in the small of her back.

14. Broadly, this involves seeing society as intersubjective, as combining changing, often transitional identities and subjectivities. Such literary texts reconfigure the moral and narrative definitions of literary engagement that reflect changes within Britain itself, as the counter cultural forces of the 1960s diminished, the globalized economy abandoned the welfarism of the post-war settlement and redefined the role of the state. Certainly national culture perhaps seemed both less entrenched and less monolithic. Contemporary fiction, as with its antecedents, seems to relate insistently to its intersections with a broader culture and upon its own cultural influence. This is expressed variously, but British novels are constantly re-contextualizing this tradition, often questioning explicitly rather than implicitly the parameters of nationhood.
15. Then the Countess threw her diamond brooch through the ice of a frozen pond: “Dive in and fetch it for me,” she said; she thought the girl would drown. But the Count said: “Is she a fish, to swim in such cold weather?” Then her boots leapt off the Countess’s feet and on to the girl’s legs. Now the Countess was bare as a bone and the girl furred and booted; the Count felt sorry for his wife.
16. Despite much debate over its political utility and accuracy, the term “Black British” gained currency during the decade as a way to refer to “the common experience of racism and marginalization in Britain and...a new politics of resistance, amongst groups and communities with, in fact, very different histories, traditions and ethnic identities.”
17. The twenty years that followed the Makerere conference gave the world a unique literature—novels, stories, poems, plays written by Africans in European languages—which soon consolidated itself into a tradition with companion studies and a scholarly industry.

Right from its conception it was the literature of the petty bourgeoisie born of the colonial schools and universities. It could not be otherwise, given the linguistic medium of its message. Its rise and development reflected the gradual accession of this class to political and even economic dominance.
18. In the renewed silence, I return to sheets of paper which smell just a little of turmeric, ready and willing to put out of its misery a narrative which I left yesterday hanging in mid-air—just as Scheherazade, depending for her very survival on leaving Prince Shahryar eaten up by curiosity, used to do night after night! I’ll begin at once: by revealing that my grandfather’s premonitions in the corridor were not without foundation. In the succeeding months and years, he fell under what I can only describe as the sorcerer’s spell of that enormous—and as yet unstained—perforated cloth.

“Again?” Aadam’s mother said, rolling her eyes. “I tell you, my child, that girl is so sickly from too much soft living only. Too much sweetmeats and spoiling, because of the absence of a mother’s firm hand. But go, take care of your invisible patient, your mother is all right with her little nothing of a headache.”
19. Tone, texture, flavor: all conveyed by a medium so curiously polyglottal that one can hardly give it a single label. If it is English then it is the variety of English that is known in India as Angrezi, a casually bastardized form entirely in step with a novel that is both history and a subversion of history.

20.



Test Practice: Essay (open-book; 15 minutes for thought and planning, 60 minutes for writing) Focusing on at least two fictional works from the ID list above, write an essay that examines ideas and their manifestation. What topics concern writers from the 1900s to 1980s? How are those issues expressed in the fiction? Consider, for example, how the ideas or concepts are connected with the works' genre, structure, style, setting, characters, plot, symbolism, irony, imagery, diction, scale, range, dynamism, intertextuality, etc.