

**R421 Aspects of the Novel**  
**OLLI Spring Session 2014 - Reston**  
**Kay Menchel**

**Class 2 - Thursday 4/2**

**Introducing a Character**

***Anna Karenina* Leo Tolstoy**

Vronsky followed the conductor to the carriage and at the door to the compartment stopped to allow a lady to leave. With the habitual flair of a worldly man, Vronsky determined from one glance at this lady's appearance that she belonged to high society. He excused himself and was about to enter the carriage, but felt a need to glance at her once more - not because she was very beautiful, not because of the elegance and modest grace that could be seen in her whole figure, but because there was something especially gentle and tender in the expression of her sweet-looking face as she stepped past him. As he looked back, she also turned her head. Her shining grey eyes, which seemed dark because of their thick lashes, rested amiably and attentively on his face, as if she recognized him, and at once wandered over the approaching crowd as though looking for someone. In that brief glance Vronsky had time to notice the restrained animation that played over her face and fluttered between her shining eyes and the barely noticeable smile that curved her red lips. It was as if a surplus of something so overflowed her being that it expressed itself beyond her will, now in the brightness of her glance, now in her smile. She deliberately extinguished the light in her eyes, but it shone against her will in a barely noticeable smile.

***Adam Bede* George Eliot**

Such a voice could only come from a broad chest, and the broad chest belonged to a large-boned muscular man nearly six feet high, with a back so flat and a head so well poised that when he drew himself up to take a more distant survey of his work, he had the air of a soldier standing at ease. The sleeve rolled up above the elbow showed an arm that was likely to win the prize for feats of strength; yet the long supple hand with its broad fingertips, looked ready for works of skill. In his tall stalwartness Adam Bede was a Saxon, and justified his name; but the jet-black hair, made the more noticeable by its contrast with the light paper cap, and the keen glance of the dark eyes that shone from under strongly marked, prominent, and mobile eyebrows, indicated a mixture of Celtic blood. The face was large and roughly hewn, and when in repose had no other beauty than such as belongs to an expression of good-humoured honest intelligence.

**Dialogue**

### ***The Uncommon Reader* Alan Bennett**

At Windsor it was the evening of the state banquet and as the president of France took his place beside Her Majesty, the royal family formed up behind and the procession slowly moved off and through into the Waterloo Chamber.

“Now that I have you to myself,” said the Queen, smiling to left and right as they glided through the glittering throng, “I’ve been longing to ask you about the writer Jean Genet.”

“Ah,” said the president. “Oui.”

The Marseillaise and the national anthem made for a pause in the proceedings, but when they had taken their seats He Majesty turned to the president and resumed.

“Homosexual and jailbird, was he nevertheless as bad as he was painted? Or, more to the point,” and she took up her soup spoon, “was he as good?”

Unbriefed on the subject of the glabrous playwright and novelist, the president looked wildly about for his minister of culture. But she was being addressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

“Jean Genet,” said the Queen again, helpfully. “Vous le connaissez?”

“Bien sûr,” said the president.

“Il m’intéresse,” said the Queen.

“Vraiment?” The president put down his spoon. It was going to be a long evening.

### **Point of View**

#### ***How Right You Are, Jeeves* P.G. Wodehouse**

Jeeves placed the sizzling eggs and b. on the breakfast table, and Reginald (Kipper) Herring and I. licking the lips, squared our elbows and got down to it. A lifelong buddy of mine, theis Herring, linked to me by what are called imperishable memories. Years ago, when striplings, he and I had done a stretch together at Malvern House, Bramley-on-Sea, the preparatory school conducted by that prince of stinkers, Aubrey Upjohn, M.A., and had frequently stood side by side in the Upjohn study awaiting the receipt of six of the juiciest from a cane of the type that biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder, as the fellow said. So we were, you might say, rather like a couple of old sweats who had fought shoulder to shoulder on Crispin’s Day, if I’ve got the name right.

#### ***If On A Winter’s Night A Traveler* Italo Calvino**

Find the most comfortable position: seated, stretched out, curled up, or lying flat. Flat on your back, on your side, on your stomach. In an easy chair, on the sofa, in the rocker, the deck chair, on the hassock. In the hammock, if you have a hammock. On top of your bed, of course, or in the bed. You can even stand on your hands, head down in the yoga position. With the book upside down naturally.