Projected Schedule of Lectures

Oct. 18: objective and workload of the course; introduction to the 20th century;

Oct. 25: aestheticism; naturalism; turn-of-the-century developments;

Nov. 1: the Edwardian period: Galsworthy, Bennett, and Wells; attacks on “materialism” (read Forster, *Howards End*);


Nov. 15: the thirties and forties: realism; political wiring; escapist literature; war as a topic; nostalgia for the past;

Nov. 22: (Prüfungswoche! – no class)

Nov. 29: class and social change; post-war Britain; Angry Young Men/the “Movement”; absurd drama; (read Osborne, *Look back in Anger*, and Pinter, *The Homecoming*);


Dec. 13: gender and sexuality: women writers of the 1960s; second-wave feminism; Gay and Lesbian literature; post-feminism; (read Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*; Churchill, *Top Girls*);

Dec. 20: fiction of the 1980s and 1990s: social criticism; approaching history in new ways; the return to story-telling; (read Barnes, “The Stowaway”);

Jan. 10: political writing; the question of national identity (read Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*);


Jan. 24: generic crossovers in British fiction (read Byatt, *Possession*);

Jan. 31: reviewing of material: questions and answers;
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY


Text Passages

[1] Idea for another novel shaping, and may do well to write it down. In a prelude Helen goes to stop with the Wilcoxes, gets engaged to the son & breaks it off immediately, for her instinct sees the spiritual cleavage between the families. Mrs Wilcox dies, and some 2 years later Margaret gets engaged to the widower, a man impeccable publicly. They are accosted by a prostitute. M., because she understands & is great, marries him. The wrong thing to do. He, because he is little, cannot bear to be understood, & goes to the bad. He is frank, kind, & attractive. But he dreads ideas.

(E.M. Forster, diary, 26 June 1908)

[2] [...] ‘Margaret, if I may interfere, don’t be taken by surprise. What do you think of the Wilcoxes? Are they our sort? Are the likely people? Could they appreciate Helen, who is to my mind a very special sort of person? Do they care about Literature and Art? That is most important when you come to think of it. Most important.

(E.M. Forster, Howards End)

[3] The truth was that she [Helen] had fallen in love, not with an individual, but with a family.

Before Paul arrived she had, as it were, been tuned into his key. The energy of the Wilcoxes had fascinated her, had created new images of beauty in her responsive mind. To be all day with them in the open air, to sleep at night under their roof, had seemed the supreme joy of her life, and had led to that abandonment of personality that is a possible prelude to love. She had liked giving in to Mr Wilcox, or Evie, or Charles; she had liked being told that her notions of life were sheltered or academic; that Equality was nonsense, Votes for Women nonsense, Socialism nonsense, Art and Literature, except when conducive to strengthening the character, nonsense. One by one the Schlegel fetishes had been overthrown, and, though professing to defend them, she had rejoiced. When Mr Wilcox said that one sound man of business did more good to the world than a dozen of your social reformers, she had swallowed the curious assertion with a gasp, and had leant back luxuriously among the cushions of his motor-car.

(E.M. Forster, Howards End)

[4] We are not concerned with the very poor. They are unthinkable, and only to be approached by the statistician or the poet. This story deals with gentlefolk, or with those who are obliged to pretend they are gentlefolk.

The boy, Leonard Bast, stood at the extreme verge of gentility. He was not in the abyss, but he could see it, and at times people whom he knew had dropped in, and counted no more. He knew that he was poor, and would admit it; he would sooner have died than confess any inferiority to the rich. This may be splendid of him. But he was inferior to most rich people, there is not the least doubt of it. He was not as courteous as the average rich man, nor as intelligent, nor as healthy, nor as lovable. His mind and his body had been alike underfed, because he was poor, and because he was modern they were always craving better food. Had he lived some centuries ago, in the brightly coloured civilizations of the past, he would have had a definite status, his
rank and income would have corresponded. But in his day the angel of Democracy had arisen, enshadowing the classes with leathern wings, and proclaiming, ‘All men are equal – all men, that is to say, who possess umbrellas,’ and so he was obliged to assert gentility, lest he slipped into the abyss where nothing counts, and the statements of Democracy are inaudible.  

(E.M. Forster, *Howards End*)

[5] [...] It is rather a moment when the commentator should step forward. Ought the Wilcoxes to have offered their home to Margaret? I think not. The appeal was too flimsy. It was not legal; it had been written in illness, and under the spell of a sudden friendship; it was contrary to the dead woman’s intentions in the past, contrary to her very nature, so far as that nature was understood by them. To them Howards End was a house: they could not know that to her it had been a spirit, for which she sought a spiritual heir. And – pushing one step further in these mists – may they not have decided even better than they supposed? Is it credible that the possessions of the spirit can be bequeathed at all? Has the soul offspring? A wych-elm tree, a vine, a wisp of hay with dew on it – can passion for such things be transmitted where there is no bond of blood? No; the Wilcoxes are not to be blamed. The problem is too terrific, and they could not even perceive a problem. No; it is natural and fitting that after due debate they should tear the note up and throw it onto their dining-room fire. The practical moralist may acquit them absolutely. He who strives to look deeper may acquit them – almost. For one hard fact remains. They did neglect a personal appeal. The woman who had died did say to them, ‘Do this,’ and they answered, ‘We will not.’  

(E.M. Forster, *Howards End*)

[6] ‘[...] The real point is that there is the widest gulf between my love-making and yours. Yours was romance; mine will be prose. I’m not running it down – a very good kind of prose, but well considered, well thought out. For instance, I know all Mr Wilcox’s faults. He’s afraid of emotion. He cares too much about success, too little about the past. His sympathy lacks poetry, and so isn’t sympathy really. I’d even say – she looked at the shining lagoons – ‘that, spiritually, he’s not as honest as I am. Doesn’t that satisfy you?’ 

(E.M. Forster, *Howards End*)

[7] ‘[...] I have my children and the memory of my dear wife to consider. I am sorry, but see that she leaves my house at once.’  
‘You have mentioned Mrs Wilcox.’  
‘I beg your pardon?’  
‘A rare occurrence. In reply, may I mention Mrs Bast?’  
‘You have not been yourself all day,’ said Henry, and rose from his seat with his face unmoved. Margaret rushed at him and seized both his hands. She was transfigured.  
‘Not any more of this!’ she cried. ‘You shall see the connection if it kills you, Henry! You have had a mistress – I forgave you. My sister has had a lover – you drive her from the house. Do you see the connection? Stupid, hypocritical, cruel – oh contemptible! – a man who insults his wife when she’s alive and chants with her memory when she’s dead. A man who ruins a woman for his pleasure, and casts her off to ruin other men. And gives financial advice, and then says he’s not responsible. These men are you. You can’t recognize them, because you cannot connect. I’ve had enough of your unweeded kindness. I’ve spoilt you long enough. All your life you
have been spoilt. Mrs Wilcox spoilt you. No one has ever told you what you are – muddled, criminally muddled. Men like you use repentance as a blind, so don’t repent. Only say to yourself: “What Helen has done, I’ve done.”

(E.M. Forster, *Howards End*)

[8] For they might be parted for hundreds of years, she and Peter; she never wrote a letter and his were dry sticks; but suddenly it would come over her, If he were with me now what would he say? – some days, some sights bringing him back to her calmly, without the old bitterness; which perhaps was the reward of having cared for people; they came back in the middle of St. James’s Park on a fine morning – indeed they did. But Peter – however beautiful the day might be, and the trees and the grass, and the little girl in pink – Peter never saw a thing of all that. He would put on his spectacles, if she told him to; he would look. It was the state of the world that interested him; Wagner, Pope’s poetry, people’s characters eternally, and the defects of her own soul. How he scolded her! How they argued! She would marry a Prime Minister and stand at the top of a staircase; the perfect hostess he called her (she had cried over it in her bedroom), she had the makings of the perfect hostess, he said.

(Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*)

[9] Septimus Warren Smith, aged about thirty, pale-faced, beak-nosed, wearing brown shoes and a shabby overcoat, with hazel eyes which had that look of apprehension in them which makes complete strangers apprehensive too. The world has raised its whip; where will it descend?

Everything had come to a standstill. The throb of the motor engines sounded like a pulse irregularly drumming through an entire body. The sun became extraordinarily hot because the motor car had stopped outside of Mulberry’s shop window; old ladies on the tops of omnibuses spread their black parasols; here a green, here a red parasol opened with a pop. Mrs Dalloway, coming to the window with her arms full of sweat peas, looked out with her little pink face pursed in enquiry. Every one looked at the motor car. Septimus looked. Boys on bicycles sprang off. Traffic accumulated. And there the motor car stood, with drawn blinds, and upon them a curious pattern like a tree, Septimus thought, and this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst into flames, terrified him. The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames. It is I who am blocking the way, he thought. Was he not being looked at and pointed at; was he not weighted there, rooted to the pavement, for a purpose? But for what purpose? (Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*)

[10] That was one of the bonds between Sally and himself. There was a garden where they used to walk, a walled-in place, with rose-bushes and giant cauliflowers – he could remember Sally tearing off a rose, stopping to exclaim at the beauty of the cabbage leaves in the moonlight (it was extraordinary how vividly it all came back to him, things he hadn’t thought of for years), while she implored him, half laughing of course, to carry off Clarissa, to save her from the Hughs and Dalloways and all the other ‘perfect gentlemen’ who would ‘stifle her soul’ (she wrote reams of poetry in those days), make a mere hostess of her, encourage her worldliness. But one must do Clarissa justice. She wasn’t going to marry Hugh anyhow. She had a perfectly clear notion of what she wanted. Her emotions were all on the surface. Beneath, she was
very shrewd – a far better judge of character than Sally, for instance, and with it all, purely feminine; with that extraordinary gift, a woman’s gift, of making a world of her own wherever she happened to be. She came into a room; she stood, as he had often seen her, in a doorway with lots of people round her. But it was Clarissa one remembered. Not that she was striking; not beautiful at all; there was nothing picturesque about her; she never said anything specially clever; there she was, however; there she was.  

(Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*)

[11] Holmes was coming upstairs. Holmes would burst open the door. Holmes would say, ‘In a funk, eh?’ Holmes would get him. But no; not Holmes; not Bradshaw. Getting up rather unsteadily, hopping indeed from foot to foot, he considered Mrs. Filmer’s nice clean bread-knife with ‘Bread’ carved on the handle. Ah, but one mustn’t spoil that. The gas fire? But it was too late now. Holmes was coming. Razors he might have got, but Rezia, who always did that sort of thing, had packed them. There remained only the window; the tiresome, the troublesome, and rather melodramatic business of opening the window and throwing himself out. It was their idea of tragedy, not his or Rezia’s (for she was with him). Holmes and Bradshaw liked that sort of thing. (He sat on the sill). But he would wait till the very last moment. He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot. Only human beings? Coming down the staircase opposite an old man stopped and stared at him, Holmes was at the door. ‘I’ll give it you!’ he cried, and flung himself vigorously, violently down on to Mrs. Filmer’s arca railings.  

(Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*)

[12] It held, foolish as the idea was, something of her own in it, this country sky, this sky above Westminster. She parted the curtains; she looked. Oh, but how surprising! – in the room opposite the old lady stared straight at her! She was going to bed. And the sky. It will be a solemn sky, she had thought, it will be a dusky sky, turning away its cheek in beauty. […] Could she see her? It was fascinating, with people still laughing and shouting in the drawing-room, to watch that old woman, quite quietly, going to bed alone. She pulled the blind now. The clock began striking. The young man had killed himself; but she did not pity him; with the clock striking the hour, one, two, three, she did not pity him, with all this going on. There! the old lady had put out her light! the whole house was dark now with this going on, she repeated, and the words came to her, Fear no more the heat of the sun. She must go back to them. But what an extraordinary night! She felt somehow very like him – the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away while they went on living. The clock was striking. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. But she must go back. She must assemble. She must find Peter and Sally. And she came in from the little room.  

(Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*)

[13] 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. 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 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 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.

(James Joyce, “Eveline”, from Dubliners)

It was after nine o’clock when he left the shop. The night was cold and gloomy. He entered the Park by the first gate and walked alone under the gaunt trees. He walked through the bleak alleys where they had walked four years before. She seemed to be near him in the darkness. At moments he seemed to feel her voice touch his ear, her hand touch his. He stood still to listen. Why had he withheld life from her? Why had he sentenced her to death? He felt his moral nature falling to pieces.

When he gained the crest of the Magazine Hill he halted and looked along the river towards Dublin, the lights of which burned redly and hospitably in the cold night. He looked down the slope and, at the base, in the shadow of the wall of the Park, he saw some human figures lying. Those venal and furtive loves filled him with despair. He gnawed the rectitude of his life; he felt that he had been outcast from life’s feast. One human being had seemed to love him and he had denied her life and happiness: she had sentenced him to ignominy, a death of shame. He knew that the prostrate creatures down by the wall were watching him and wished him gone. No one wanted him; he was outcast from life’s feast. […] He began to doubt the reality of what memory told him. He halted under a tree and allowed the rhythm to die away. He could not feel her near from in the darkness nor her voice touch his ear. He waited for some minutes listening. He could hear nothing: the night was perfectly silent. He listened again: perfectly silent. He felt that he was alone.

(James Joyce, “A Painful Case”, from Dubliners)

I agree that Look Back in Anger is likely to remain a minority taste. What matters, however, is the size of the minority. I estimate it at roughly 6,733,000, which is the number of people in this country between the ages of twenty and thirty. And this figure will doubtless be swelled by refugees from other age-groups who are curious to know precisely what the contemporary young pup is thinking and feeling. I doubt I could love anyone who did not wish to see Look Back in Anger. It is the best young play of its decade.    (Kenneth Tynan, review of play, May 1956)
[16] **JIMMY:** [...] Oh, yes. There’s a Vaughan Williams. Well, that’s something, anyway. Something strong, something simple. Something English. I suppose people like me aren’t supposed to be patriotic. Somebody said – what was it – we get our cooking from Paris (that’s a laugh), our politics from Moscow, and our morals from Port Said. Something like that, anyway. Who was it? (Pause.) Well, you wouldn’t know anyway. I hate to admit it, but I think I understand how her Daddy must have felt when he came back from India, after all those years away. The old Edwardian brigade do make their little brief world look pretty tempting. All homemade cakes and croquet, bright ideas, bright uniforms. Always the same picture: high summer, the long days in the sun, slim volumes of verse, crisp linen, the smell of starch. What a romantic picture. Phoney too, of course. It must have rained sometimes. Still, even I regret it somehow, phoney or not. If you’ve no world of your own, it’s rather pleasant to regret the passing of someone else’s. I must be getting sentimental. But I must say it’s pretty dreary living in the American Age – unless you’re an American of course. Perhaps all our children will be Americans. That’s a thought isn’t? (John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*)

[17] **ALISON:** The game we play: bears and squirrels, squirrels and bears. *Helena looks rather blank.*

Yes, it’s quite mad, I know. Quite mad. (*Picks up the two animals.*) That’s him. …And that’s me. …

**HELENA:** I didn’t realise he was a bit fey, as well as everything else!

**ALISON:** Oh, there’s nothing fey about Jimmy. It’s just all we seem to have left. Or had left. Even bears and squirrels seem to have gone their own ways now.

**HELENA:** Since I arrived?

**ALISON:** It started during the first months we had alone together – after Hugh went abroad. It was the only way of escaping everything – a sort of unholy priest-hole of being animals to one another. We could become little furry creatures in their own cosy zoo for two. A silly symphony for people who couldn’t bear the pain of being human beings any longer. And now, even they are dead, poor little animals. They were all love, and no brains. (*Puts them back.*)

(John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*, Act II, sc. i)

[18] **JIMMY:** Why; why, why, why do we let these women bleed us to death? Have you ever had a letter, an on it is franked “Please Give Your Blood Generously”? Well, the Postmaster-General does that, on behalf of all the women of he world. I suppose people of our generation aren’t able to die for good causes any longer. We had all that done for us, in the thirties and the forties, when we were still kids. (*In his familiar, semi-serious mood.*) There aren’t any good, brave causes left. If the big bang does come, and we all get killed off, it won’t be in aid of the old-fashioned, grand design. It’ll just be for the Brave New-nothing-very-much-thank-you. About as pointless and inglorious as stepping in front of a bus. No, there’s nothing left for it, me boy, but to let yourself be butchered by the women. (John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*, Act III, sc. i)
ALISON: I’m … sorry. I’ll go now.

JIMMY: You never sent any flowers to the funeral. Not – a little bunch of flowers. You had to deny me that too, didn’t you?

She starts to move, but again he speaks.
The injustice of it is almost perfect! The wrong people going hungry, the wrong people being loved. The wrong people dying!

She moves to the gas stove. He turns to face her.

Was I really wrong to believe that there’s a – a kind of – burning virility of mind and spirit that looks for something as powerful as itself? The heaviest, strongest creatures in this world seem to be the loneliest. Like the old bear, following his own breath in the dark forest. There’s no warm pack, no herd to comfort him. That voice that cries out doesn’t have to be a weakling’s, does it?

He moves in a little.

[…] I may be a lost cause, but I thought if you loved me, it needn’t matter.

She is crying silently. He moves down to face her.

ALISON: It doesn’t matter! I was wrong, I was wrong! I don’t want to be neutral, I don’t want to be a saint. I want to be a lost cause. I want to be corrupt and futile!

All he can do is watch her helplessly. Her voice takes on a little strength, and rises.

Don’t you understand? It’s gone! It’s gone! That – that helpless human being inside my body. I thought it was so safe, so secure in there. Nothing could take it from me. It was mine, my responsibility. But it’s lost.

She slides down against the leg of the table to the floor.

All I wanted was to die. I never knew what it was like. I didn’t know it could be like that! I was in pain, and all I could think of was you, and what I’d lost. (Scarcely able to speak.) I thought: if only – if only he could see me now, so stupid, and ugly and ridiculous. That is what he’s been longing for me to feel. This is what he wants to splash about in! I’m in the fire, and I’m burning, and all I want is to die! It’s cost him his child, and any others I might have had! But what does it matter – this is what he wanted from me!

(John Osborne, Look Back in Anger, Act III, sc. ii)

I do not know. This story I am telling is all imagination. These characters I create never existed outside my own mind. If I have pretended until now to know my characters’ minds and innermost thoughts, it is because I am writing in (just as I have assumed some of the vocabulary and ‘voice’ of) a convention universally accepted at the time of my story: that the novelist stands next to God. He may not know all, yet he tries to pretend that he does. But I live in the age of Alain Robbe-Grillet and Roland Barthes; if this is a novel, it cannot be a novel in the modern sense of the word.

So perhaps I am writing a transposed autobiography; perhaps I now live in one of the houses I have brought into the fiction; perhaps Charles is myself disguised. Perhaps it is only a game. Modern women like Sarah exist, and I never understood them. Or perhaps I am trying to pass off a concealed book of essays on you.

(John Fowles, The French Lieutenant’s Woman)
And now, having brought this fiction to a thoroughly traditional ending, I had better explain that, although all I have described in the last two chapters happened, it did not quite happen in the way you may have been led to believe.

I said earlier, that we are all poets, though not all of us write poetry; and so are we all novelists, that is, we have a habit of writing fictional futures for ourselves, although perhaps today we incline more to put ourselves into a film. We screen in our minds hypotheses about how we might behave, about what might happen to us; and these novelistic or cinematic hypotheses often have very much more effect on how we actually do behave, when the real future becomes the present, than we generally allow.

Charles was no exception; and the last few pages you have read are not what happened, but what he spent the hours between London and Exeter imagining might happen. (John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*)

Now the question I am asking, as I stare at Charles, is not quite the same as the two above. But rather, what the devil am I going to do with you? I have already thought of ending Charles’s career here and now; of leaving him to eternity on his way to London. But the conventions of Victorian fiction allow, allowed no place for the open, the inconclusive ending; and I preached earlier of the freedom characters must be given. My problem is simple – what Charles wants is clear? It is indeed. But what the protagonist wants is not so clear; and I am not at all sure where she is at the moment. Of course if these two were two fragments of real life, instead of two figments of my imagination, the issue of the dilemma is obvious: the one want combats the other, and fails or succeeds, as the actuality may be. Fiction usually pretends to conform to reality: the writer puts the conflicting wants in the ring and then describes the fight – but in fact fixes the fight, letting that want he himself favours win. And we judge writers of fiction both by the skill they show in fixing the fights (in other words, in persuading us that they were not fixed) or by the kind of fighter they fix in favour of: the good one, the tragic one, the evil one, the funny one, and so on.

But the chief argument for fight-fixing is to show one’s readers what one thinks of the world around us – whether one is a pessimist, an optimist, what you will. I have pretended to slip back into 1867; but of course that year is in reality a century past. It is futile to show optimism or pessimism, or anything else about it, because we know what has happened since.

So I continue to stare at Charles and see no reason this time for fixing the fight upon which he is about to engage. That leaves me with two alternatives. I let the fight proceed and take no more than a recording part in it; or I take both sides in it. I stare at that vaguely effete but not completely futile face. And as we near London, I think I see a solution; that is, I see the dilemma is false. The only way I can take no part in the fight is to show to versions of it. That leaves me with only one problem: I cannot give both versions at once, yet whichever is second will seem, so strong is the tyranny of the last chapter, the final, the ‘real’ version. (John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*)

Oranges is an experimental novel: its interests are anti-linear. It offers a complicated narrative structure disguised as a simple one, it employs a very large vocabulary and a beguilingly straight-forward syntax. This means that you can read in spirals. As a shape, the spiral is fluid and allows infinite movement. But is it movement backwards or forwards? Is it height or depth? Draw several, each drifting into each and all this
will be clear. [...] I don’t really see the point of reading in straight lines. We don’t think like that and we don’t live like that. Our mental processes are closer to a maze than a motorway, every turning yields another turning, not symmetrical, not obvious. Not chaos either. A sophisticated mathematic equation made harder to unravel because X and Y have different values on different days.

(Jeanette Winterson, Introduction to Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit)

[24] [...] There were two women I knew who didn’t have any husbands at all; they were old though, as old as my mother. They ran the paper shop and sometimes, on a Wednesday, they gave me a banana bar with my comic. I liked them a lot, and talked about them a lot to my mother. One day they asked me if I’d like to go to the seaside with them. I ran home, gabbled it out, and was busy emptying my money box to buy a new spade, when my mother said firmly and forever, no. I couldn’t understand why not, and she wouldn’t explain. She didn’t even let me go back to say I couldn’t. Then she cancelled my comic and told me to collect it from another shop, further away. I was sorry about that. I never got a banana bar from Grimsby’s. A couple of weeks later I hear her telling Mrs White about it. She said they dealt in unnatural passions. I thought she meant they put chemicals in their sweets.

(Jeanette Winterson, Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit)

[25] I didn’t despair; I did Streetcar Named Desire out of pipe-cleaners, an embroidered cushion cover of Bette Davis in Now Voyager, an origami William Tell with real apple, and best of all, a potato sculpture of Henry Ford outside the Chrysler building in New York. An impressive list by any standards, but I was as hopeful and as foolish as King Canute forcing back the waves. Whatever I did made no impression at all, except to enrage my mother because I had abandoned biblical themes. She quite liked Now Voyager, because she had done her courting during that film, but she thought I should have made the Tower of Babel out of origami, even though I told her it would be too difficult.

‘The Lord walked on the water,’ was all she said when I tried to explain But she had her own problems. A lot of the missionaries had been eaten, which meant she had to explain to their families.

‘It’s not easy,’ she said, ‘even though it’s for the Lord.’

(Jeanette Winterson, Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit)

[26] Slowly she put on her coat, and picked up her little Bible, the travel size one. We set off together down the street.

‘I’ve got to talk to you, have you got time?’

‘Yes,’ she said, ‘let’s have an orange.’

I tried to explain my dream, and the beast theory, and how much I hated Uncle Bill. All the time my mother walked along humming What a Friend We Have in Jesus, and peeling me an orange. She stopped peeling and I stopped talking about the same time. I had one last question.

‘Why did you marry my dad?’

She looked at me closely.

‘Don’t be silly.’

‘I’m not being silly.’
‘We had to have something for you, and besides, he’s a good man, though I know he’s not one to push himself. But don’t you worry, you’re dedicated to the Lord, I put you down for missionary school as soon as we got you. Remember Jane Eyre and St John Rivers.’ A faraway look came into her eye.

I did remember, but what my mother didn’t know was that I now knew she had rewritten the ending. *Jane Eyre* was her favourite non-Bible book, and she read it to me over and over again, when I was very small. I couldn’t read it, but I knew where the pages turned. Later, literate and curious, I had decided to read it for myself. A sort of nostalgic pilgrimage. I found out, that dreadful day in a back corner of the library, that Jane doesn’t marry St John at all, that she goes back to Mr Rochester. It was like the day I discovered my adoption papers while searching for a pack of playing cards. I have never since played cards, and I have never since read *Jane Eyre*.

(Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*)

[27] The days lingered on in a kind of numbness, me in ecclesiastical quarantine, them in a state of fear and anticipation. By Sunday the pastor had word back from the council. The real problem, it seemed, was going against the teachings of St Paul, and allowing women power in the church. Our branch of the church had never thought about it, we’d always had strong women, and the women organized everything. Some of us could preach, and quite plainly, in my case, the church was full because of it. There was uproar, then a curious thing happened. My mother stood up and said she believed this was right: that women had specific circumstances for their ministry, that the Sunday School was one of them, the Sisterhood another, but the message belonged to the men. Until this moment my life had still made some kind of sense. Now it was making no sense at all. My mother droned on about the importance of missionary work for a woman, that I was clearly such a woman, but had spurned my call in order to wield power on the home front, where it was inappropriate. She ended by saying that having taken on a man’s world in other ways I had flouted God’s law and tried to do it sexually. This was no spontaneous speech. She and the pastor had talked about it already. It was her weakness for the ministry that had done it. No doubt she’d told Pastor Spratt months ago. I looked around me. Good people, simple people, what would happen to them now? I knew my mother hoped I would blame myself, but I didn’t. I knew know where the blame lay. If there’s such a thing as spiritual adultery, my mother was a whore.

(Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*)

[28] ‘Daughter, you have disgraced me,’ said the sorcerer, ‘and I have no more use for you. You must leave.’

[...]  

‘And what if I stay?’

‘You will find yourself destroyed by grief. All you know will be around you, and at the same time far from you. Better find a new place now.’

Winnet thought about this, while the raven balanced patiently on her shoulder.

‘Will you come with me?’

‘I can’t, I’m bound here, but take this.’ The raven flew down and, as far as Winnet could see, started vomiting on the flags. Then he arranged his feathers, and dropped a rough brown pebble into her hand.

‘Thank you,’ said Winnet. ‘What is it?’

‘It’s my heart.’
'But it’s made of stone.’
‘I know,’ the raven replied sadly. ‘You see I chose to stay, oh, a long time ago, and my heart grew sick with sorrow, and finally set. It will remind you.’

Winnet sat for a moment, at the edge of the fireplace. The raven, struck dumb, could not warn her that her father had crept in, in the shape of a mouse, and was tying an invisible thread around one of her buttons. As Winnet stood up the mouse scuttled away. She did not notice, and when morning came, she had reached the edge of the forest, and crossed the river.

(Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*)

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The ideas for *Top Girls* came from all kinds of things. A lot of it went back a really long way. The idea of Dull Gret as a character I found in some old notebook from 1977 or 78. There’d been the idea of a play about a lot of dead women having coffee with someone from the present. And an idea about women doing all kinds of jobs. It was also that Thatcher had just become P.M.; and also I had been to America ... and had been talking to women there who were saying things were going very well: they were getting far more women executives, women vice-presidents and so on. And that was such a different attitude from anything I’d met here, where feminism tends to be much more connected with socialism and not so much to do with women succeeding on the sort of capitalist ladder. All those ideas fed into *Top Girls*. I wanted it to set off, with all those historical women celebrating Marlene’s achievement, to look as if it were going to be a celebration of women achieving things, and then to put the other perspectives on it, to show that just to achieve the same things as men had achieved in capitalist society wouldn’t be a good object. (Caryl Churchill in an interview)

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MARLENE. We’ve all come a long way. To our courage and the way we changed our lives and our extraordinary achievements.

They laugh and drink a toast.

ISABELLA. Such adventures. We were crossing a mountain pass at seven thousand feet, the cook was all to pieces, the muleteers suffered fever and snow blindness. But even though my spine was agony I managed very well.

MARLENE. Wonderful.

NIJO. Once I was ill for four months lying alone at an inn. Nobody to offer a horse to Buddha. I had to live for myself, and I did live.

ISABELLA. Of course you did. It was far worse returning to Tobermory. I always felt dull when I was stationary. That’s why I could never stay anywhere.

NIJO. Yes, that’s it exactly. New sights. The shrine by the beach, the moon shining on the sea. The goddess had vowed to save all living things. She would even save the fishes. I was full of hope.

JOAN. I had thought the Pope would know everything. I thought God would speak to me directly. But of course he knew I was a woman.

[…]

MARLENE (introducing Griselda). Now who do you know? This is Joan who was Pope in the ninth century, and Isabella Bird, the Victorian traveller, and Lady Nijo from Japan, Emperor’s concubine and Buddhist nun, thirteenth century, nearer your own time, and Gret who was painted by Brueghel. Griselda’s in Boccaccio and Petrarch and Chaucer because of her extraordinary marriage.  
(Caryl Churchill, Top Girls, Act One)

What use is female emancipation, Churchill asks, if it transforms the clever women into predators and does nothing for the stupid, weak and helpless? Does freedom, and feminism, consist of aggressively adopting the very values that have for centuries oppressed your sex?  
(Benedict Anderson, New Statesman, 1982)

MARLENE. She’s a tough lady, Maggie. I’d give her a job. She just needs to hang in there. This country needs to stop whining. Monetarism is not stupid.  
JOYCE. You voted for them, did you?  
JOYCE. What good’s first woman if it’s her? I suppose you’d have liked Hitler if he was a woman. Ms Hitler. Got a lot done, Hitlerina. Great adventures.  
MARLENE. Bosses still walking on the workers’ faces? Still Dadda’s little parrot? Haven’t you learned to think for yourself? I believe in the individual. Look at me.  
JOYCE. I am looking at you.  
(Caryl Churchill, Top Girls)

MARLENE. I don’t mean anything personal. I don’t believe in class. Anyone can do anything if they’ve got what it takes.  
JOYCE. And if they haven’t?  
MARLENE. If they’re stupid or lazy or frightened, I’m not going to help them get a job, why should I?  
JOYCE. What about Angie?  
MARLENE. What about Angie?  
JOYCE. She’s stupid, lazy and frightened, so what about her?  
MARLENE. You run her down too much. She’ll be all right.  
JOYCE. I don’t expect so, no. I expect her children will say what a wasted life she had. If she has children. Because nothing’s changed and it won’t with them in.  
MARLENE. Them, them. Us and them?  
JOYCE. And you’re one of them.  
MARLENE. And you’re one of us, and Angie’s us and Mum and Dad’s us.  
JOYCE. Yes, that’s right, and you’re them.  
(Caryl Churchill, Top Girls)
[34] There was a particularly relaxed sloth, for instance – an exquisite creature, I can vouch for it personally – who had scarcely got down to the foot of its tree before it was wiped out in the great wash of God’s vengeance. What do you call that – natural selection? I’d call it professional incompetence.  (Julian Barnes, “The Stowaway”)

[35] It is sometimes said that butlers only truly exist in England. Other countries, whatever title is actually used, have only manservants. I tend to believe this is true. Continentals are unable to be butlers because they are as a breed incapable of the emotional restraint which only the English race are capable of. Continentals – and by and large the Celts, as you will no doubt agree – are as a rule unable to control themselves in moments of strong emotion, and are thus unable to maintain a professional demeanour other than in the least challenging of situations. If I may return to my earlier metaphor – you will excuse my putting it so coarsely – they are like a man, who will at the slightest provocation, tear off his suit and his shirt and run about screaming. In a word, ‘dignity’ is beyond such persons. We English have an important advantage over this respect and it is for this reason that when you think of a great butler, he is bound, almost by definition, to be an Englishman.

(Kazuo Ishiguro, The Remains of the Day)

[36] It is of course tragic that her marriage is now ending in failure. At this very moment, no doubt, she is pondering with regret decisions made in the far-off past that have now left her, deep in middle age, so alone and desolate. And it is easy to see how in such a frame of mind, the thought of returning to Darlington Hall would be a great comfort to her. Admittedly, she does not at any point in her letter state explicitly her desire to return; but that is the unmistakable message conveyed by the general nuance of many of the passages, imbued as they are with a deep nostalgia for her days at Darlington Hall. Of course, Miss Kenton cannot hope by returning at this stage ever to retrieve those lost years, and it will be my first duty to impress this upon her when we meet. I will have to point out how different things are now – that the days of working with a grand staff at one’s beck and call will probably never return within our lifetime. But then Miss Kenton is an intelligent woman and she will have already realized these things. Indeed, all in all, I cannot see why the option of her returning to Darlington Hall and seeing out her working years there should not offer a very genuine consolation to a life that has come to be so dominated by a sense of waste.

(Kazuo Ishiguro, The Remains of the Day)

[37] Of course there are many people these days who have a lot of foolish things to say about Lord Darlington, and it may be that you are under the impression I am somehow embarrassed or ashamed of my association with his lordship, and it is this that lies behind such conduct. Then let me make it clear that nothing could be further from the truth. The great majority of what one hears said about his lordship today is, in any case, utter nonsense, based on an almost complete ignorance of the facts. Indeed, it seems to me that my odd conduct can be very plausible explained in terms of my wish to avoid any possibility of hearing any further such nonsense concerning his lordship; that is to say, I have chosen to tell white lies in both instances as the simplest means of avoiding unpleasantness. This does seem a very plausible explanation the more I think about it; for it is true, nothing vexes me more these days than to hear this sort of nonsense being repeated. Let me say that Lord Darlington was a gentleman of great
moral stature – a stature to dwarf most of these persons you will find talking this sort of nonsense about him – and I will readily vouch he remained that to the last. Nothing could be less accurate than to suggest that I regret my association with such a gentleman. Indeed, you will appreciate that to have served his lordship at Darlington Hall during those years was to come as close to the hub of this world’s wheel as one such as I could ever have dreamt. I gave thirty-five years’ service to Lord Darlington; one would surely not be unjustified in claiming that during those years, one was, in the truest terms, ‘attached to a distinguished household’. In looking back over my career thus far, my chief satisfaction derives from what I achieved during those years, and I am today nothing but proud and grateful to have been given such a privilege.

(Kazuo Ishiguro, The Remains of the Day)

[38] One is simply accepting an inescapable truth: that the likes of you and I will never be in a position to comprehend the great affairs of today’s world, and our best course will always be to put our trust in an employer we judge to be wise and honourable, and to devote our energies to the task of serving him to the best of our ability. Look at the likes of Mr Marshall, say, or Mr Lane – surely two of the greatest figures in our profession. Can we imagine Mr Marshall arguing with Lord Camberley over the latter’s latest dispatch to the Foreign Office? Do we admire Mr Lane any the less because we learn he is not in the habit of challenging Sir Leonard Gray before each speech in the House of Commons? Of course we do not. What is there ‘undignified’, what is there at all culpable in such an attitude? How can one possibly be held to blame in any sense because, say, the passage of time has shown that Lord Darlington’s efforts were misguided, even foolish? Throughout the years I served him, it was he and he alone who weighed up evidence and judged it best to proceed in the way he did, while I simply confined myself, quite properly, to affairs within my own professional realm. And as far as I am concerned, I carried out my duties to the best of my abilities, indeed to a standard which many may consider ‘first rate’. It is hardly my fault if his lordship’s life and work have turned out today to look, at best, a sad waste – and it is quite illogical that I should feel regret or shame on my own account.

(Kazuo Ishiguro, The Remains of the Day)

[39] Miss Kenton fell silent again for a moment. Then she went on:

‘But that doesn’t mean to say, of course, there aren’t occasions now and then – extremely desolate occasions – when you think to yourself: “What a terrible mistake I’ve made of my life.” And you get to thinking about a different life, a better life you might have had. For instance, I get to thinking about a life I may have had with you, Mr Stevens. And I suppose that’s when I get angry over some trivial little thing and leave. But each time I do so, I realize before long – my rightful place is with my husband. After all, there’s no turning back the clock now. One can’t be forever dwelling on what might have been. One should realize one has as good as most, perhaps better, and be grateful.’

I do not think I responded immediately, for it took me a moment or two to fully digest these words of Miss Kenton. Moreover, as you might appreciate, their implications were such as provoke a certain degree of sorrow within me. Indeed – why should I not admit it? – at that moment, my heart was breaking. Before long, however, I turned to her and said with a smile:

‘You’re very correct, Mrs Benn. As you say, it’s too late to turn back the clock. […]

(Kazuo Ishiguro, The Remains of the Day)
A few minutes ago, incidentally, shortly after the lights came on, I did turn on my bench a moment to study more closely these throngs of people laughing and chatting behind me. There are people of all ages strolling around this pier: families with children; couples, young and elderly, walking arm in arm. There is a group of six or seven people gathered just a little way behind me who have aroused my curiosity a little. I naturally assumed at first that they were a group of friends out together for the evening. But as I listened to their exchanges, it became apparent they were strangers who had just happened upon one another here on this spot behind me. Evidently, they had all paused a moment for the lights to come on, and then proceeded to fall into a conversation with one another. As I watch them now, they are laughing together merrily. It is curious how people can build such warmth among themselves so quickly. It is possible these particular persons are simply united by the anticipation of the evening ahead. But, then, I rather fancy it has more to do with this skill of bantering. Listening to them now, I can hear them exchanging one bantering remark after another. It is, I would suppose, the way many people like to proceed. In fact, it is possible my bench companion of a while ago expected me to banter with him – in which case, I suppose I was something of a sorry disappointment. Perhaps it is indeed time I began to look at this whole matter of bantering more enthusiastically. After all, when one thinks about it, it is not such a foolish thing to indulge in – particularly if it is the case that in bantering lies the key to human warmth.

(Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*)

[...] but he knew other things. He knew that he, Millat, was no Paki no matter where he came from; that he smelt of curry; had no sexual identity; took other people’s jobs … that no one who looked like Millat, was ever on the news unless they had recently been murdered. In short, he knew he had no face in this country, until the week before last when suddenly people like Millat were on every channel and every radio and every newspaper and they were angry, and Millat recognized the anger, thought it recognized him, and grabbed it with both hands.       (Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*)
Required Reading

1) for student wishing to take the BA exam:

Novels:
Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*;

Short Fiction:
James Joyce, “Eveline” and “A Painful Case” (from *Dubliners*)
Julian Barnes, “The Stowaway”
Qaisra Sharaz, “A Pair of Jeans”
Hanif Kureishi, “My Son the Fanatic”

Drama:
John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*;
Harold Pinter, *The Homecoming*;
Caryl Churchill, *Top Girls*;

Poetry
Rupert Brooke, “The Soldier”
Wilfred Owen, “Anthem for Doomed Youth”
David Dabydeen, “Ballad of the Little Black Boy”
U.A. Fanthorpe, “Not My Best Side”

plus: text passages (which accompany the lecture)
Required Reading

2) for students wishing to take the Zwischenprüfung:

**Novels:**

E.M. Forster, *Howards End*;
Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*;
John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*;
Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*;
Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*;

**Short Fiction:**

James Joyce, “Eveline” and “A Painful Case” (from *Dubliners*)
Julian Barnes, “The Stowaway”
Qaisra Sharaz, “A Pair of Jeans”
Hanif Kureishi, “My Son the Fanatic”

**Drama:**

John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*;
Harold Pinter, *The Homecoming*;
Caryl Churchill, *Top Girls*;

**Poetry**

Rupert Brooke, “The Soldier”
Wilfred Owen, “Anthem for Doomed Youth”
Philip Larkin, “The Whitsun Weddings”
David Dabydeen, “Ballad of the Little Black Boy”
U.A. Fanthorpe, “Not My Best Side”

**plus: text passages** (which accompany the lecture)
Required Reading

3) for students wishing to take the Staatsexamen / Magisterklausur:

**Novels:**

E.M. Forster, *Howards End*;
Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*;
John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*;
Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*;
Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*;
A.S. Byatt, *Possession*;

**Short Fiction:**

James Joyce, “Eveline” and “A Painful Case” (from *Dubliners*)
Julian Barnes, “The Stowaway”
Qaisra Sharaz, “A Pair of Jeans”
Hanif Kureishi, “My Son the Fanatic”

**Drama:**

John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*;
Harold Pinter, *The Homecoming*;
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Rupert Brooke, “The Soldier”
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