

R417 Aspects of the Novel 9.30 – 11am
OLLI Fall Session 2012 – Reston
Kay Menchel

Class 1 - Tuesday 9/18/12

Beginnings

Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.

Jane Austen *Emma* (1816)

There once lived in a sequestered part of the county of Devonshire, one Mr Godfrey Nickleby, a worthy gentleman, who taking it into his head rather late in life that he must get married, and not being young enough or rich enough to aspire to the hand of a lady of fortune, had wedded an old flame out of mere attachment, who in her turn had taken him for the same reason: thus two people who cannot afford to play cards for money, sometimes sit down to a quiet game for love.

Charles Dickens *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839)

“Was anyone hurt?”

“No one, I am thankful to say,” said Mrs Beaver, “except two housemaids who lost their heads and jumped through a glass roof into the paved court. They were in no danger. The fire never reached the bedrooms, I’m afraid. Still they are bound to need doing up, everything black with smoke and drenched in water and luckily they had that old-fashioned sort of extinguisher that ruins *everything*.”

Evelyn Waugh *A Handful of Dust* (1934)

It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.

George Orwell *1984*(1949)

Hale knew, before he had been in Brighton three hours, that they meant to murder him. With his inky fingers and his bitten nails, his manner cynical and nervous, anybody could tell he didn’t belong – belong to the early summer sun, the cool Whitsun wind off the sea, the holiday crowd. They came in by train from Victoria every five minutes, rocked down Queen’s Road standing on the tops of the little local trams, stepped off in bewildered multitudes into fresh and glittering air: the new silver paint sparkled on the piers, the cream houses ran away into the west like a pale Victorian water-colour; a race in miniature motors, a band playing, flower gardens in bloom below the front, an aeroplane advertising something for the health in pale vanishing clouds across the sky.

Graham Greene *Brighton Rock*(1938)

This is the saddest story I have ever heard. We had known the Ashburnhams for nine seasons of the town of Nauheim with an extreme intimacy – or, rather with an acquaintanceship as loose and easy and yet as close as a good glove’s with your hand. My wife and I knew Captain and Mrs Ashburnham as well as it was possible to know anybody, and yet, in another sense, we knew nothing at all about them. This is, I believe, a state of things only possible with English people of whom, till today, when I sit down to puzzle out what I know of this sad affair, I knew nothing whatever. Six months ago I had never been to England, and, certainly, I had never sounded the depths of an English heart. I had known the shallows.

Ford Maddox Ford *The Good Soldier*(1915)

Except for the Marabar Caves – and they are twenty miles off – the city of Chandrapore presents nothing extraordinary. Edged rather than washed by the river Ganges, it trails for a couple of miles along the bank, scarcely distinguishable from the rubbish it deposits so freely. There are no bathing-steps on the river front, as the Ganges happens not to be holy here; indeed there is no river front, and the bazaars shut out the wide and shifting panorama of the stream. The streets are mean, the temples ineffective, and though a few fine houses exist they are hidden away in gardens or down alleys whose filth deters all but the invited guest.

E.M. Forster *A Passage to India*(1924)

Three gulls wheel above the broken boxes, orangerinds, spoiled cabbage heads that heave between the splintered plank walls, the green waves spume under the round bow as the ferry, skidding on the tide, crashes, gulps the broken water, slides, settles slowly into the slip. Handwinches whirl with jingle of chains. Gates fold upwards, feet step out across the crack, men and women press through the manuresmelling wooden tunnel of the ferry-house, crushed and jostling like apples fed down a chute into a press

John Dos Passos *Manhattan Transfer*(1925)

The madness of an autumn prairie cold front coming through. You could feel it: something terrible was going to happen. The sun low in the sky, a minor light, a cooling star. Gust after gust of disorder. Trees restless, temperatures falling, the whole northern religion of things coming to an end. No children in the yards here. Shadows lengthening on yellowing zoysia. Red oaks and pin oaks and swamp white oaks rained acorns on houses with no mortgage. Storm windows shuddered in the empty bedrooms. And the drone and hiccup of a clothes dryer, the nasal contention of a leaf blower, the ripening of local apples in a paper bag, the smell of the gasoline with which Alfred Lambert had cleaned the paintbrush from his morning painting of the wicker love seat.

Jonathan Franzen *The Corrections* 2001

Chapters

Chapter Two

I grow up – Am hated by my relations – Sent to School – Neglected by my Grandfather – Maltreated by my Master – Seasoned to Adversity – I form Cabals against the Pedant – Am debarred access to my Grandfather – Hunted by his Heir – I demolish the Teeth of his Tutor.

Tobias Smollet *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748)

Chapter 31

Nothing much else happened, all the rest of that night.

Ray Bradbury *Something Wicked This Way Comes*(1962)

Chapter Five

If you have ever experienced something that feels strangely familiar, as if the exact same thing has happened to you before, then you are experiencing what the French call “déjà vu.” Like most French expressions – “ennui,” which is a fancy term for severe boredom, or “la petit mort,” which describes a feeling that part of you has died – “déjà vu” refers to something that is usually not very pleasant, because it is curious to feel as if you have heard or seen something that you have heard or seen before.

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Lemony Snicket *The Carnivorous Carnival*(2002)