

R421 Aspects of the Novel
OLLI Spring Session 2015 - Reston
Kay Menchel

Class 8 - Thursday 5/14

Endings

***The Gambler* Fyodor Dostoevsky**

Just remember what happened to me seven months ago in Roulettenberg, before I lost everything. Oh, it was a beautiful instance of determination... I lost everything I had then... I walked out of the Casino, and suddenly discovered that I still had one gulden in my waistcoat pocket. Well, that'll pay for dinner at least, I said to myself. But after I had taken a hundred steps or so, I changed my mind and went back to the roulette table. I staked that gulden on *manque* (yes, that time I played *manque*). And its true, it gives you a special feeling when you are all alone in a foreign country, far away from your home and your friends, not knowing whether you're going to eat that day, and gambling your very last gulden! I won, and twenty minutes later I left the Casino with one hundred and seventy gulden in my pocket. It's the absolute truth! That's what your very last gulden can sometimes do for you! But suppose I had lost heart then? What if I hadn't dared to risk?...

Tomorrow, tomorrow, it will all be over!

***Manhattan Transfer* John Dos Passos**

Sunrise finds him walking along a cement road between dumping grounds full of smoking rubbishpiles. The sun shines redly through the mist on rusty donkeyengines, skeleton trucks, wishbones of Fords, shapeless masses of corroding metal. Jimmy walks fast to get out of the smell. He is hungry; his shoes are beginning to raise blisters on his big toes. At a cross-road where the warning light still winks and winks, is a gasoline station, opposite it the Lightning Bug lunch-wagon. Carefully he spends his last quarter on breakfast. That leaves him three cents for good luck, or bad for that matter. A huge furniture truck, shiny and yellow, has drawn up outside.

"Say will you give me a lift?" he asks the redhaired man at the wheel.

"How fur ye goin?"

"I dunno...Pretty far."

***Wonder Boys* Michael Chabon**

He has known a number of famous and admired authors in his time, and he likes to caution and amuse his young companions with case histories of the incurable disease that leads all good writers to suffer, inevitably, the quintessential fate of their characters. The young men listen dutifully, for the most part, and from time to time some of them even take the trouble to go over to the college library, and dig up one or another of his novels, and crouch there, among the stacks, flipping impatiently through the pages, looking for parts that sound true.

***The Lifeboat* Charlotte Rogan**

I was wearing a new silk dress and it rustled magnificently when I stood up to go before the allotted hour was up. I said, "You will have to find your answers without me," which made him tap his fountain pen so hard in frustration that it left a large blot of ink on his compulsive little page of notes. If I had not felt so sorry for him, I would have laughed out loud at his desire to pin everything down, at his naïveté, at his childish desire to know.