

**A Christmas present to all teachers of literature  
from the students themselves**

Edited by

**Lidia Vianu**

**Violeta Baroană** (graduate, MTTLIC)

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With drawings by **Miruna Voican** (graduate student, MTTLIC)

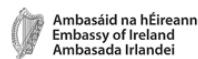
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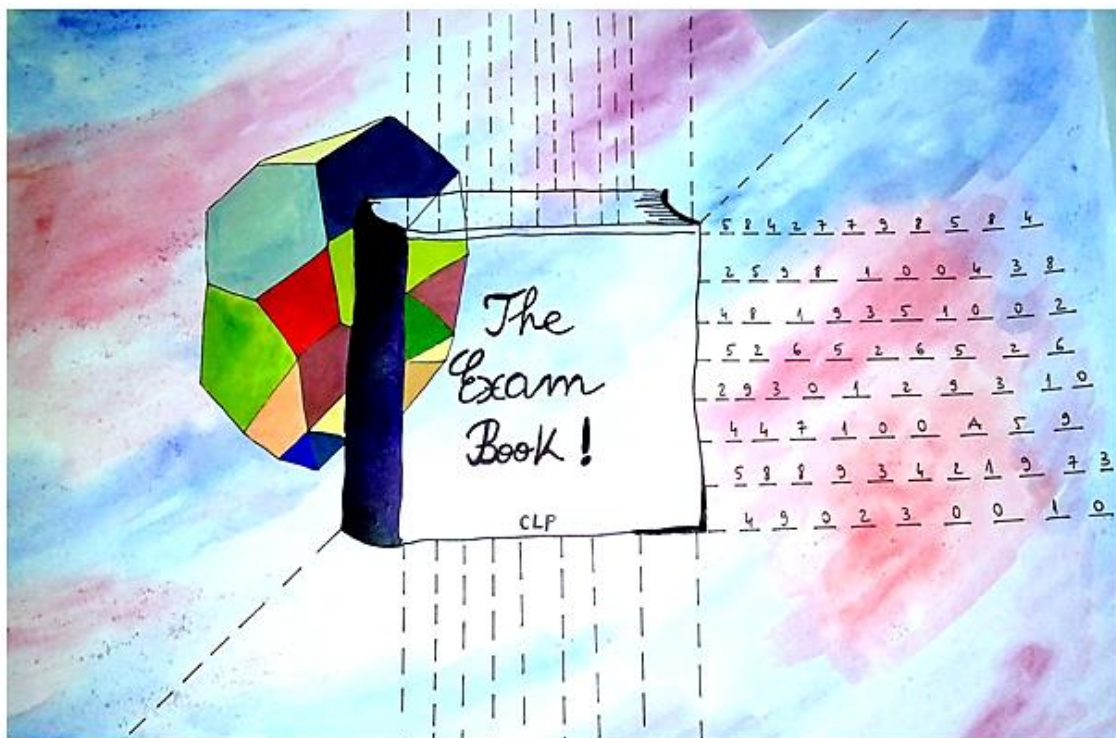
### **Acknowledgements**

The Test was devised by Lidia Vianu as the final exam to her course on English literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries, entitled *Modernism and After*.

The examination papers, the essays on teaching literature, and the answers to the questionnaire belong to the students of the English Department (Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, the University of Bucharest), second year – first series, academic year 2013-2014, who attended Lidia Vianu's course.

The undergraduate students who have agreed that their names should be made known are: Silvia Belu, Eliza Boțogan, Andreea Dragomir, Roxana Drocan, Ecaterina Eana, Andreea Enea, Ștefan Mălaimare, Andreea Munteanu, Georgiana Negrea, Cristina Nistor, Iuliana Panduru, Maria Popa, Maria Rizoïu, Andra Sîrbu, Ramona Tudor, Isadora Visoschi, Alexandra Zegrean.

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# **The Exam Book !**

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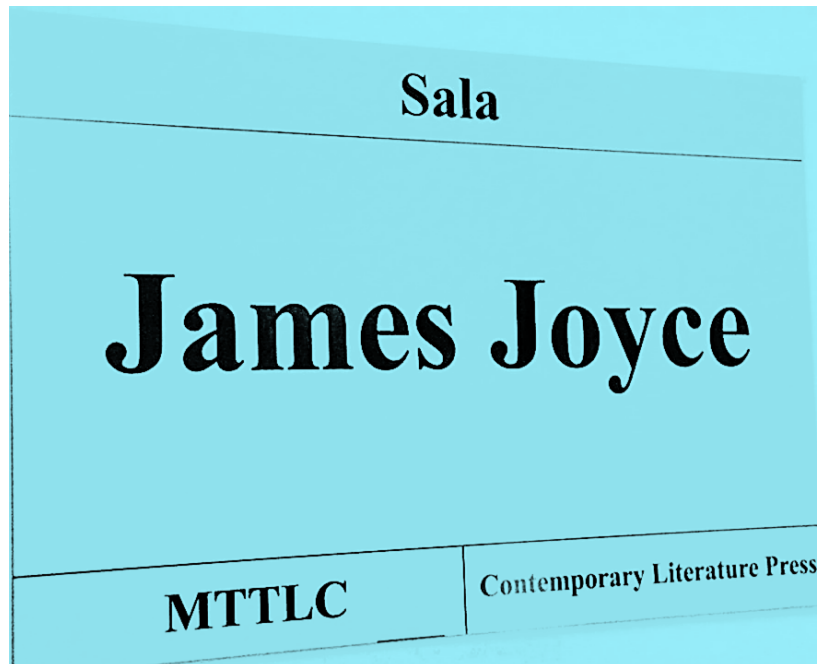
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*To the future or to the past,  
to a time when thought is free –*

***greetings***

*from the English majors  
at the University of Bucharest!*





## **Merry Christmas, Mr Joyce !**

(Version Nine)

We are now in the 31<sup>st</sup> Century, at a time when words such as *pupil* or *student* have lost their meaning. Everyone wears a QUARK behind their ear. The Quark is a device that instantly connects absolutely everyone to the entire culture of the Universe. Everybody can talk about absolutely everything without having studied one single day in their lives: they merely ask for the needed information, and everything ever accomplished in the field is on the spot transferred to their minds.

It is the year **3041**. The University of Bucharest is 1177 years old. Like all other 'educational' buildings, it had closed its gates long ago. A group of young people in their twenties, coming from several planets, have been assigned to discard the incredibly old computers that have been hanging around the university premises for at least ten centuries! They have made an intriguing discovery: the name of their discovery is *Contemporary Literature Press*. It was found in a lost loop of the Quark-net.

The youths are now refusing to leave the University of Bucharest. They have taken up English—a 'language' as old as all universities, and as useless nowadays, when everyone OMNI-THINKS. They are reading a 'book'. Its title is It originated in an 'examination' that came at the end of a 'course' in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries English Literature, attended long ago by undergraduates of Bucharest University. The book consists of the examination subject, the students' written papers, the students' answers to a questionnaire, and a number of statements regarding their opinions as to the importance of literature in the study of the English language. The teacher who gave the examination deliberately refrained from mentioning any marks in this volume. Together with her students, she was 'reading' *Finnegans Wake*, written by a 20<sup>th</sup> Century writer, called James Aloysius Joyce.

*The Exam Book!* passed unnoticed in the year 2014—the memorable year of the Crimean War!

Now, 1027 years later, the young team are going through it word by word. They will not leave the English Department headquarters located in The Street of the Old Breadmaker and of Children. They are on the first floor, in a room still bearing the name it had had back in 2014: James Joyce. The subtitle of *The Exam Book!* is 'A Christmas present to all the teachers of literature, from the students themselves.'

## The Exam Book !

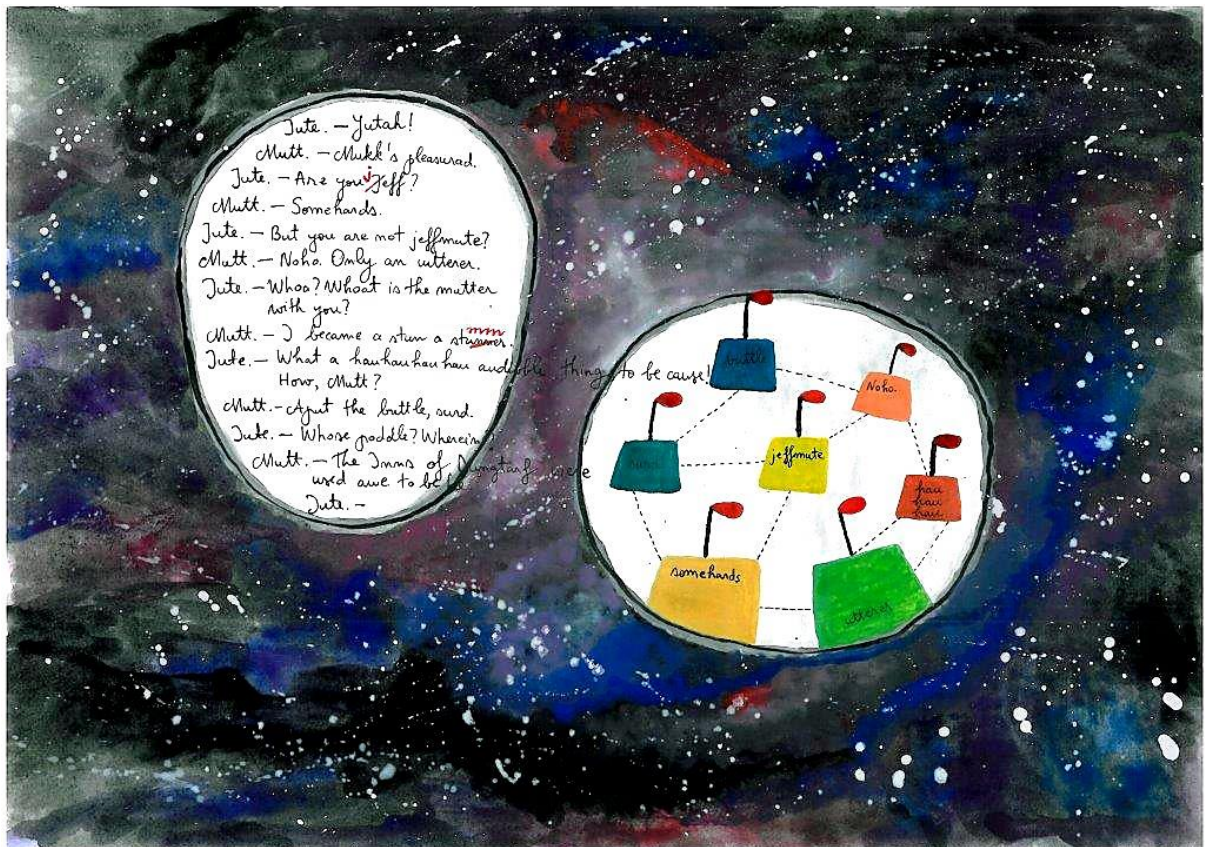
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'This is nat language at any sinse of the world' (*Finnegans Wake* 083.12:1). But it works, once you realize it can be learned. Merry Christmas again, Mr Joyce!

**Lidia Vianu**

**Professor at the Old University of Bucharest**



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## Crăciun fericit, Domnule Joyce !

(Versiunea a noua)

Suntem în secolul XXXI. Cuvinte ca *elev* ori *student* au ieșit din vocabular. Toată lumea are un QUARK în spatele urechii. Quark-ul conectează pe loc pe absolut toată lumea la întreaga cultură a universului. Putem vorbi despre absolut orice vrem fără să fi studiat nici măcar o singură zi: ajunge să cerem o informație și ni se transferă în minte absolut tot ce s-a făcut vreodată în domeniu.

Suntem în anul **3041**. Universitatea din București are o vechime de 1177 ani. Porțile ei, ca de altfel ale tuturor clădirilor legate de „educație”, s-au închis de mult. Un grup de tineri în jur de douăzeci de ani, provenind de pe diverse planete, au primit însărcinarea să scoată și să arunce computerele vechi de când lumea care zac prin universitate de peste zece secole. Cu această ocazie, tinerii au descoperit ceva neașteptat: descoperirea lor se numește *Contemporary Literature Press*. Au găsit-o pe Quark-net, într-o buclă de informații rătăcite.

În acest moment, tinerii refuză să mai părăsească Universitatea din București. S-au apucat să învețe engleza – o „limbă străină”. Limbile sunt chiar mai vechi decât universitățile și la fel de inutile ca și ele în ziua de azi, când absolut toată lumea folosește OMNI-THINK. S-au apucat să citească o „carte” intitulată *The Exam Book!* Cartea pare să fi pornit de la un „examen” cu care s-a încheiat „cursul” de literatură engleză din secolele XX și XXI, predat în urmă cu foarte mult timp la Universitatea din București. Cartea aceasta cuprinde subiectul care s-a dat la examenul scris, lucrările studenților, răspunsurile lor la un chestionar și părerile lor în ceea ce privește importanța literaturii în studiul limbii engleze. Profesoara care a dat examenul cu studenții nu a inclus în volum și notele primite de fiecare, pentru că, spunea ea, nu nota contează. Important era faptul că putea „citi” cot la cot cu studenții o carte intitulată *Finnegans Wake*, care fusese scrisă de un scriitor din secolul XX, pe numele lui James Aloysius Joyce.

Volumul *The Exam Book!* pare să fi trecut neobservat în anul 2014 – anul memorabil al războiului din Crimeea!

Astăzi, cu 1027 de ani mai târziu, acești tineri îl citesc literă cu literă. Nu mai vor să iasă din Catedra de Engleză din strada Pitar Moș. Stau cu toții la etajul întâi, într-o sală care încă poartă același nume pe care îl avea în 2014: James Joyce. Subtitlul



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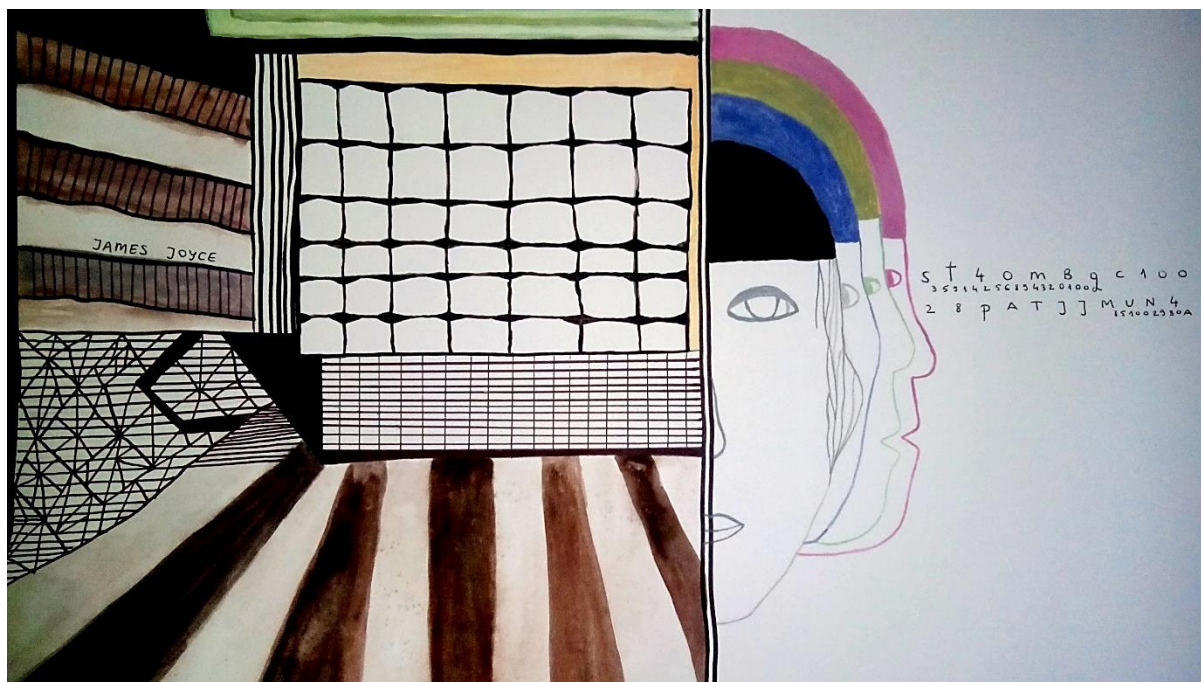
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cărții *The Exam Book!* este „Dar de Crăciun pentru toți profesorii de literatură, de la studenții lor”.

‘This is nat language at any sinse of the world’ (*Finnegans Wake* 083.12:1). Da, limba aceasta se poate citi, odată ce-ți dai seama că ajunge s-o înveți. Încă o dată, Crăciun fericit, Domnule Joyce!

**Lidia Vianu**

Profesor la Vechea Universitate din București



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## Acknowledgements

<sup>1</sup>For the theoretical terms, blame the teacher.

<sup>2</sup> For the bibliography and the excerpts quoted in the Test, blame the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century authors themselves.

<sup>3</sup> For any anachronism, remember this is supposed to be the year 2014.



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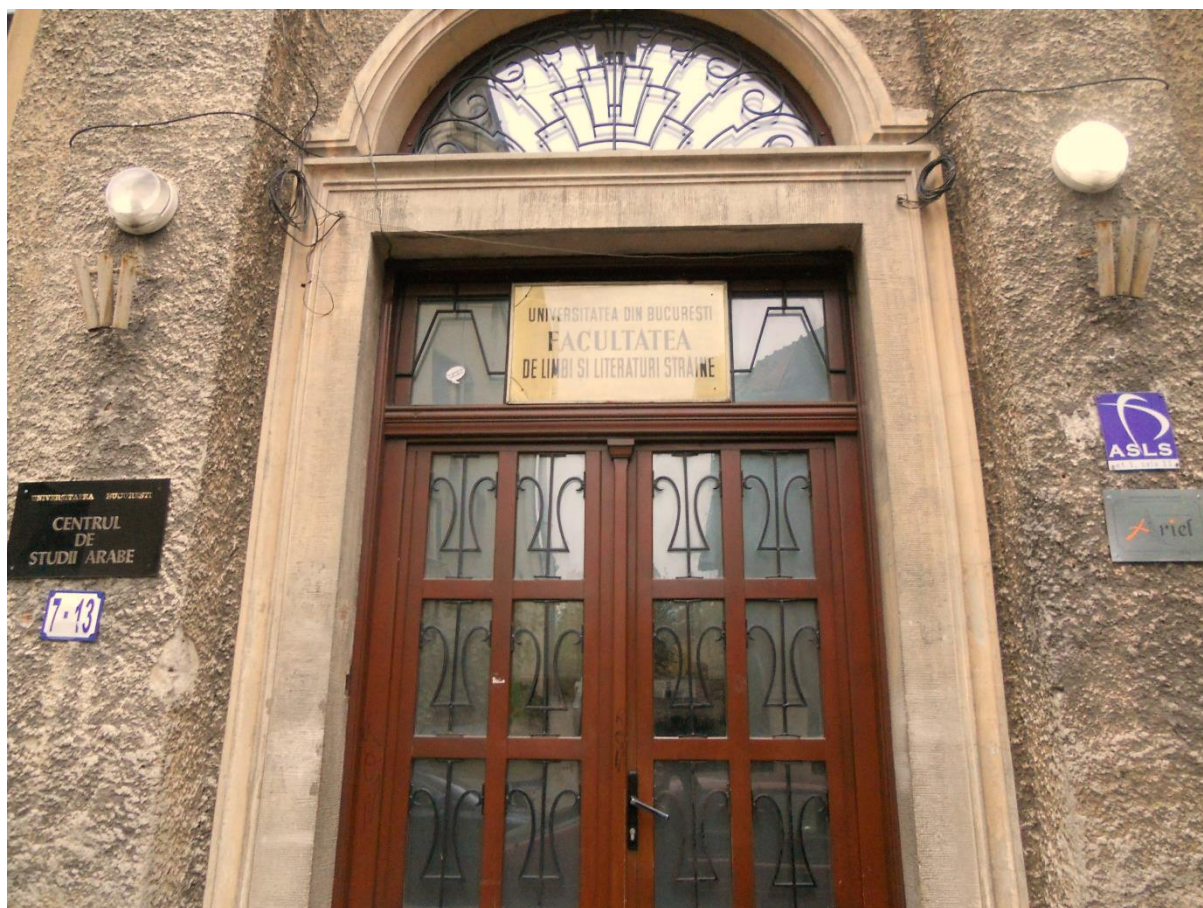
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## **Examination Test**

June 2014



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You are the youngest editor of *Times Literary Supplement*. The story below has been submitted to you by a yet unpublished writer. You decide **to publish / not to publish** it [choose], and write a letter to your boss, the Editor-in-Chief, **motivating your choice**.

### Who Can Say Why Today Tomorrow Will Be Yesterday..?

[Tennyson, 1883]

The lot of love is chosen. But I am old and you are young, and I speak a barbarous tongue. April is the cruellest month. I was neither living nor dead, and I knew nothing, looking into the heart of light, the silence. Hurry up, Joyce, it's time! So, getting up, I left them there, and walked away under the chestnut trees, with the cry of the peacock following.

The house of fiction has in short not one window, but a million—a number of possible windows.

'We needn't speak to understand each other,' she said.

'And remember this,' he continued, 'that if you've been hated you've also been loved. Ah but, Isabel—*adored!*' he just audibly and lingeringly breathed.

'Oh my brother!'

The stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life. Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. 'He is in Melbourne now.' 'I know these sailor chaps.' 'Damned Italians! coming over here!'

Every life is many days, day after day. We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love. But always meeting ourselves. How tired I am of stories, how tired I am of phrases that come down beautifully with all their feet on the ground! Also, how I distrust neat designs of life that are drawn upon half-sheets of note-paper. I begin to long for some little language such as lovers use, broken words, inarticulate words, like the shuffling of feet on the pavement.

'The horror! the horror!' 'The last word he pronounced was—your name.'

'O brave new world,' he repeated. 'O brave new world that has such people in it. Let's start at once.' The telescreen struck fourteen. *To the future or to the past, to a time when thought is free, when men are different from one another and do not live alone—to a time when truth exists and what is done cannot be undone: From the age of uniformity, from the age of solitude, from the age of Big Brother, from the age of double think—greetings!* And in the middle of them, with filthy body, matted hair, and unwiped nose, Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall

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through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy.

She would see Ben, standing rather apart from the crowd, staring at the camera with his goblin eyes, or searching the faces in the crowd for another of his own kind. Now could I use you? Now what could I do with you? I take my purse from the pocket of my frock-coat, I extract a florin, I rest it on my right thumbnail, I flick it, spinning, two feet into the air and catch it in my left hand. So be it. And I am suddenly aware that Charles has opened his eyes and is looking at me.

'You're a very special person, Robyn,' he says solemnly. 'One day you'll meet a man who deserves to marry you.'

'I don't need a man to complete me,' she says, smiling.

'That's because you haven't met him yet.'

Perhaps they are all around us, but we cannot see one another. It may be that we refuse to see them. Or they refuse to see us. I am not sure. Somehow we have all become separated. But I know this; our world and their world are intermingled.

'Never let me go... Oh baby, baby... Never let me go...' I was eleven then, and hadn't listened to much music, but this one song, it really got to me.

Adam ate the apple. Eve ate Adam. The serpent ate Eve. This is the dark intestine.

Virginia Eliot Huxley, née Golding

*[Information required by TLS for further correspondence:*

Foster parents: Kazuo Ackroyd and Doris Fowles.

Place of birth: Lodge Town, Galsworthy, United Lit Lands.

Graduate of Conrad Department, Yeats University.

Date of birth: 7/7/3014]

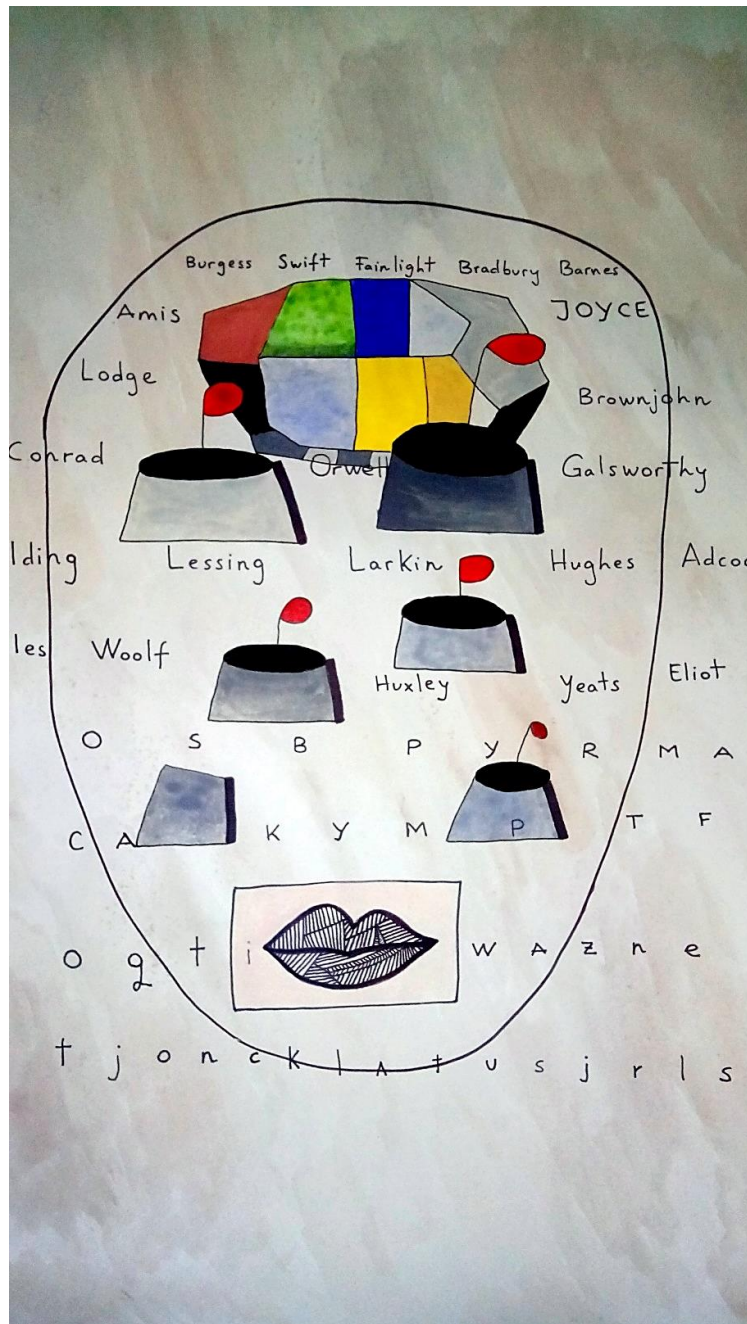
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# Students' Examination Papers

June 2014



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17<sup>th</sup> March 3045

London, United Kingdom

Mr Editor-in Chief,

I have recently been sent an extraordinary piece of work written by a young undiscovered writer. What is so special about this young fellow is that I find most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century best writers in his work, a trait which I believe appeals to an audience of all ages.

The text is neither a story, nor an essay, but a presentation of Modernist and AfterModernist narration, neatly set by putting together sentences and paragraphs from renowned novels of Modernism and the AfterMode. At first sight, you can notice that this is not an original piece of work, and that the characters have nothing to do with each other, running around a non-existing plot.

The author starts by speaking about love, and how *barbarous* old people can seem. Fiction can never be summarised in one word, because what is the beauty of language if not a word with ten meanings? Why long for straightforward language and *speak to understand each other* when we can enjoy *neat designs of life that are drawn upon half sheets of notepaper*? Henry James and Virginia Woolf are Modernism's best instances. Furthermore the key to good literature are the obstacles a creator devises for himself. Modernists were keen on enriching language in order to create something that would last, regardless of the vital connection between author and reader, while AfterModernists decide to reconsider the importance of their connection with their readers and use a clear, straightforward style.

The stream of consciousness is indeed a 'luminous halo', as Virginia Woolf states: thoughts are easily read, and the technique is common now. It brings what the AfterMode calls an 'unreliable narrator'. Together, the author and the reader discover that thoughts have a very concrete existence once they are put into words. Together we welcome a Brave New World where the innocent discover the darkness of man's heart, disguised as the Lord of the Flies. Feelings are no longer the only refuge. An unhealthy new-born who would need more attention than a healthy one is rejected by his family as The Fifth Child. Women no longer depend on man's strength to support them, or at least that is what Robyn claims in *Nice Work*. Some individuals are created to live on their own, refusing to see that all worlds intermingle and we, as much as they, belong to both (clones and humans in *Never Let me Go*). Now, what would be a better way to present the development of literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> century if not in this



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specific way? Why interpret the past when you can extract the best of it, put the pieces together and show it the way it actually is?

Therefore, Dear Sir, I strongly recommend the piece and I hope you will take into consideration my arguments, since this is fine piece of work indeed.

Yours faithfully,

Diana Antar, Junior Editor

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you concerning the publishing of the story that I have recently read. It is called 'Who Can Say Why Today Tomorrow Will Be Yesterday...?'

I shall start by telling you that I can't actually tell you why is it that I should consider this story a good story... Just as someone once said - I think his name was Smith... Winston Smith, or so - I felt that I already knew what I was reading, but I didn't have the courage to put it on the paper. By this time, I think you already wonder what the story could be about. I am deeply sorry to disappoint you, but I could not tell you what the story is about... whether it is good or bad, sad or happy... I can't tell you. Just as Ben couldn't tell the story of the film 'The Thing is - I've let

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Dear Sir,

I am writing in order to express my opinion concerning the story you sent me.

It is extremely rich in quotations of great authors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which makes me say that I personally would not accept it for publication. I find it very devious of the author to use quotations in this way, mixing together short lines from various books. On the one hand, it creates a beautiful mosaic of knowledge, but on the other hand it can be quite bewildering.

For instance, in the first part of the text, we recognize William Butler Yeats and T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* with 'April is the cruellest month...', followed by James Joyce's 'Hurry up, Joyce, it's time!' The first paragraph ends with a line from Galsworthy's *The Meeting*, and continues with Henry James'. Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady* is present in the lines 'We needn't speak to understand each other... Ah but, Isabel—*adored!* he just audibly and lingeringly breathed': the words refer to the scene in which Isabel leaves Osmond in order to see her dying cousin Ralph. 'The stream of thought, of consciousness...', comes from William James, and reveals the essence of Modernism. What follows is a sentence from James Joyce's *Eveline*: 'He is in Melbourne now', and also two more from the same story: 'I know these sailor chaps', and 'Damned Italians! coming over here!'

The author then switches to a more dystopian point of view, 'The horror! the horror!', and then Marlowe's words in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: 'The last word he pronounced was—your name.' Aldous Huxley follows, with *Brave New World*, and then George Orwell's *1984*: 'The telescreen struck fourteen. To the future or to the past...' This ends with an extract from William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*: 'And in the middle of them... Ralph wept for the end of innocence...'. Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child*, John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and the two AfterModernist books, David Lodge's *Nice Work* and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* remarkably end this interesting attempt.

To put it in a nutshell, I suspect the author of the attempt to imitate James Joyce, as well as T.S. Eliot. An encyclopaedia seems to have been integrated in this story, by simply referring to the literary works from the previous century, bringing next to nothing that was written by our author as well.

Sincerely,

Sarah James

## The Exam Book !

A Christmas present to all teachers of literature, from the students themselves

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07.09.3039

Dear Sir,

The story *Who Can Say Why Today Tomorrow Will Be Yesterday...*? submitted to us by Virginia Eliot Huxley, neé Golding is indeed a great story, which would deserve publication, unless—. The story is captivating and it is full of suspense: we never expect what will come next. It does not have a clear plot and it nimbly jumps from one thing to another.

However, if we examine better the way in which the story was written, we can't fail to realise that we can identify parts of her story as belonging to somebody else. Based on my feelings, I did a week of research that I considered necessary, and I can now say that her story is in fact a collage of old texts from PreModernism, Modernism, and AfterModernism. Some of the original novels may have been destroyed or lost in the course of time, but we can still find in libraries fragments that can demonstrate the plagiarism.

We find here fragments from Henry James's novel *The Portrait of a Lady*. In those times it was believed that only God could show us the truth. After this we have Modernism and heavy industrialization. The power no longer belonged to the church, as politics and universities took over. We thus go back to novels such as *Heart of Darkness*, *Brave New World*, *1984*, *Lord of the Flies*, *The Fifth Child*, *Nice Work* and also some now lost AfterModernist texts that tried to deconstruct everything PreModernist and Modernist: *The Waste Land* and *Never Let Me Go*.

Even though the story looks like most literature nowadays, we cannot overlook the fact that it is indeed plagiarised and is using parts of novels that were written over a thousand years ago.

In conclusion, we cannot publish this story because, even if other people don't recognise the novels used in it, we would be deliberately lying to our readers, as we ourselves know those origins of Mrs Eliot's story. As far as plagiarism is concerned, I suggest that we should send a warning to all Global United Newspapers, just in case she attempts this again elsewhere, case in which she should be sued.

Best regards,

Junior Editor, Ana-Maria Bebu

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London, June 14, 1884

To Mr Adam Burns, Editor-in-Chief of the *Times Literary Supplement*

From Abraham Jackson, editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*

Dear Mr Burns,

I am writing this letter in order to let you know that I have read the story *Who Can Say Why Today Tomorrow Will Be Yesterday..?* and I have decided to publish it.

The title is very interesting, combining the past, present and future in a vague question that prompts the reader to build his own interpretation of it.

In the beginning we see an old man talking to a young person, while in the end we have an interpretation of the beginning of the religious world in a mythical method; the story of Adam and Eve and the creation of Sin. These beginning matches the end, and both give a sense of infinity, of a circular story. The text itself hardly follows any rules at all in terms of the story as we know it. Characters just pop up unannounced, stay for a couple of seconds, and they vanish, being replaced by yet other vanishing characters. This must surely win the reader over, for he will most certainly want to know more more of this story – they will want to be told what has happened to X and why Y says whatever it is he or she says. To be honest, I am intrigued myself.

The story is not exactly a whole: it consists of smaller parts that create a feeling of a lacking context. The marvellous thing about these smaller parts is that they do not focus on society any more – it is true that it still exists in the background, corrupting lives – the self and its struggles are the focus of this new age in literature.

Individualism is the major feature of the heroes. Women feel they no longer need a man in order to be 'complete': they are independent, and always says what they think. Everything that is described in the text is the result of innermost desires, fears or loves.

Last but not least, the heroes' stream of consciousness adds flavour to the text, as it gives a strong impression of psychological realism: what happens in the mind of the character inevitably happens in the reader's mind as well. Life is not a story as we know it, but a disorderly mixture of all moments: the future happens in the past, and the present of these characters takes place at an indeterminate moment in time.

I strongly feel this story must be published: it seems to me to be unbelievably original.

Abraham Jackson, editor of 'Times Literary Supplement'



## The Exam Book !

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20.06.3012

To the Editor-in-Chief

From: Eliza Boțogan

A recently received text has caught my attention. Its title is 'Who can say why today tomorrow will be yesterday..?' I want to briefly present some of its characteristics.

It is made up of small pieces of text which are brought together in such a way as to form a new piece. These pieces of text belong to various famous authors belonging to both Modernism and AfterModernism. I found fragments belonging to Yeats, Galsworthy, Conrad, Henry James, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Eliot, Huxley, Orwell, Golding and some other authors. It seems that the author, Virginia Eliot Huxley, loved Modernist works, and tried to emphasize the main characteristics of their period: lack of characters, no defined plot, lack of chronology: her own work has the very same characteristics.

From what I hear, she was accused of plagiarism when she sent this text to other editors.

My opinion is that it doesn't really matter that she borrowed other authors' words to say what she means. Her work touched me because I can identify with it. It may sound strange, but this is the truth. She chose and used a lot of the quotes that also stuck in my mind when I read the same works.

Another reason why I approve of her work is that I think the text shows exactly how human mind functions. What the reader feels is that somebody is poring out all their thoughts at once. I find this natural, because the mind and the soul are intermingled. I cannot think without feeling, and I cannot feel without thinking. All the quotes look like the memories of one person. And we all know, memories always work this way: one memory triggers another, and you find yourself thinking about a completely different thing than the one you were thinking of six seconds before.

I am in favour of publishing this story. I really think that many readers will relate to it as I did myself, even though some may not see the point of it.

Yours faithfully,

Eliza Boțogan

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Dear Sir,

I have just received the story written by Virginia Eliot Huxley, *Who Can Say Why Tomorrow Will Be Yesterday..?* and I see it as being revolutionary indeed. Not as revolutionary as Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, but still.

The thing that caught my attention was the fact that all the pieces are in perfect place and the puzzle seems to be the definition of AfterModernism.

This can be an important piece of writing. An ordinary man who comes home after ten hours of work will not be able to relax reading this book. Without previous knowledge, without having ever heard of Joyce's *Ulysses*, Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, Eliot's 'objective correlative', Woolf's 'luminous halo' and all the rest, he will never manage to understand it.

This work gives the reader a taste of PreModernism with Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady*, a taste of Modernism with Woolf's *The Waves* – where the stages of the day match the stages of a lifetime, Golding's *Lord of the Flies* – where violence and aggressive temper masters of the world, Eliot's long-criticized and controversial work *The Waste Land*, but also AfterModernism with Orwell's *1984* – in which thinking becomes a crime, Huxley's *Brave New World* – in which *soma* brings pure happiness, Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and its multiple endings, Lodge's *Nice Work* and his irony regarding Victorianism, Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* and his double-meaning and confusing words, and Lessing's *The Fifth Child* – with her idea of giving the reader a hero who simply can't use language. This piece of writing is a tribute to all those who understand Modernism and the writers who are contemporary with us.

'Who Can Say Why Today Tomorrow Will Be Yesterday..?' can teach the reader Einstein's theory of relativity. It also reminds me of Yeats' *Chosen*, where a woman is trying to find that point out of time where love can live forever. It can teach us all that we have to find the truth behind the words, open our eyes and see what is in store for us all in the future, that clones and 'community, identity, stability' are not far from us, that we should realize how much alike we all are – see Eliot in *The Waste Land*: 'mon semblable, mon frère'. We have to face the fact that life is not a series of events strategically and symmetrically planned, or, in Virginia Woolf's words, 'life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged'. We learn to fear the future for what it can bring: shall we become violent barbarians or animals – as in *Lord of the Flies*, or a society in which Big Brother watches us, in which 'War is Peace' and *soma* is the only escape from the cruel reality – as is in *1984* and in *Brave New World*? Shall we be forced to hide our feelings, will love turn into a lost fairytale? Will Henry James's 'We needn't

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speak to understand each other' be forgotten, and will everyone belong to everyone else — as in *Brave New World*? Will we all mourn the death of love in a Waste Land, like Eliot? Will 'the horror' of Mr Kurtz become concrete, more alive than the beast in *Lord of the Flies* and will it be haunting us for ever and ever?

All these things must appeal to our readers.

All in all, I would publish this work for its remarkable courage in this age obsessed with the sin of plagiarism, and, although I do not think it will be a bestseller, I assume that for the critics, it will be a delight.

Yours sincerely,  
Sarah Archer

Richard Smith  
Editor-in-Chief of Times  
Literary Supplement

Dorian

June 23rd 2060  
London, UK.

10+

Dear Mr Smith,

A new story has been submitted to me by a yet unpublished writer, a story which I read and reread several times before deciding whether we should publish it or not. It is nothing like the stories we receive every day and I am sure that its publishing is bound to cause controversy. There are only two possibilities: it can be either a great success or an utter failure.

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Bucharest, 20 June 3060

Dear Mr Jackson,

I have recently received a story from an unpublished writer, Virginia Eliot Huxley. I have read it several times. Upon due consideration, I have decided not to publish it. I am writing because I would appreciate your opinion in the matter.

To begin with, its style is so cryptic that I think it could only be understood by a considerably reduced audience. The whole text seems to have squeezed a large number of powerful minds and themes into one single story. It speaks in many different voices, even though in the end they all seem to say the same thing.

It starts very gravely: 'I was neither living, nor dead, and I knew nothing' – T.S. Eliot. Here I sensed the theme of time – of wasted moments which are not fully appreciated when they come, and which never come back. It seemed to me that the author was emphasizing the idea that present life is all in the past, just like the leitmotif 'the cry of the peacock following' – in Galsworthy.

There is a sort of narrative in this. A character exclaims: 'We needn't understand each other' – H. James, which expresses an idea that informs, I think, most of this text, except for a few paragraphs at the end. The loss of clarity and a kind of preverbalness lead to epiphany: 'He is in Melbourne now', followed by 'I know these sailor chaps', 'Damned Italians! coming over here!' – J. Joyce And along the way, or rather as a consequence of all this, I sense that the idea of love interest, plot or fairytale pattern is also lost, as the narrator herself states a few lines further down: 'How tired I am of stories, how tired I am of phrases that come down beautifully with all their feet on the ground! Also, how I distrust neat designs of life that are drawn upon half-sheets of note-paper' – V. Woolf.

The latter half of the story regains a sense of plot, a sense that we are looking at more than unexpressed thoughts, that the text only speaks in word-images. There are characters that line in an apocalyptic version of reality, of the world as a whole. I recognize many dystopias. I can see now the author trying to go back to the idea of plot and to the use of clear language. Yet what was done cannot be undone, and I am afraid she cannot go back to tradition so easily. She expresses the fear of degradation of the human race: 'the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy' – W. Golding. It is a hopeless world, in which characters have no idea what love is any more: 'I don't need a man to complete me,' – David Lodge.

And then the idea of a multiple reality is advanced: 'our world and their world



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are intermingled' – P. Ackroyd.

I have attached a copy of the text so that you can look at it yourself. I for one do not think it will appeal to our readership.

Yours faithfully,

Alina C.

Second Year, English-Italian  
Literature Exam

10+  
Splendid! Congratulations

Dear Mr. Geert Steingold, Editor-in-Chief, TLS

I am writing to inform you that of the last batch of no-name submissions, I did come upon a most strange piece of flash fiction. I do regret our Bloomsday edition ~~has~~ missed it. Let me explain...

This one-page long piece is an anonymous ~~hullabaloo~~ of downright word-for-word plagiarism of a gallery of <sup>THE</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> century's greatest, signed Virginia Eliot Hurley, née Golding, no relevant information on the author whatsoever. I identified Yeats, Eliot, Joyce, Hemingway, H. Jones, Woolf, ~~Co.~~, Hurley, Orwell, Golding, Fowler, David Lodge, Peter Ackroyd, Ishiguro and Ted Hughes. I think that is ~~enough~~ enough to lend this piece a page. But I will further spend it, yes, I will...

The merits? They're inherent in the difficulty of deconstructing the story: a narrator? There's hardly one... Why doesn't he read? ... rather not, the villain... An author? It's the paroxysm of ... as a family tree, I'm afraid it ... probably

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20 June 3059

Leeds, United Kingdom

Dear Sir,

It was Ezra Pound who said literature was *language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree*. Virginia Eliot Huxley is the most versatile and creative writer that I have ever read. The way in which she manages to revive the greatest authors of Modernism and AfterModernism is unmatched. From the beginning, the sentence *April is the cruelest month* goes back to T. S. Eliot. In *The Waste Land*, he conveys a sense of emptiness that the world was experiencing at the time.

Virginia Woolf 's *The Waves* favours introspection. She emphasizes inner experiences, thoughts and perceptions of her characters, and so does this young writer.

Last but not least, Aldous Huxley is another author that inspired our writer here '*O brave new world*', he repeated. '*O brave new world that has such people in it. Let's start at once*'. She continues with words from 1984 by George Orwell. Both these books present a dystopian society in which the individual is reduced to nothing for 'the collective welfare'. The paragraph '*And remember this*', he continued, '*that if you've been hated you've also been loved. Ah but, Isabel – adored!*' he just audibly and lingeringly breathed reveals the characters of Henry James in *The Portrait of a Lady*. James Joyce's work is also to be found in the next paragraph. *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad is here, too, and with it Conrad's love for the story within a story.

I should not say that Virginia Eliot Huxley is a plagiarist; she just wants to refresh our memory. To my mind, this memento deserves to be read and published.

Yours faithfully,

Ioana Gabriela Corcodel

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11 February 3041

Birmingham, United Kingdom

Dear Sir,

I have recently received a story from a yet unpublished author whose name is Virginia Eliot Huxley.

I do not think I have ever read anything similar to it. This text is so innovative in style, so 'unusual' that it will give professors a very hard time if we decide to publish it. I for one would gladly do so. I think that this story makes a lot of sense if you get the hang of it. Mrs Huxley's story breaks all the barriers. She challenges her readers in such a way that they become addicted to what she writes. There are many keys to this story.

The story deals with situations that lead us to terms such as 'utopia' or 'dystopia'. Whether the writer wants to warn her readers against the a future they do 'not yet' want to see, I cannot tell. But one thing is certain: the mixture of ideas, literary tools and techniques offer the reader a unique experience. It is something that strikes you with its sincerity; you feel like drifting away through the minds of all these characters that, at first sight, seem unconnected. At the same time, one feels that one is given the map of the *dark intestine* of two ages in the history of literature.

Fragmentation, the *heap of broken images* in this text, goes hand in hand with a love of the beautiful style that could rival Flaubert's.

I can only say one thing in favour of this unusual text which is not a story, poem, essay, or anything else for that matter – because it is a new genre in itself: its publication now, in the year 3041, will bring back to life the ghost of James Joyce, who died precisely 1100 years ago today.

Yours faithfully,

Giacomo James

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26 June 3045

London, United Kingdom

Dear Sir,

I have been sent a story written by a yet unpublished writer.

First of all, she is a modern writer. I have identified a lot of modernist features in the text, but the problem is that the text is not an original one: it mixes Modernist texts and more. She combines the words of Yeats, T. S. Eliot (*The Waste Land*), Aldous Huxley (*Brave New World*), Orwell (1984), Fowles (*The French Lieutenant's Woman*), Ishiguro (*Never Let Me Go*), Virginia Woolf, Henry and William James, and the list can go on.

The text is ambiguous, it has no story and the focus is on the mind of the writer and on the stream of consciousness. Virginia Eliot Huxley's text is a combination of thoughts represented by the fragments she chose. These features make the text a modern one.

There is another problem with this text: not every reader knows Modernist literature: many will not understand the text. Virginia Eliot Huxley's text is addressed to a limited group of readers, given the fact that it's ambiguous and made up of fragments from different works.

We are looking for a story that can boost sales. I feel quite certain that this one is not at all what we need.

Yours faithfully,

Iosif Visarion



**11**

2 June 3014

London, UK

Dear Mr Brown,

I have recently read a story submitted to me by a yet unpublished writer. The story is written in Modernist manner, and evinces many influences. The style can be easily recognised, since there is no plot, no setting in time or space.

The first paragraph refers us to authors such as Yeats, Eliot and Galsworthy, who are all quoted. Without previous knowledge of the age, it will be difficult for an inexperienced reader to understand this story.

It continues with a sentence from Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady*, with Virginia Woolf's short description of life from her novel *The Waves*, and with a quotation from *Dubliners* by James Joyce. Joseph Conrad's 'The Horror! The Horror!', perhaps the most important words in *Heart of Darkness*, the ones which contain the dark secret of the novel, are also present.

The second part of the story continues with novels belonging to AfterModernism, where the language becomes clearer, where plot, suspense, and sometimes love interest can be found again. *Brave New World* by Huxley, 1984 by George Orwell and *Lord of the Flies* written by Golding, all of them belonging to AfterModernism, are present here in the same paragraph. An important characteristic of these novels is that all of them start as utopias, presenting a new, better world. But what seems to be a perfect world ends up in dystopia, a future that nobody is ready to face. This fear of the future is something few will understand.

The ending is not a happy or even an optimistic one; it's a dark ending specific to Modernism.

To be honest, I don't see this story becoming a best-seller. Nowadays, readers expect clear language; the plot should be there in order to keep the reader interested. We could, however, publish it for the benefit of those readers who are interested in difficult literature and will appreciate the challenge.

Yours faithfully,

Petru Soare

**12**

26 June 3060

London, United Kingdom

To Richard Smith

Editor-in-Chief of Times Literary Supplement

Dear Mr Smith,

A new story has been submitted to me by a yet unpublished writer, a story which I have read and re-read several times before deciding whether we should publish it or not. It is nothing like the stories we receive every day, and I am sure that its publishing is bound to cause controversy. It can be either a great success or an utter failure.

The story is a combination of fragments taken from the most important works of authors belonging to Modernism and the AfterMode, all cleverly gathered under the title 'Who Can Say Why Today Tomorrow Will Be Yesterday..?' – Tennyson's line. While I cannot deny the originality of the story, I am very much aware of the needs of our public. Considering the big change that Modernism brought, which caused it to lose some of its audience, and also considering the efforts of the AfterMode writers to win it back by revisiting the past, a combination of these two major literary trends in a story bearing a Victorian title may come as a shock to our readers.

Needless to say, for those who are not familiar with any of the works by Yeats, Eliot, Galsworthy, Henry James, Virginia Woolf, Joyce, Conrad, Huxley, Orwell, Golding, Lessing, Lodge, Fowles, Ackroyd or Ishiguro, such a story will not make any sense. Nowadays, the public wants action, suspense love interest (maybe) and clear language. They have neither the time nor the desire to read a story which makes them think and which can only be understood in relation to the literary past.

However, it is clear to me that this new writer does not share the desire of his contemporary colleagues to write a bestseller, and I really think that our public needs this – an author who does not write in order to sell. I mentioned above how difficult it would be for those who do not know much about Modernism and the AfterMode to understand the essence of this text. But on the other hand, there are also those who did read the works of the authors that I have already mentioned and who do know what these literary trends meant. I am sure that such readers have been expecting something like this for a long time, because they are fed up with bestsellers: they will think the world of this story.

In conclusion, I think not publishing a story which praises the literature of the

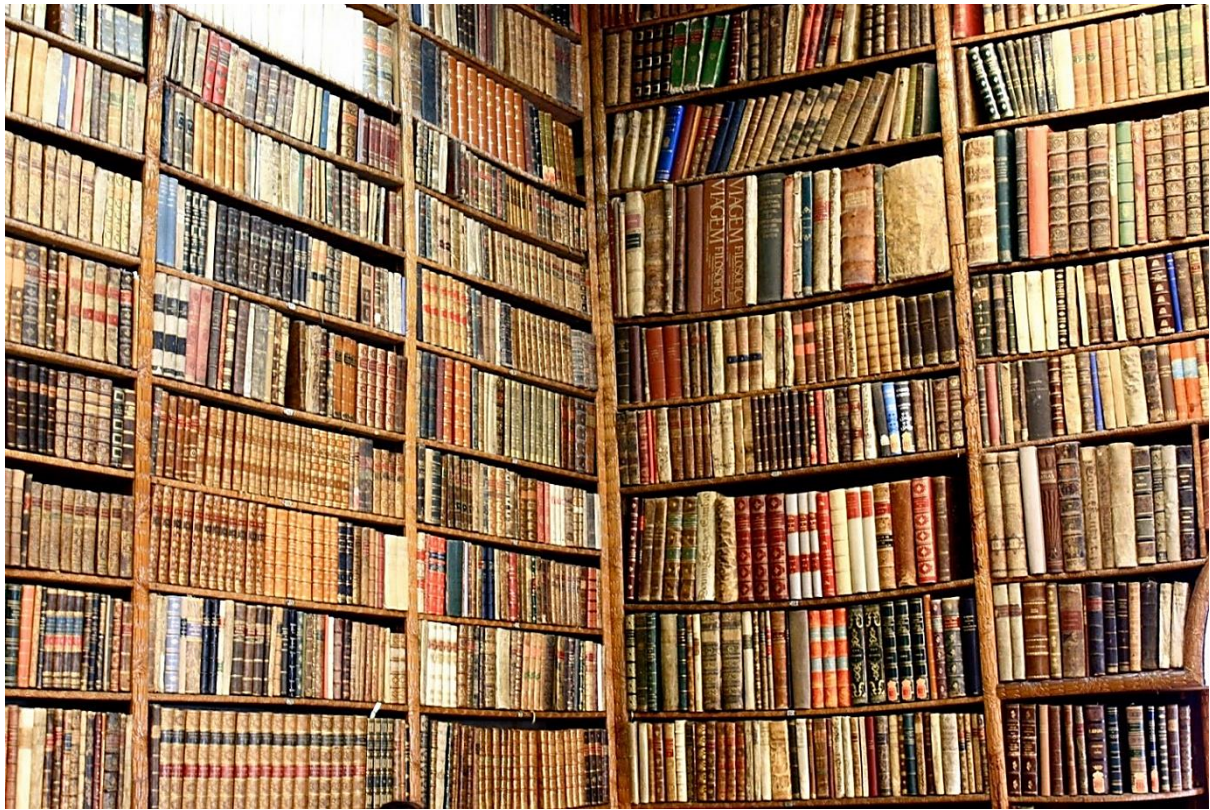
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previous century would be a mistake. The originality of this new writer, who not only found inspiration in the poems of Yeats and Eliot and in the prose of Galsworthy, H. James, V. Woolf, Conrad, Joyce, Huxley, Orwell, Golding, Lodge, Fowles, Lessing, Ackroyd and Ishiguro, but also put together excerpts from their works in order to create such a story, comes as a breath of fresh air. Even if it goes against the grain of public taste, I plead in favour of this story being published in THE TLS.

Yours faithfully,  
Roxana Drocan



### 13

Rummidge, 20.06.3084

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you concerning the publication of a text that I have recently read. It is called 'Who Can Say Why Today Tomorrow Will Be Yesterday..?'.

I shall start by stating that I can't really say why it is that I consider this text a good story. Just as someone once said – I think his name was Smith... Winston Smith – I felt that I already knew what I was reading, only I had never had the courage to put it on paper. By this time, you must already be wondering what the story is about. I am deeply sorry to disappoint you, but I won't be able to tell you what the story is about... whether it is good or bad, sad or happy... I can't do this; just as Ben couldn't tell the story of the film he watched (you surely remember Doris Lessing's hero). The thing is, we always expect stories. While reading this text, I felt it was just as when I was a child, and I tried to solve a puzzle by putting the appropriate piece in its place. Still, this text that I've read is not just an ordinary puzzle. It is a puzzle inside which one can make one's own rules: whichever way you connect the pieces, it will always make sense. The puzzle is in your mind, you have to figure out for yourself what rules can help the meaning. The text is fragmentary, and yet it is not.

As this text (or should I call it a pretext?) goes on, you feel you speak a 'barbarous tongue', which is no longer spoken by anyone, a kind of Newspeak, as Orwell called it. Yet, you get used to it, and you soon feel that you can understand the text in spite of its silence – as Isabel says to Ralph: 'We needn't speak to understand each other!'. At first sight, you may be confused and angry: who is speaking here, and to whom? Where does this action take place? When does it take place? But then you experience a strange feeling... your mind is at work.

You hate the text because it doesn't tell you enough... but, on the other hand, you don't need to be told... You can think for yourself. You don't need an omniscient narrator, who knows everything and orders you what to understand. In fact, why should anyone have the right to do that, to tell you what to think of someone, a character, an incident, a situation? You don't need Dickens, or Austen, or anybody to tell you. It wouldn't be correct, 'politically correct'.

As this story says, 'you begin to long for some little language [...] broken words, inarticulate words', you are sick of all those elaborate, flamboyant discourses of the omniscient narrator; you feel like saying 'Damned omniscience!', just as Eveline's father ejaculated: 'Damned Italians!' Now... you see, there is no omniscient narrator in this story.

Besides, I have never come across the mixture of both utopian and dystopian



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universes in a story or novel that I have read so far. This text is 'brave new world' (the world of Lenina, of Bernard Marx, but not of John the Savage), this 'time when thought is free', which seems to be a utopia, but then it all turns into a dystopia, when Ralph weeps 'for the end of innocence', for 'the darkness of man's heart', where Marlowe seems to be on the verge of sinking into this 'heart of darkness', where Harriet can no longer communicate with Ben because he is looking 'for another of his kind'. Can a text like this make sense? It can: each reader chooses for himself whether he wants it to be a utopia or a dystopia. As someone once said, there would be no utopia without dystopia anyway.

The narrator of this text does not think of an ending at all. He tosses up a coin, just as Fowles did with Charles. Then you find yourself wondering: Why should I need ending? Do I really need an ending? There are endings, as there are stories are all around us. All we need is the ability to see them.

I've been trying to find an answer to the question in its text: 'Who Can Say Why Today Tomorrow Will Be Yesterday..?' A quote from Joyce came to mind. He knew. There are so many answers in his books.

Last but not least, I do have a major argument in favour of this text, and this is it: you can always find an answer in the past. If there hadn't been writers like Dickens, or the Brontës, we would never have had Joyce, or Eliot, or Ishiguro. This text is past and present at the same time. It will enrich anyone who will be patient enough to read it through.

Kind regards,  
Kathy H.

**14**

20.06.3036

Dear Sir,

I have recently received a story written by a yet unpublished writer, Virginia Eliot Huxley. It took me a while to make up my mind whether it was publishable or not. Her text merely glues together fragments written by Modernist and AfterMode authors. The whole history of Modernism and of the AfterMode can be found found in her 'Who Can Say Why Today Tomorrow Will Be Yesterday...?'

I believe that by putting those fragments together she meant to write a whole new story of her own: no plot, no chronology, no closure, no characters and no clarity. My opinion is that she failed to do so. Her story has as characters Yeats, Eliot, Galsworthy, Henry James, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Conrad, Huxley, Orwell, Golding and others. She has chronology, in the sense that all these remarkable authors and their works are chronologically listed. And we also have plot in this story: it is the history of 20<sup>th</sup> century English Literature. The incidents are the of stream of consciousness, epiphany, the luminous halo, dark secrets, dystopia. It all ends with the temptation to tell the future 'Not yet!', to give up the sense that we can expect anything from the future at all, because we would be better off if the future did not exist.

The question that I asked myself was if I, as a contemporary reader, would enjoy such a story. I might, but I could not possibly consider Virginia Eliot Huxley its true writer. This is not literature, it is pure plagiarism.

And yet, it is comforting to see that our past is not forgotten. We could try and publish this story for the simple reason that it asks a very good question: *Who Can Say Why Today Tomorrow Will Be Yesterday...?*.

Yours faithfully,  
Andreea Enea

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15

20.06.3045

Dear Sir,

Virginia Eliot Huxley's story 'Who can say why today tomorrow will be yesterday...?' can be published. It has potential. It is an interesting combination of PreModernism, Modernism, and AfterModernism. The author is well acquainted with Joseph Conrad, William Golding, T.S Eliot, Kazuo Ishiguro, and many others.

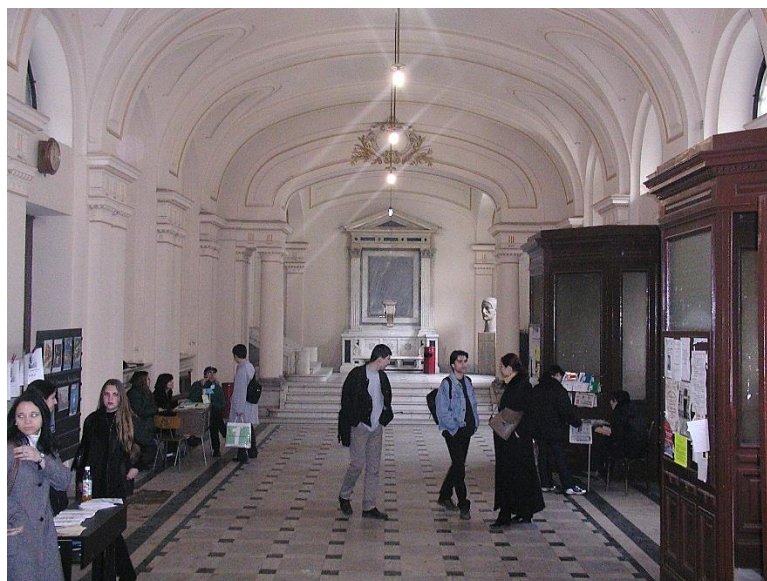
Although on first reading it I thought it was no more than plagiarism, on second thought I realized that it may be a great opportunity to remind our readers of the history of English literature.

The story may seem hard to understand at first. The language may be sharp and direct, but this is what people need in order to be brought back to reality. In my opinion, people have forgotten the beauty of engaging feeling while reading a book, and books of action with no feelings involved does not help at all.

So, from my point of view this story has to be published. The fact that Virginia Eliot Huxley succeeded in bringing together all these masterpieces from different ages and making them work together is a sign of great talent. Sincerely, I would like to read a sequel to this story. TLS should definitely give it a chance.

Yours,

Radiana Florescu



**16**

Dear Mr Johnson,

I have just received a very interesting story from an unpublished writer.

At first sight it looked all right. Reading it again and again, I realized that it was a puzzle made up of sentences taken from a number of novels and poems. I have identified excerpts from Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, Lodge's *Nice Work*, 1984 and more. It may have been the writer's tool to evoke the stream of consciousness by means of literary quotes.

I hesitated for a long time. This author either has no storytelling power, or, on the contrary, she has an amazing ability of mixing voices – and in that case it might be worth publishing. I am afraid I cannot support its publication, however: I have the feeling that, ethically speaking, this writer is borrowing too much and is not, in the end, the author of her own story.

The story is chaotic. It resembles the stream of consciousness of a lost person, with a lot of feelings involved, such as love, cruelty, horror, but also a lot of characters, of undefined He's and She's. We are overwhelmed with a 'a million – a number of possible windows'. And yet, I must say I respect this writer for showing her readers that there are a million ways of reading and understanding a text.

Also, the writer is contradicting herself from one sentence to another: first she says she is 'tired [...] of stories', and yet she quotes half a library of them. She uses the most loveless sentence from *Heart of Darkness* – 'The horror! the horror!' after saying that she longs for a 'little language such as lovers use'.

I think that the readership nowadays is not self-educated enough to respond to such a story, to get the meaning of all these quotes. People need clear stories, which are easy to understand.

I do not recommend this text for publication, but I thought you might want to have a look at it, precisely because it is really complicated, which makes it worth reading for someone who knows literature.

Karolin Le Gallou



17

June 26, 2002

Dear Mr Geert Steingold,

I am writing to inform you that in the last batch of no-name submissions, I did come upon a most strange piece of flash fiction. I do regret our Bloomsday edition missed it. Let me explain...

This one-page long piece is an anonymous hullabaloo of downright word-for-word plagiarism of a gallery of the 20th century's greatest, signed Virginia Eliot Huxley, née Golding, and no relevant information on the author whatsoever. I identified Yeats, Eliot, Joyce, Galsworthy, Henry James, Woolf, Conrad, Huxley, Orwell, Golding, Fowles, David Lodge, Peter Ackroyd, Ishiguro and Ted Hughes. I think that is reason enough to lend this piece a page. But I will further defend it, yes, I will...

The merits? They're inherent in the difficulty of deconstructing the story: a narrator? There's hardly one... Why doesn't he speak? He would prefer not to, I am sure... An author? It's the paroxysm of intertextuality, he even gave us a family tree, I'm afraid 3014 is the cut-off... There probably exists a plot, there certainly seem to be a lot of characters... The genre? Theatre, I reckon, and the one character I find, then, is the young author. Him that was born too late, for whom Joyce ruined it all. That, of course, in absence of Godot... The time is immemorial, as shown by the title. We walk by faith, not by sight, seems to say this Tennyson reprise that defines the ebb and flow of the writing game... Faith as that non-existent call for times past with no catalyst, no evidence whatsoever. Look, this is what I mean: today, tomorrow will be yesterday. Tomorrow is to come. Yesterday, we all know it. But today? Out of the plethora of today's work, our work, this 'author' has used or borrowed no word...

Čapek, Asimov... I think he's a robot. Hence, no royalties...

I wonder if there's anything to look forward to; certainly he hasn't come to love history, the nightmare? And I do wonder if Orwell realized there could be no truth except in uniformity... 2D bad, 4D good? The fourth dimension has overstayed...

The drawbacks? I'm positive it negates the purpose of all that we strive for; but then with masters like these, who would battle their bondage? One can't have lilacs without a dry land or humanity without a dead and buried creator.

Yours truly,

Nicholas Handersen,

editor TLS

**18**

London, 1 April 3084

Dear Sir,

A short story that has been submitted to us recently by Mrs Virginia Eliot Huxley, neé Golding. I must say I found it delightful, but also confusing. I have yet to make a decision, but I will now list the reasons why I consider this piece of writing not suitable for publication.

Firstly, it is ambiguous. The title of this piece is a quote from Tennyson's works. The text is a compilation of fragments from all major Modernist and AfterModernist authors, in chronological order (relatively), starting with Yeats, Galsworthy, James, Woolf, Joyce and Conrad, all modernists, and ending with Huxley, Wells, Golding, Lessing, Fowles, Lodge, Ackroyd, Ishiguro and Hughes, who are all part of the AfterMode. Tennyson belonged to the previous generation of writers, and he probably wouldn't have thought that he could have anything in common with the upcoming modernists.

Surprisingly, the title is very appropriate: it toys with the idea of time, that time which is 'out of joint'; furthermore, it conveys the message that time is a closed circle *Why Today Tomorrow Will Be Yesterday?* The writers of today and tomorrow will always return to yesterday. And the writers of yesterday, unknowingly, predict what will be tomorrow. There is a circularity of time, proved by the text itself: it starts with Modernism, and with Yeats, it continues with AfterModernists, and it ends with the controversial verse from Hughes' *Theology*: 'Adam ate the apple. Eve ate Adam. The serpent ate Eve. This is the dark intestine.' We return to Modernism. Literature is always based on 'yesterdays'.

Secondly, although the passages are very well chosen in this intertextual piece of writing, and they are also chronologically ordered, the story would be hard to decipher for a man who has not studied each of these authors and has not understood them thoroughly. We have to consider our readership. I personally see it as a case study of all the major Modernist and AfterModernist writers, and I think we should publish it in the special section, along with other specific works about this age.

Thirdly, I will say that the story really appeals to me, but I would rather you made the final decision, as Editor-in-Chief. I really like intertextuality. The passages, arranged in this order, really speak to me. The beginning, with Yeats and Galsworthy, is just like the beginning of Modernism: it neglects plot, love story and characters, it ignores time. Only the words matter, and the images they create in our mind when we read them. Modernists created a new language: an infinite language of words, images and symbols that can always be reinterpreted. 'We needn't speak to

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understand each other' – Henry James, or T.S. Eliot – 'Poetry can communicate before it is understood'.

The text continues with James, Woolf, Joyce, and 'the stream of consciousness', 'the luminous halo'. Chronology is unimportant. Only thoughts count: what am I thinking, why am I feeling? The stream of consciousness has no beginning and no ending: it just is.

Virginia Woolf was 'tired of stories', distrusted 'neat designs of life drawn upon half-sheets of note-paper'. She longed for 'some little language such as lovers use, broken words, inarticulate words, like the shuffling of feet on the pavement'. She pleaded for modernism, theoretically, but in practice her instinct was to follow the traditionalist rules she had been raised in. She needed plot, characters, even a love story.

Later on, dystopias came along: stories about a terrible, but probable future.

To cut a long story short, the story is interesting because, using intertextuality, it presents a brief summary of Modernist and AfterModernist literature. It is structured like a Modernist piece of writing, it is circular and ambiguous, and it makes the reader think and feel. I think it still needs to be worked upon, though. I will let you know as soon as I have made up my mind whether to recommend it for publication in the TLS or not.

Yours sincerely,  
Silvana Manea



14.07.3039, Reality Town

Dear Mr Smith,

I have just read the story that Mrs Virginia Eliot Huxley, née Golding sent to us last week.

Virginia's style is not easy at all, and this is why her readers should be highly educated in order to be able to understand this text. The story reminded me of Eliot's style, especially of *The Waste Land*. It must be because she uses intertextuality. I could easily identify a succession of quotes, both from poetry (Yeats, T.S. Eliot) and prose (starting with Henry James and ending with Kazuo Ishiguro).

The story is interesting. It would have been appreciated in Eliot's time, but not today. Her ambiguity, her use of invented words ('doublethink') and her fragmentariness hardly make sense.

What is more, she has a lot of characters, yet she has no plot at all. Most readers need books with a clear plot, books that they can understand. So many read for entertainment, and I do not think anyone can blame them. They will become bored and tired reading this story and they will be disappointed that it does not have an ending.

I must also add that one of the main reasons for which we should not publish this book is money. I am quite sure that you will agree with me that this kind of story will never help the TLS sell better.

Yours,

Sarah Smithson Penrose



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12 November 3045

Liverpool, United Kingdom

Dear Sir,

I have received a story which I would like to recommend for publication in the TLS. The story is made up of exquisite fragments leitmotifs used by Modernism and the AfterMode. They are wisely chosen and put together, and they follow the model of their period, in that they are not chronologically arranged. We don't have a plot here, or a main hero. The story starts ironically with the theme of love. I say ironically because we know that love interest and fairy tales were rejected by both Modernism and the AfterMode.

Modernism was such a drastic change from everything that went before it. Modernists used *a barbarous tongue*, different, unknown until then. *April is the cruellest month* belongs to Eliot's *The Waste Land* and the beginning of Modernism. In his poem, Eliot describes a series of moments which are lost, wasted. Silence is another theme of Modernism, followed by *the cry of the peacock*, a lyrical image found in Galsworthy's *The Meeting*, in which the narrator watches two young lovers at their first meeting; we have a lot of images and gestures described there, but typical for Modernism, we have no clear ending, we are supposed to imagine it.

The next image in the story is the sad ending of *The Portrait of a Lady*, where we understand that Ralph really loved Isabel, while she used the ambiguous word *brother* to address him.

*He is in Melbourne now* is extracted from Joyce's 'Eveline', a sad short story about the loss of love. *Brothers-in-love* is Joyce's coinage in *Ulysses*. *The horror!* in *Heart of Darkness* leads us to the moment when Kurtz dies, ambiguously hinting at possible dark rites in a cannibal community.

In the fragments of *Brave New World* and *1984* we are introduced to dystopia, that future that we are not prepared to see and which we refuse to understand. *The Fifth Child* introduces monstrosity as a theme of the AfterMode, which leads to the destruction of a beautiful Victorian family. From there we follow the irony of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *Nice Work*: the AfterMode woman is too intelligent to need love. *Never Let Me Go*, on the other hand, suggests a love story, even though we see just clones and donations.

I have enumerated just a few of the elements used by this writer. Publication of this story would be a wonderful reward for all the writers involved in this story.

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[I may not be very good at pretending that I am a TLS editor, but I have read all the books in the bibliography, and I hope my letter proves it.]

Yours faithfully,  
Alexandra Munteanu  
Editor of the TLS



### 21

12 November 3037, Lodge Town

Dear Sir,

I am writing this letter in support of a most curious story by an unpublished writer, a story that I have recently received. The writer who sent it to us glues together fragments that are emblematic for Modernism and the AfterMode. She takes the reader for a ride in a supersonic vehicle of thoughts.

We travel through Eliot's *Waste Land* of sad memories and lost moments. Then our heart freezes when we hear 'the cry of the peacock' (*The Meeting*) and the power of the words strikes us, hinting at so many feelings and memories: paint, absent love, uncertain future. We soon reach at Henry James' house of fiction, and understand that there are so many windows to look through, so many ways to see a piece of literature. 'We needn't speak to understand each other' is another lesson: a text can communicate, can make us feel and bring back memories, before it is understood (T.S. Eliot said that). Why? Because we are all brothers-in-love, all alike, we go through the same things.

We are also reminded of 'the stream of consciousness' – the mind that flows page after page in interior monologues, the 'luminous halo' of Virginia Woolf, who dismisses chronology, plot, love interest and reminds us that life isn't a fairy tale, and also of James Joyce, who uses words in order to awake memories and feelings, to cause epiphanies of the mind and soul.

The next lesson comes from Joyce's *Eveline*: once you become a foreigner, you stay a foreigner. Eveline doesn't leave Ireland: should Joyce have done the same? But we haven't got too much time to wonder, because *Ulysses* is waiting for us with its rich words and so many meanings, and with its lyricism. The modernists realize that words can say and hide at the same time. We have in this text dark secrets: possibly cannibalism ('The horror!') in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

At a turning point, we begin to feel the taste of dystopia, of fear, of guilt. We would rather stop, but the wheels keep on turning. Huxley's *Brave New World* is here with Alphas, Gammas and Deltas, *soma* and escapes into dreams. We are scared, totalitarianism scares us even more, but we must go ahead and face the dark side of human nature that Golding shows us in *Lord of the Flies*. No order, no leader, no rules, no grown-ups, children killing each other. Just darkness, which is so far away from the fairy tale.

Next, Lessing destroys any hope of traditional family in her *Fifth Child*. Love is

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dead for ever in Lodge's *Nice Work*, where Robyn claims her independence from all men. Ackroyd's idea that there might be other parallel worlds around us, worlds that we cannot see, that maybe we are actually living in a cave, and our light is actually darkness, puzzles us. Just like Ishiguro's Kathy, we don't want to let go of this world, we don't want to become brainwashed, or killers of innocent clones, we don't want these dystopias, no, not yet! Let the future wait!

We run across suspense and fear, just like Dickens's Scrooge in his Christmas nightmares. All the tools Mrs Eliot Huxley uses lead to ambiguity. We cannot go back to our fairytale, to relaxing chronology, to the omniscient narrator who controlled everything. This text is quite a journey, despite its fragmentariness and I hope you agree that it is worth publishing, at least for the effort of finding excerpts that define so well Modernism and what came after.

Yours faithfully,  
Mihaela Negrea





**22**

01.02.3042

To the Editor-in-Chief

From the beginning of the story we have received from Virginia Eliot Huxley, the writer admits that she speaks a 'barbarous tongue', a language which may not be very clear to the reader, a style which prevents us from seeing the plot – if there is any.

Indeed, the text is discontinuous, and gives the impression that one sentence does not link directly to the following. Intertextuality is present from the very beginning. The writer uses fragments from T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* – 'April is the cruellest month'. It borrows Virginia Woolf's theory that 'life is a luminous halo', and so should be the literature that reflects it. And yet this text does have a coherent meaning and it does have a story. Actually, the writer does not want her story to have 'one window' only, but 'a number of possible windows'.

She also gets inspiration from AfterModernist writers. She uses Robyn, the main female character in David Lodge's *Nice Work*, in order to show that love is no longer relevant in the life of a contemporary academic. Robyn is the modern, independent woman who gets to play the male role, therefore she does not need a male presence in her life to be fulfilled, so the novelist can safely dispense with love interest. The ending of this text seems to follow Fowles pattern: in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the novelist flips a coin when he wants to decide whether his hero's fate is going to be fulfilment in love or lovelessness.

I must confess that to my mind ambiguous words and intertextuality may not lead to a very a successful novel. It may be a challenge for some readers, a game in which they can test their literary knowledge, but it may also be an exaggerated combination of styles and words.

Consequently, I agree got to the writer's statement that her text is written in 'a barbarous tongue', a language that is not clear, which is difficult for the readers to understand. Her desire to be read by persons who are well conversant with literature and its history is more than understandable, but this does not necessarily mean that her own story is as good as its models.

I have quite made up my mind that, at least this time round, Virginia Eliot Huxley should not be published.

Respectfully,  
Maria Serdaru

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To the Editor-in-Chief of the *Times Literary Supplement*

I believe that the story 'Who Can Say Why Today Tomorrow Will Be Yesterday...?' should be published, as it combines elements of three different literary ages: PreModernism, Modernism and AfterModernism.

Even though the sentences this text is made up of already exist, even though the present work could be interpreted as plagiarism, what Mrs Virginia Eliot Huxley did, I think it is worth publishing. Her text is a memento of books that may soon be forgotten.

One of the reasons for which I would choose to publish this story is because of the story's structure and language. I think this story has a circular structure, as it starts and ends in the same way. It somehow starts from the future – 'But I am old and you are young', then it moves to the past – '...if you've been hated, you've also been loved', and ends up in the the future again – 'never let me go...'.

The writer begins with ambiguous words, switches to a clearer language, which certainly helps understanding, and finally shifts back to confusing words again. Her story begins with *April is the cruellest month* – a line taken from T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. The reader watches a lifeless world, empty, without feelings, a dystopian world. Soon after this, the author hints at a love story in a somehow utopian world full of life and emotions. This kind of story is specific to PreModernism. We can guess what happens from the following sentence: '...if you've been hated, you've also been loved. Ah but, Isabel, adored!'

Throughout the story, the author reflects a contradictory world, a combination between utopia and dystopia, hope and pessimism, a world full of emotions in which, paradoxically, love interest is discarded. I think that we should publish Mrs Virginia Eliot Huxley' story precisely because it harbours such a confusingly contradictory mood, rendered by means of a variety of literary tools, which belong to three different literary ages. We should publish her in order to preserve our literary inheritance, I think.

Yours,  
Elena Oprea

### 24

15 August, 1993

Birmingham, United Kingdom

Dear Mr Anderson,

I have recently received a story from a yet unpublished writer. I have already read it a few times: it seems very well-written. Its title is a rhetorical question. The story begins with a line taken from T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. The author uses a lot of adverbs and nouns which suggest the idea of time ('old', 'young', 'dead', 'April', 'hurry up', 'it's time'). The whole text is, as we see further on, a plea for the reader to forget about the meaning, or the multiple meanings, actually, of time. We are told indirectly that time is no more than a convention which our mind can discard.

The author has combined bits and pieces from lyrical poems and a lot of novels (*The Portrait of a Lady*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Brave New World*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *Nice Work*, *Never Let Me Go*) and has achieved a perfect puzzle. She works with at quite a number of individual stories taken from disparate writers, but the resulting whole is just one story which has a coherent meaning, a clear beginning and an unmistakable end. This story is the vivid image of the modernist approach: it is the proof that you can make a story from bits and pieces. More important than the story, though, are its characters—the windows of the house, their stream of consciousness, their language, intertextuality and metafiction (fiction that 'talks' about itself, about the art of writing fiction).

The story begins in a lyrical voice, with a few lines from *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot: they introduce the reader into a dramatic atmosphere and invite him to reflect upon the ephemerality of life. The words are carefully chosen, the narrative has rhythm and rhyme. The apocalyptic view is symbolised by the cry of the peacock, which suggests sadness and pain.

The text is a mixture of interior monologue, stream of consciousness (characters' thoughts are revealed) and dialogue. It has a myriad of themes, so that practically anyone can identify with its heroes at some point: love and time, socio-economic and political aspects of life (*Nice Work*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*), morality, spiritual values, colonialism and imperialism (*Heart of Darkness*), the disadvantages of the development of technology and, as a consequence, the loss of identity (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *Brave New World*). The characters allow us to know their thoughts through monologues.

I must add that this text is rich food for criticism. Every feminist critic will

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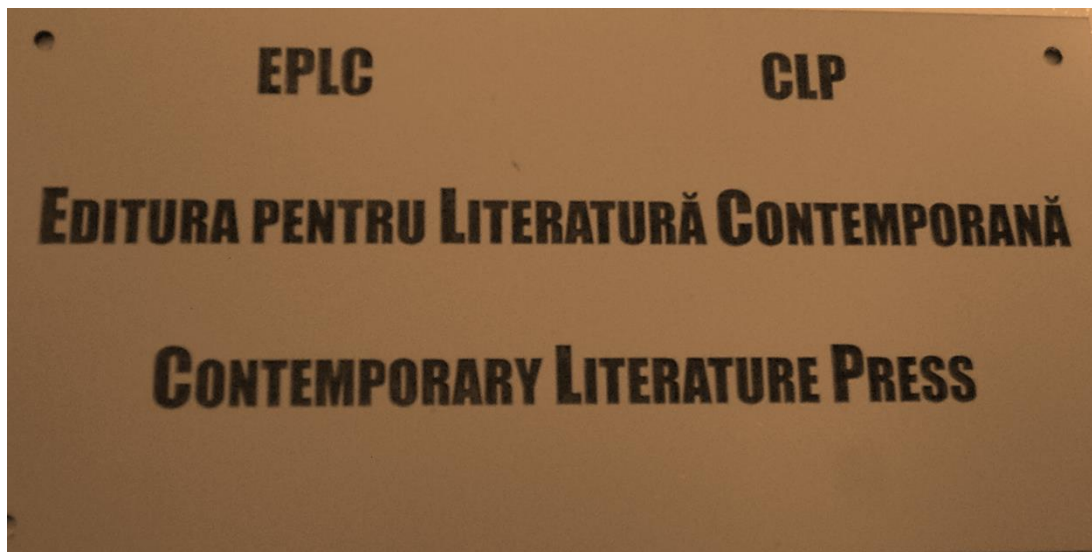
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identify with Robyn's (*Nice Work*) opinion about marriage ('I don't need a man to complete me'). The formalist and the structuralist critics will find the text very interesting, too, since the narration shifts from the first person narrative (intradiegetic narrator) to the third person narrative (the omniscient one, emotionally detached from the story). Even the symbolism of names is important, whether they come from the Bible or various myths. For example, Robyn (which is a masculine name) is in fact a girl in this story, a smart and independent feminist.

I believe this text to be very powerful theoretically, and I think the importance of literary theory cannot be emphasised enough nowadays.

Sincerely,  
Gilbert Tennyson





25 August 3034

Lodge Town

Dear Editor-in-Chief,

I have not yet made up my mind whether the story we have just received from Mrs Huxley can be published.

I would publish the story because of its cultural content, because of the literary references that the author makes. We find in her text, side by side, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* – *April is the cruellest month (...) I was neither living nor dead*. Part of that text indicates *The Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James as a source: '*And remember this*', he continued, '*that if you've been hated you've also been loved. Ah but Isabel – adored!*' he just audibly and lingeringly breathed. The next text I was able to recognize in this story was *Heart of Darkness* – *The horror! The horror! (...) The last word he pronounced was your name*. It was followed by *Brave New World*: '*O brave new world!*' he repeated '*O brave new world that has such people in it. Let's start at once.*' Further on we find 1984: '*From the age of uniformity, from the age of solitude, from the age of Big Brother, from the age of double think – greetings!*' It goes on with *The Fifth Child* and *Nice Work*: '*You're a very special person, Robyn*' he says solemnly. '*One day you'll meet a man who deserves to marry you*' Next I recognized Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*: *I was eleven then, and hadn't listened to much music, but this one song, it really got to me*. For all these literary references, and for all the styles that the author uses with dexterity, I would be inclined to publish her story.

Unfortunately, there is a number of arguments that I could bring against the publication of this kind of story. The readers today need a plot, and, as far as I can see, the writer has chosen to write her story in the manner of James Joyce. Joyce uses in his novel *Ulysses* echoes of Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*; our writer also refers us to old texts. On the other hand, Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* is full of compound words: Joyce merges two, three or more words, quite often each of them coming from another language. As a consequence, a word has multiple simultaneous meanings. Virginia Huxley tries to do that herself. I think she does it to the detriment of clarity, which cannot bring her more readers: maybe fewer, significantly fewer, nowadays.

Chronology is also quite necessary to a story. It can be PreModernist, dividing time into past, present and future, or Modernist, where past and present are one. In this story I could not find these moments in time I am speaking about. We have a number of stories with no particular chronology, which makes the text hard to follow.

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Today we are always interrupted by commercials when we watch a film, or we cannot read a book without reading our text messages first, or read them while we try to read that particular book. In this context, we really need a story with a plot and chronology in order for us to be able to concentrate and to understand what we are reading.

Besides, we must also consider that not many readers today are very fond of all the authors this text quotes. If they don't know the original texts, I don't think they will be able to understand what this story is all about. It is true that the AfterMode writers preserve the ambiguity of older texts, mainly modernist, but their taste has also returned to the use of a plot, because they understand that readers nowadays, as always, after all, need a story that is easy to follow.

In conclusion, it may not be wise to publish this story: the readers may not understand it, and financially it will be a disaster, in that case.

Yours faithfully,

Iuliana Panduru, Junior Editor



18 November 3049

London, United Kingdom

To Mr Benjamin Blake, Editor-in-Chief,

Mrs Virginia Eliot Huxley has submitted a short story for publication in the *Times Literary Supplement*. I found this text interesting, but quite disconcerting: it brings together elements that do not belong to the same text, and makes them cohere and produce meaning. In a remarkable way that reminds us of T.S. Eliot, the text speaks to the reader before it is understood. What seems to make the text work is the concept of the objective correlative. The author comes up with certain formulas which convey the right ideas and the ideas have their own subtle coherence. We get the general idea of what looks like a love story, which is without doubt destroyed, or at least treated with irony, against the general background of a broken world, a dystopia perhaps, which rather directs us to the AfterMode.

The text contains elements of Modernism and of the AfterMode, and, to a certain extent, it is self-explanatory. A number of concepts have caught my eye in this respect. *The luminous halo* refers to the fact that the human mind is not a string of elements arranged in perfect chronological order, but flows like a stream, the stream of consciousness, which becomes a literary device when used in an imaginary text. The author plays with references of time and place, as the mind jumps from one memory to another. The concept of *house of fiction* is also mentioned, meaning that a text is like a house with a *number of possible windows*, each offering a different perspective. The *windows* of a text are its characters, or, in this case, I would rather say voices.

The story states: *how tired I am of phrases that come down beautifully with all their feet on the ground*. It is clear that the author is tired. The problem is, I believe, that our readers will be even more tired of sentences that stumble upon each other, forcing them to sort out the mess. I do not think that our contemporary reader's minds will respond to the Modernist challenge as readers they used to in the 1920's. They want clarity and suspense back, and this text partly written in the Modernist spirit hardly meets those two requirements. Nowadays, soap operas are more popular than novels. *No spoilers!* is the catch phrase of the decade. That is why, with regret, I am inclined to believe this text will disappoint many, and therefore should not be published.

Sincerely,

Smaranda Horea

### 27

Dear Madam,

I am writing to recommend a new name in the field of literature and though it may seem a bit off-putting and risky to promote someone new, I want to assure you that she is talented and has something fresh in her writing. I have read one of her stories, and I think that the other readers of the *Times Literary Supplement* would be impressed by it.

First of all, one thing that you notice immediately is that this story is devoid of plot and structure. The reader no longer has a path to follow, he is no longer guided by the words of the author. Consequently, the reader has more work to do discovering the meaning on his own, relying only on the author's ambiguity.

Secondly, what is striking is that she chose to use the technique of collage in order to convey her ideas and build up her story. She is a word-smith, so to say, because she knows how to play with fragments pertaining to famous authors with distinct styles. For her story, she decided to use works from Modernism and the AfterMode. Therefore, in her story, we encounter famous words from acclaimed writers such as James Joyce with 'Eveline' and his parody of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. We have Henry James' idea of a 'house of fiction', Virginia Woolf with *The Waves*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, 1984, *Lord of the Flies*, *Brave New World*, and she went even further by including works such as *The Fifth Child* or *Never Let Me Go*.

After taking a short look at the story, we might say that the fragments it includes have little in common, but then again, the all the pieces belong to writers who changed the face of literature, who innovated, who changed the pace. And she proves this by taking authors with different styles, such as James Joyce and Doris Lessing, for example, bringing them together in her story and telling us 'Look, they both wanted to show us another facet of literature, they wanted to go off the beaten track.'

Moreover, I believe that her work can be regarded as an act of courage, because the author goes against the grain: contemporary writers create mostly weak characters and flimsy plots that require almost no effort to follow. Her creation is just like a puzzle that will make us flex our intellectual muscle in order to find the missing bits and get closer to the meaning.

Taking everything into account, publishing this story would encourage our readers to take a closer look at the changes in literature and analyse a large array of styles belonging to different authors.

Yours faithfully,

Andrada Paul

13 September 3047

London, United Kingdom

To Mr James Smith, Editor-in-Chief,

I have received Mrs Eliot Huxley's story. She submitted it yesterday, and I have spent the last 17 hours trying to decide whether we should publish it or not.

I shall be blunt about it. I consider her work completely unpublishable. While I admire her efforts to produce a modernist text in the manner of the 'greats' of the age, I do not believe she has succeeded.

Mrs Huxley is quite an innovating writer, in theory. Her text has no apparent form, no clear meaning and does not seem to follow any set literary rules. It is a collage, consisting entirely of fragments from various PreModernist, Modernist and also AfterModernist works. Her use of intertextuality is outstanding. Mrs Huxley shows us T. S. Eliot, Henry James, Virginia Woolf, Joseph Conrad, Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, David Lodge, Kazuo Ishiguro, all in one text, and ends on a high note with an insert from Ted Hughes.

It is quite impressive that someone living now, in this age (after all, quite some time has passed since the Modernism) possesses such strong knowledge of the texts of that time, but this is actually the problem with her work: Mrs Huxley was too busy trying to be Joyce, or at least Eliot, and she forgot to make the text her own. While this cold defamiliarization might sound great in theory, I believe the lack of personal touch makes her story unreadable to the public large. Especially in this age of the electronically-controlled-everything, people need to be able to turn to literature and feel something while reading it. In my opinion, this is what a good text must accomplish: make the reader feel something. And, sadly, Mrs Huxley's text did not accomplish that, in my case.

Moreover, her abundant use of fragments from texts ranging from the early to the late 1900's might pose a serious problem to the average reader. You might argue that the above-average reader might still enjoy it. Well, while to some well-read few this journey through the finest works of Modernism might seem delectable (as it did to me at first glance), may I remind you that the *Times Literary Supplement* does not target the well-read alone. And, even if it were so, this text would risk annoying them in the end.

In conclusion, my decision is to not publish Mrs Virginia Eliot Huxley's text in our magazine. Maybe after a bit of editing and revising, I could give it another shot. I will inform her of this. But, for the time being, the answer is no.



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Sincerely,  
Alina Petcu

P.S. I could not shake off the feeling that this was just a test of my abilities.  
Nevertheless, I enjoyed providing this analysis.



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20.06.2014

Dear Sir,

The text I attach has been sent to me by a yet unpublished author. Here are my opinions and conclusions.

I have noticed, after first reading the text without understanding much of it, that the writer's work is a perfect chronological combination of Modernist and AfterModernist texts, from Yeats to T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* – 'April is the cruellest month' in 1922, and ending with Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The text starts with part of a poem and the circle ends with another poem.

This work has many modernist features: there is no plot, and no apparent love story. We are given some names and characters, but we have absolutely no idea of what is going to happen; neither are we given any clue.

If you are not aware that this is a mixture of a number of books, the text appears merely ambiguous: we follow a hero's stream of consciousness, catch a glimpse of each author's mind. The texts within this text are not related, but we do identify an exterior time line. We have Henry James' 'The House of Fiction' – 'The house of fiction has (...) a number of possible windows', Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady* – 'We needn't speak to understand each other,' she said, Virginia Woolf's 'Modern Fiction', William James – 'The stream of thought', James Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* – 'The Horror! The Horror!...', Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child* – 'She would see Ben', and more.

I would advise publishing Ms. Virginia Eliot Huxley's text because it mimics James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*. It is difficult to decode, has many references to other works, and yet has a note of its own. She will give the young generation a taste of the 1920's, which is not a bad thing, considering that that moment in time gave birth to a mind like James Joyce's.

Best regards,  
Hieronymus Baba

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8 June 2863

London, England

Dear Mr Darkwood,

I have received a story written by an unknown writer, and I would like to publish it in the following number of our magazine. The story is a compilation of quotes from Modernism and the AfterMode. The selection this author has made is impressive, and I truly believe this idea of a composite story will be a success with our readers.

Modernism revolved around the year 1922, when James Joyce's *Ulysses* and T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* were published. The Modernist period was characterized by the following features: the language was more important than the story, the author was more interested in the character's mind than in the plot. Modernism was followed by the AfterMode.

One reason why I have chosen to publish this story is the beauty of its quotes, belonging to all the important writers of Modernism. A second reason would be that it merges two ages that could not be more different: the Modernism and the AfterMode.

Respectfully yours,  
Isabella Warton



## The Exam Book !

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3 May 3051

Birmingham, united Kingdom

Dear Sir,

I received yesterday the most interesting of manuscripts. It is a collection of reasons why anyone should read authors belonging to Modernism and the AfterMode. It is a collage of key excerpts skillfully put together. This text may be able to make young people today read Modernist writers such as Woolf and Joyce.

The author has one interesting tool: she chooses emblematic bits and pieces of quite a number of different literary works, and actually manages to create a collective stream of consciousness, if I may say so. The boundaries between authors are nicely blurred.

As the story starts out with a line from Tennyson and the continues with Yeats and Eliot, I had the feeling, at first, that she was trying to create a chronology – which would have been dull. But, before I could finish that thought, Galsworthy was preceded by Henry James, then followed by Virginia Woolf and Joyce.

If you ask me, I would definitely give it a shot.

Yours faithfully,  
Alexandra Revenco



**32**

20.06.3054

To the Editor-in-Chief

I am writing this letter in order to express my opinion regarding Mrs Virginia Eliot Huxley's story.

I find that the best choice we could make is to publish it.

Authors today should try and make use of what their predecessors had to offer, and to explore their texts and ideas. That is exactly what Virginia has managed to do in her piece.

While reading it, I have stumbled upon fragments from authors belonging to Modernism and the AfterMode. Those authors include Yeats, Virginia Woolf, T.S. Eliot, Huxley, Kazuo Ishiguro and many more. The text opens with a fragment from Yeats' *To a Child dancing in the Wind* and T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. She has also included a fragment from Virginia Woolf on the stream of consciousness and Bernard's speech from her book *The Waves*.

Virginia Huxley has put together parts from modern dystopias such as: *Brave New World*, *Lord of the Flies*, and *1984*. *Nice Work*, *The Fifth Child* and *Never Let Me Go* are also some of the texts she makes use of. I am not going to list every poem and novel in her story, as it would take too long.

I am aware that she could be accused of plagiarism, but, in my opinion, she has managed to produce something new and interesting. She has managed to write a memorable and daring text, making use of intertextuality, including great authors that came before her.

If we were to publish her story, we would not only give her chance, but give a chance to the last two centuries of literature to be read with interest again.

Marga Rusu

Editor, *Times Literary Supplement*



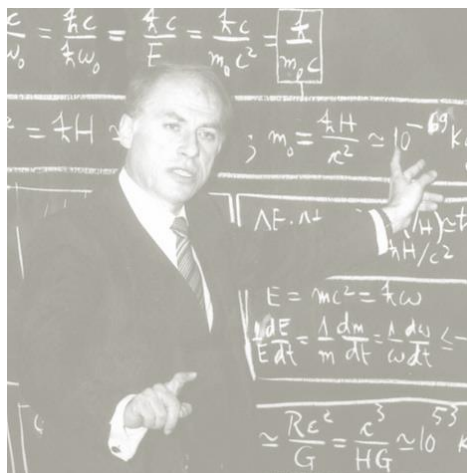
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We have recently received a story that I believe will interest both you and our readers, especially those fond of modernist and AfterModernist literature. Upon reading it, I found myself pleasantly surprised by the ingenious structure of the text, as you probably will be, too: it is far from the usual stories we receive, meaning that it is both an original work and yet borrowed from some of the most notable authors.

However, this story will probably seem relevant only to readers who are familiar with the original texts. The author helps her readers by signing 'Virginia Eliot Huxley, née Golding. Foster parents: Kazuo Ackroyd and Doris Fowles. Place of birth: Lodge Town, Galsworthy, United Lit Lands. Graduate of Conrad Department, Yeats University.' She is thus mentioning the names of some of the authors whose sentences she uses.

Andreea Stan



**http://editura.mttlc.ro**  
București 2014

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Dear Sir,

I have just received a story that has impressed me deeply.

I read the story line by line, and I was bewildered: every single word was an epiphany. Within its limited boundary of no more than one page, the story encapsulated all the greatness of the authors I love. It is that sensation of beauty and intelligence that struck me. Who is the author of this text? And for an instant, I thought of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and I said to myself: **someone has discovered the master.**

The author chooses to write in quotes, but every excerpt she chooses becomes part of a coherent whole with an inner logic of its own: she follows a stream of consciousness. It is just, that unlike Joyce, who in *Eveline* follows the thought of a young girl, this piece is the mind of a whole literary movement. This very short story emphasizes the power of a word to stand on its own. Time is suspended.

I would really like to have this piece published, because it shows the unimaginable power of the word: writers express themselves, of course, and yet they stand together after all, their ideas are closely connected to one another.

There is also a story in this text. It is the (hi)story, of art and writing, of ideas following one another. I am sure you understand the importance of having this piece published. It is the legacy of an age of change. There is life within these words, and this is more than a mere text: it is destiny. Readers must realize: this, where we are, is 'the dark intestine'. Learning the history may help to carry on the change.

Yours,

Amalia Radu



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3 July 3044

Liverpool, United Kingdom

Dear Mr Glide,

The submission of Virginia Eliot Huxley née Golding is on my desk. I have read it more than once.

First of all, we live at a time when writers no longer have to come up with a story in order to be original. And I think it all started with them, the writers that Mrs Huxley leads us to. She's obviously not trying to fool us. The story is made up of fragments that some of us, maybe not all, know well. They were very carefully chosen. It begins by showing how writers like Yeats in poetry and Galsworthy in the novel were beginning to make changes by focusing on something else than the story or on being clear. Then it goes through how creativity in literature is defined by H. James, then how V. Woolf claims the need of verisimilitude and how she tries to apply her theoretical ideas without actually managing to do it very well. Further on, she deals with the way in which Joyce focuses on language, followed by Conrad's use of ambiguity and dystopia. More dystopias are hinted at, from *Brave New World* to *Never Let Me Go*. To cut a long story short, Mrs Huxley points at the fact that things were changing and yet not changing back then.

Apparently this text lacks coherence, since it is after all just a succession of bits and pieces from various stories, but I'm sure I'm not the only one who can feel the connection between them, how they reflect, each of them, what had been before and how that announce what was to follow.

The title suggests that each present is to become a past, and the story proves it, as well as it proves that the past matters, that Ackroyd really is this author's ancestor and that like Ackroyd's character Plato, our author wants us to be aware of the past.

Finally, this may not be the kind of story that everyone will appreciate, but I think we should publish it, because it is not only a statement of our past, but also of our present.

Sincerely,

Lavinia Stoleru

**36**

21 December 3051

London, United Kingdom

To Mr Robert Lockwood, Editor-in-Chief

I am writing in support of the story that I have received from a promising writer. I have read it a couple of times, and it has made it revisit highly agreeable literary memories.

Mrs Huxley's text relies on ambiguity and lack of clarity: the word betrays its communication purpose and digs tunnels in the subconscious of the reader. The text is very challenging. It consists of a number of fragments. The reader needs to join the game, to play along, to follow many writers' ideas. The purpose is to find the link between the fragments and follow it. Only then is the true meaning of the text understood. The stream of consciousness is used and I find it very productive.

The novelty that this story brings is that it crosses the boundaries of time, combining two literary ages that actually aimed at being different from each other. The text flows and the passage is smooth. Such a transition shows that Modernism has not died. As a matter of fact, what we are reading could be the work of another Eliot, Virginia Eliot Huxley (even the name helps). She is as good as Eliot at concentrating. She has lyricism on her side and the epiphanies of Joyce. Good choice.

I strongly believe that this story strike roots in the reader's mind. This is the aim that Virginia Eliot Huxley had in mind when she started writing: to force us (readers) to review our past and also feel again that the future is a nightmare. Dystopia is the favourite genre of the AfterMode writers.

You see your whole life passing before your eyes and you start questioning your past, your existence. This is the story that will unsettle the very core of your being and will raise you from the sleep of forgetfulness and ignorance: *Who* am I? *Where* am I? *Why* am I here? This is the ballad of the 20<sup>th</sup> century presented in flashbacks.

It seems to me that this message is worth promoting in the TLS, so I am in favour of publication.

Sincerely,

Ramona Tudor, Junior Editor

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New York, 20 July 3034

To: George Golding,

TLS Editor-in-Chief

From: Andreea Ursulescu,

TLS Junior Editor

Mr Golding,

I have received a story by a yet unpublished writer. It took me a while to decide whether we should publish this story or not.

I will start by pointing out the multitude of texts, of the different styles used. It is difficult to read because of its intertextuality, but once you decode it, it gets easier. This story makes so many references to other stories. I found it hard to decide whether it's just an attempt to copy other writers in order to sell, or it is a new text.

Originality, I think is the main issue here.

We see characters, but their names only appear once, if at all. We don't know what their place in the story is. The narrative perspective changes all the time: it turns from a narrator that is also a character in the text to an omnipresent narrator, from the first person to the third person. That makes things very ambiguous. We don't know who or what is the main character, let alone what his story is. The sudden change from *Brave New World* to *1984*, to *Lord of the Flies* and so on, requires intelligent bridges to connect the pieces, and so do the different topics and styles. This writer is deeply influenced by George Orwell, Kazuo Ishiguro and other well known remarkable minds, but I am not so sure it actually brings anything new to literature.

I have been struggling for a long time now to decide, and I want to let you know that I doubt we should publish this. Considering the author is still a young writer, and she does have potential to create something original, I find it more appropriate to wait for a new work from her.

Yours sincerely,

Andreea Ursulescu



24.07.3050

To the Editor-in-Chief

I have received a story written by a yet unpublished writer.

After reading the story, I was surprised to discover that our writer is quite a versatile woman. What she actually did, was write a story which makes sense in spite of the fact that it consists of excerpts from the works of various Modernist and AfterModernist writers such as: William Butler Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Aldous Huxley, Joseph Conrad, George Orwell, Kazuo Ishiguro and Ted Hughes.

Her story is not actually a story, for it does not have plot, characters or chronology. On the other hand, it follows modernist rules: fragmentation, allusions, stream of consciousness, and the interior monologue. Even though it is a medley of other writers' words, it strikes one as genuine and original.

O course, this piece will only appeal to knowledgeable readers, who have read *The Waves*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Brave New World*, *1984*, *Lord of the Flies*, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *Nice Work*, and *Never Let Me Go*. As far as poetry is concerned, there are only two references, namely *The Waste Land* and *Theology*, which are used as framework, at the beginning and at the end of the text.

Interestingly enough, the title chosen by Mrs Huxley is a mixture of time adverbials and tenses, which looks like a rhetorical question. It makes me think about the timelessness and the fictitious character of Modernist works.

The idea in itself is, of course, risky, but brave. In my opinion, the TLS ought to support it.

Yours,

Raluca Vasile

Editor of *Times Literary Supplement*

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19 February 3044

**Birmingham, United Kingdom**

To Mr Melvin Adams, Editor-in-Chief

A week ago I received an intriguing text by an unknown author who calls herself Virginia Eliot Huxley, née Golding.

The story obviously has an author with 'multiple personality'. I am pointing this out only for literary purposes. We have here a genuine history of Modernism and the AfterMode.

*Who can say why Today Tomorrow will be Yesterday?* This rhetorical question was the first intriguing sign that aroused my curiosity and troubled my understanding. I felt as though I was travelling in a time machine and having before my eyes all the important moments of several literary movements. Slowly, it all came back to me. Yeats's fear of his life coming to an end combined with a *wasted* April and finished *under the chestnut trees* with a tinge of Galsworthy's lyricism.

Moving on, the text ingeniously puts together William James and Henry James, because, after all, James the psychologist created the term *stream of consciousness* (in 1892, if my memory doesn't fail me), while his brother built the theory of the *house of fiction*. An explanation is beautifully chosen from Virginia Woolf's essay in which her *stream of consciousness* is a *luminous halo*. These ideas are finally wrapped up in a few words from Joyce's *Dubliners*. The result is a modernist gift that one can hardly resist.

A witty game of words, of meanings places side by side *the language such as lovers use, broken words, inarticulate words* and Conrad's *horror*. The mood of this last word is continued by Huxley's *Brave New World*, Orwell's *1984* and of Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, all of them dystopias. Doris Lessing is also present with *The Fifth Child*, in which she creates a character who cannot use words, cannot make himself understood. John Fowles, David Lodge, Peter Ackroyd follow. The last sentence ironically announces the 'dark' conclusion of our world.

Should this author be published? It was a difficult decision. Originality was a word that still haunts me. Is this text original at all? Upon long and careful consideration, I suggest that this story should be published, on one condition: its author must necessarily provide detailed explanations and footnotes. We are giving the puzzle, but also providing the key. Isn't this what T.S. Eliot himself did in the Notes to *The Waste Land*?

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Sincerely,

Dorimia Karoyd, Editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*



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# **Examination Paper**

September 2014



CONTEMPORARY  
LITERATURE PRESS

<http://editura.mttlc.ro>  
București 2014



## Modernist or After?

Identify the following short excerpts as Modernist or AfterModernist in the second column of the table below, and justify your choice briefly:

Test	Answers
They had no way of knowing that their earth was in a great cavern beneath the surface of our world. Their sky was the roof of a cave, but for them it was the threshold of the universe. I was walking among the blind.	Excerpt from Peter Ackroyd's <i>The Plato Papers</i> : AfterModernist – dystopic universe, solitude of the hero.
She remembered the last night of her mother's illness; she was again in the close dark room at the other side of the hall and outside she heard a melancholy air of Italy. The organ-player had been ordered to go away and given sixpence. She remembered her father strutting back into the sickroom saying: 'Damned Italians! coming over here!'	Modernist: strong emphasis of the past tense. The character is not preoccupied with what the future may hold in store for her, but, rather, with remembering and understanding the past. This break with the traditional narrative pattern (past – present – future) is one of the features of Modernism
'You're a very special person, Robyn' he says solemnly. 'One day you'll meet a man who deserves to marry you.' 'I don't need a man to complete me,' she says, smiling.	Excerpt from David Lodge's <i>Nice Work</i> . The text is AfterModernist. The universe it depicts is a dystopic one, a world in which love does not exist, or is ridiculed. We notice the change of the relation between a man and a woman and the emancipation of the latter.
Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end.	Excerpt from Virginia Woolf; Modernist, arguing the necessity to break with the previous literary tradition of narrative universals, of the fairy-tale pattern which emphasized chronology.



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<p>‘His last word—to live with,’ she murmured. ‘Don’t you understand I loved him—I loved him—I loved him!’</p> <p>I pulled myself together and spoke slowly.</p> <p>‘The last word he pronounced was—your name.’</p>	<p>Excerpt from Joseph Conrad’s <i>Heart of Darkness</i>. The text is Modernist: emphasis on the past tense, on the intensity of feeling; use of the first person narrative.</p>
<p>‘Are you married to her? he asked.</p> <p>‘Am I what?’</p> <p>‘Married. You know—for ever. They say ‘for ever’ in the Indian words; it can’t be broken.’</p> <p>‘Ford, no!’ Bernard couldn’t help laughing.</p>	<p>Excerpt from Aldous Huxley’s <i>Brave New World</i>. The text is AfterModernist: use of simple, common words, reader-friendly, easy to understand. From the point of view of the content, we notice the break with the traditional view on love and marriage, which changed irrevocably with Modernism.</p>
<p>Scarce did he my body touch, Scarce sank he from the west Or found a subterranean rest On the maternal midnight of my breast Before I had marked him on his northern way, And seemed to stand although in bed I lay.</p>	<p>Excerpt from the Modernist poem ‘Chosen’ by William Butler Yeats, from the volume <i>A Woman Young and Old</i>. Yeats obeyed traditional rules of poetic musicality, but the world he perceived was already under the sign of hopelessness. The difference is that he was stubborn enough to create a future (the ‘sphere’) for his heroine, and that future was, in common words, a love story with a happy ending, after all...</p>
<p>Every life is many days, day after day. We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love. But always meeting ourselves.</p>	<p>?...</p>
<p>Perhaps quite soon, in the new house she would be living in (alone) with David, she would be looking at the</p>	<p>Excerpt from Doris Lessing’s <i>The Fifth Child</i>. AfterModernist: clear style, lack of the ambiguity that was so</p>

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box, and there, in a shot on the News of Berlin, Madrid, Los Angeles, Buenos Aires, she would see Ben, standing rather apart from the crowd, staring at the camera with his goblin eyes, or searching the faces in the crowd for another of his own kind.	important to modernists.
The spreading field, the human scene, is the 'choice of subject'; the pierced aperture, either broad or balconied or slit-like and low-browed, is the 'literary form'; but they are, singly or together, as nothing without the posted presence of the watcher—without, in other words, the consciousness of the artist.	Excerpt from Henry James — preface to <i>The Portrait of a Lady</i> . He begins the modernist revaluation of the story, by making the consciousness of the author the point of interest in the novel.
He put the diary away in the drawer. It was useless to think of hiding it, but he could at least make sure whether or not his existence had been discovered.	Excerpt from George Orwell's 1984: AfterModernist. Although the character is seen from the outside, we are faced with his restlessness, his solitude, his discomfort in the world he lives in, his anxiety.
'You gave me hyacinths first a year ago; They called me the hyacinth girl.' — Yet when we came back, late, from the Hyacinth garden, Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither Living nor dead, and I knew nothing, Looking into the heart of light, the silence. Od' und leer das Meer.'	Excerpt from T.S. Eliot's <i>The Waste Land</i> : Modernist. Eliot embarked upon a journey of the word independent from its grammatical context. We are struck by the lack of clarity, the multiplicity of meanings, the clusters of images called to the mind simultaneously. We also observe the mixture of languages and the organic musicality of the text, which constitutes a clear break from traditional patterns.
... what the devil am I going to do	Excerpt from John Fowles' <i>The</i>

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with you? I have already thought of ending Charles' career here and now; of leaving him for eternity on his way to London. But the conventions of Victorian fiction allow, allowed no place for the open, the inconclusive ending...

*French Lieutenant's Woman.*

AfterModernist, the text is more than a reinterpretation of the Victorian novel or a mere parody of it and its conventions. There is a stress on the inner world of the character, on its thoughts, but unlike Modernist texts, the focus is on the present tense. Neither the future nor the past matter.

And I began wondering. The inevitable life of their love, just flowering like the trees, the inevitable life with its budding, and blossom, and decay, started up before me. Were they those exceptional people that falsify all expectation and prove the rule? Not they! They were just the pair of lovers, the man and woman, clean, and vigorous, and young, with the Spring in their blood – fresh-run, as they say of the salmon, and as certain to drift back to the sea at the appointed time. On that couple bending their heads together, morals and prophecies were as little likely to take effect as a sleet shower on the inevitable march of Spring.

Excerpt from John Galsworthy's *The Meeting*. The text is Modernist, although there are more PreModernist than modernist features in it: the characters are observed from the outside by a subjective narrator, which is after all a combination of PreModernism and Modernism. This is not something Dickens would have said. Moreover, there seems to be an attempt at an open ending, but we do know that the story ends badly. The author does not give us the exact image, but he won't let us understand, or come up with whatever ending we desire. A clearer break with the traditional conventions is the disregard for morality.

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# Appendices

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### **I**

## **The Future Teachers of Literature**





### 1.

The subject of how a lecture should look like is a very delicate one, because I have never taught a lecture to a number of at least thirty students. I imagine it must be a really difficult job to put yourself out there and try to teach fresh minds a piece of what you know.

If I was to try and write a recipe for a good teacher, it would contain the following list of ingredients: the desire to teach, the ability to teach, a knowledge of a minimum of 95% of the course material and information, an open attitude, an open mind, an open heart, a bunch of students willing to know and to learn, techniques of approaching the students, of teaching the material and of making the students think on their own.

First, we have to take the desire and reinforce it. We have to make sure that nothing and no one can destroy it. Then we take the ability and learn how to improve it. We take classes to learn the techniques of teaching, we need to learn about the psychology of the student, about ways to approach him/her. As we learn how to teach, we also have to learn what we want to teach. Throughout this process we have to observe other teachers, to think about what they are doing right or wrong and about what methods would improve their teaching. After a period of time we have to teach others, but under supervision.

As soon as we are done with all the learning process, we launch ourselves into the sea of teaching others. To manage to accomplish that, we must prepare our lessons before every lecture. We have to make sure we know what we have to teach and know the right methods to teach it. Also we have to make up scenarios in which students ask us tricky questions so that we can avoid difficulties. After that we have to accept and understand that we cannot know everything and do everything. This is also the part when we decide about how open our mind and attitude are. This is always up to us, because it depends on our character and personality how much we want to give of ourselves.

As far as students are concerned, they come in very different shapes and personalities and if we do our best with all of the above, we will succeed to make the best of almost all the class; I say almost because there are some things that are not within our control. The teaching materials such as images, videos, interactive boards come only to spice things up, because I am sure that a good teacher can teach students even if he/she doesn't have all of that.

To conclude, I want to point that great teachers can build the future, because they are the ones who inspire students to continue the good work, and this is why a good teacher recipe has to have so many complicated ingredients.

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Enjoy your teaching!

Cursul a fost o adevărată plăcere! Am rețut  
acel sentiment de admirație față de  
cunoștințele și modalitatea imediată de a le  
exprima <sup>unui</sup> Obisnuiam să vă "citez" anumite  
<sup>profesor</sup> fraze din simplul motiv al ordinii și aranjării  
cuvintelor. Materia a fost frumos  
structurată și răbdător explicată.  
Pot spune zâmbind că am înțeles imaginea,  
dar și limbajul, reușind să filtrez datele oferite.

Vă mulțumesc!

CONTEMPORARY  
LITERATURE PRESS



<http://editura.mttlc.ro>  
București 2014

### **2.**

Literature has always been my favorite subject. I was lucky enough to have literature classes in high school as well, and to be honest I must admit that those classes made me realize I had to change my career path, because I was studying maths and computer science and I hated it. Therefore, literature became something very personal to me, I started seeing it as a salvation from the mediocrity that could have settled in my life. When I got into University I realized that I wanted to teach literature when I graduated. Throughout my four semesters I met eight literature professors and they could not have been more different from one another. Some were distant and arrogant, others were conducting literature circles and were chatting with their students during the breaks about the latest books they had read or the movies they had watched. Given the fact that I have a soft spot for this subject, I tend to appreciate more the professors that are more open and get involved. I find that I respect them more because I get to know them better and realize how fascinating they are. I am one of the students who need dialogue in a lecture. Sure I have a lot to learn from those professors who deliver monologues for two hours, but I'd rather engage in a conversation than take down notes mechanically. Furthermore, another aspect that divides professors in my classification is what they choose to focus on during their lectures. Some choose to discuss the text and the text alone, others spend more time focusing on the social and historical background or even on the writer's personal life. I for one would like more balance when it comes to this because whatever the approach, I feel that we're not devoting enough time to the other aspect. Actually, at this point, a literature circle might come in handy. Perhaps some professors are reluctant when it comes to this because of the lack of interest that some students display during classes, but I want to take this opportunity to remind them that there are students who are interested in spending extra hours discussing literature.

All in all, I believe that teaching literature is not for everyone. Brilliant professors have that sparkle that transcends and starts shaping the personality and even the expectations of the students. Sure they might not have an impact on everyone, but then again every student sets up his or her own different goals. So it is all relative. But in my opinion, literature has an impact on the reader regardless of the one who teaches it, so in the end I believe it is all up to the students to make the most of their literature classes.

### 3.

In my opinion, the most important aspect of a course is the student's participation. An interactive course is the best way to learn. The course this term was very close to my idea of an ideal course. The reason for this is the fact that it was not based on teaching and taking notes, but rather on our participation in a general discussion about a certain literary work. This way, each student had the possibility to take part in it, to agree or disagree with the others and bring arguments to support their point of view, thus putting in practice the freshly learnt notions. A course which involves both theory and practice is a course which brings satisfaction to both students and teachers.

Mi-a plăcut foarte mult cursul  
dumneavoastră! Ați explicat totul pe înțelesul  
nostru, serios sau glumind, fără cuvinte  
sofisticate, și ați reușit să îmi treziți  
curiositatea. A fost unul dintre puținele  
cursuri la care nu m-am plictisit. Interactiv,  
cu discuții frumoase în care ați ascultat  
părerea fiecăruia. Recunosc că nu am reușit

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### 4.

One day – while I was killing time inside our faculty, waiting for a new lecture to start – I came across a quote by William Arthur Ward that read: *'The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.'* I found it to be quite an interesting piece of advice, particularly because I have spent much of my life being a student, as it is the case with many others. I've been thinking about this quote ever since I first saw it... and I have come to the following conclusion: that I've always been told, many times explained to, sometimes demonstrated to, but rarely inspired.

Now... to give a short explanation of how this 'inspiration' works, I would say that: a. you must love what you do (and by this I mean loving your job) b. you must be a good listener, and c. you must respect others' opinions; and, with no intention of using pretentious words, I must say that the course on *British Modernism and the AfterMode* has found the 'formula' for inspiration... the 'objective correlative'. With this course I learned that my opinion as a student is not only being looked for, but also appreciated... I learned that a few words of your own mean more than a lengthy opinion voiced by another... I learned that the text is essential when you want to know more about the laborious paths of literature, and that everything outside the text is but a pretext... and I learned that, if you love what you do, you can never fail. I am therefore thankful for this kind of knowledge, and I think that every now and then we should be inspired because it makes us have an ideal, which in fact is the engine of life.





### **5.**

#### **Some Thoughts about Teaching Literature and My Literature Courses...**

As an English Major, I had four literature courses at this faculty so far, and I can say that I am not completely disappointed by all of them. In fact, two of them I have really enjoyed, and I would like to mention the things that I have appreciated in them and what made me attend all of these classes. First of all, I was very pleased with the student-centred approaches that at least two of my professors used, as opposed to the teacher-centred approaches. In this way, I was not part of an audience, but participant in a dialogue. This interaction and the fact that we were supposed to express our own opinions stimulated my desire to read the course bibliography. And what I have appreciated the most is the fact that there were no good or bad answers, just genuine ones. By reading the texts, without courses on theory and even fewer background information, I was able to understand the 'understandable': in my course in British Modernism and AfterMode I thus successfully passed my final exam, which is also my favourite so far.

During these courses the atmosphere in the classroom and the student-teacher relationship were exemplary, meaning that it was based on mutual respect and collaboration. I have met dozens of teachers over the years, and I have realized that if I am interested in a particular course I can leave aside my personal opinions about the course instructors. But although I have come to appreciate professionalism and dedication, I am sure that I will always remember more fondly those who were not just amazing teachers, but good people too.

As I have mentioned earlier, not all of these literature courses and seminars were as I had expected them to be. By attending some of them, I felt like I had never left highschool, meaning that I felt somehow narrowed by standard interpretations and led to accept ineptitudes. But I guess these sorts of examples had their purpose too, because without them, I wouldn't be able to make a difference between bad teaching and good teaching.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the teachers that open both minds and souls, because am I sure that not only the students have a lot to learn from them, but also those who want to pursue this career or those who already do it, but are not so great at it.

### 6.

#### On Teaching Literature

Minoring in Italian as an entirely new language meant, for most of my peers, an encounter with 20<sup>th</sup> century's Italian literature in translation. The language barrier was torn in the second semester, but the literature was, more or less, the same. To my generation, anything—except literature—was old, if it belonged to the past century. Though many books we read as youngsters would qualify as young adult today, back then I have no recollection of the market making any other distinction between children's books and grown-ups' books. The latter had more sober cover designs and, unlike children's' books, the cover didn't give away anything: it was abstract. A recent read, Tom Sharpe's jocular *The Great Pursuit*, reminds me of the issue, because the cover illustration, although you wouldn't know it beforehand, contains the whole storyline. And how about Harper Lee's novel, which, in a Romanian edition accompanied by Max Ernst's *Two Children are Threatened by a Nightingale* on the cover, is called ...*Să ucizi o pasăre cântătoare*. The ellipsis has stayed with me and what prompted is of lesser importance. Tackling Italian AfterModernists in the original version was an accomplishment, just as the 20<sup>th</sup> century course was: we had reached the age of grown-ups' novels. Growing up in a household that frequents bookshops, not only libraries, meant that actually everything was modernist to me, before being a classic. The Zeitgeist was, for me, the whole of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I felt that contemporary writers were, sometimes, too new to be taken seriously.

Now that my third and final undergraduate year is about to commence, I'm bracing myself for 19<sup>th</sup> century Italian literature and for a course in American literature, accompanied by a decisive comeback of Shakespeare. My ultimate hope is that these courses reflect on my understanding of everything contemporary that has now come to bloom. The young are called upon to read their contemporary authors, while revelation accompanies every discovery that a 'classic' is in fact very modern. The experience of a professor of Dante who could recite the cantos by heart and who was familiar with the voices of the greats was like listening to the young adult reader who rides on a grown-up's shoulders in order to get a better view, unhindered by the deafening howl of the crowd.

The literary phenomenon is driven by people, and most people are clear mirrors of their environment. But, then again, most people don't make it in an English literature bibliography. Literature is nothing more than text. There are other instances of art that we recognize as text. A book, the text that has escaped solipsism, is the product of the author's mental ramblings. If the text is a minefield, going

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around it should be about the individual talent that planted it, and not about the man's family, neighbours and leaders. As for bibliography, it's never enough. It's a daunting burden to choose what bunch of novels will be read by the students, while others will be ignored. The only consolation I foresee is that an apt presentation of context – again, for understanding the text, and not the evolution of the author – coupled with a heartfelt interest in writers that can render them personal and vivid, should lay the groundwork for any further approach on the part of the student. The number of works is down to micromanagement. The central aim should be to open a student's eyes to the plethora of choices. Any bibliography is limiting, especially a reasonable one.

Stressing the meaning of single words by stretching them in translation, opening up to the students about perception of literature and the discontent it sometimes carries, reducing theoretical readings to their own textual instances and making a critic out of every voice in class, these are facets of this course's method that have made me realize, after some deliberation, that although the historical context and the reader's context are telling, and although text is always rewriting, the literary text, like the ellipsis, demands to take over or threatens to vanish into thought, broken thought, the true mother of expression, and never into fact.

### 7.

Literature – immortal feelings and thoughts that catch life again and again – is moulded by the hearts and minds of readers. What could be more beautiful than this flawless, ageless expression of eternity? And how come literature can and sometimes does become less than the favourite topic of students around the world? Teaching literature is probably a difficult mission, and I myself, as a student of philology who has her fair share of literature courses, find it hard to give advice about doing this better, but I will try to identify and share what I believe should be different in this process.

What first comes in mind, in my opinion a very big mistake, is fear. Fear of being wrong, fear of misinterpreting, fear of having an opinion that others would find silly, fear of not understanding things, fear of not even finishing who knows what endless and unintelligible piece of literature. Some teachers cover literature in a sort of aura, giving the impression that it is made for the elect, for the smart ones. I believe we should all feel free to read whatever we want to and to interpret what we read however we want to, after all, this is the magic thing in literature, the fact that it can be reborn in so many different shapes, from reader to reader.

During this course we were motivated to speak, to have an opinion of our own, to solve mysteries and fix puzzles and some of us had great answers, some good answers and none bad answers, because each of us had the right to one's opinion. The feeling of being active, of thinking, of understanding was great, we felt worthy of literature and we were able to enjoy it. Literature was no longer sacred, we were worthy enough to read and analyse it with our own minds and hearts, we were free and this freedom brought us closer to literature.

This does not mean we were not given any information or clues, but we had our side of control and we enjoyed it. And the exam was the best I ever stood, not because I did an extraordinary job, but because I could write freely, I could create. The lack of conventional rules which first scared me turned this exam into a great experience, I did not know whether I would pass or not, but I was happy during the exam and after I left the exam room. I believe this could also improve literature classes, the possibility and freedom to create, to make your very own tiny piece of eternity – but without the fear of being silly, boring, or a plagiarizer. As we grow older and older, we create less and less, and stick to other people's opinions. After all, it is called literature, so why not try and make something ourselves? Freedom to create should also come with its dose of encouragements and trust.

Another important, very debatable and debated issue: what is the

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recommended dose of criticism? How much of others' opinion should we serve with a piece of literature? In the two semesters of the second year of college the two literature courses were very different in this respect. Victorianism tried to take us back in time so that we could to make connections between the age and its literature and other arts. It was a great journey. In the second semester the focus was on the pieces of literature themselves, on words, just like the modernists would have probably wanted it to be. I cannot criticise either of the two approaches and I believe that the mere effort of the professors, their wish to do something, to make a difference, their dedication and pleasure to teach weigh a lot in the process of teaching literature and beyond. As for criticism, maybe it should come in smaller doses, and only after students themselves have thought, understood, analysed and drawn conclusions, and, though laziness might be influential in forming this opinion, I find it wrong to make students memorize what others have said and write only things that revolve around others' opinions.

As a conclusion, I believe that the love of literature and of teaching literature should be present in the process, in the hope that it will be felt and transmitted from one generation to another and replace the students' fear of failure. Literature should be introduced as a friend with whom we could enjoy spending time, not as an enemy whom we have heard so much of, and whom we look at through the eyes of others, or from a safe distance, afraid of breaking the glass of its fancy display.



### **8.**

For the philology section of our faculty, literature is a subject of high importance, being allotted 5 credits for each semester out of the total amount of 30. Students may wonder at its importance, but, in fact, it is the only subject which calls for our imagination and power to judge.

First I must say what really impressed me about literature in this faculty. From my two years' experience as a Major English student, I can say that literature is stressed upon and well taught so as to develop our critical thinking with regard to literary texts. I have observed that our literature professors mingle history with texts felicitously, a fact that draws our attention towards the mentality of those ages. What I enjoy most about this subject is discovering the effect that historical events had upon writing literature back then. Professors ask for our own opinions and under no circumstances do they approve of a completely-devoid-of-understanding imitation of someone else's ideas, nor do they leave plagiarism unpunished. We are encouraged to think and give a touch of originality to our approaches of the text. I think that no student, however bright or dull, can deny, or doubt the fact that everything is done for our improvement in thought and expression and that the results are never late to appear.

Second, I have some suggestions for a better performance on our part. What I and many others don't quite agree upon is the quantity of texts that we have to study. I enjoy reading very much, but there are too many texts and most of us can't read them all and have to appeal to summaries, which is not good. I would like to have time to read everything we have to, but sometimes I find this impossible. I also know that all the texts are important for the comprehension of the age they were written in, but this takes a lot of time and our schedule is already filled with many other courses and seminars, and our free time shrinks awfully. If something could be done about the quantity of texts in the bibliography, we would have more time at our disposal to focus on the understanding of the texts and develop the critical thinking abilities that are required of us.

As a conclusion, I want to express my admiration towards this faculty and its professors who are very well-prepared and enthusiastic about their job, which makes literature easier to understand and more pleasant to study.

### **9.**

#### **Literature in School vs. Literature for Pleasure. Are They the Same Thing?**

For many of us this question has no meaning, has no point, because probably they think that taking any book or magazine or newspaper and reading what is written there is one important part of literature; the other essential part of literature being the act of writing. But what if some day somebody comes and tells you that literature is more than that? And now the initial question has its meaning. What I am going to do in this short essay is to present my academic experience regarding literature and to give my opinion about another possible approach to literature, more akin to what I have experienced lately.

In elementary school I was encouraged more or less to discover what lay beyond a work of fiction. In high-school there was no more time for us to identify what we thought could have lain behind the author's words, so teachers gave us other people's beliefs about the text, people who were allowed to identify the unwritten words of the text. Later on, in my academic experience: our professors tried to make us use our intuition, imagination, creativity, our past experience with fictional texts, but, as we were not used to such an approach, we barely could say a word, or only few of us were able to talk freely; this reaction being the result of many years in which we were given the necessary information just in order to pass some test, without being required to voice our own ideas. Perhaps this was the reason why our professors had to use the same method as our teachers in high-school.

Having to learn by heart the critics' words all these years led me to the sad conclusion that school takes from us part of the pleasure of reading. There are too many rules, there must be something hidden from us in the text, there is no possibility that the author just expresses himself, his beliefs, his thoughts in those particular words of the text in front of us: there has to be more. We as readers want there to be more, but sometimes we have to understand that what is, is all. All those years we were prompted to think and to search for the meaning: our enthusiasm was cut off by the statement that what we found in the text did not correspond to what a particular critic said; and that it is exactly the opposite.

What I am trying to say is that our educational system does not require us to be personal and have our own opinions regarding a text. It expects to be androids, to reproduce what sounds nice to people's ears. So I have to admit that, I did not read some books (when teachers and professors asked me to do so, but rather, I read them some other time) because of the fear that my impression of the text would not fit the critics' standards. So, I decided to practice literature for pleasure, reading texts,

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having my own opinion, which I either share with my friends, or I keep for myself, and there is no fear that somebody will tell me that it is not right.

I think that if we want to still have literature classes in high-school, or in university, we have to change the approach. Maybe if professors would lead us by using our ideas and beliefs to what the critics say we would approach literature for pleasure during our courses. In this way we won't be taken by surprise when another professor asks us to be personal.



### 10.

Literature has always been an important subject in everyone's life. A book can open our mind and horizons to new experiences. Books offer people a particular education and culture.

I believe literature has a very important function in the development of everyone's character.

Literature is connected with history and other important cultural elements.

I have always considered that studying literature and discovering every symbol behind every book is an amazing thing. I had the chance to make my wish come true at the University, where I study a section called Philology.

I had here the chance to study, in the course of six semesters, six different ages of English literature. Until now I have studied the Middle Ages, the Enlightenment, Victorianism and Modernism.

I have discovered a lot of new and beautiful things which I didn't know before. The professors have helped me understand these ages and especially grasp the hidden meanings of each book I have read, because every book related to the ages mentioned has a hidden meaning related to history and the events that happened in that age.

My favourite period was The Victorian one. I loved this age because in this age a lot of changes happened in the history of England and many books have a special feel, books which have remained alive until today. Writers like Dickens, The Brontë sisters, Thomas Hardy have marked this beautiful period. Dickens talks in his book *Great Expectations* about the Industrial Revolution and its effects.

My favourite book of all I have read in college remains *Wuthering Heights* written by Emily Brontë. The way she describes the tragic love story in the book impressed me so much so that I almost burst into tears in the end.

I believe that in college, and especially in literature classes, there is a connection between the professor and the student. Until now, I have met only professors who give their best to explain very clearly everything that is related to a certain age we study. I think this is very important, because the study of literature is not that easy, one must know a lot about history, legends and so on to understand the real meaning of a book. Professors need to explain very clearly certain the concepts that are related to each period we study.

In conclusion, I believe studying and fathoming literature is very interesting and I am glad that I had the opportunity to study different ages of the English literature.

### **11.**

#### **On the Study of Literature**

Literature cannot be regarded simply as yet another subject among so many that students take up. Literature is the vessel of the human soul, it is a perfect form of art, a voyage through the mind and soul of the artist, and, ultimately, of the individual. Thus, it requires a different method of study. Reading for one's personal pleasure is a form of escapism, but reading for academic purposes must be more than that. It is a good thing if a student enjoys the works in the bibliography, but one should not forget that studying literature is a whole different matter from one's afternoon leisure reading accompanied by a cup of tea.

Simply stating what one thinks about a certain text does not do it justice. I believe that in order to grasp the multiple layers that compose the text, one must apply critical analysis. This, in itself, may prove to be rather difficult, for further reading and research are required, along with patience and willingness to read through the text and see what standpoint would be best.

A multitude of interpretations thus arise, and the student slowly becomes aware of the task ahead. Examining a text from various perspectives leads to various interpretations, all valid, I might add, for studying literature does not simply mean guessing at what the author was feeling or implying when writing. There are so many other things to look for: form, structure, and perspective, among many others. Critical minds did that long before us, and the duty of the students is to retrace the layers of the text back to a critical standpoint.

But this is no easy task. How could a student understand the concept of dialogism in a text, when terms such as heteroglossia, or polyglossia sound foreign, at best? It is thus up to the professor to understand the students' needs: walking on new ground for the first time is challenging, and sometimes frightening. So, the study of literature should begin with the study of critical analysis. But rather than force the students to take the plunge into the abyss of difficult, elaborated critical texts, the professor should thoroughly explain where we stand. What does the critic mean? What does he or she imply? Is his or her point of view easy to grasp by the students on their own? Trial and error is a method. Surely, one learns from one's mistakes. But the prospect of failing alone can do more damage than intended.

Our system of education provides feedback in the form of grades for the students. Good grades could lead up to a scholarship, and other benefits, while mediocre or low grades can affect the student greatly: low self-esteem, poor academic performance, and further difficulties when applying for a job. It is fair to say that not all minds function in the same way: some are more analytical, while



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others are endowed with great imagination, or an outstanding memory. Certain subjects, literature among them, are a challenge, a pleasure for the student.

Thus it becomes the professors' duty to make the subject as accessible as possible. The use of critical analysis of a text surely provides one with good understanding, but sometimes, more practical methods should previously be used. Take poetry, for example: an outstanding, fine example of the human mind and soul at work. Before attempting any proper analysis on the verses, a good way of presenting the text to the students would be reciting it. Allow thus the students to read it beforehand, read it out loud in front of the bathroom mirror at home maybe, then recite it in class with proper intonation and 'feeling' so to say. It is fun, interactive, and provides better understanding of the text. This also applies to plays. Even excerpts from novels can be thus presented during seminars.

In addition, I believe that the historical background of the texts should also be given. A wider scope leads to better understanding of not only the literary work in itself, but of the author, the times, and the literary movement to which the book belongs. Why did the novel become popular in the 18<sup>th</sup> century? Why did poetry change from one century to another? What was the context of all these changes and shifts in style and approach? How did society react?

But all this means an outstanding amount of information crammed in a curriculum, and it might seem overwhelming. What I suggest would be to give students a very concise bibliography. For the sake of making the course more interactive and less restraining, I believe that studying a smaller amount of texts would benefit the students. But for the beginning, these texts should not be the canonical titans of the age. If one begins by studying more accessible texts, taking up the canonical ones will be easier. Similar to a spider's web, all extremities will ultimately lead to the centre. So, the student understands the historical age, the literary movement, has the tools ready for critical analysis, and the difficult texts will become easier. Take the example of poetry: when studying the Romantics, it would be far easier to begin with the works of Wordsworth, and not of Coleridge.

Literature is a complex object of study. Mere reading a text does not do it justice. We all resonate differently to a certain text, but that does not make our standpoint valid unless we can support it with more than claims and personal opinions. In the end, a wider horizon does not only improve our dealings with literature, but also makes us intellectually richer, for we are all aware of the fact that an idle mind will always consume itself.

### **12.**

#### **My Modern Literature Experience**

For a student to receive the power to speak and to be heard is more than bliss, but when it is given, it becomes so overwhelming and empowering that it sometimes reduces him to silence. 'I've strived so much for this, but what am I going to do about it?' It is different. 'New' is the ultimate fear for the blessed, but 'new' means also accepting and learning, if it is a good thing. And this is good!

Modern literature is about the 'new' thing and we as students should be prepared to face each novelty with an open mind. It should be taught as it is: different, innovative and far from the previous tradition. Yes! How?

Well, it must be interactive, it must be a dialogue: questions raised, answers suggested; students try hard, and it is best when the answer comes out of their mouths, the fruit of their own judgment and of a way of thinking that is gently steered in the right direction by a professor. Arguments have to be brought forward, sustained by examples and, as expected, materials do come in handy. Students have to see the text, play with it, find its secrets.

These are the stages of understanding, and students are just children that start discovering a 'new' world: asking questions, observing, testing, making mistakes and learning from them. Students have to get a better understanding of the tools they are given, certain concepts that are present in each text when you read it. But some are blind to such hints and end up with a bitter taste about literature.

The opposite effect may be getting lost in a maze of 'hidden' meanings. The closer you are to the trees, the less probable it becomes for you to see the woods! Take a step back and think, use what you are given! That's how the exam should ask the student to apply the skills that he has learned: a spontaneous, creative composition to demonstrate that this kind of learning process is more effective than any other. Learning takes place during each course and functions like the work of a bricklayer: progressive, constant and durable. Therefore, another opportunity to 'speak and to be heard' arises. But this time, the student is prepared: 'I've been there! I know how to handle it! I have the tools!'

### 13.

#### Thoughts on Teaching Literature

How can teaching literature not be a difficult endeavour when the teacher is faced with different reading preferences and experiences coming from students? The teacher is often faced with the impossible task of convincing some of the students of the importance of century-old writings, because these writings can influence their development more than spending hours on the Internet. I will attempt to present, from my point of view, a handful of suggestions that may help a literature teacher to create a bond between the 21<sup>st</sup> century mentality of the students and the mentalities of earlier centuries.

The first aspect every teacher must accept is that some students are at war with literature so that it is almost torture for them to read a 16<sup>th</sup> century piece of literature (or a piece of literature from any century, frankly, especially if it is poetry). Evidently, I am not part of that group of students, or else I would not be attempting to write this sort of essay.

Moreover, I will go a step further and explain how different I truly am from the above-mentioned group of students: I wish to pursue an academic career of teaching English literature. During my first two years in college, I had the privilege of attending literature courses and seminars held by teachers whom I now consider mentors. During these courses I have learned that an efficient approach to literature presupposes dialogue and involving the students' reading experience. Even though their reading experience is not vast when considering each student individually, by organizing the lecture as a dialogue, teachers can get through to students better than if they, for instance, describes the historical context and the characteristics of the text.

In this sense, I believe that drilling opinions from the class having an excerpt from the text as a base is a good starting point in analysing a literary text. This approach is used by many literature teachers from my faculty and I, for one, find it efficient since it is a means of actively involving the class, even though some of the students have not even read the whole original text (as it happens more often than not). Of course, it depends on the teacher's ability to be a moderator, to lead the students to a viable conclusion about the text and its significance.

Another aspect that I believe worth mentioning is that the teacher may use the technology at hand to make the text more transparent to students. An example of this is the following situation: when we were studying *The Waste Land* in my second year, the seminar instructor had the brilliant idea of bringing a tablet with the recording of Fiona Shaw reading the verses of 'The Burial of the Dead'. It was an extraordinary experience and, even though I had read the entire text beforehand, I

benefitted from a different understanding of the poem by hearing and watching Fiona Shaw interpret it.

As far as approaching the concepts is concerned, I believe that if the teacher presents the information in an organized, structured and logical order, students that are indeed interested and involved in the course are bound to internalize the respective information. A personal example is from a seminar instructor from the first semester of my second year, who gave us the grade-saving advice to 'label' the 19<sup>th</sup> century poets we were studying. As such, Wordsworth was 'the poet of nature', Coleridge was 'the visionary poet' and Keats was 'the poet of beauty'. This system is useful since it helps students differentiate one poet from another using structures that also aid them in the eventuality that they have as a subject for their exam essay to compare or analyse the works of one or two poets.

The last method I wish to present is that of on-the-spot translations of the text during lectures and/or seminars. Honestly, I cannot know if it is a wide-spread practice, but if not, it certainly should be, since students not only actively participate in the lecture, but they also come in direct contact with the text and obtain a better understanding of it by having the chance to hear the words and ideas in their mother tongue. Our 18<sup>th</sup> century British literature teacher used to apply this method and it was very efficient since she offered us variants of translating the difficult words and the words that do not have a direct correspondent in our language.

It was not my intention to make a lengthy study of how teaching literature should be done, because more competent persons have used rivers of ink to write entire volumes on this subject. Still, I sincerely hope my ideas and suggestions will be of aid for understanding the students' experience with reading in general and with English literature in particular. In my opinion, teaching literature cannot be done by someone with a one-track mind: the teachers should be open to unconventional means of teaching in order to involve students and to raise their awareness that literature does not involve only the rational domain: one should also be involved emotionally in order to fully comprehend a literary text. When a student has become aware of literature's versatility, a clear understanding of literary texts is sure to follow. Functioning as a conclusion, Oscar Wilde's words fairly capture literature's versatility: 'Literature always anticipates life. It doesn't copy it but moulds it to its purpose.'

## **The Exam Book !**

A Christmas present to all teachers of literature, from the students themselves

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### **15 Answers from the Students of Literature**





## **The 15 Questions**

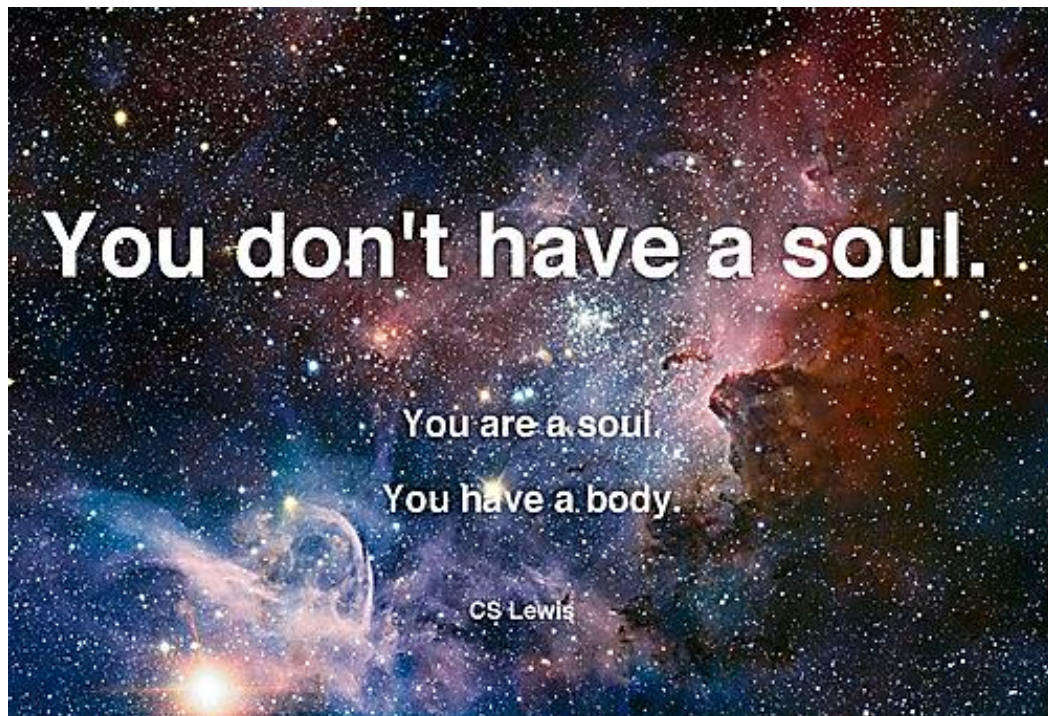
1. When it comes to students of English, is literature better off when read for enjoyment or when studied in universities?
2. Can literature be taught?
3. Would you like to make a profession of teaching literature?
4. When do you think people began teaching literature and why?
5. What is the right order: first read the book and then be taught/read criticism about it, or the other way round?
6. When do you think literary theory gained ground, and why did that happen?
7. Try to teach a book you know well, from several perspectives: a/History of literature; b/Text analysis; c/Cultural Studies; d/Theoretical approach. Write a few sentences to illustrate each attempt, and then state which you would choose if you were to teach your own colleagues.
8. Can being taught literature replace reading it yourself?
9. In the beginning there was the text: people heard/read it. Later on, the text had to be remembered: there appeared lists of books, histories of literature: some books were on those lists, but some were not. What do you think of the Literary Canon?
10. When literary history had settled comfortably as *the* approach to reading, there came something to unsettle it: theories of reading. Why is theory necessary to students of books?
11. Literary critics and theorists have made it a habit of creating their own words, which is natural when the study of a field reaches a more abstract level. Linguistics did the same. Every second a new word is being created in some part of the world, or some field of knowledge. How should this necessary tool which is the professional language of criticism be taught to students? How should it be used by them?
12. When is a critical approach counterproductive?
13. Recently, a new theoretical level has emerged: teach the teachers of literature how to teach. In parallel with teach the writers how to write (a bestseller). Is teaching literature a science, a do-it-yourself profession, a gift?

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14. Sort out your memories and experience: what has worked for you? What is your own solution as to how teaching literature should use literary history, literary criticism, literary theory?
15. Last but not least, who/what should teach the teacher to adapt to changing times? Should teachers compromise? Should students try harder? Let us end this by the description of the teacher form whom you learnt the most.



### 1.

1. When it comes to students of English, is literature better off when read for enjoyment or when studied in universities?

It depends on what university we're talking about. What kind of critical approach it is. I am so fed up with the way discrimination comes up in literature that I no longer care about it! All those foreigners in English literature that come up, and so what? Big deal to make a paper about those. Everybody does.

2. Can literature be taught?

Yes. I realize there is much more to writing than the gift of writing. You need to be creative but also to know some rules although you will probably just come to break them in the end.

3. Would you like to make a profession of teaching literature?

No. I prefer to write literature, not to teach it.

4. When do you think people began teaching literature and why?

Early, when the first literary works appeared, and when writers started adhering to various groups and trends. You can't exist outside common trends or rules, even if you break them a little.

5. What is the right order: first read the book and then be taught/read criticism about it, or the other way round?

First read the book. Then read criticism about it. Then see what critics have missed.

6. When do you think literary theory gained ground, and why did that happen?

The date is not important. It happened because academics needed their jobs!

7. Try to teach a book you know well, from several perspectives: a/History of literature; b/Text analysis; c/Cultural Studies; d/Theoretical approach. Write a few sentences to illustrate each attempt, and then state which you would choose if you were to teach your own colleagues.

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I'll skip a few steps. All of them are important: it depends which one is most relevant to you. You will need to use it also to bring something new! Text analysis is the basis. You start from it and then use a theoretical approach to place your commentary in context, then you notice something other critics haven't, and then you start saying why you agree or disagree with them.

8. Can being taught literature replace reading it yourself?

No. Anyway you need to read it yourself! To bring in your own interpretation, then to see if you agree or disagree with what great critics say!

9. In the beginning there was the text: people heard/read it. Later on, the text had to be remembered: there appeared lists of books, histories of literature: some books were on those lists, but some were not. What do you think of the Literary Canon?

It's nothing but politics. Seriously, there are plenty of more interesting books that are not in the Canon and that do not make you say, oh no, not this novel again, and roll your eyes when you hear someone talk about it. The more obscure, the more interesting.

10. When literary history had settled comfortably as *the* approach to reading, there came something to unsettle it: theories of reading. Why is theory necessary to students of books?

To make us think of arguments to refute them. To provoke us to think up new ones.

11. Literary critics and theorists have made it a habit of creating their own words, which is natural when the study of a field reaches a more abstract level. Linguistics did the same. Every second a new word is being created in some part of the world, or some field of knowledge. How should this necessary tool which is the professional language of criticism be taught to students? How should it be used by them?

If they need it in their research, all right, if not, then fine, too.

12. When is a critical approach counterproductive?

When too many people use it! And over-use it!

13. Recently, a new theoretical level has emerged: teach the teachers of literature how to teach. In parallel with teach the writers how to write (a bestseller). Is teaching literature a science, a do-it-yourself profession, a gift?

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You need to know some basic rules just to find a way to step over them, to break them in a most creative way.

14. Sort out your memories and experience: what has worked for you? What is your own solution as to how teaching literature should use literary history, literary criticism, literary theory?

Students should be given a choice. Show them what already exists, and then let them choose what they like and what they wish to use.

15. Last but not least, who/what should teach the teacher to adapt to changing times? Should teachers compromise? Should students try harder? Let us end this by the description of the teacher from whom you learnt the most.

Literature is creativity. You can't teach creativity. That's all. The poet can be illiterate. Raw talent counts in the end.



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București 2014



### 2.

1. When it comes to students of English, is literature better off when read for enjoyment or when studied in universities?

I'm sure some schools don't make this distinction—imagine Fine Arts students contemptuously going to the Museum or to artists' workshops. The problem may lie with literature's medium. Almost all pictures share the canvas, whereas literature has a much harder time escaping a much more evident medium, the paper and the sequence of words.

2. Can literature be taught?

Irrespective of the meaning we give to literature, whether it's formal writing about universal subjects, the profession of producing said works or the reading that fuels its transcendence of time, it can be taught to the extent of producing specialised historians, writers and readers of literature. Mastery is an abstract level which is entirely dependent on those specialists who don't quite reach it, but who acknowledge it into existence.

3. Would you like to make a profession of teaching literature?

As a parent, I would like to teach literature to the extent of creating stand-alone readers. As a professor, I would enjoy helping the readers make sense of culture. As a writer, though I'd never know it, I'd be happy if I could make a contribution towards others' expression of that which lies within us.

4. When do you think people began teaching literature and why?

In the late 14<sup>th</sup> century. Before that, people taught *letteratura* and, even earlier, *literatura*. Teaching and literature are two concepts so ingrained in our culture and suffused with it, that I would not use them referring to the myths and stories older civilizations told. Their paradigm is one I'm not familiar with. I sense we have lost something of the advisory and realistic aspects of their stories. Rather, I wonder, when did fiction come about? Before, it was all too real.

5. What is the right order: first read the book and then be taught/read criticism about it, or the other way round?

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The easy answer is to read the book first. I tend to appreciate a little background information first: clues about what to look for during the reading. Going into it knowing nothing in order not to discriminate against any opinion you could form seems hazardous. There's more to lose than there is to gain.

6. When do you think literary theory gained ground, and why did that happen?

Literary theory could be said to date as far back as Aristotle's *Poetics*, but the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century saw a professionalization of the field, with structuralist and formalist influences, probably because of a larger communication between cultures and a context that allowed for intellectual freedom.

7. Try to teach a book you know well, from several perspectives: a/History of literature; b/Text analysis; c/Cultural Studies; d/Theoretical approach. Write a few sentences to illustrate each attempt, and then state which you would choose if you were to teach your own colleagues.

If I were to teach T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, I would speak about 1922 in Modernist literature, and about how other modernists related to the struggles of the century. Textual analysis would be in the forefront, while the representation of the female in the second part could be discussed along with other cultural perceptions present in Eliot's work. A comparison with Modernist Marianne Moore's *Marriage* would serve as a good discussion-opener.

8. Can being taught literature replace reading it yourself?

What is essential about our lives tends to be limited to survival and comfort. Literature should not be comfortable and I deem it non-essential. That having been said, I hardly see the point of learning about literature without experiencing it – for it would solely amount to general knowledge. Without experiencing literature as you learn, you can't even really say it was literature you learned about, but rather culture and history of expression.

9. In the beginning there was the text: people heard/read it. Later on, the text had to be remembered: there appeared lists of books, histories of literature: some books were on those lists, but some were not. What do you think of the Literary Canon?

I believe the use of 'remembered' points to the culture that we have created and are trying to preserve. My first thought was, though, of Shakespeare's colleagues, who memorized by heart some of the Latin and Greek Canon that they studied. The much richer world literature that we have available today makes for a more superficial reading experience. But, without the Literary Canon, no discussion would be possible, as literature is constant re-writing. We need a canon, even if merely to fight (with) it.

10. When literary history had settled comfortably as *the* approach to reading, there came something to unsettle it: theories of reading. Why is theory necessary to students of books?

Those theories are essential because as the student browses through the curricula and the history of literature, he comes to realize that the theories he will study are already ingrained in him from culture and from contemporary readings. He can't possibly see literature the way the Greats did. Thus, learning about it is a way of self-discovery, of conscious positioning within a cultural system to which the student already belongs.

11. Literary critics and theorists have made it a habit of creating their own words, which is natural when the study of a field reaches a more abstract level. Linguistics did the same. Every second a new word is being created in some part of the world, or some field of knowledge. How should this necessary tool which is the professional language of criticism be taught to students? How should it be used by them?

Consensus is a scientific concept that I believe can also be applied to literature. When the consensus is reached on how to call the period after Modernism, I believe students of that period will be able to more clearly judge why there were mavericks and where, maybe, they were right. It's a good idea to start from conventions and, at least for a period of time, have a mainline. The positions of defender and attacker will allow for more comprehensible discourse.

12. When is a critical approach counterproductive?

When used incorrectly. Otherwise, if the purpose is to analyse the work in light of the critical approach, it can never go wrong. And this, I fear, is the only purpose there can be. In the sense of a palpable output, it can never be productive, because the text is finite and nothing can be added to it. If the critical approach makes something worthwhile turn up, I deem it a success.

13. Recently, a new theoretical level has emerged: teach the teachers of literature how to teach. In parallel with teach the writers how to write (a bestseller). Is teaching literature a science, a do-it-yourself profession, a gift?

Teaching anything is a trade and it requires specific skills that can be honed. Teaching literature probably has a lot to do with external factors. Literature never changes: a new current does not erase or deny what came before, irrespective of how much it means to do so. Other sciences, but especially exact sciences, all change. Literature depends on adaptation of the readers. Thus, I believe bridging the time gap for your students is what grows to be a harder and harder task the more you yourself drift away from a progressing culture.

14. Sort out your memories and experience: what has worked for you? What is your own solution as to how teaching literature should use literary history, literary criticism, literary theory?

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15. Last but not least, who/what should teach the teacher to adapt to changing times? Should teachers compromise? Should students try harder? Let us end this by the description of the teacher from whom you learnt the most.

Teachers themselves ought to follow popular culture and come off as lucid analysts of the modern world. Or, in the case of experts on older literature, they should try to offer a new perspective but also to attempt, as best they can, to recreate a contemporary reader's experience for the works they present. As far as bibliography goes, I'm in favour of an extensive bibliography. Maybe it could be achieved by creating subgroups of students attending a lecture, for which all have a basic bibliography and alternate bibliographies. With strong communication, a more global experience can be inculcated through this personalized approach. I'm sure professors have great advice on how to stop trying and just succeed with bibliography and studying. This should be shared: vulnerability on the part of the professor can translate to a lot of confidence for the students. The teacher that succeeded most in bridging the gap had the most democratic approach and offered great insight, always keeping in mind that she was teaching the text become literature and not literature as ideology, thought, history, manifesting itself.

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A Christmas present to all teachers of literature, from the students themselves

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### 3.

1. When it comes to students of English, is literature better off when read for enjoyment or when studied in universities?

I believe literature in general is better off when read for enjoyment than out of obligation.

2. Can literature be taught?

Literature is more of a passion, you cannot really teach it but you can explain the basics of a text such as motifs, historical context and maybe try to get at the reason the author had for writing it.

3. Would you like to make a profession of teaching literature?

No I would not.

4. When do you think people began teaching literature and why?

Well, I believe people started teaching literature in the Antiquity. Literature was seen as a way to influence people in their behaviour, they talked about moral values and how they were supposed to act in certain situations.

5. What is the right order: first read the book and then be taught/read criticism about it, or the other way round?

You first read the book and then you go to criticism.

6. When do you think literary theory gained ground, and why did that happen?

In my opinion literary theory has gained ground for the last two centuries, since literature started widening its horizons. There wasn't only one way to write correctly, and basically everyone could write anything they wanted. This is the reason I believe people needed the start theorizing about it.

7. Try to teach a book you know well, from several perspectives: a/History of literature; b/Text analysis; c/Cultural Studies; d/Theoretical approach. Write a few sentences to

illustrate each attempt, and then state which you would choose if you were to teach your own colleagues.

I believe that in matters of the perspective of history of literature, we would drift far from the text itself. Such analysis is more objective, somehow strict and, again, the text doesn't matter that much. Text analysis can become too subjective, we can get lost in the countless meanings a text can really have, not exactly knowing what the author meant. Cultural studies can be important in understanding a text because most texts are influenced by the ideology of their time. The theoretical approach as the history of literature can get too objective. In my opinion a successful method of teaching a literary text would be a combination of the four, the emphasis being on the analysis of the literary text.

8. Can being taught literature replace reading it yourself?

No it can't.

9. In the beginning there was the text: people heard/read it. Later on, the text had to be remembered: there appeared lists of books, histories of literature: some books were on those lists, but some were not. What do you think of the Literary Canon?

The literary canon is just a way to separate the books that need to be taught in schools or universities from the ones that are not considered masterpieces or good for teaching.

10. When literary history had settled comfortably as *the* approach to reading, there came something to unsettle it: theories of reading. Why is theory necessary to students of books?

Reading some books can involve some kind of knowledge a person needs, or maybe a different age. Readers are of many kinds, and some books are meant for just one type of person. This is why students of literature need theory, because we need knowledge of the background for some books in order for us to understand them.

11. Literary critics and theorists have made it a habit of creating their own words, which is natural when the study of a field reaches a more abstract level. Linguistics did the same. Every second a new word is being created in some part of the world, or some

field of knowledge. How should this necessary tool which is the professional language of criticism be taught to students? How should it be used by them?

The professional language of criticism should be learned along with the text that is under analysis, and it should be used as a way of a better understanding of the text.

12. When is a critical approach counterproductive?

I guess a critical approach is counterproductive when students are trying to go straight to the critic and skip reading. That only gives them one opinion on the text, and that could be wrong because critics can also be considered writers because in the end they somehow change the meaning of the original text and give their own thoughts about it.

13. Recently, a new theoretical level has emerged: teach the teachers of literature how to teach. In parallel with teach the writers how to write (a bestseller). Is teaching literature a science, a do-it-yourself profession, a gift?

Teaching literature is not a science, it's more of a passion. I believe if you are not passionate about something you can't teach it correctly.

14. Sort out your memories and experience: what has worked for you? What is your own solution as to how teaching literature should use literary history, literary criticism, literary theory?

I believe teaching literature should be a mix of the three. Each is important in understanding a text and why the author chose to write it.

15. Last but not least, who/what should teach the teacher to adapt to changing times? Should teachers compromise? Should students try harder? Let us end this by the description of the teacher from whom you learnt the most.

I think teachers should adopt new methods, use more computer aid, because it's easier for students to remember things if they see them in front of their eyes. Also, students should try harder. The teacher I learnt most from was the one who used PowerPoint presentations at every course and also sometimes showed us documentaries. That helped me understand the subject better, and I can also say I actually remember some of the stuff I did that semester.

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Bucuresti 2014

### 4.

1. When it comes to students of English, is literature better off when read for enjoyment or when studied in universities?

It depends very much on how it is studied. Sometimes a discussion during a course can be revealing and it can make you see things much clearer and from so many perspectives, turning the piece of literature in question into something much more captivating. On the other hand, there are times when others' opinions are presented in a too complicated way or times when students have to learn them, whether they agree to them or not, and this makes literature less pleasant than when read for enjoyment.

2. Can literature be taught?

It can be taught, but I believe that first we should be taught how to feel it.

3. Would you like to make a profession of teaching literature?

I think that it would be a very pleasant but also very challenging experience, but I don't know if I would necessarily like to teach. I would rather talk about it, in a relaxed environment that encourages participants to speak their mind, to have opinions that they can share with others.

4. When do you think people began teaching literature and why?

Maybe they began teaching literature when they realised how valuable literature, and all the other arts are for humans as individuals and for the history of humanity. They could have started teaching it to make others see what the human mind can create, how beautiful it can be, how much it can carry within and give to the readers, how very similar people are to one another. Maybe they started teaching it as a lesson, of history and of heritage, wanting to preserve it, value it, and share it with other future generations.

5. What is the right order: first read the book and then be taught/read criticism about it, or the other way round?



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Maybe we should first read the book and form our own, unaltered opinion, then read criticism, then reread it so as to see it from a different perspective and to look at things that were hidden before reading the criticism. But maybe, sometimes, we should just feel it.

6. When do you think literary theory gained ground, and why did that happen?

It might have gained ground when people started to appreciate it and enjoy it more, when they started to believe that talking about literature was important and they enjoyed doing it. It could also have been the case that people wanted to give or to have guides for literature, for reading it and understanding it better.

7. Try to teach a book you know well, from several perspectives: a/History of literature; b/Text analysis; c/Cultural Studies; d/Theoretical approach. Write a few sentences to illustrate each attempt, and then state which you would choose if you were to teach your own colleagues.

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8. Can being taught literature replace reading it yourself?

No, I don't believe anything can replace your experience and how you would have seen a piece of literature from your own perspective, with your own heart and mind.

9. In the beginning there was the text: people heard/read it. Later on, the text had to be remembered: there appeared lists of books, histories of literature: some books were on those lists, but some were not. What do you think of the Literary Canon?

Given the huge amount of literature that has been and is still being written, a selection became a necessity and, on the one hand it is natural to have a Literary Canon to differentiate between good literature and not so good literature, but on the other hand there might have been times when the selection was not so fair, depriving us of some great pieces of literature. Nowadays so many of us write on blogs: we cannot complain that somebody is preventing us from creating.

10. When literary history had settled comfortably as *the* approach to reading, there came something to unsettle it: theories of reading. Why is theory necessary to students of books?

Theory is necessary because students of books need to go beyond reading a book for pleasure, they need to broaden their horizon, to understand literature and to analyse it, to form a critical opinion, one that is helpful.

11. Literary critics and theorists have made it a habit of creating their own words, which is natural when the study of a field reaches a more abstract level. Linguistics did the same. Every second a new word is being created in some part of the world, or some field of knowledge. How should this necessary tool which is the professional language of criticism be taught to students? How should it be used by them?

I believe these terms should be explained clearly and taught gradually. Reading a piece of criticism filled with complicated terms, without having been introduced to any of them, can be a really unpleasant job for a student at the beginning of his/her training.

12. When is a critical approach counterproductive?

I think a critical approach can become counterproductive when it insists too much on the 'hidden message' behind everything. I agree that looking 'behind' is very important and can become really pleasant too, but what if sometimes the author did not mean to say something in every little detail? Maybe sometimes we should focus, at least in the beginning, on enjoying literature, and afterwards we can start playing Sherlock Holmes. Perhaps neither the background, nor the author, and not even the text should be overanalysed.

13. Recently, a new theoretical level has emerged: teach the teachers of literature how to teach. In parallel with teach the writers how to write (a bestseller). Is teaching literature a science, a do-it-yourself profession, a gift?

In my opinion the way one teaches literature can be improved, but it all begins with a gift, and the personal contribution is the most important in this profession. I believe that the mere effort of the professors, their wish to do something, to make a difference, their dedication and pleasure to teach are things that weigh a lot in the process of teaching literature.

14. Sort out your memories and experience: what has worked for you? What is your own solution as to how teaching literature should use literary history, literary criticism, literary theory?

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Our teacher of Victorian literature tried to take us back in time so as for us to be able to make connections between the age and its literature and other arts. It was a great journey. In the second semester the focus was on the pieces of literature themselves, on words, just like the modernists would have probably wanted it to be. I enjoyed both courses and I believe that a good teacher finds the way to balance and select the essential so as to make the course both useful and enjoyable, and in this way it will certainly work.

15. Last but not least, who/what should teach the teacher to adapt to changing times? Should teachers compromise? Should students try harder? Let us end this by the description of the teacher from whom you learnt the most.

One of the biggest frustrations felt during college is that I was never able to do everything that I wanted, and had to do, especially in literature courses. Students should either take time management lessons, or they should really be taught less, but better. I don't think learning a lot as information that erases itself after a couple of years or even months is beneficial. Maybe the previous generations were more capable, or maybe generations should not be compared at all in the first place. Let's find solutions instead of complaining. Both sides should be aware of the changes and should try harder to make things work.



### 5.

1. When it comes to students of English, is literature better off when read for enjoyment or when studied in universities?

Reading for enjoyment and reading as a specialist are two very different experiences, which are not always separate. You get more than just your point of view when studying literature, but at the same time it is important to keep a balance between critical analysis, your teacher's input and your own impressions. Overall, I feel that certain texts were meant to be read for enjoyment, while others beg for a more academic approach.

2. Can literature be taught?

You can teach the science of literature, but you need a special organ for the art of literature which can't be taught.

3. Would you like to make a profession of teaching literature?

Yes, I think it would be interesting for me to see how different generations of students react to the same texts, but also to give them the opportunity to discover books and writers who might change the way they see life.

4. When do you think people began teaching literature and why?

I think it began together with literature itself, from a need for sharing ideas and comments on the basis of the texts.

5. What is the right order: first read the book and then be taught/read criticism about it, or the other way round?

First read the book, then be taught/read criticism, and then going back to the text.

6. When do you think literary theory gained ground, and why did that happen?

I think it didn't take people very long to select certain interpretations of literature and deem them more valuable than the rest, and once this was achieved, it must have been seen as necessary to pass this information along. When literature developed into

several competing paradigms, it became essential for anyone to be able to clearly differentiate between them, writers and readers of literature alike.

7. Try to teach a book you know well, from several perspectives: a/History of literature; b/Text analysis; c/Cultural Studies; d/Theoretical approach. Write a few sentences to illustrate each attempt, and then state which you would choose if you were to teach your own colleagues.

Strike a balance between the first three, then choose the theoretical approach which best fits the text.

8. Can being taught literature replace reading it yourself?

It can't replace the reading experience, and you will always be closer to the text by reading it, but it is possible to understand a text very well just by learning about it, and with the aid of a few selected passages.

9. In the beginning there was the text: people heard/read it. Later on, the text had to be remembered: there appeared lists of books, histories of literature: some books were on those lists, but some were not. What do you think of the Literary Canon?

It is something which is no longer on a pedestal, and I am very glad for that. It is a collection of texts which were relevant at some point (not necessarily at the time they were written), and might not mean the same thing to a modern audience as they did to one contemporary with the text. It is, however, a point of reference, and the relations established between the canon and other non-canonical works are always interesting to study.

10. When literary history had settled comfortably as *the* approach to reading, there came something to unsettle it: theories of reading. Why is theory necessary to students of books?

Because a historical approach is over-simplistic. Because theory is something which some writers took into account when producing literature, and it is therefore the key, or at least one of the keys, to understanding their work. It is the difference between watching a play unfold, enjoying the show as a spectator, and then going backstage to see the mechanics of it as well.



11. Literary critics and theorists have made it a habit of creating their own words, which is natural when the study of a field reaches a more abstract level. Linguistics did the same. Every second a new word is being created in some part of the world, or some field of knowledge. How should this necessary tool which is the professional language of criticism be taught to students? How should it be used by them?

Just as with any specialised language, it should be introduced gradually, always making logical connections between the terms and offering lots of examples to illustrate them. Students should be encouraged to paraphrase the terms, use their own words whenever possible, to make sure they grasp the meaning before they start using the terms themselves, so as to avoid cliché formulations and empty words.

12. When is a critical approach counterproductive?

When it leaves no room for questions.

13. Recently, a new theoretical level has emerged: teach the teachers of literature how to teach. In parallel with teach the writers how to write (a bestseller). Is teaching literature a science, a do-it-yourself profession, a gift?

Teaching literature, like all forms of teaching, is an ability which can be a gift, but which can also be learned, and should always be perfected. Teaching teachers how to teach is a very sound principle, poorly executed though it may be, and has nothing to do with teaching writers how to write. A bestseller is a recipe, but it is still very far from scientific or even culinary precision. Teaching is less of an art: it is applied common sense, and teaching literature is no exception. It is very possible, and very sad, for someone to be a specialist in whatever field, but to be incapable of teaching that subject. Teaching can be taught, it should be improved and updated constantly, if students are to benefit from a rich learning experience.

14. Sort out your memories and experience: what has worked for you? What is your own solution as to how teaching literature should use literary history, literary criticism, literary theory?

I am in favour of balance, of clear explanations and instructions, of interaction and feedback on both sides. What has worked best for me was looking at a text from more than one perspective, and feeling that my own argued opinion was just as good as that of teachers and critics.

15. Last but not least, who/what should teach the teacher to adapt to changing times? Should teachers compromise? Should students try harder? Let us end this by the description of the teacher from whom you learnt the most.

Teachers should be aware that they live in the world of their students, and not the other way around. They shouldn't try to recreate the same act of learning which they benefited from as students, useful though it might have been at the time, because the circumstances are no longer the same. Students should try their best to understand and experience as much of literature as they can, and most importantly be open to views different from their own, whether they come from fellow students, teachers or critics. The teacher from whom I learnt the most was able to paint a very vivid picture of the literary period we were studying, but at the same time managed to anchor everything in the present, keeping the discussion relevant for us. That teacher encouraged us to make connections with what we already knew in order to understand what we were doing, and I found that incredibly helpful. It was great that we used different critical approaches for different texts, so that we could experiment with them, see the limits of each interpretation and combine them when one view was not enough. Discussing literature in connection to visual art, cinematography and music was not only interesting from the point of view of general knowledge, but it helped us understand that literature is not an isolated phenomenon, and what applies to a painting can just as well apply to a poem.



### 6.

1. When it comes to students of English, is literature better off when read for enjoyment or when studied in universities?

I believe there is a great difference between the two. When reading for one's own pleasure, one selects books based on certain criteria, and pays little attention to aspects such as cultural or historical background, or the impact a certain book had at a given moment. When reading a book as part of a bibliography, all these aspects are taken into consideration, along with many others. But both approaches are enjoyable, though different.

2. Can literature be taught?

It can be, but literature hardly stands by itself. Usually other elements, such as history or critical analysis are interwoven in the course.

3. Would you like to make a profession of teaching literature?

I would enjoy it immensely. It is my favourite subject.

4. When do you think people began teaching literature and why?

Literature reflects the identity of a people. I believe people see their value and thus, the need to study them.

5. What is the right order: first read the book and then be taught/read criticism about it, or the other way round?

Reading the book is the first step, then everything else follows.

6. When do you think literary theory gained ground, and why did that happen?

I believe its roots may very well run far back in time to ancient times, but as a profession it might have been established not more than a century ago. It might have been triggered by the desire to paint a larger picture of what literature meant, which was more than isolated texts.

7. Try to teach a book you know well, from several perspectives: a/History of literature; b/Text analysis; c/Cultural Studies; d/Theoretical approach. Write a few sentences to illustrate each attempt, and then state which you would choose if you were to teach your own colleagues.

A text needs to be pinpointed in time, so as to understand the historical and social circumstances that might have generated it, but also to illustrate how it was received and maybe compared to how the audience might regard the text today.

Textual analysis is a perfect exercise to tap deeper into the text. Select a paragraph and dissect it in order to understand the main idea and the the beauty of the style.

A text hardly stands by itself. It is always part of a larger picture, of a literary movement or trend, one that has certain parameters that are shared with several texts dating from the same period. What better way to understand why certain texts emerged than to understand that they are the direct result of a certain cultural implication?

The theoretical approach might be one of the most interesting approaches to the literary text. It allows one to see so much more than the ordinary reader; it taps into the depths of the text that explain how certain elements are interwoven together in perfect synchronicity. Be it Structuralism or psychological analysis, this approach, I believe differentiates the student of Philology from pastime readers.

Should I have to choose, I would be faced with a predicament, for I believe all approaches are instrumental. But I think that a historical and cultural approach is a very good way to start studying a text, followed by critical analysis in order to thoroughly understand the text.

8. Can being taught literature replace reading it yourself?

I do not think so. Studying literature is different from reading it yourself. A course in literature can be very interesting, and one might very well enjoy the critical bibliography, but this should not come as a substitute to one's own, personal enjoyment of literature.

9. In the beginning there was the text: people heard/read it. Later on, the text had to be remembered: there appeared lists of books, histories of literature: some books were on those lists, but some were not. What do you think of the Literary Canon?

I believe that literature should not be limited to the books that are part of the Literary Canon. The beauty of reading is to discover a book nobody else has taken up and to enjoy it tremendously. There is a feeling of pride in having uncovered something similar to a hidden treasure.

10. When literary history had settled comfortably as *the* approach to reading, there came something to unsettle it: theories of reading. Why is theory necessary to students of books?

It allows students to understand that there are certain elements lying dormant in the book that can surface only if one directs one's attention to that purpose.

11. Literary critics and theorists have made it a habit of creating their own words, which is natural when the study of a field reaches a more abstract level. Linguistics did the same. Every second a new word is being created in some part of the world, or some field of knowledge. How should this necessary tool which is the professional language of criticism be taught to students? How should it be used by them?

I believe that professional language should be part of the course itself. This way students not only become familiar with certain terms, but they understand the context in which they occur. Also, students can resort to it whenever they write an essay or present their opinions during the course.

12. When is a critical approach counterproductive?

I believe it becomes counterproductive when there is no versatility in the matter. Clearly certain approaches work better for a certain text, and others, for different texts. Trying to take a certain standpoint when there is no tangible material in the text to enable you to do so renders the whole affair frustrating.

13. Recently, a new theoretical level has emerged: teach the teachers of literature how to teach. In parallel with teach the writers how to write (a bestseller). Is teaching literature a science, a do-it-yourself profession, a gift?

Teaching literature requires dedication. Real dedication, the type students will appreciate and will even look up to. A bestseller is a book for the masses, not for the elite, so teaching literature is for the small handful of people who are willing to listen to a theory that is different from theirs, that will not be intimidated by questions asked



by the students, and who will see that in literature one is never right or wrong; it is all about having an opinion and the necessary arguments behind it.

14. Sort out your memories and experience: what has worked for you? What is your own solution as to how teaching literature should use literary history, literary criticism, literary theory?

I think a text should be carefully introduced to the students. Many students are discouraged by the amount of books in the bibliography and the very fast pace of the course, and I believe it is this that prevents them from seeing just how enjoyable it can be. I believe studying literature should always begin with literary history, then criticism, then theory. The order in which students receive information is also very important. Understanding the historical and cultural implications allows them to understand the text at the level of the surface structure, if you will. Only after this can they attempt to dive further into the text.

15. Last but not least, who/what should teach the teacher to adapt to changing times? Should teachers compromise? Should students try harder? Let us end this by the description of the teacher from whom you learnt the most.

I think an effort should come from both sides. Truthfully, the bibliography can be overwhelming, but, at the same time, students think they stand no chance from the very beginning, so they do not try harder. Teachers should adapt maybe in the sense of trying to make the course more interactive or versatile. When studying poetry, why not read poetry in class, to break the ice? Why not perform a soliloquy or a short excerpt of a play?

I have learned from all my literature professors. While the subject in itself changed greatly from one semester to the other, all the professors I have had so far have managed to fascinate me by being very passionate about what they do, about the subject they teach, about all the additional information they try to slip into the course, from areas such as philosophy or history. I think passion is the one thing any literature professor should have. Literature cannot be tamed. It is life comprised between two covers.

### 7.

1. When it comes to students of English, is literature better off when read for enjoyment or when studied in universities?

As a literature student, I have come to appreciate the importance of having something on which to build my literary knowledge in an organized way. Reading for pleasure frees your mind from any constraint, or at least lets it wander within the limits of its own comfort, but an organized approach will train a creative mind to extend far beyond these limits and enrich its ability of identifying and grasping new concepts.

2. Can literature be taught?

Of course, but not like other subjects. Literature cannot be imposed on us, students, but we are rather invited to discover it. We can create it. But first we must understand it and identify with a part of it.

3. Would you like to make a profession of teaching literature?

I wouldn't like to make a profession of teaching. But, if I had the skills that I find necessary for such a profession, I would definitely go for a literature teacher's career, because there is a thing that good literature teachers have in common (apart from what is obvious): through literature they get a better understanding of the world and of the people. Literature is a fine recorder of life. This is a thing towards which all of us strive, and I will try to get as close to it as possible.

4. When do you think people began teaching literature and why?

I think people began teaching literature because they understood its place in society, in their lives, and came to appreciate it for its educational purpose. The need to perpetuate certain ideas made teaching literature flourish.

5. What is the right order: first read the book and then be taught/read criticism about it, or the other way round?

For me, the right order is to read the book and then discuss it with respect to several critical approaches and specific themes. What I enjoy most about reading is anticipation, and this would be ruined if the plot were revealed beforehand. Another

advantage of reading the book first would be that of creating your own version of it, based on your principles and not somebody else's.

6. When do you think literary theory gained ground, and why did that happen?

I reckon that literary theory dates back to the period of ancient Greek writers, such as Aristotle, who tried to characterize the main literary forms. A possible explanation may be that, going beyond communication, writing got the attention of thinkers and philosophers. The challenge was to find out in how many ways a literary text could be approached.

7. Try to teach a book you know well, from several perspectives: a/History of literature; b/Text analysis; c/Cultural Studies; d/Theoretical approach. Write a few sentences to illustrate each attempt, and then state which you would choose if you were to teach your own colleagues.

For *The Scarlet Letter* I would use the historical perspective, because it is closest to the Puritan heritage background which is highlighted throughout the novel. From the point of view of the Cultural Studies, the symbolism of the letter 'A' is also vital for the understanding of the subtle correlations that are interwoven with the main plot. And even Text analysis, through the close reading process may lead to a deeper understanding of what lies behind the images that the author creates. It is difficult to choose between these views, because they come together as the pieces of a puzzle, forming the great picture.

8. Can being taught literature replace reading it yourself?

Fortunately, it cannot. It would be a terrible thing to take away the pleasure of such an exercise of imagination. I don't mean that these should be separated, but that they rather go hand in hand. For me, literature is the only field of study in which all of us are equal and free to give our contribution. Literature is for the people and about the people. Nothing can be wrong or right. It is simply there to be accepted or confronted with arguments.

9. In the beginning there was the text: people heard/read it. Later on, the text had to be remembered: there appeared lists of books, histories of literature: some books were on those lists, but some were not. What do you think of the Literary Canon?

The Literary Canon is representative of each society and defines a certain kind of people along with their views upon life. The books that illustrate best this tendency and also prove great skill in their making are those which are worthy of representing it and of becoming the standard. The Literary Canon is not just the compulsory set of readings for the literature course, but also a source of inspiration for future generations and a repository of literary history. A Literary Canon, at a smaller scale, is part of each one of us: a set of books that immortalize parts of our former selves at each stage of our life, an anchor at times of mistrust.

10. When literary history had settled comfortably as *the* approach to reading, there came something to unsettle it: theories of reading. Why is theory necessary to students of books?

To my view, each type of theory comes to organize, to create a sort of map of something. Literary theory cannot be so far from that, as it provides a method of reading the literary text, focusing on certain traits that are further exploited by that theory. For a student who may get lost among so many approaches, literary theory is his guide.

11. Literary critics and theorists have made it a habit of creating their own words, which is natural when the study of a field reaches a more abstract level. Linguistics did the same. Every second a new word is being created in some part of the world, or some field of knowledge. How should this necessary tool which is the professional language of criticism be taught to students? How should it be used by them?

The first step towards this perspective would be to test the students' ability to use different processes and mechanisms without their being aware of it, and naturally some theoretical instruction should follow. It is better to give them a start from which they can go on and fill in the gaps. Then, after being encouraged to use these terms during the classes they will be able to adopt them in their written papers and integrate them in their academic life.

12. When is a critical approach counterproductive?

A critical approach is not a mandatory option to reading a text, but one of the tools with which to approach it.

13. Recently, a new theoretical level has emerged: teach the teachers of literature how to teach. In parallel with teach the writers how to write (a bestseller). Is teaching literature a science, a do-it-yourself profession, a gift?

I am inclined to believe that teaching literature is a not so well balanced mixture of science, personal input and talent. And that is so because I think that being endowed with a certain understanding of the word makes the teaching experience pleasurable for both professor and student. Literature requires a certain sensibility for the text and through it, for the mind: a closed circuit from one mind to another mind. Therefore, the literature teacher functions as a mediator (through his understanding of the word) between the minds that are trying to reach each other: author and student. Only a truly gifted literature teacher will be able to make the passage enjoyable and constructive.

14. Sort out your memories and experience: what has worked for you? What is your own solution as to how teaching literature should use literary history, literary criticism, literary theory?

There should be a balance between these three branches of literature study. Literary history offers the literary background, literary theory gives you the method, and literary criticism – the means. These are the tools that will help you cut a literary text to pieces.

15. Last but not least, who/what should teach the teacher to adapt to changing times? Should teachers compromise? Should students try harder? Let us end this by the description of the teacher from whom you learnt the most.

At a certain point a compromise has to be made on both sides. Times are changing, and we grow distant from literature and reading in general, because other activities become 'fashionable' and enjoyable, to the detriment of our cultural integrity. On the one hand, it is important to understand those changes and adjust the method of teaching, with the risk of losing bits and pieces on the way. This is part of the evolution of literature. Something is lost so that something new will be gained. On the other hand, students should learn to appreciate what is truly important for their future, and by this I don't mean high grades, but the path towards becoming knowledgeable individuals.



### 8.

1. When it comes to students of English, is literature better off when read for enjoyment or when studied in universities?

To my mind, one truly enjoys reading when one has deliberately chosen what to read and I truly believe this applies to students of English as well.

2. Can literature be taught?

Certainly.

3. Would you like to make a profession of teaching literature?

Yes. I have already had the opportunity to teach English grammar and vocabulary for 8 months and it has proven a wonderful experience.

4. When do you think people began teaching literature and why?

I believe literature began being taught shortly after people started writing literature. I cannot conceive the two as separate.

5. What is the right order: first read the book and then be taught/read criticism about it, or the other way round?

Actually, I believe there might be a third approach: read the first part of the book (the first 100 pages or so) in order to get an idea about the author's style, the language, characters, etc, and then be taught/read criticism. This approach has proven efficient for me.

6. When do you think literary theory gained ground, and why did that happen?

I believe literary theory gained ground when Claude Lévi-Strauss added his contribution to structuralism since he enriched the existing conceptual schema with ideas and concepts from anthropology.

7. Try to teach a book you know well, from several perspectives: a/History of literature; b/Text analysis; c/Cultural Studies; d/Theoretical approach. Write a few sentences to

illustrate each attempt, and then state which you would choose if you were to teach your own colleagues.

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8. Can being taught literature replace reading it yourself?

In my opinion, you gain solid knowledge only by having an authentic experience and it applies to all domains, including literature. Therefore, it is necessary to come in contact with the source text in order to understand the ideas.

9. In the beginning there was the text: people heard/read it. Later on, the text had to be remembered: there appeared lists of books, histories of literature: some books were on those lists, but some were not. What do you think of the Literary Canon?

I believe that the Literary Canon is a priceless reservoir of experience which captures the paramount of inspiration and artistry.

10. When literary history had settled comfortably as *the* approach to reading, there came something to unsettle it: theories of reading. Why is theory necessary to students of books?

Theory is necessary to students of books because, without it, they would be just readers, they would not truly study the text, but remain on a primary level of contact.

11. Literary critics and theorists have made it a habit of creating their own words, which is natural when the study of a field reaches a more abstract level. Linguistics did the same. Every second a new word is being created in some part of the world, or some field of knowledge. How should this necessary tool which is the professional language of criticism be taught to students? How should it be used by them?

On the text. I believe that the best approach to teaching the professional language is to apply it on as many texts as time permits.

12. When is a critical approach counterproductive?

A critical approach is counterproductive if the person applying it is subjective and is more interested in details (that are not necessarily relevant) than in the general frame, and leaves out important aspects, only because they do not fit his personal beliefs.

13. Recently, a new theoretical level has emerged: teach the teachers of literature how to teach. In parallel with teach the writers how to write (a bestseller). Is teaching literature a science, a do-it-yourself profession, a gift?

I believe teaching literature can be viewed as a science since it uses specialized language and has specific aims, the person teaching literature has to be endowed with a certain sensibility and has to be able to interpret both language and emotions.

14. Sort out your memories and experience: what has worked for you? What is your own solution as to how teaching literature should use literary history, literary criticism, literary theory?

As previously stated in point 5, I have best managed to understand a text and apply a given literary theory after first reading part of the text, then being taught the literary theory in cause. To my mind, an effective way of teaching literature should combine literary history, criticism and theory because these three domains should not exclude each other, since only by having in view all three can one have an objective perspective on the literary work. I believe that the literary work is the result of the influence of the author's life, the historical context and of the link between form and meaning and only by bearing in mind this influence can a literary work be fully understood.

15. Last but not least, who/what should teach the teacher to adapt to changing times? Should teachers compromise? Should students try harder? Let us end this by the description of the teacher from whom you learnt the most.

It is in the teacher's best interest to use modern technique in order to facilitate students' access to literary criticism. Nowadays, students' interest in literature has declined, but I believe it is the teacher's responsibility to prove that the ideas contained in century-old literary works apply to today's society. If a teacher does manage to persuade students into believing this fact, the students' interest is guaranteed.

### 9.

1. When it comes to students of English, is literature better off when read for enjoyment or when studied in universities?

As a full-time reader, I can only choose a melange of the two. Literature is better off when read for enjoyment in universities and devoured in your own time.

I believe that one needs guidance in order to taste the subtleties of literature, this of course being the basis of a student's 'literary enrolment'. The amount of works written is truly overwhelming and can seem a labyrinth of writers with their mixed bags of literary features. This is where the University comes in and provides you with a full menu explaining the main dishes, what each choice may or may not illustrate, how to handle your plate and inviting you to understand and be aware of your tastes. Now you go and make the choices and then create your own food!

2. Can literature be taught?

This calls for a definition of the word 'teach'. The Oxford Dictionary gives the following explanation: 'TEACH—to impart knowledge to or instruct (someone) as to how to do something.' Now to answer the question, the notion of literature can be explained, its knowledge can be imparted, but the key part is in understanding and embracing its sometimes confused mixture of meanings. Indeed, literature can be explained, but there comes a stage in the process when the theoretical part shifts to a more personal understanding of the notions. That is the point where the act of teaching no longer rules, but rather gives small pieces of advice as to how the words should be reasoned.

3. Would you like to make a profession of teaching literature?

I am still in quest of what I would like as a profession, but this last year of studying literature definitely planted a seed. Time will surely tell if it grows into something related to 'a profession of teaching literature'.

4. When do you think people began teaching literature and why?

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5. What is the right order: first read the book and then be taught/read criticism about it, or the other way round?

Let's spice it up a little. First read the book without any critical glasses on, then be taught about it but be careful to understand all the notions. Your personal curiosity will dig up a certain amount of criticism about the book. Finish it up with a re-reading of the most important parts, because after new information the book will look different. Your first understanding of the book will be enriched.

6. When do you think literary theory gained ground, and why did that happen?  
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7. Try to teach a book you know well, from several perspectives: a/History of literature; b/Text analysis; c/Cultural Studies; d/Theoretical approach. Write a few sentences to illustrate each attempt, and then state which you would choose if you were to teach your own colleagues.  
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8. Can being taught literature replace reading it yourself?

If I were to state whether literary theory can be understood without actually reading the works, the answer would be a mixture of yes and no. The two, therefore, go hand in hand. You will, of course, be able to cope with the novelty of the terms but you might find making connections a little harder. Why skip the first part, when it is the starting point in judging and interpreting the words?

On the other hand, there is more to literature than what one is taught. Try not to undermine your part in this process, but rather build everything around it. The act of reading it yourself cannot be replaced by any critical approach: it is the first 'face-to-page' meeting that counts.

9. In the beginning there was the text: people heard/read it. Later on, the text had to be remembered: there appeared lists of books, histories of literature: some books were on those lists, but some were not. What do you think of the Literary Canon?

It is a list that indeed has certain authority as far as the works of an author are concerned. The question is: how will an author be a part of this canon, on what basis are the 'chosen ones' chosen? Perchance because certain texts have to be remembered! But in doing so, one shows a mere act of respect for a remarkable talent. It is the reader's offering to the writer's genius. Thomas Carlyle in his essay 'On Heroes,



Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History: The Hero as Poet' gives two wondrous examples, thus attributing to them the term 'canon':

'Nay here in these ages, such as they are, have we not two mere Poets, if not deified, yet we may say beatified? Shakespeare and Dante are Saints of Poetry, really, if we will think of it, **canonized, so that it is impiety to meddle with them.**[...] Dante and Shakespeare are a peculiar Two. They dwell apart, in a kind of royal solitude; none equal, none second to them: in the general feeling of the world, a certain transcendentalism, a glory as of complete perfection, invests these two. **The are canonized**, though no Pope or Cardinals took hand in doing it!'

Therefore, it is fair to state that the books in the Literary Canon have won their right to be recognized and to be forever remembered.

10. When literary history had settled comfortably as *the* approach to reading, there came something to unsettle it: theories of reading. Why is theory necessary to students of books?

Digging up the hidden meanings is one thing students of books are trained to do. We are given the chance to peep at the creative process, and at what the author wanted to suggest. This is our path: to reveal the magician's secret. Theory is necessary for bookish students: it teaches how to go beyond words and reach the meaning.

11. Literary critics and theorists have made it a habit of creating their own words, which is natural when the study of a field reaches a more abstract level. Linguistics did the same. Every second a new word is being created in some part of the world, or some field of knowledge. How should this necessary tool which is the professional language of criticism be taught to students? How should it be used by them?
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12. When is a critical approach counterproductive?

When it maims the work and rips chunks of false interpretations. Provided with so many types of reading and interpreting a literary work, one might fall into temptation and force the text to match a wrong pattern. This is one instance of how a critical approach can be more that counterproductive.

### 10.

1. When it comes to students of English, is literature better off when read for enjoyment or when studied in universities?

It depends upon the purpose. I do believe that every text has a message to send, but I think that overanalysing it for 'academic' purposes makes the work of art lose some of its flavour in exchange for the 'insight'.

2. Can literature be taught?

I believe literature should be read. And if one finds a particular interest in a certain text, only then should one look further.

3. Would you like to make a profession of teaching literature?

No.

4. When do you think people began teaching literature and why?

Since literature was created, perhaps. The human being is inquisitive and people usually want to know more.

5. What is the right order: first read the book and then be taught/read criticism about it, or the other way round?

Book first, criticism afterwards. Having read the criticism first, you can't look at the book with the same eyes as you would have if you hadn't read it (the criticism).

6. When do you think literary theory gained ground, and why did that happen?

19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century. Because they thought a text was more than meets the eye and sought multiple layers of meaning.

7. Try to teach a book you know well, from several perspectives: a/History of literature; b/Text analysis; c/Cultural Studies; d/Theoretical approach. Write a few sentences to illustrate each attempt, and then state which you would choose if you were to teach your own colleagues.

I wouldn't make a good teacher. What I can say, though, is that there's not a universally valid method that'd work with every single person. But if someone REALLY wanted to be taught something on a particular work, then I would use all four options and even more.

8. Can being taught literature replace reading it yourself?

Definitely not.

9. In the beginning there was the text: people heard/read it. Later on, the text had to be remembered: there appeared lists of books, histories of literature: some books were on those lists, but some were not. What do you think of the Literary Canon?

I don't believe in it. What the majority can consider 'the good literature' shouldn't be enforced upon the rest. We don't all think/judge/appreciate in the same way.

10. When literary history had settled comfortably as *the* approach to reading, there came something to unsettle it: theories of reading. Why is theory necessary to students of books?

To broaden the horizon of understanding. Theory is a way looking at a text.

11. Literary critics and theorists have made it a habit of creating their own words, which is natural when the study of a field reaches a more abstract level. Linguistics did the same. Every second a new word is being created in some part of the world, or some field of knowledge. How should this necessary tool which is the professional language of criticism be taught to students? How should it be used by them?

As I have no experience in the field of teaching, I can't talk of methods. But, as someone who was/is being taught, I guess the term-definition-example should suffice. And, once the student has a good enough grasp of the term, he/she should start using it as well.

12. When is a critical approach counterproductive?

When one is trying to read for pleasure.

13. Recently, a new theoretical level has emerged: teach the teachers of literature how to teach. In parallel with teach the writers how to write (a bestseller). Is teaching literature a science, a do-it-yourself profession, a gift?

I'd go for a combination of those. In order to teach literature, 'knowing' it isn't enough, you also need to 'pass it on'. And, sometimes, when one passes something on, so he/she does with his/her opinions, as we cannot be perfectly objective. So it's also a question of the who is being taught.

14. Sort out your memories and experience: what has worked for you? What is your own solution as to how teaching literature should use literary history, literary criticism, literary theory?

To me, the only thing that applying all those theories leads to is the realization that nothing is truly original. Everything comes from something. And all those fancy theories and explanations do is help us trace the roots of the analysed work.

15. Last but not least, who/what should teach the teacher to adapt to changing times? Should teachers compromise? Should students try harder? Let us end this by the description of the teacher from whom you learnt the most.

Every 'age', so to speak, has a certain inventory of moral values, principles. People look for something. And understanding what that something is and how it relates to teaching certain literature is the key here. I learnt, some years ago, that going into deeply complicated theories and definitions, concepts and labels doesn't really do anything. I only search for the message of the work, its moral, and I enjoy the story and how it's written on the way. But if I need to be initiated in who knows how many approaches in order to understand what the text is about, then I don't see why it would even be written. Perhaps to feed the author's oh-look-how-much-I-know ego?

**The following answers belong to graduate students of  
the MA Programme for the Translation of the  
Contemporary Literary Text (MTTLC)**

**11.**

1. When it comes to students of English, is literature better off when read for enjoyment or when studied in universities?

Personally, I prefer reading literature for my own enjoyment, rather than for school assignments. Whenever I am reading a book for school, I tend to analyse it and apply to it all the techniques and approaches we have studied, and that takes away the pleasure of reading. In the end, it almost feels like I have performed an autopsy instead of getting to know a book better and thoroughly comprehending it.

2. Can literature be taught?

Yes, it can. Some people think they don't enjoy reading, simply because they have never read anything that appeals to their personal interests.

Literature is an acquired taste, and it can be triggered by the right book. I have friends who started reading in their twenties, just because they stumbled upon a fragment that made them curious. From there on, they were hooked. And once they also learnt how to look at a book and what tools to use, literature turned from a curiosity to more of a hobby.

3. Would you like to make a profession of teaching literature?

I am more interested in translations, but I think I would do a good job at teaching literature as well.

4. When do you think people began teaching literature and why?

I believe mankind started teaching literature as soon as they gained the ability to talk and have decent conversations. I assume they started with myths, legends and fairy-tales as a form of passing on their knowledge and history to future generations.



5. What is the right order: first read the book and then be taught/read criticism about it, or the other way round?

Start with the book and then be taught/read criticism. If you read criticism before reading the book, I think it affects your opinion and narrows the views and conclusions you may derive from the book. One should always start from the book as the main text, not from what others believe of that text.

6. When do you think literary theory gained ground, and why did that happen?

My guess is that literary theory gained ground after the appearance of the novel, and once literacy became the norm, rather than the privilege of the rich.

7. Try to teach a book you know well, from several perspectives: a/History of literature; b/Text analysis; c/Cultural Studies; d/Theoretical approach. Write a few sentences to illustrate each attempt, and then state which you would choose if you were to teach your own colleagues.

I would choose *The Book Thief*, written by Markus Zusak

a/History of literature: This book is a novel that can be included into the following genres: historical novel; coming-of-age novel; Holocaust novel, written and published in Australia, 2005. Markus Zusak was born in Sydney and he grew up listening to his parents' stories of their childhoods in Vienna and Munich during World War II.

b/Text analysis: The Book Thief is narrated by Death, an omniscient narrator that mostly describes the events during the years of World War Two, though occasionally goes fast forward to describe various characters' fates.

c/Cultural Studies: Literature, with its various genres, can be an invaluable teaching tool, as it has the ability to transport readers to different times, distant places, and unique circumstances. Through literature, readers not only learn the facts about the Holocaust and World War II, but they can also make personal connections with those characters, real and fictional, who lived and died during that time. Students would be exposed to those events via the text and should be able to identify their consequences and how they influenced literature over the decades.

d/Theoretical approach: to this text we can apply the following Critical Approaches: biographical, psychoanalytic, reader-response criticism, social criticism, cultural studies, Marxism.

8. Can being taught literature replace reading it yourself?

No. Literature starts with the original text, not with the opinions of others.

9. In the beginning there was the text: people heard/read it. Later on, the text had to be remembered: there appeared lists of books, histories of literature: some books were on those lists, but some were not. What do you think of the Literary Canon?

It is useful as a guideline, but one should feel free to dabble into whatever branch of literature fulfils his or her own literary cravings.

10. When literary history had settled comfortably as *the* approach to reading, there came something to unsettle it: theories of reading. Why is theory necessary to students of books?

I believe that theories of reading can help a student not only recognize the form or type of the text, but also know what to look for in a text, apprehend the author's intentions when writing that particular piece of literature, understand a cultural context that is different from the student's and broaden one's horizon.

11. Literary critics and theorists have made it a habit of creating their own words, which is natural when the study of a field reaches a more abstract level. Linguistics did the same. Every second a new word is being created in some part of the world, or some field of knowledge. How should this necessary tool which is the professional language of criticism be taught to students? How should it be used by them?

I believe that the easiest way would be to provide the students with illustrative examples for each concept described and then ask them to identify those instances in texts/books that they are familiar with.

12. When is a critical approach counterproductive?

When a student reads too much into a text and, instead of acknowledging what is in front of him on the page, he tries to come up with hypothetical, far-fetched situations.

13. Recently, a new theoretical level has emerged: teach the teachers of literature how to teach. In parallel with teach the writers how to write (a bestseller). Is teaching literature a science, a do-it-yourself profession, a gift?

I wouldn't name it a science, but more of a willingness to accept different views than yours and take the time to analyse it from different perspectives. It can be considered a gift, as some people are more inclined to look into such matters and have the patience to go over the details, looking for hidden meaning or a new approach.

14. Sort out your memories and experience: what has worked for you? What is your own solution as to how teaching literature should use literary history, literary criticism, literary theory?

I usually do the following: read the text, come up with my own theories, read the literary criticism and acknowledge new insights, confront my theories with what I have found written by others to see if my ideas stand, go back to the original text and review if necessary.

15. Last but not least, who/what should teach the teacher to adapt to changing times? Should teachers compromise? Should students try harder? Let us end this by the description of the teacher form whom you learnt the most.

I doubt there is a magic formula for this: it depends on the text, the students, the teacher. What I found more important is the final result: in the end, the students should understand what they have read and be able to apply it to their future readings. Using only one method would be futile, as students are different when it comes to reading a book, and their preferences should always be taken into account.



**12.**

1. When it comes to students of English, is literature better off when read for enjoyment or when studied in universities?

As a personal opinion, literature is always better read for pleasure and enjoyment, rather than force-fed to unwilling subjects. The eagerness of the reader is what makes literature easy or hard to digest.

2. Can literature be taught?

First and foremost, literature must be felt. One cannot teach literature, one can only teach ways in which you can approach literature, different angles and perspectives from which it can be viewed. But literature itself lies within the relationship between the text and the perceiver of the text, the reader.

3. Would you like to make a profession of teaching literature?

I would rather make a profession of writing literature.

4. When do you think people began teaching literature and why?

Personally I believe teaching literature has been with us from the beginning of literature itself, just not in the form we are accustomed to. As long as literature is approached, as long as it is read and discussed, as long as opinions and views upon it are shared, I believe that literature is being taught.

5. What is the right order: first read the book and then be taught/read criticism about it, or the other way round?

To my mind, coming in contact with a book without being influenced by another opinion is the best way in which you can formulate your own opinion. Therefore, a 'raw' reading, untainted by 'external forces', is what prevails. Criticism by others comes second, to help you fully shape your creed.

6. When do you think literary theory gained ground, and why did that happen?

I believe it was during the industrial era that literary theory started to gain more and

more importance, perhaps due to the pragmatic and 'scientific' mind-set of that time. I believe it is then, at the time of industrialisation, that people felt the need to 'dissect' literature and treat it as a science.

7. Try to teach a book you know well, from several perspectives: a/History of literature; b/Text analysis; c/Cultural Studies; d/Theoretical approach. Write a few sentences to illustrate each attempt, and then state which you would choose if you were to teach your own colleagues.

If I were to teach a text from a historical standpoint, I would present it alongside a text from a previous era, and comment upon the changes that have occurred, and why they might have occurred.

If I were to teach a text by using text analysis, my focus would be on deciphering each and every symbol used, each and every archetype present. A text, a good text, always has much more to tell us than it does at a first reading, it keeps a few mysteries to itself, which we may uncover when we qualify.

If I were to teach a text from the Cultural Studies standpoint, I would emphasise the social, economic, religious, politic aspects of society that have influenced the text and the author. I would explain how all these factors contributed to shaping the mind of the individual belonging to that era, how they moulded their beliefs and their behaviour towards the society and towards life in general, and how these factors seep from the text.

When approaching a text with literary theory in mind, I believe one first tries to 'fit' it in a certain category (a school of thought, an artistic movement, etc.) and then explain why it belongs there, by exhausting all possible reasons (ranging from style, to time-frame, structure, etc.)

I would, without a doubt, choose text analysis, for it provides the most intimate connection to the text.

8. Can being taught literature replace reading it yourself?

No.

9. In the beginning there was the text: people heard/read it. Later on, the text had to be remembered: there appeared lists of books, histories of literature: some books were on those lists, but some were not. What do you think of the Literary Canon?

I believe it is as 'flawed' as the people who decide what qualifies as being 'Canon' and



what is not. Subjectivity plays a huge part in this matter.

10. When literary history had settled comfortably as *the* approach to reading, there came something to unsettle it: theories of reading. Why is theory necessary to students of books?

It is necessary because it helps them form the ground, the foundation of their ideas.

11. Literary critics and theorists have made it a habit of creating their own words, which is natural when the study of a field reaches a more abstract level. Linguistics did the same. Every second a new word is being created in some part of the world, or some field of knowledge. How should this necessary tool which is the professional language of criticism be taught to students? How should it be used by them?

Unfortunately, I believe that it does not quite matter how the professional language of criticism is being taught. To my mind, it is more important how much effort the student invests in learning it, how much he WANTS to learn it. This depends on the student.

12. When is a critical approach counterproductive?

It becomes counterproductive when it takes away the character and personality of the text and transforms it into an amalgam of different opinions, not a stand-alone structure.

13. Recently, a new theoretical level has emerged: teach the teachers of literature how to teach. In parallel with teach the writers how to write (a bestseller). Is teaching literature a science, a do-it-yourself profession, a gift?

Perhaps it is a mixture of all those, up to a certain point. One must possess the 'gift' in order to be attracted towards this particular field. However, the gift is not enough; it is worth nothing without the effort to understand. To some point, it can be a science, but it can also be an innate understanding that cannot be taught, just reached.

14. Sort out your memories and experience: what has worked for you? What is your own solution as to how teaching literature should use literary history, literary criticism, literary theory?

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In my experience, it is fine if these devices are employed, but only as guidelines, never as norms. No such device should impair the relationship between literature and its readers.

15. Last but not least, who/what should teach the teacher to adapt to changing times? Should teachers compromise? Should students try harder? Let us end this by the description of the teacher from whom you learnt the most.

I believe both parties should reach a middle ground, to a mutual understanding. It is useless if one compromises, but the other does not. The professor I learned most from was highly knowledgeable, but it was his character that set him apart. Although he had his own beliefs and opinions, he never discredited an idea, as different from his viewpoint as it may have been, provided that it was well argued. He taught me never to use empty statements and always think when I name an idea. He taught me to always ask myself 'How can I prove what I am thinking?'



**13.**

1. When it comes to students of English, is literature better off when read for enjoyment or when studied in universities?

It is better off when studied in universities, definitely.

2. Can literature be taught?

Yes, it can.

3. Would you like to make a profession of teaching literature?

I would like to, but I do not consider myself capable of it.

4. When do you think people began teaching literature and why?

In Europe, as soon as literature began public, that is around the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in order to educate the masses and to make sure people understood what the authors meant to say by their works, if such works had purposes other than art. In the last case too, people needed guidance when reading a piece of literature and trying to grasp its meaning. In ancient Greece, literature was taught and discussed about in public schools such as Socrates'.

5. What is the right order: first read the book and then be taught/read criticism about it, or the other way round?

This is the right order, although being taught about a book and then reading it keeping in mind the notes taken before works equally well.

6. When do you think literary theory gained ground, and why did that happen? Try to teach a book you know well, from several perspectives: a/History of literature; b/Text analysis; c/Cultural Studies; d/Theoretical approach. Write a few sentences to illustrate each attempt, and then state which you would choose if you were to teach your own colleagues.

*The Chronicle of a death foretold* – a 20<sup>th</sup> century detective story set in an exotic country (unknown, unnamed, just suggested), the typical modernist novel, letting the

reader decipher its meaning all by him/herself, the author only giving the reader a few hints.

It is precisely in the way it is written that the beauty of the text resides; the reader has access to mere bits of the story, that he/she may concoct freely and thus obtain his/her version of the story.

Judging by the characters' names, religion and traditions, the story may take place in Latin America, where a stranger (an African) is supposed to be a murderer, maybe because of his being different. The issue of alterity/identity and discrimination/marginalization could be tackled here.

I do not know how to approach the novel from this point of view.

7. Can being taught literature replace reading it yourself?

No, it cannot, we need to read in order to have a background of what we are being taught.

8. In the beginning there was the text: people heard/read it. Later on, the text had to be remembered: there appeared lists of books, histories of literature: some books were on those lists, but some were not. What do you think of the Literary Canon?

There has to be a list of books that everyone in a certain country has to have read, for instance that people's representative works. It is unconceivable that a Romanian student having graduated high-school, elementary school and secondary school in Romania has no idea about Creangă's, Eminescu's and Caragiale's works.

9. When literary history had settled comfortably as *the* approach to reading, there came something to unsettle it: theories of reading. Why is theory necessary to students of books?

So that they may be sure they have a few guidelines when studying literature.

10. Literary critics and theorists have made it a habit of creating their own words, which is natural when the study of a field reaches a more abstract level. Linguistics did the same. Every second a new word is being created in some part of the world, or some field of knowledge. How should this necessary tool which is the professional language of criticism be taught to students? How should it be used by them?

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11. When is a critical approach counterproductive?

When it does not help you understand or get an image of what a literary work means or refers to.

12. Recently, a new theoretical level has emerged: teach the teachers of literature how to teach. In parallel with teach the writers how to write (a bestseller). Is teaching literature a science, a do-it-yourself profession, a gift?

The three of them at once.

13. Sort out your memories and experience: what has worked for you? What is your own solution as to how teaching literature should use literary history, literary criticism, literary theory?

Reading a list of novels that are being discussed and explained in turn in class, in a mixture of literary theory and student-teacher interaction. It has helped me understand and become very fond of the 20<sup>th</sup> century French writers (rather difficult to understand, because of their philosophical tendencies).

14. Last but not least, who/what should teach the teacher to adapt to changing times? Should teachers compromise? Should students try harder? Let us end this by the description of the teacher from whom you learnt the most.

Students should try harder, I think, judging by the way I see school works nowadays. Teachers should also remember how they were taught in their turn and, apply those methods, which have proven successful at least once.



**14.**

1. When it comes to students of English, is literature better off when read for enjoyment or when studied in universities?

I think that most students often tend to be reluctant to study literature in universities, as they find the bibliography restrictive or incomplete, and there's also the method of teaching it that may be a problem for some. On the other hand, when studying literature in an academic context, students may learn to develop a more complex point of view regarding one work or another, they see analogies with other writers, painters or even composers.

As for me, studying literature in university seemed very useful, as it helped me get a knowledge of theoretical and critical works which further on joined my personal readings. I did read for enjoyment at first, then I derived even more pleasure from doing it after I had studied it in the academic context.

2. Can literature be taught?

I think that literature cannot be taught in the way that Math or Chemistry can. However, I see it as a broad subject; therefore there are many ways in which students can be guided in reading it so that they may have a better grasp of it.

3. Would you like to make a profession of teaching literature?

Maybe at some point, but I'm not sure.

4. When do you think people began teaching literature and why?

I think literature became a subject when people realised literature is about pondering over different ideas, and also when they felt the need to explain to others the mechanisms of its aesthetic function.

5. What is the right order: first read the book and then be taught/read criticism about it, or the other way round?

I think it can be either way. Good reviews that can guide you to one book or another, but it's definitely advisable to read the book, whatever the order.

6. When do you think literary theory gained ground, and why did that happen?

I think literary theory emerged from a need to conceptualise the answer to the questions of those interested in *écriture*, the mechanisms of aesthetics. I think people have a strong need to order and classify things, and, if possible, why not apply it to literature as well?

7. Try to teach a book you know well, from several perspectives: a/History of literature; b/Text analysis; c/Cultural Studies; d/Theoretical approach. Write a few sentences to illustrate each attempt, and then state which you would choose if you were to teach your own colleagues.

a/History of literature—I would first try to place the book and the writer in a historical context, then in a literary tradition. I would also encourage students to identify certain hints in the text which may lead them towards an understanding of the time when the action takes place, literary trends, etc.

b/Text analysis—Sentence by sentence, I would read the text several times with my students and try to portray its style by means of identifying myths, themes, motifs, transgression of language, lexical particularities, etc.

c/Cultural Studies—I would use the historical context and literary tradition as a starting point, then concentrate on how phenomena as gender, ethnicity, philosophy or social theory are presented in the given work. I'd also use text analysis to show how the above are presented in the text and what the meaning of the text in this paradigm is.

d/Theoretical approach—Once again, I'd use text analysis in order to see the patterns that order the text from the point of view of literary concepts. I'd also try to provoke students to see story behind the story.

8. Can being taught literature replace reading it yourself?

I don't think that any course package on literature can replace reading a text as one needs his/her own filter first, so as to be able to objectify the text and recognize its mechanisms.

9. In the beginning there was the text: people heard/read it. Later on, the text had to be remembered: there appeared lists of books, histories of literature: some books were on those lists, but some were not. What do you think of the Literary Canon?

I think that the literary canon is a mere utopia. I see it more as a guideline for somebody who feels the need to understand references in critical theory or literary theory in general. However, some books need to be read as they underline the essential myths found in almost all works of literature (ex: myth of Oedipus, the myth of Sisyphus the myth of Prometheus).

10. When literary history had settled comfortably as *the* approach to reading, there came something to unsettle it: theories of reading. Why is theory necessary to students of books?

Students may feel theory comes in handy when they read, as it can help them understand the text.

11. Literary critics and theorists have made it a habit of creating their own words, which is natural when the study of a field reaches a more abstract level. Linguistics did the same. Every second a new word is being created in some part of the world, or some field of knowledge. How should this necessary tool which is the professional language of criticism be taught to students? How should it be used by them?

I think the ability to use the language of criticism is developed only by reading criticism but at the same time developing one's own personal way of approaching a literary text, by expressing one's opinion in writing as often as possible. Some concepts can be discussed and applied on literary texts, but they have to be developed and used as a starting point, not as axioms or final paradigms.

12. When is a critical approach counterproductive?

A critical approach can influence our own idea of a text, it can ruin the text just for the sake of demonstration.

13. Recently, a new theoretical level has emerged: teach the teachers of literature how to teach. In parallel with teach the writers how to write (a bestseller). Is teaching literature a science, a do-it-yourself profession, a gift?

I think teaching literature means the ability to make connections and to encourage others to do the same. As for me, a good teacher of literature is always open to new ideas, connections, and at the same time, can be a professional guide to others in the

world of literature without imposing his/her point of view or some critic's point of view.

14. Sort out your memories and experience: what has worked for you? What is your own solution as to how teaching literature should use literary history, literary criticism, literary theory?

I had to study literature in a chronological way at university, but at the same time I remember reading contemporary literature. All these branches—literary history, literary criticism and literary theory—came in handy at the time, as they provided important background information. At first, I read them because they were compulsory but, after a while, I was simply curious to know more. Making students curious and encouraging them to go to the library and read there seems to me a good idea of making these more appealing. With interaction one can learn a lot more, even if it doesn't seem so appealing at first.

15. Last but not least, who/what should teach the teacher to adapt to changing times? Should teachers compromise? Should students try harder? Let us end this by the description of the teacher from whom you learnt the most.

I think teachers are open-minded people who can adapt themselves not to the changing times alone, but also to their students, especially their interests. When students feel the teacher takes interest in their opinions, I think they will try harder by default. A description of the teacher from whom I learnt the most: patient, open-minded, passionate about arts in general and with a sense of humor.



**15.**

1. When it comes to students of English, is literature better off when read for enjoyment or when studied in universities?

In my opinion, literature is better off when read for enjoyment: students understand better when they read for pleasure.

2. Can literature be taught?

Yes, it can be taught – by the specialised people.

3. Would you like to make a profession of teaching literature?

Yes, I would like to make a profession of teaching literature. I enjoy reading English literature and French literature.

4. When do you think people began teaching literature and why?

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5. What is the right order: first read the book and then be taught/read criticism about it, or the other way round?

In my opinion, the right order is first of all to read the book, and then be taught/read criticism about it.

6. When do you think literary theory gained ground, and why did that happen?

I think that literary theory gained ground in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

7. Try to teach a book you know well, from several perspectives: a/History of literature; b/Text analysis; c/Cultural Studies; d/Theoretical approach. Write a few sentences to illustrate each attempt, and then state which you would choose if you were to teach your own colleagues.

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8. Can being taught literature replace reading it yourself?



Yes, it could be replaced by it.

9. In the beginning there was the text: people heard/read it. Later on, the text had to be remembered: there appeared lists of books, histories of literature: some books were on those lists, but some were not. What do you think of the Literary Canon?

I think that they are very important for Literary theory.

10. When literary history had settled comfortably as *the* approach to reading, there came something to unsettle it: theories of reading. Why is theory necessary to students of books?

Because just reading the book is not sufficient, students must also read criticism and theory concerning the books that they read.

11. Literary critics and theorists have made it a habit of creating their own words, which is natural when the study of a field reaches a more abstract level. Linguistics did the same. Every second a new word is being created in some part of the world, or some field of knowledge. How should this necessary tool which is the professional language of criticism be taught to students? How should it be used by them?

It should be taught in special courses, based on analysis of the books.

12. When is a critical approach counterproductive?

I do not think that a critical approach can be counterproductive.

13. Recently, a new theoretical level has emerged: teach the teachers of literature how to teach. In parallel with teach the writers how to write (a bestseller). Is teaching literature a science, a do-it-yourself profession, a gift?

It is a science, but it can also be a gift.

14. Sort out your memories and experience: what has worked for you? What is your own solution as to how teaching literature should use literary history, literary criticism, literary theory?

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15. Last but not least, who/what should teach the teacher to adapt to changing times? Should teachers compromise? Should students try harder? Let us end this by the description of the teacher from whom you learnt the most.

The teacher from whom I learnt most never asked us to remember information about the author's life. She always said that knowing about the author's life this would not make us understand his book. She always wanted us to know all the names of the characters, the all the details of the plot.



**16.**

1. When it comes to students of English, is literature better off when read for enjoyment or when studied in universities?

Literature is always better off when read for enjoyment: reading what you want vs. reading what you are told to.

2. Can literature be taught?

Literary theory and literature as a source of information and knowledge can be taught. However, literature as an art is unlikely to ever be taught.

3. Would you like to make a profession of teaching literature?

If I were a teacher, I would like to talk literature with my students, and not 'teach' them.

4. When do you think people began teaching literature and why?

I think people began teaching literature when they realised that literature is food for thought. In ancient times (ancient Greece, ancient Rome).

5. What is the right order: first read the book and then be taught/read criticism about it, or the other way round?

Sometimes it is better to first read something about the book/author/literary movement, etc., because otherwise you might not understand much of the book.

6. When do you think literary theory gained ground, and why did that happen?

It gained ground in the twentieth century, after the development of different schools of thought, movements, approaches to literary writing.

7. Try to teach a book you know well, from several perspectives: a/History of literature; b/Text analysis; c/Cultural Studies; d/Theoretical approach. Write a few sentences to illustrate each attempt, and then state which you would choose if you were to teach your own colleagues.

Mihail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*:

- a) Finished in 1940, the novel belongs to post-modernism. Thus, I would discuss the cultural context and differences between modernism and post-modernism.
- b) Here I would discuss the main themes, symbols, motifs and insertions from other fields (e.g. theology), and encourage the students to make their own interpretation of the book by discovering symbols, meanings, etc. that have not been discussed in class.
- c) Here I would discuss the setting of the plot, the novel, and the background of the novel from different points of view: the social context, the political/historical context, the cultural context.
- d) Here I would try to make some parallels between a love story and a political satire, while speaking of magic realism as well, but first let them discover it themselves.

8. Can being taught literature replace reading it yourself?

Never.

9. In the beginning there was the text: people heard/read it. Later on, the text had to be remembered: there appeared lists of books, histories of literature: some books were on those lists, but some were not. What do you think of the Literary Canon?

I think it is very useful for 'beginners'. We all need to start somewhere and have guidance. As we progress and gather more and more information, we make our own lists of books.

10. When literary history had settled comfortably as *the* approach to reading, there came something to unsettle it: theories of reading. Why is theory necessary to students of books?

Literary theory can teach students *how* to read a book. It also gives students the necessary tools for analysis, interpretation, and creative reading. It should never impose ideas.

11. Literary critics and theorists have made it a habit of creating their own words, which is natural when the study of a field reaches a more abstract level. Linguistics did the same. Every second a new word is being created in some part of the world, or some field of knowledge. How should this necessary tool which is the professional language of criticism be taught to students? How should it be used by them?

The overuse of professional language and specialised terms when teaching students with little or no background in literary criticism has always been a problem. Most teachers don't realise that they give too much, too soon, and thus students will come to despise the language of criticism and literary criticism itself. It should all happen gradually, and teachers should allow students to grow into it, at least the students who are still drawn to this.

12. When is a critical approach counterproductive?

When it kills the pleasure of reading a book, or when it becomes constraining.

13. Recently, a new theoretical level has emerged: teach the teachers of literature how to teach. In parallel with teach the writers how to write (a bestseller). Is teaching literature a science, a do-it-yourself profession, a gift?

The ability to teach is a gift. Teaching literature is both a gift and a do-it-yourself thing. But this doesn't mean teachers don't need to learn and practise how to be the best teacher they can be.

14. Sort out your memories and experience: what has worked for you? What is your own solution as to how teaching literature should use literary history, literary criticism, literary theory?

As I have said, teaching literature should not use literary history/criticism/theory more than needed. They are mere tools, which enable students to read creatively and further create. And literature should be fun when taught in class, because reading is first and foremost a hobby. If one doesn't enjoy reading and reading 'about reading', why be in this field?

15. Last but not least, who/what should teach the teacher to adapt to changing times? Should teachers compromise? Should students try harder? Let us end this by the description of the teacher from whom you learnt the most.

Teachers should never remain stuck in the past. They should keep up with the times, but keeping up with the times doesn't mean compromising in order to cater to the younger (more ignorant and spoilt) generation. Students, just like anybody else, should try harder, because this is the key to progress. A good teacher knows how to



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speak to students, how to make literature attractive even to those who did not find it attractive before, and most of all, how to link the fictional world of literature with the real world we're living in, and thus help students to learn from it and make use of what they've learnt in their everyday life, to express themselves and conduct themselves. You can tell that a literature teacher is good when they turn a book which looks boring into the most interesting thing ever. And you could listen to them forever. Yes, there are very few; and those few are gifted indeed.



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# **Excerpts from the Course Package**

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Second Year English Majors

(more or less) **1922**

**English Literature**

*The Story **within** the word*

CONTEMPORARY  
LITERATURE PRESS



<http://editura.mttlc.ro>  
București 2014

## **Lectures**

0. Introduction: **The Story**
1. Modernism? PostModernism? Literary Trends? **Structure and Style.**
2. Introductory Digression: John Donne (Metaphysical Poetry), John Keats (Romanticism), Matthew Arnold (Victorian Poetry)
3. W.B. Yeats: **Ambiguity**
4. T.S. Eliot: From ambiguous to **unreliable** words
5. Henry James: Parting with Realistic Fiction. The **Unreliable Narrator**
6. Joseph Conrad: A shortcut from the Story to the Word
7. John Galsworthy: The Mirage of Experimentalism
8. **From the Story to the Word: To Say or Not to Say**  

'Epiphany' (Joyce)

'The Luminous Halo' (Woolf)

'The Objective Correlative' (T.S. Eliot)
9. James Joyce: The **Interior Monologue**
10. Virginia Woolf: **The Story within the Word**
11. **To Say or Not to Say**

Introduction

## The Story

‘Great literature is simply **language**  
charged with meaning  
to the utmost possible degree.’

Ezra Pound

## What exactly is a story?

### The Old Testament, John 1

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God, and the  
Word was God.

### Sfânta Evanghelie după Ioan 1.1: 1

<sup>1</sup> La început era Cuvântul și Cuvântul  
era la Dumnezeu și Dumnezeu era  
Cuvântul.

### Genesis 3

<sup>1</sup> Now, the snake was the most subtle  
of all the wild animals  
that Yahweh God had made. It asked  
the woman, ‘Did God really say you  
were not to eat from any of the trees in  
the garden?’

<sup>2</sup> The woman answered the snake, ‘We  
may eat the fruit of the trees in the  
garden.

<sup>3</sup> But of the fruit of the tree in the  
middle of the garden God said, ‘You  
must not eat it, nor touch it, under pain  
of death.’

<sup>4</sup> Then the snake said to the woman,  
No! You will not die!

<sup>5</sup> God knows in fact that the day you  
eat it your eyes will be opened and

### 1. Facerea. Capitolul 3

<sup>1</sup> Șarpele însă era cel mai șiret dintre  
toate fiarele de pe pământ, pe care le  
făcuse Domnul Dumnezeu. Și a zis  
șarpele către femeie: ‘Dumnezeu a zis  
El, oare, să nu mâncați roade din orice  
pom din rai?’

<sup>2</sup> Iar femeia a zis către șarpe: ‘Roade  
din pomii raiului putem să mâncăm;

<sup>3</sup> Numai din rodul pomului celui din  
mijlocul raiului ne-a zis Dumnezeu: ‘Să  
nu mâncați din el, nici să vă atingeți de  
el, ca să nu muriți!’

<sup>4</sup> Atunci șarpele a zis către femeie:  
‘Nu, nu veți muri!’

<sup>5</sup> Dar Dumnezeu știe că în ziua în care  
veți mânca din el vi se vor deschide



you will be like gods,  
knowing good from evil.

<sup>6</sup> The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and pleasing to the eye, and that it was enticing for the wisdom that it could give. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate it.

<sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realised that they were naked. So they sewed fig-leaves together to make themselves loin-cloths.

<sup>8</sup> The man and his wife heard the sound of Yahweh God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from Yahweh God among the trees of the garden.

<sup>9</sup> But Yahweh God called to the man. 'Where are you?' he asked.

<sup>10</sup> 'I heard the sound of you in the garden,' he replied. 'I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.'

<sup>11</sup> 'Who told you that you were naked?' he asked. 'Have you been eating from the tree I forbade you to eat?'

<sup>12</sup> The man replied, 'It was the woman you put with me; she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.'

<sup>13</sup> Then Yahweh God said to the woman, 'Why did you do that?' The woman replied, 'The snake tempted me and I ate.'

<sup>14</sup> Then Yahweh God said to the snake, 'Because you have done this, Accursed be you of all animals wild and tame! On your belly you will go and on dust you will feed as long as you live.'

<sup>15</sup> I shall put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; it will bruise your head and you will strike its heel.'

<sup>16</sup> To the woman he said: I shall give

ochii și veți fi ca Dumnezeu, cunoscând binele și răul'.

<sup>6</sup> De aceea femeia, socotind că rodul pomului este bun de mâncat și plăcut ochilor la vedere și vrednic de dorit, pentru că dă știință, a luat din el și a mâncat și a dat bărbatului său și a mâncat și el.

<sup>7</sup> Atunci li s-au deschis ochii la amândoi și au cunoscut că erau goi, și au cusut frunze de smochin și și-au făcut acoperăminte.

<sup>8</sup> Iar când au auzit glasul Domnului Dumnezeu, Care umbla prin rai, în răcoarea serii, s-au ascuns Adam și femeia lui de fața Domnului Dumnezeu printre pomii raiului.

<sup>9</sup> Și a strigat Domnul Dumnezeu pe Adam și i-a zis: 'Adame, unde ești?'

<sup>10</sup> Răspuns-a acesta: 'Am auzit glasul Tău în rai și m-am temut, căci sunt gol, și m-am ascuns'.

<sup>11</sup> Și i-a zis Dumnezeu: 'Cine ti-a spus că ești gol? Nu cumva ai mâncat din pomul din care ti-am poruncit să nu mănânci?'

<sup>12</sup> Zis-a Adam: 'Femeia care mi-ai dat-o să fie cu mine, aceea mi-a dat din pom și am mâncat'.

<sup>13</sup> Și a zis Domnul Dumnezeu către femeie: 'Pentru ce ai făcut aceasta?' Iar femeia a zis: 'Șarpele m-a amăgit și eu am mâncat'.

<sup>14</sup> Zis-a Domnul Dumnezeu către șarpe: 'Pentru că ai făcut aceasta, blestemat să fii între toate animalele și între toate fiarele câmpului; pe pânțele tale să te târăști și țărană să mănânci în toate zilele vieții tale!'

<sup>15</sup> Dușmănie voi pune între tine și între femeie, între sămânța ta și sămânța ei; aceasta îți va zdrobi capul, iar tu îi vei înțepa călcâiul'.

<sup>16</sup> Iar femeii i-a zis: 'Voi înmulți mereu

you intense pain in childbearing,  
you will give birth to your children in  
pain. Your yearning will be for your  
husband, and he will dominate you.

<sup>17</sup> To the man he said, 'Because you  
listened to the voice of your wife and  
ate from the tree of which I had  
forbidden you to eat, Accursed be the  
soil because of you! Painfully will you  
get your food from it as long as you  
live.

<sup>18</sup> It will yield you brambles and  
thistles, as you eat the produce of the  
land.

<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face will you  
earn your food, until you return to the  
ground, as you were taken from it. For  
dust you are and to dust you shall  
return.'

<sup>20</sup> The man named his wife 'Eve'  
because she was the mother of all those  
who live.

<sup>21</sup> Yahweh God made tunics of skins  
for the man and his wife and clothed  
them.

<sup>22</sup> Then Yahweh God said, 'Now that  
the man has become like one of us in  
knowing good from evil, he must not be  
allowed to reach out his hand and pick  
from the tree of life too, and eat and live  
for ever!'

<sup>23</sup> So Yahweh God expelled him from  
the garden of Eden, to till the soil from  
which he had been taken.

<sup>24</sup> He banished the man, and in front  
of the garden of Eden he posted the  
great winged creatures and the fiery  
flashing sword, to guard the way to the  
tree of life.

necazurile tale, mai ales în vremea  
sarcinii tale; în dureri vei naște copii;  
atrasă vei fi către bărbatul tău și el te va  
stăpâni'.

<sup>17</sup> Iar lui Adam i-a zis: 'Pentru că ai  
ascultat vorba femeii tale și ai mâncat  
din pomul din care ți-am poruncit: 'Să  
nu mănânci', blestemat va fi pământul  
pentru tine! Cu osteneală să te hrănești  
din el în toate zilele vieții tale!

<sup>18</sup> Spini și pălămidă îți va rodi el și te  
vei hrăni cu iarba câmpului!

<sup>19</sup> În sudoarea fetei tale îți vei mânca  
pâinea ta, până te vei întoarce în  
pământul din care ești luat; căci pământ  
ești și în pământ te vei întoarce'.

<sup>20</sup> Și a pus Adam femeii sale numele  
Eva, adică viață, pentru că ea era să fie  
mama tuturor celor vii.

<sup>21</sup> Apoi a făcut Domnul Dumnezeu lui  
Adam și femeii lui îmbrăcăminte de  
piele și i-a îmbrăcat.

<sup>22</sup> Și a zis Domnul Dumnezeu: 'Iată  
Adam s-a făcut ca unul dintre Noi,  
cunoscând binele și răul. Și acum nu  
cumva să-și întindă mâna și să ia roade  
din pomul vieții, să mănânce și să  
trăiască în veci!...'

<sup>23</sup> De aceea l-a scos Domnul  
Dumnezeu din grădina cea din Eden, ca  
să lucreze pământul, din care fusese  
luat.

<sup>24</sup> Și izgonind pe Adam, l-a așezat în  
preajma grădinii celei din Eden și a pus  
heruvimi și sabie de flacără vâlvăitoare,  
să păzească drumul către pomul vieții.

### New Testament, Matthew 14

[1] At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,

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- [2] And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.
- [3] For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.
- [4] For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.
- [5] And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.
- [6] But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.
- [7] Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.
- [8] And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.
- [9] And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her.
- [10] And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.
- [11] And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother.
- [12] And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

<b>Authorized Version. 1610. Gospel of St Mark 6.14-29</b>	<b>Biblia lui Șerban Cantacuzino. 1688. Evanghelia după Marcu 6.14-29</b>	<b>Miron Cristea. 1936. Sf. Evanghelie dela Marcu 6.14-29</b>
14. And king Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. 15. Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. 16. But when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead. 17. For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon	14. Și auzi împăratul Irod (că arătat s-au făcut numele Lui) și zicea că Ioan acela ce boteza s-a sculat din morți și drept acea lucrează puterile întru el. 15. Alții zicea că Ilie iaste, iară alții zicea că iaste proroc sau ca unul din proroci. 16. Iară auzind, Irod zise că „Acesta e Ioan pre carele am tăiat eu, el s-au sculat din morți”. 17. Că Irod acesta, trimițînd , au prins pre Ioan și l-au legat	14. Și a auzit și stăpânitorul Irod, căci numele lui Iisus ajunsese în vileag, și zicea că Ioan botezătorul s'a sculat din morți și de aceea puterile acestea lucrează întru el. 15. Alții, însă, ziceau că este Ilie și iarăși alții că este un profet ca unul din profeți. 16. Dar, auzind, Irod zicea: Este Ioan, căruia eu am pus să-i tae capul; el s-a sculat din morți. 17. Căci el, Irod, a fost trimis de l-a prins pe Ioan, și l-a legat și

John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her.

18. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

19. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not:

20. For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

21. And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee;

22. And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.

23. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

24. And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

25. And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

26. And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

27. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison,

pre el în temniță, pentru Iordiana, muiarea lui Filip, fratelui său, căci o luase muiare.

18. Că zicea Ioan lui Irod că „Nu ți se cade să aibi pe muiarea fratelui tău’.

19. Iară Irodiana pizmiia lui și vrea să-l omoară, și nu putea.

20. Că Irod să temea de Ioan, știind pre el om drept și sfânt, și-l socotia pre el și, ascultînd pre el, multe făcea și cu drag asculta pre el.

21. Și tîmplîndu-se o zi de bună vreme, cînd Irod nașterilor lui făcea cină boiarilor săi și căpitanilor și mai marilor Galileii,

22. Și intrînd fata Irodiadei și jucînd, și plăcînd lui Irod și celor ce șădea cu el, zise împăratul featei: „Ceare de la mine ce vei vrea, și voiu da’.

23. Și să jură ei că „Au ce vei ceare de la mine da-ț-voiu ție, până la jumătate de împărăția mea’.

24. Iară ea, ieșind, spuse mîne-sa: „Ce voiu ceare?’ Iară ea zise: „Capul lui Ioan Botezătorul’.

25. Și intrînd îndată, cu grabă, la împăratul, ceru, zicînd: „Voiu ca să-mi dai acum, în blid, capul lui Ioan Botezătorul’.

26. Și împăratul, foarte întristîndu-se, pentru jurămînturi și pentru ceia ce șădea cu el, nu vru să-i leapede cearerea.

27. Și numaidecît trimițînd împăratul speculator, porunci să aducă capul lui.

l-a închis, din pricina Irodiadei, nevasta lui

Filip, fratele său, fiindcă se însurase cu ea.

18. Iar Ioan îi zicea lui Irod: Nu-ți este îngăduit să ții pe femeia fratelui tău.

19. De aceea Irodiana avea pică pe el și vroia să-l omoare, dar nu putea.

20. Că Irod se temea de Ioan, știindu-l bărbat neprihănit și sfânt, și-l păstra. Și cînd îl asculta sta mult pe gânduri și era bucuros să-l asculte.

21. Ci se ivi cu bun prilej, cînd Irod, de ziua sa de naștere, făcu ospăț boerilor săi și căpitanilor săi și celor dintăiu din Galileia.

22. Atunci fiica Irodiadei intrînd și jucînd plăcu lui Irod și celor ce ședeau cu el la masă. Iar împăratul zise fetei: Cere dela mine orice voiești și îți voiu da.

23. Și s’a jurat ei cu jurămînt: că orice vei cere dela mine îți voiu da, până la jumătate din împărăția mea.

24. Fata a ieșit și a întreat pe mama ei: Ce să cer? Iar Irodiana i-a zis: Capul lui Ioan Botezătorul.

25. Atunci intrînd cu degrabă la împăratul i-a cerut și i-a zis: Voiesc ca numai de cât să-mi dai, în tîpsie, capul lui Ioan Botezătorul.

26. Ci împăratul s-a întristat adînc, dar pentru jurămînt și pentru comeseni n’a voit să o nesocotească.

27. Și trimițînd în acel ceas pe paznicul temniței, împăratul porunci a-i aduce capul lui Ioan Botezătorul.

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28. And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.

29. And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

28. Iară el, mergînd tăie capul lui în temniță și-l aduse în blid și-l deade featei, și fata îl deade mîna-sa.

29. Și auzind, ucenicii lui veniră și luară trupul și-l puseră în mormînt.

28. Și ducându-se, a tăiat capul lui Ioan, în temniță, l-a adus în tipsie și l-a dat fetei, iar fata l-a dat mamei sale.

29. Iar când ucenicii lui au aflat, au venit, au luat trupul lui Ioan și l-au pus în mormânt.

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**William Butler Yeats** (1865-1939)

**Chosen** [from *A Woman Young and Old* (1933)]

The lot of love is chosen. I learnt that much  
Struggling for an image on the track  
Of the whirling Zodiac.  
Scarce did he my body touch,  
Scarce sank he from the west  
Or found a subterranean rest  
On the maternal midnight of my breast  
Before I had marked him on his northern way,  
And seemed to stand although in bed I lay.

I struggled with the horror of daybreak,  
I chose it for my lot! If questioned on  
My utmost pleasure with a man  
By some new-married bride, I take  
That stillness for a theme  
Where his heart my heart did seem  
And both adrift on the miraculous stream  
Where – wrote a learned astrologer –  
The Zodiac is changed into a sphere.

**Two Years Later** (1914)

Has no one said those daring  
Kind eyes should be more learn'd?  
Or warned you how despairing  
The moths are when they are burned?  
I could have warned you; but you are young  
So we speak a different tongue.

O you will take whatever's offered  
And dream that all the world's a friend,  
Suffer as your mother suffered,  
Be as broken in the end.  
But I am old and you are young,  
And I speak a barbarous tongue.

T.S. Eliot: 'Yeats is pre-eminently the poet of middle age.'



**T.S. Eliot** (1888-1965)

‘Genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood.’

[T.S. Eliot: ‘Dante’, 1929]

**THE WASTE LAND** (1922)

‘Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis  
vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent:  
Sibylla ti theleis; respondebat illa: apothanein thelo.’

For Ezra Pound  
*il miglior fabbro*

**I. The Burial of the Dead**

April is the cruellest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain.  
Winter kept us warm, covering  
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding  
A little life with dried tubers.  
Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee  
With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,  
And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten, 10  
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.  
Bin gar keine Russin, stamm’ aus Litauen, echt deutsch.  
And when we were children, staying at the archduke’s,  
My cousin’s, he took me out on a sled,  
And I was frightened. He said, Marie,  
Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.  
In the mountains, there you feel free.  
I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter.

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow

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Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man, 20  
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only  
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,  
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,  
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only  
There is shadow under this red rock,  
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),  
And I will show you something different from either  
Your shadow at morning striding behind you  
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;  
I will show you fear in a handful of dust. 30

*Frisch weht der Wind*

*Der Heimat zu*

*Mein Irisch Kind,*

*Wo weilest du?*

'You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;  
'They called me the hyacinth girl.'  
— Yet when we came back, late, from the Hyacinth garden,  
Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not  
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither  
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing, 40  
Looking into the heart of light, the silence.  
*Oed' und leer das Meer.*



**James Joyce on *The Waste Land***

James Joyce: **The wastobe land** (FW: 062.11:3)

**Rouen is the rainiest place getting**

[from Poems and Shorter Writings (1991), Faber and Faber]

Rouen is **the** rainiest place getting  
Inside all impermeables, wetting  
Damp marrow in drenched bones.  
Midwinter soused us coming over Le Mans  
Our inn at Niort was the Grape of Burgundy  
But the winepress of the Lord thundered over that grape of Burgundy  
And we left it in a hurgundy.  
**Hurry up, Joyce, it's time!)**

I heard mosquitoes swarm in old Bordeaux  
**So many!**  
**I had not thought** the earth contained so many  
Hurry up, Joyce, it's time)

**Mr Anthologos, the** local gardener,  
Greycapped, with politeness full of cunning  
Has made wine these fifty years  
And told me in his southern **French**  
*Le petit vin* is the surest drink to buy  
For if 'tis bad  
*Vous ne l'avez pas payé*  
(Hurry up, hurry up, now, now, now!)

But we shall have great times,  
When we return to **Clinic, that waste land**  
O Esculapios!  
**Shan't we? Shan't we? Shan't we?)**

**Henry James** (1843-1916)

**The Portrait of a Lady, 1881.**

From **The Preface: The 'House of Fiction'**

'The Portrait of a Lady' was, like 'Roderick Hudson,' begun in Florence, during three months spent there in the spring of **1879**. (...)

**The house of fiction** has in short not one window, but a million – a number of possible windows not to be reckoned, rather; every one of which has been pierced, or is still pierceable, in its vast front, by the need of the individual vision and by the pressure of the individual will. These apertures, of dissimilar shape and size, hang so, all together, over the human scene that we might have expected of them a greater sameness of report than we find. They are but windows at the best, mere holes in a dead wall, disconnected, perched aloft; they are not hinged doors opening straight upon life. But they have this mark of their own that at each of them stands a figure with a pair of eyes, or at least with a field-glass, which forms, again and again, for observation, a unique instrument, insuring to the person making use of it an impression distinct from every other. He and his neighbours are watching the same show, but one seeing more where the other sees less, one seeing black where the other sees white, one seeing big where the other sees small, one seeing coarse where the other sees fine. And so on, and so on; there is fortunately no saying on what, for the particular pair of eyes, the window may NOT open; 'fortunately' by reason, precisely, of this incalculability of range. The spreading field, the human scene, is the 'choice of subject'; the pierced aperture, either broad or balconied or slit-like and low-browed, is the 'literary form'; but they are, singly or together, as nothing without the posted presence of the watcher – without, in other words, the consciousness of the artist. Tell me what the artist is, and I will tell you of what he has BEEN conscious. Thereby I shall express to you at once his boundless freedom and his 'moral' reference. (...)

From **The Portrait of a Lady** (1881),

[Washington Square Press, 1963]

**p. 546**

But he went on, after a moment: 'It passes, after all; it's passing now. But love

## The Exam Book !

A Christmas present to all teachers of literature, from the students themselves

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remains. I don't know why we should suffer so much. Perhaps I shall find out. There are many things in life. You're very young.'

'I feel very old,' said Isabel.

'You'll grow young again. That's how I see you. I don't believe—I don't believe—' But he stopped again; his strength failed him.

She begged him to be quiet now. 'We needn't speak to understand each other,' she said.

'I don't believe that such a generous mistake as yours can hurt you for more than a little.'

'Oh Ralph, I'm very happy now,' she cried through her tears.

'And remember this,' he continued, 'that if you've been hated you've also been loved. Ah but, Isabel—*adored!*' he just audibly and lingeringly breathed.

'Oh my brother!' she cried with a movement of still deeper prostration.



**Joseph Conrad** (1857-1924)

**Heart of Darkness** (1902)

[Bantam Books, 1969]

**p. 118**

It was as though a veil had been rent. I saw on that ivory face the expression of sombre pride, of ruthless power, of craven terror – of an intense and hopeless despair. Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision – he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath:

‘The horror! the horror!’

[...]

‘Ah, but I believed in him more than anyone on earth – more than his own mother, more than – himself. He needed me! Me! I would have treasured every sigh, every word, every sign, every glance.’

I felt like a chill grip on my chest. ‘Don’t,’ I said, in a muffled voice.

‘Forgive me. I – I – have mourned so long in silence – in silence... You were with him – to the last? I think of his loneliness. Nobody near to understand him as I would have understood. Perhaps no one to hear...’

‘To the very end,’ I said, shakily. ‘I heard his very last words...’ I stopped in a fright.

‘Repeat them,’ she said in a heart-broken tone. ‘I want – I want – something – something – to – to live with.’

I was on the point of crying at her, ‘Don’t you hear them?’ The dusk was repeating them in a persistent whisper all around us, in a whisper that seemed to swell menacingly like the first whisper of a rising wind. ‘The horror! The horror!’

‘His last word – to live with,’ she murmured. ‘Don’t you understand I loved him – I loved him – I loved him!’

I pulled myself together and spoke slowly.

‘The last word he pronounced was – your name.’

I heard a light sigh, and then my heart stood still, stopped dead short by an exulting and terrible cry, by the cry of inconceivable triumph and of unspeakable pain. ‘I knew it – I was sure!’... She knew. She was sure.

I heard her weeping; she had hidden her face in her hands. It seemed to me



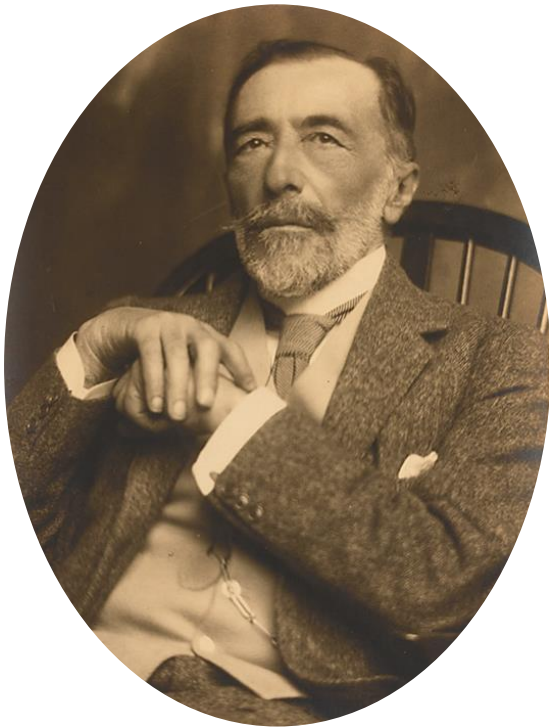
## **The Exam Book !**

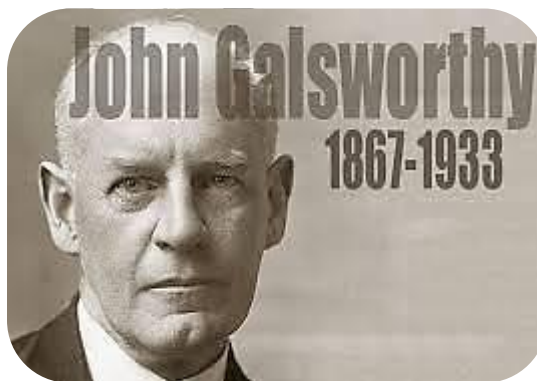
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that the house would collapse before I could escape, that the heavens would fall upon my head. But nothing happened. The heavens do not fall for such a trifle. Would they have fallen, I wonder, if I had rendered Kurtz that justice which was his due? Hadn't he said he wanted only justice? But I couldn't. I could not tell her. It would have been too dark – too dark altogether...

Marlow ceased, and sat apart, indistinct and silent, in the pose of a meditating Buddha. Nobody moved for a time. 'We have lost the first of the ebb,' said the Director, suddenly. I raised my head. The offing was barred by a black bank of clouds, and the tranquil waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth flowed somber under an overcast sky – seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness.





## **John Galsworthy (1867-1933)**

### **The Meeting (1904)**

[From *A Motley*]

Walking one day in Kensington Gardens, I strolled into the enclosure of the tea kiosk and sat down on the side sheltered from the east, where fashionable people never go.

The new-fledged leaves were swinging in a breeze that kept stealing up in puffs under the half-bare branches; sparrows and pigeons hunted on the grass for crumbs; and all the biscuit-coloured chairs and little round-topped marble tripods, with thick inverted cups and solitary bowls of sugar, were sending out their somewhat bleak invitation. A few of these tables were occupied; at one sat a pale, thin child in an enormous white hat, in the company of a cheery little red-cross nurse and a lady in grey, whose pathetic, half-thankful eyes betokened a struggling convalescence; at another, two ladies – Americans, perhaps – with pleasant, keen, brown faces, were munching rolls; at a third, an old square man, bald and grey, sat smoking. At short intervals, like the very heart's cry of that Spring day, came the scream of the peacocks from across the water.

Presently there strolled along the gravel space from right to left a young man in a fashionable cut-away coat, shining top-hat, and patent boots, swinging a cane. His face was fresh and high-coloured, with little twisted dark moustaches, and bold, bright eyes. He walked like an athlete, whose legs and loins are hard with muscle; and he looked about him with exaggerated nonchalance. But under his swagger I detected expectation, anxiety, defiance. He re-passed, evidently looking for some one, and I lost sight of him.

But presently he came back, and this time he had *her* with him. Oh! She was a pretty soul, with her veil, and her flower-like face behind it, and her quick glances to

left and right; and her little put-on air of perfect ease, of perfect – how shall we call it? – justification. And yet behind all this, too, was a subtle mixture of feelings – of dainty displeasure at her own position, of unholy satisfaction, of desire not to be caught. And he? How changed! His eyes, no longer bold and uneasy, were full of humble delight, of deferential worship; his look of animal nonchalance was gone.

Choosing a table not far from mine, which had, as it were, a certain strategic value, he drew her chair back for her, and down they sat. I could not hear their talk, but I could watch them, and knew as well as if they had told me in so many words that this was their first stolen meeting. That first meeting, *which must not be seen*, or rather the first meeting that both *felt* must not be seen – a very different thing. They had stepped in their own minds over the unmarked boundary of convention. It was a moment that had perhaps been months in coming, the preliminary moment that in each love affair comes only once, and makes all the after poignancy so easy.

Their eyes told the whole story – hers restlessly watchful of all around, with sudden clings to his; and his, with their attempt at composure, and obvious devotion. And it was psychologically amusing to see the difference between the woman and the man. In the midst of the stolen joy she had her eye on the world, instinctively deferring to its opinion, owning, so to speak, that she was in the wrong; while he was only concerned with striving not to lower himself in his own estimation by looking ridiculous. His deference to the world's opinion had gone by the board, now that he was looking into her eyes.

'D – n the world!' he said to himself; while she, still watching the world as a cat watches some bullying dog, knew she need not trouble about looking ridiculous – she would never look that. And when their eyes met, and could not for a moment tear themselves apart, it gave one an ache in the heart, the ache that the cry of the peacock brings, or the first Spring scent of the sycamores.

And I began wondering. The inevitable life of their love, just flowering like the trees, the inevitable life with its budding, and blossom, and decay, started up before me. Were they those exceptional people that falsify all expectation and prove the rule? Not they! They were just the pair of lovers, the man and woman, clean, and vigorous, and young, with the Spring in their blood – fresh-run, as they say of the salmon, and as certain to drift back to the sea at the appointed time. On that couple bending their heads together, morals and prophecies were as little likely to take effect as a sleet shower on the inevitable march of Spring.

I thought of what was in store – for him, the hours of waiting, with his heart in his mouth, tortured by not knowing whether she would come, or why she did not come. And for her the hours of doubt: 'Does he really love me? He cannot really love me!' The stolen meetings, whose rapture has gone almost as soon as come, in thought

of the parting; the partings themselves – the tearing asunder of eyes, the terrible blank emptiness in the heart; and the beginning of waiting again. And then for her, the surreptitious terrors and delights of the ‘post,’ that one particular delivery agreed on for safety; the excuses for going out, for secrecy, for solitude. And for him, the journeys past the house after dark to see the lights in the windows, to judge from them what was going on; and the cold perspirations, and furies of jealousy and terror; the hours of hard walking to drive away the fit; the hours of sleepless desire.

And then the hour, the inevitable hour of some stolen day on the river, or under the sheltering cover of a wood; and that face of hers on the journey home, and his offer to commit suicide, to relieve her of his presence; and the hard-wrung promise to meet once more. And the next meeting, the countless procession of meetings. The fierce delights, the utter lassitudes – and always like the ground bass of an accompaniment, the endless subterfuge. And then – the slow gradual process of cooling – the beginning of excuses, the perpetual weaving of self-justification; the solemn and logical self-apologies; the finding of flaws in each other, humiliating oaths and protestations; and finally the day when she did not come, or he did not come. And then – the letters; the sudden *rapprochement*, and the still more sudden – end.

It all came before the mind, like the scenes of a cinematograph; but beneath the table I saw their hands steal together, and solemn prophetic visions vanished. Wisdom, and knowledge, and the rest, what were they all to that caress!

So, getting up, I left them there, and walked away under the chestnut trees, with the cry of the peacock following.

1904.

## **From the Story to the Word: To Say or Not to Say**

'Epiphany' (Joyce),  
'The Luminous Halo' (Woolf),  
'The Objective Correlative' (T.S. Eliot)

'Stream-of-Consciousness'

'Interior Monologue'

'Epiphany' – 'Luminous Halo' – 'Objective Correlative'

'Stream-of-Consciousness'

**William James**

Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as 'chain' or 'train' do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let us call it **the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life.**

[*The Stream of Consciousness*, 1892]

'The House of Fiction'

**Henry James**

The **house of fiction** has in short not one window, but a million ... These apertures, of dissimilar shape and size, hang so, all together, over the human scene that we might have expected of them a greater sameness of report than we find. They are but windows at the best, mere holes in a dead wall, disconnected, perched aloft; they are not hinged doors opening straight upon life. But they have this mark of their own that at each of them stands a figure with a pair of eyes, or at least with a field-

glass, which forms, again and again, for observation, a unique instrument, insuring to the person making use of it an impression distinct from every other. He and his neighbours are watching the same show, but one seeing more where the other sees less, one seeing black where the other sees white, one seeing big where the other sees small, one seeing coarse where the other sees fine. And so on, and so on... The spreading field, the human scene, is the 'choice of subject'; the pierced aperture, either broad or balconied or slit-like and low-browed, is the 'literary form'; but they are, singly or together, as nothing without the posted presence of the watcher – without, in other words, the consciousness of the artist. Tell me what the artist is, and I will tell you of what he has been conscious.

[*The Portrait of a Lady* – Preface, 1881]

### 'Epiphany'

**James Joyce**

[Mentioned only in *Stephen Hero*, which was begun 1904, and discarded by Joyce himself, then published posthumously in 1944. Joyce never used the word again in his whole work.]

'By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a **memorable phase of the mind itself**. He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments.'

'Its soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance. The soul of the commonest object ... seems to us **radiant**. The object achieves its epiphany.'

[*Stephen Hero*]

... [moments in which] 'the soul is born'

[*Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man*]

### 'The Luminous Halo'

**Virginia Woolf**

[*Modern Fiction*, essay (1919), in *The Common Reader*]

Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being 'like this'. Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad



impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; the moment of importance came not here but there; so that, if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style, and perhaps not a single button sewn on as the Bond Street tailors would have it. Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a **luminous halo**, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end.

### ‘The Objective Correlative’

T.S. Eliot

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an ‘objective correlative’; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the **emotion is immediately evoked**.

[*Hamlet and His Problems*, 1922]

Genuine poetry can communicate **before it is understood**.

[*Dante*, 1929]

**James Joyce** (1882-1941)

**Eveline**

[*Dubliners*, 1914]

She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne. She was tired.

Few people passed. The man out of the last house passed on his way home; she heard his footsteps clacking along the concrete pavement and afterwards crunching on the cinder path before the new red houses. One time there used to be a field there in which they used to play every evening with other people's children. Then a man from Belfast bought the field and built houses in it – not like their little brown houses but bright brick houses with shining roofs. The children of the avenue used to play together in that field – the Devines, the Waters, the Dunns, little Keogh the cripple, she and her brothers and sisters. Ernest, however, never played: he was too grown up. Her father used often to hunt them in and out of the field with his blackthorn stick; but usually little Keogh used to keep nix and call out when he saw her father coming. Still they seemed to have been rather happy then. Her father was not so bad then; and besides, her mother was alive. That was a long time ago; she and her brothers and sisters were all grown up her mother was dead. Tizzie Dunn was dead, too, and the Waters had gone back to England. Everything changes. Now she was going to go away like the others, to leave her home.

Home! She looked round the room, reviewing all its familiar objects which she had dusted once a week for so many years, wondering where on earth all the dust came from. Perhaps she would never see again those familiar objects from which she had never dreamed of being divided. And yet during all those years she had never found out the name of the priest whose yellowing photograph hung on the wall above the broken harmonium beside the coloured print of the promises made to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque. He had been a school friend of her father. Whenever he showed the photograph to a visitor her father used to pass it with a casual word:

'He is in Melbourne now.'

She had consented to go away, to leave her home. Was that wise? She tried to weigh each side of the question. In her home anyway she had shelter and food; she had those whom she had known all her life about her. Of course she had to work hard, both in the house and at business. What would they say of her in the Stores when they found out that she had run away with a fellow? Say she was a fool, perhaps; and her place would be filled up by advertisement. Miss Gavan would be glad. She had always had an edge on her, especially whenever there were people listening.

'Miss Hill, don't you see these ladies are waiting?'

'Look lively, Miss Hill, please.'

She would not cry many tears at leaving the Stores.

But in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not be like that. Then she would be married – she, Eveline. People would treat her with respect then. She would not be treated as her mother had been. Even now, though she was over nineteen, she sometimes felt herself in danger of her father's violence. She knew it was that that had given her the palpitations. When they were growing up he had never gone for her like he used to go for Harry and Ernest, because she was a girl but latterly he had begun to threaten her and say what he would do to her only for her dead mother's sake. And now she had nobody to protect her. Ernest was dead and Harry, who was in the church decorating business, was nearly always down somewhere in the country. Besides, the invariable squabble for money on Saturday nights had begun to weary her unspeakably. She always gave her entire wages – seven shillings – and Harry always sent up what he could but the trouble was to get any money from her father. He said she used to squander the money, that she had no head, that he wasn't going to give her his hard-earned money to throw about the streets, and much more, for he was usually fairly bad on Saturday night. In the end he would give her the money and ask her had she any intention of buying Sunday's dinner. Then she had to rush out as quickly as she could and do her marketing, holding her black leather purse tightly in her hand as she elbowed her way through the crowds and returning home late under her load of provisions. She had hard work to keep the house together and to see that the two young children who had been left to her charge went to school regularly and got their meals regularly. It was hard work – a hard life – but now that she was about to leave it she did not find it a wholly undesirable life.

She was about to explore another life with Frank. Frank was very kind, manly, open-hearted. She was to go away with him by the night-boat to be his wife and to live with him in Buenos Ayres where he had a home waiting for her. How well she remembered the first time she had seen him; he was lodging in a house on the main road where she used to visit. It seemed a few weeks ago. He was standing at the gate, his peaked cap pushed back on his head and his hair tumbled forward over a face of bronze. Then they had come to know each other. He used to meet her outside the Stores every evening and see her home. He took her to see The Bohemian Girl and she felt elated as she sat in an unaccustomed part of the theatre with him. He was awfully fond of music and sang a little. People knew that they were courting and, when he sang about the lass that loves a sailor, she always felt pleasantly confused. He used to call her Poppens out of fun. First of all it had been an excitement for her to have a fellow and then she had begun to like him. He had tales of distant countries. He had

started as a deck boy at a pound a month on a ship of the Allan Line going out to Canada. He told her the names of the ships he had been on and the names of the different services. He had sailed through the Straits of Magellan and he told her stories of the terrible Patagonians. He had fallen on his feet in Buenos Ayres, he said, and had come over to the old country just for a holiday. Of course, her father had found out the affair and had forbidden her to have anything to say to him.

‘I know these sailor chaps,’ he said.

One day he had quarrelled with Frank and after that she had to meet her lover secretly.

The evening deepened in the avenue. The white of two letters in her lap grew indistinct. One was to Harry; the other was to her father. Ernest had been her favourite but she liked Harry too. Her father was becoming old lately, she noticed; he would miss her. Sometimes he could be very nice. Not long before, when she had been laid up for a day, he had read her out a ghost story and made toast for her at the fire. Another day, when their mother was alive, they had all gone for a picnic to the Hill of Howth. She remembered her father putting on her mother’s bonnet to make the children laugh.

Her time was running out, but she continued to sit by the window, leaning her head against the window curtain, inhaling the odour of dusty cretonne. Down far in the avenue she could hear a street organ playing. She knew the air. Strange that it should come that very night to remind her of the promise to her mother, her promise to keep the home together as long as she could. She remembered the last night of her mother’s illness; she was again in the close dark room at the other side of the hall and outside she heard a melancholy air of Italy. The organ-player had been ordered to go away and given sixpence. She remembered her father strutting back into the sickroom saying:

‘Damned Italians! coming over here!’

As she mused the pitiful vision of her mother’s life laid its spell on the very quick of her being – that life of commonplace sacrifices closing in final craziness. She trembled as she heard again her mother’s voice saying constantly with foolish insistence:

‘Derevaun Seraun! Derevaun Seraun!’

She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror. Escape! She must escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life, perhaps love, too. But she wanted to live. Why should she be unhappy? She had a right to happiness. Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms. He would save her.

\*\*\*\*\*

She stood among the swaying crowd in the station at the North Wall. He held her hand and she knew that he was speaking to her, saying something about the passage over and over again. The station was full of soldiers with brown baggages. Through the wide doors of the sheds she caught a glimpse of the black mass of the boat, lying in beside the quay wall, with illumined portholes. She answered nothing. She felt her cheek pale and cold and, out of a maze of distress, she prayed to God to direct her, to show her what was her duty. The boat blew a long mournful whistle into the mist. If she went, tomorrow she would be on the sea with Frank, steaming towards Buenos Ayres. Their passage had been booked. Could she still draw back after all he had done for her? Her distress awoke a nausea in her body and she kept moving her lips in silent fervent prayer.

A bell clanged upon her heart. She felt him seize her hand:

'Come!'

All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her. She gripped with both hands at the iron railing.

'Come!'

No! No! No! It was impossible. Her hands clutched the iron in frenzy. Amid the seas she sent a cry of anguish.

'Eveline! Evvy!'

He rushed beyond the barrier and called to her to follow. He was shouted at to go on but he still called to her. She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition.

## **Ulysses (1922)**

Every life is many days, day after day. We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love. But always meeting ourselves. The playwright who wrote the folio of this world and wrote it badly (He gave us light first and the sun two days later), the lord of things as they are whom the most Roman of catholics call dio boia, hangman god, is doubtless all in all in all of us, ostler and butcher, and would be bawd and cuckold too but that in the economy of heaven, foretold by Hamlet, there are no more marriages, glorified man, an androgynous angel, being a wife unto himself.

[Episode 9]



### Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)

#### Modern Fiction, essay (1919)

[from *The Common Reader*]

...Our quarrel, then, is not with the classics, and if we speak of quarrelling with Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Galsworthy, it is partly that by the mere fact of their existence in the flesh their work has a living, breathing, everyday imperfection which bids us take what liberties with it we choose. But it is also true that while we thank them for a thousand gifts, we reserve our unconditional gratitude for Mr. Hardy, for Mr. Conrad ... Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Galsworthy have excited so many hopes and disappointed them so persistently that our gratitude largely takes the form of thanking them for having shown us what they might have done but have not done; what we certainly could not do, but as certainly, perhaps, do not wish to do. No single phrase will sum up the charge or grievance which we have to bring against a mass of work so large in its volume and embodying so many qualities, both admirable and the reverse. If we tried to formulate our meaning in one word we should say that these three writers are materialists. It is because they are concerned not with the spirit but with the body that they have disappointed us, and left us with the feeling that the sooner English fiction turns its back upon them, as politely as may be, and marches, if only into the desert, the better for its soul.

... The writer seems constrained, not by his own free will but by some powerful and unscrupulous tyrant who has him in thrall, to provide a **plot, to provide comedy, tragedy, love interest, and an air of probability** embalming the whole impeccably that if all his figures were to come to life they would find themselves dressed down to the last button of their coats in the fashion of the hour. The tyrant is obeyed; the novel is done to a turn. But sometimes, more and more often as time goes by, we suspect a momentary doubt, a spasm of rebellion, as the pages fill themselves in the customary way. **Is life like this? Must novels be like this?**

**Look within** and life, it seems, is very far from being 'like this'. Examine for a moment **an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions** – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. **From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; the moment of importance came not here but there;** so that, if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what



he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style, and perhaps not a single button sewn on as the Bond Street tailors would have it. **Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end.**

... there is no limit to the horizon, and that nothing—no ‘method’, no experiment, even of the wildest—is forbidden, but only falsity and pretence. ‘The proper stuff of fiction’ does not exist; **everything is the proper stuff of fiction, every feeling, every thought; every quality of brain and spirit** is drawn upon; no perception comes amiss. And if we can imagine the art of fiction come alive and standing in our midst, she would undoubtedly bid us break her and bully her, as well as honour and love her, for so her youth is renewed and her sovereignty assured.

### The Waves (1931)

[The Albatross, 1933]

p. 216

‘Now to sum up,’ said Bernard. ‘Now to explain to you the meaning of my life. Since we do not know each other (though I met you once, I think, on board a ship going to Africa), we can talk freely. The illusion is upon me that something adheres for a moment, has roundness, weight, depth, is completed. This, for the moment, seems to be my life. If it were possible, I would hand it you entire. I would break it off as one breaks off a bunch of grapes, I would say, ‘Take it. This is my life.’

But unfortunately, what I see (this globe, full of figures) you do not see. You see me, sitting at a table opposite you, a rather heavy, elderly man, grey at the temples. You see me take my napkin and unfold it. You see me pour myself out a glass of wine. And you see behind me the door opening, and people passing. But in order to make you understand, to give you my life, I must tell you a story – and there are so many, and so many – stories of childhood, stories of school, love, marriage, death, and so on; and none of them are true. Yet like children we tell each other stories, and to decorate them we make up these ridiculous, flamboyant, beautiful phrases. How tired I am of stories, how tired I am of phrases that come down beautifully with all their feet on the ground! Also, how I distrust neat designs of life that are drawn upon half-sheets of note-paper. I begin to long for some little language such as lovers use, broken words, inarticulate words, like the shuffling of feet on the pavement.

# The Exam Book !

A Christmas present to all teachers of literature, from the students themselves

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Before	1922									
	<p>Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as ‘chain’ or ‘train’ do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A ‘river’ or a ‘stream’ are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. <b>In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life.</b></p> <p>[William James, <i>The Stream of Consciousness</i>, 1892]</p>									
<p><b>STORY</b></p> <p><b>Common narrative convention</b> (mythologies, the Bible, 19 centuries of European literature...)</p> <p><b>Hero’s Life: Adventures</b> Story = Certain incidents happen to a certain hero in some place, at some point in time.</p> <p><b>The Fairy-Tale tradition</b> The <b>order of Time</b>: The Past causes a Present which imagines a Future</p> <p>‘the told’</p> <p><b>‘and then what?’</b> Narration of the future: SUSPENSE</p> <p>The explained hero <b>Social plot</b></p>	<p><b>WORD</b></p> <p>‘Stream-of-Consciousness’ ‘Interior Monologue’</p> <p>‘Epiphany’ – ‘Luminous Halo’ – ‘Objective Correlative’</p> <p><b>Hero’s Mind</b></p> <table><tr><td colspan="3">‘Here Comes Everybody’ (FW)</td></tr><tr><td>Here</td><td>Comes</td><td>Everybody’</td></tr><tr><td><b>This place</b> we all see</td><td><b>now</b></td><td>(could <b>happen</b> to any of us)</td></tr></table> <p><b>Refusal of the fairy tale</b> The unfinished Past</p> <p>‘the telling’</p> <p><b>‘how?’</b> The STORY <b>within</b> the WORD</p> <p>The encoded hero <b>Private plot</b>: To SAY or <b>NOT</b> to SAY</p>	‘Here Comes Everybody’ (FW)			Here	Comes	Everybody’	<b>This place</b> we all see	<b>now</b>	(could <b>happen</b> to any of us)
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**Aldous Huxley** (1894-1963)

**Brave New World** (1931)

[quoted from A Triad Grafton Book, 1988]

**p. 144**

The young man drew a deep breath. 'To think it should be coming true – what I've dreamt of all my life. Do you remember what Miranda says?'

'Who's Miranda?'

But the young man had evidently not heard the question. 'O wonder!' he was saying; and his eyes shone, his face was brightly flushed. 'How many godly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is!' The flush suddenly deepened; he was thinking of Lenina, of an angel in bottle-green viscose, lustrous with youth and skin food, plump, benevolently smiling. His voice faltered. 'O brave new world,' he began, then suddenly interrupted himself; the blood had left his cheeks; he was as pale as paper. 'Are you married to her?' he asked.

'Am I what?'

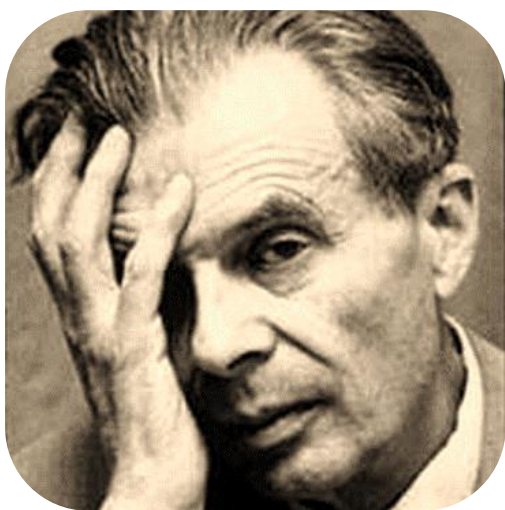
'Married. You know – for ever. They say 'for ever' in the Indian words; it can't be broken.'

'Ford, no!' Bernard couldn't help laughing.

John also laughed, but for another reason – laughed for pure joy.

'O brave new world,' he repeated. 'O brave new world that has such people in it. Let's start at once.'

'You have a most peculiar way of talking sometimes,' said Bernard, staring at the young man in perplexed astonishment. 'And, anyhow, hadn't you better wait till you actually see the new world?'





**George Orwell** (1903-1950)

**Nineteen Eighty-Four** (1949)

[quoted from A Signet Classic, 1961]

p. 26

The telescreen struck fourteen. He must leave in ten minutes. He had to be back at work at fourteen-thirty.

Curiously, the chiming of the hour seeming to have put new heart into him. He was a lonely ghost uttering a truth that nobody would ever hear. But so long, as he uttered it, in some obscure way the continuity was not broken. It was not by making yourself heard but by staying sane that you carried on the human heritage. He went back to the table, dipped his pen and wrote:

*To the future or to the past, to a time when thought is free, when men are different from one another and do not live alone – to a time when truth exists and what is done cannot be undone:*

*From the age of uniformity, from the age of solitude, from the age of Big Brother, from the age of double think – greetings!*

He was already dead, he reflected. It seemed to him that it was only now, when he had begun to be able to formulate his thoughts, that he had taken the decisive step. The consequences of every act are included in the act itself. He wrote:

*Thoughtcrime does not entail death: thoughtcrime IS death.*

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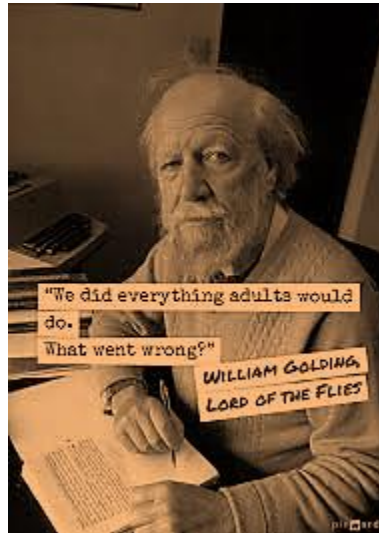
Now that he had recognized himself as a dead man it became important to stay alive as long as possible. Two fingers of his right hand were inkstained. It was exactly the kind of detail that might betray you. Some nosing zealot in the Ministry (a woman, probably; someone like the little sandy-haired woman or the dark-haired girl from the Fiction Department) might start wondering why he had been writing during the lunch interval, why he had used an old-fashioned pen, *what* he had been writing – and then drop a hint in the appropriate quarter. He went to the bathroom and carefully scrubbed the ink away with the gritty dark-brown soap which rasped your skin like sandpaper and was therefore well adapted for this purpose.

He put the diary away in the drawer. It was useless to think of hiding it, but he could at least make sure whether or not its existence had been discovered. A hair laid across the page-ends was too obvious. With the tip of his finger he picked up an identifiable grain of whitish dust and deposited it on the corner of the cover, where it was bound to be shaken off if the book was moved.

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### William Golding (1911-1993)

from **Lord of the Flies** (1954)

[quoted from Faber and Faber, 1969]

#### p. 222: End of the novel

The officer turned back to Ralph.

'We'll take you off. How many of you are there?'

Ralph shook his head. The officer looked past him to the group of painted boys.

'Who's boss here?'

'I am,' said Ralph loudly.

A little boy who wore the remains of an extraordinary black cap on his red hair and who carried the remains of a pair of spectacles at his waist, started forward, then changed his mind and stood still.

'We saw your smoke. And you don't know how many of you there are?'

'No, sir.'

'I should have thought,' said the officer as he visualized the search before him, 'I should have thought that a pack of British boys – you're all British, aren't you? – would have been able to put up a better show than that – I mean –'

'It was like that at first,' said Ralph, 'before things –'

He stopped.

'We were together then –'

The officer nodded helpfully.



'I know. Jolly good show. Like the Coral Island.'

Ralph looked at him dumbly. For a moment he had a fleeting picture of the strange glamour that had once invested the beaches. But the island was scorched up like dead wood – Simon was dead – and Jack had... The tears began to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob too. And in the middle of them, with filthy body, matted hair, and unwiped nose, Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy.

The officer, surrounded by these noises, was moved and a little embarrassed. He turned away to give them time to pull themselves together; and waited, allowing his eyes to rest on the trim cruiser in the distance.

## **Doris Lessing** (1919-2013)

from **The Fifth Child** (1988)

### **(opening paragraph)**

Harriet and David met each other at an office party neither had particularly wanted to go to, and both knew at once that this was what they had been waiting for. Someone conservative, old-fashioned, not to say obsolescent; timid, hard to please: this is what other people called them, but there was no end to the unaffectionate adjectives they earned. They defended a stubbornly held view of themselves, which was that they were ordinary and in the right of it, should not be criticized for emotional fastidiousness, abstemiousness, just because these were unfashionable qualities.

### **(end of the novel)**

Harriet sat there quietly, with the television sounds and their voices coming from next door; and she sometimes looked at Ben quickly, and then away; and she wondered how soon they would all simply go off, perhaps not knowing they would not return. She would sit there, beside the quiet soft shine of the pool that was the table, and wait for them to come back, but they would not come back.

And why should they stay in this country? They could easily take off and disappear into any number of the world's great cities, join the underworld there, live off their wits. Perhaps quite soon, in the new house she would be living in (alone) with David, she would be looking at the box, and there, in a shot on the News of Berlin, Madrid, Los Angeles, Buenos Aires, she would see Ben, standing rather apart from the crowd, staring at the camera with his goblin eyes, or searching the faces in the crowd for another of his own kind.



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**John Fowles** (1926-2005 )

from **The French Lieutenant's Woman**, (1969)

[quoted from Granada Publishing Limited, 1970]

p. 348

Now could I use you?

Now what could I do with you?

It is precisely, it has always seemed to me, the look an omnipotent god – if there were such an absurd thing – should be shown to have. Not at all what we think of as a divine look; but one of distinctly mean and dubious (as the theoreticians of the *nouveau roman* have pointed out) moral quality. I see this with particular clarity on the face, only too familiar to me, of the bearded man who stares at Charles. And I will keep up the pretence no longer.



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**David Lodge** (b. 1935)

from **Nice Work** (1988)

[quoted from Penguin Books]

p. 380

'I just wanted to get things straight,' he says, glancing at her apprehensively. 'I'm afraid I've been a bit foolish.'

'Don't worry about it.'

'I've been living in a dream. This business has woke me up. I must have been out of my mind imagining you would see anything in a middle-aged dwarf engineer.'

Robyn laughs.

'You're a very special person, Robyn,' he says solemnly. 'One day you'll meet a man who deserves to marry you.'

'I don't need a man to complete me,' she says, smiling.

'That's because you haven't met him yet.'



**Peter Ackroyd** (1949)

**The Plato Papers** (1999)

**p. 121**

So you refuse to believe that I travelled to a dark cave in which the ancient inhabitants of London dwelled? Citizens, listen to me. Please listen. Perhaps I was mistaken. I had felt and believed that I was travelling beneath the earth, but that may have been my own lack of imagination. Perhaps they are all around us, but we cannot see one another. Now you are laughing again. You prove my point. It may be that we refuse to see them. Or they refuse to see us. I am not sure. Somehow we have all become separated. But I know this; our world and their world are intermingled.



**Kazuo Ishiguro**(1954)

**Never Let Me Go** (2005)

England, late 1990s

Anyway, that's why I was so secretive about my tape. I even turned the cover inside out so you'd only see Judy and her cigarette if you opened up the plastic case. But the reason the tape meant so much to me had nothing to do with the cigarette, or even with the way Judy Bridgewater sang – she's one of those singers from her time, cocktail-bar stuff, not the sort of thing any of us at Hailsham liked. What made the tape so special for me was this one particular song: track number three, 'Never Let Me Go.'

It's slow and late night and American, and there's a bit that keeps coming round when Judy sings: 'Never let me go... Oh baby, baby... Never let me go...' I was eleven then, and hadn't listened to much music, but this one song, it really got to me. I always tried to keep the tape wound to just that spot so I could play the song whenever a chance came by.

[...]

What was so special about this song? Well, the thing was, I didn't used to listen properly to the words; I just waited for that bit that went: 'Baby, baby, never let me go...' And what I'd imagine was a woman who'd been told she couldn't have babies, who'd really, really wanted them all her life. Then there's a sort of miracle and she has a baby, and she holds this baby very close to her and walks around singing: 'Baby, never let me go...' partly because she's so happy, but also because she's so afraid something will happen, that the baby will get ill or be taken away from her. Even at the time, I realised this couldn't be right, that this interpretation didn't fit with the rest of the lyrics. But that wasn't an issue with me. The song was about what I said, and I used to listen to it again and again, on my own, whenever I got the chance.





## **Ted Hughes** (1930-1998)

### **Theology**

No, the serpent did not  
Seduce Eve to the apple.  
All that's simply  
Corruption of the facts.

Adam ate the apple.  
Eve ate Adam.  
The serpent ate Eve.  
This is the dark intestine.



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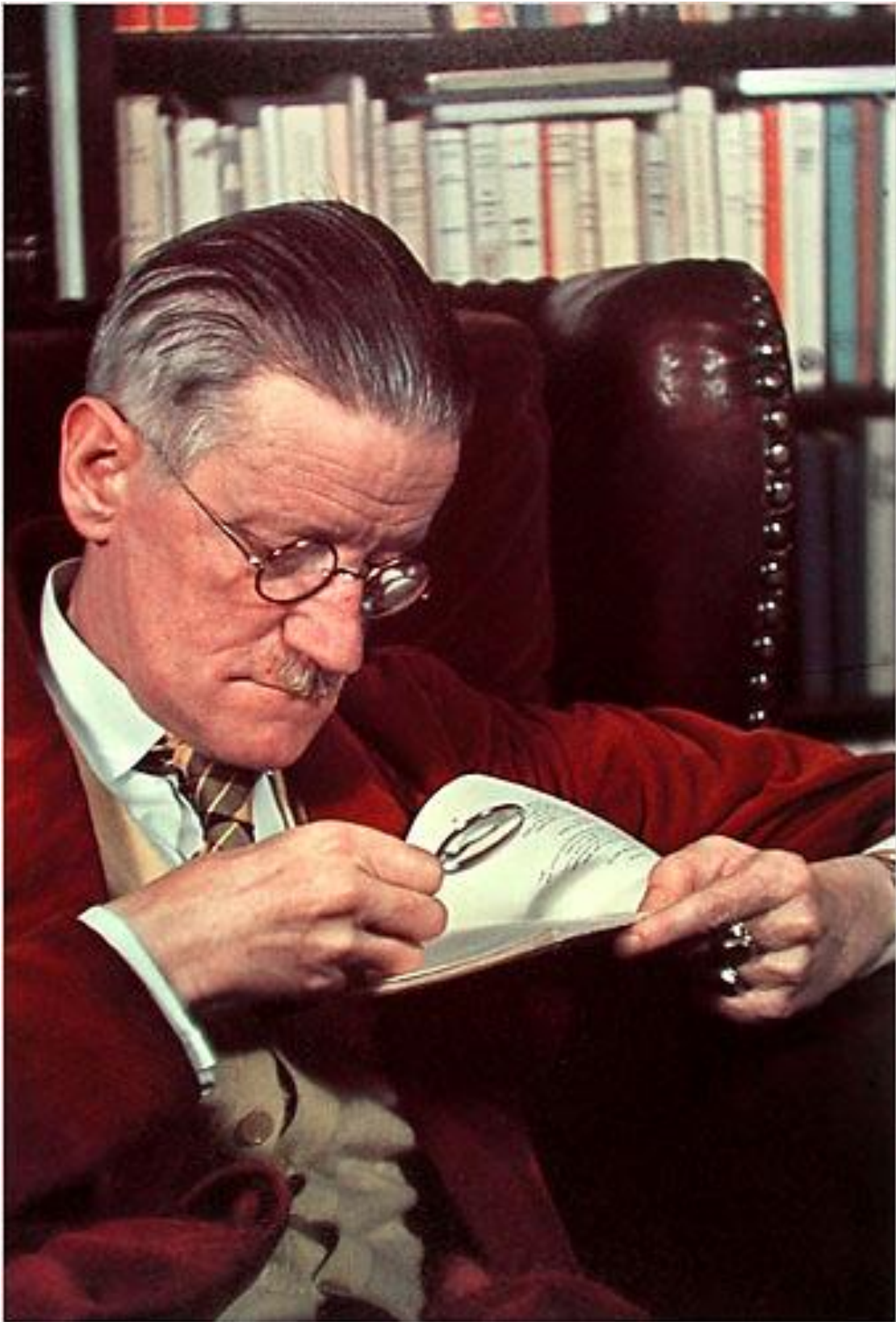
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?... Mode		AfterMode												
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'the told'	'the telling'	Shock the reader's expectations												
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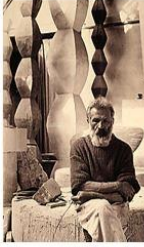
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