CONFLICT IN LITERATURE

CLASSICAL
MAN vs. NATURE
MAN vs. MAN
MAN vs. GOD

MODERN
MAN vs. SOCIETY
MAN vs. SELF
MAN vs. NO GOD

POSTMODERN
MAN vs. TECHNOLOGY
MAN vs. REALITY
MAN vs. AUTHOR

GRANT SNIDER
LITERARY MODERNISM

- Late 19th century-early 20th century (phil, cult trend)
- Break away from traditional modes of writing
- Express the new sensibilities of their time: shock of Great War, cultural trauma
- Loss of faith, disenchantment — Marx, Freud, Darwin, Nietzsche
- New notion of temporality: Bergson: inner/outer time
- Question power of human reason — subjective exp of vulnerability
- Urbanization: alienation: lure/fear of masses
- Stream of consciousness, unreliable narrators
- The absurd, existential nihilism, cynicism (dada)
- Formal experimentation
Franz Kafka, Metamorphosis, 1916

- Lapse from human to inhuman: transformation from man to beetle, from self to other:
- without a cause (NO magic, no scientific explanation)
- loss of identity, Unheimlich/uncanny
- slipstream (sci-fi, fantasy), absurd, speculative fiction

„One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin. He lay on his armour-like back, and if he lifted his head a little he could see his brown belly, slightly domed and divided by arches into stiff sections. The bedding was hardly able to cover it and seemed ready to slide off any moment. His many legs, pitifully thin compared with the size of the rest of him, waved about helplessly as he looked. "What's happened to me?" he thought. It wasn't a dream. (…) Gregor then turned to look out the window at the dull weather. Drops of rain could be heard hitting the pane, which made him feel quite sad. "How about if I sleep a little bit longer and forget all this nonsense", he thought, but that was something he was unable to do because he was used to sleeping on his right, and in his present state couldn't get into that position. However hard he threw himself onto his right, he always rolled back to where he was. He must have tried it a hundred times, shut his eyes so that he wouldn't have to look at the floundering legs, and only stopped when he began to feel a mild, dull pain there that he had never felt before.

- Strangeness as an inevitable condition of being: Everyman (a travelling salesman)
- Semantic emptiness, language slides away from things: „the words he uttered were no longer understandable” forgetfulness: he sees only „a desert waste where grey sky and grey land blend indistinguishably into each other”
- A world hollowed out by a Nothingness that demands to speak „a strange ardent wheel deprived of a center”
- Lived, tragic nonsense (The Trial, The Castle) ↔ playful literary nonsense (Carroll, Wonderland)
The Fly, 1986. dir. David Cronenberg
arthropod horror, sci-fi body horror
vs. Mr Hyde, mad scientist, monstrous metamorphosis
FANTASY FEATURES OF MODERNIST CLASSICS

TS Eliot: The Waste Land, 1922

- Shock of Great War + nervous breakdown
- Prophecy + Satire
- Mixture of diff voices, renew lgg to narrate trauma (experimental narrative)
- post-religious world, devastated land – thinning of world, barreness of kingdom
- April is the cruelest month, breeding
  Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
  Memory and desire, stirring
  Dull roots with spring rain.
**Fantasy Features of Modernist Classics**

**James Joyce: Ulysses, 1922**

- Odysseus, Homer’s hero, mythological parallels (Penelope, Calypso, Lotus Eaters, Hades..)
- 1 day of Leopold Bloom in Dublin on 16 June 1904
- The Everyman of democratic 20th c: advertising salesman for a newspaper, Jewish by race, Christian by baptism, and atheist by inclination, a believer in reason and science
- “Calmly he goes about his business on this sunny day in June—cooking breakfast, attending a funeral, having lunch, negotiating with a client, sitting on the beach—wandering in Dublin, just as Ulysses once wandered in the Mediterranean during his long journey home.”
  → demythologization or new myth for new times? -- no grand events
- Bergson: inner time / outer time
- “Life for the most part does not happen in neat little diagrams and nothing is more tiresome than the continual pretence that it does.”
- Fantastification of mundane reality
- Experimental prose: puns, parodies, allusions, lgg games, neologisms, Biblical jargon, Irish myth
- Obscenity trial -- confuse highbrow+lowly ling. registers, pornographic
- Interior monologue: avant-garde style

*A kidney oozed bloodgouts on the willowpatterned dish: the last. He stood by the nextdoor girl at the counter. Would she buy it too, calling the items from a slip in her hand. Chapped: washing soda. And a pound and a half of Denny’s sausages. His eyes rested on her vigorous hips. Woods his name is. Wonder what he does. Wife is oldish. New blood. No followers allowed.*

- Gigantic proportions: he called it a „fucking novelosaurus”
Fantasy features of modernist classics

Virginia Woolf: Mrs Dalloway (1925)

- Aftermath of World War 1
- Show life through eyes of sane + insane
- High society lady Clarissa Dalloway’s double = war veteran, Septimus Smith, dies in her place
- “The mind, exposed to the ordinary course of life, receives upon its surface a myriad impressions . . . From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms, composing in their sum what we might venture to call life itself.” Novelists should “record the atom as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they come . . . however disconnected and incoherent.”
- Omniscient narrator → embrace fragmentation, impressionism, stream of consciousness
- Ordinary/ Epiphany: blur boundary bw real/dream, present/pst, CS/UCS
- Theme: desire to connect, difficulty of communication, unreliability of memory, solitude, trauma

Virginia Woolf: Orlando. A Biography, 1928

- Shape shifting: adventures of poet who changes sex from man to woman & lives for centuries
- Time travel: from Elizabethan era for 300 years
- Historiographic metafiction: meets key figures of English literary history (Pope)
- Dream/Real: Transgender transformation waking from a dream, love letter to Vita Sackville West
- Metafiction: poem about The Oak Tree, creativity
- „What matters is precisely this: the unspoken at the edge of spoken”
**Fantasy Features of Modernist Classics**

- Nonmimetic, unrealistic, absurd
- Wait for impossible epiphany, unredeemable matter
  (↔ Joyce. revelations, Woolf. moments of being)
- Uncovers absence but continues quest for absolute
- Hopelessness: God is dead. (Nietzsche) -- cynicism: impossible redemption of mankind
- Move from demonology to psychology (self-generated ghosts)
MODERNISM→POSTMODERNISM

- Q of representationability: non-mimetic nature of fantasy: necessary fictionalization of real reality (presence) \(\rightarrow\) experience (perception/cognition) \(\rightarrow\) re/presentation \(\rightarrow\) mis/interpretation
- Impossibility of meaninglessness \(+\) inevitability of miscomprehension
- Signifier/Signified=sign (Saussure) \(\rightarrow\) floating chain of signifiers, denotation \(\leq\) connotations, Ser→Ser→Ser→Ser→... (Sed)
dissemination, proliferation of meanings (only delimited by interpretive community)
- open text, writerly text, pleasure text, Author’\(\text{'}\)s \(\rightarrow\) readers’ meanings
- Structuralism \(\rightarrow\) deconstruction (Derrida)
- Intertextuality, metafiction, transmedia storytelling
- José Luis Borges: *On Exactitude in Science*, 1946 17th c Sp traveller’s account+ L. Carroll: Sylvie & Bruno concluded *The map takes over the territory but insufficiency of representation: the desert of the real*
- Baudrillard: simulacra, simulation (cyberpunk: hyperreal, likeness of real interchangeable w real, Matrix)
- Self-reflectivity: human being’s struggle to make his way in maelstrom of world
- New Historicism: the textuality of historicity+ the historicity of textuality
- Question Grand Master narratives
  - (Auto)biography \(\rightarrow\) self/life-writing, autofiction, Q capacity of truth telling, remember+forget
- Heroic quest \(\rightarrow\) quest for meaning
- Introspection \(\rightarrow\) stream of consciousness
- Open-ended texts, endless wandering, „writing beyond the ending”, waiting (Godot)
In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast map was Useless, and not without some Pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of Sun and Winters. In the Deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in all the Land there is no other Relic of the Disciplines of Geography.

- Neil Gaiman ties hyperreal and Borges’ map to storytelling
  The tale is the map that is the territory.
  One describes a tale best by telling a tale.
- I’m telling you stories, trust me. (Winterson)–relativize truth, Q grand narratives
- History → oral histories, herstories
- Partial perspectives, fractured visions, fictionalized real
- Role of stories in cultural memory
  compulsion to tell unspeakable traumas
  „This is not a story to pass on. This is a story to pass on.” (Toni Morrison)
- Decentralization / destabilization → confusion of dream and real
- Endless search for meanings
- Q. what is real? → what is real in a fictional reality? (how is reality constructed w lgg – technologies of truth production)
The map is (not) the image.
René Magritte. The treachery of images
"perception always intercedes between reality and ourselves"
Marshall McLuhan. The Medium is the Message
“See… Great A’Tuin the turtle comes, swimming slowly through the interstellar gulf, hydrogen frost on his ponderous limbs, his huge and ancient shell pocked with meteor craters. Through sea-sized eyes that are crusted with rheum and asteroid dust He stares fixedly at the Destination. In a brain bigger than a city, with geological slowness, He thinks only of the Weight. Most of the weight is of course accounted for by Berilia, Tubul, Great T’Phon and Jerakeen, the four giant elephants upon whose broad and star-tanned shoulders the disc of the World rests, garlanded by the long waterfall at its vast circumference and domed by the baby-blue vault of Heaven. Astropsychology has been, as yet, unable to establish what they think about…”
- Aristotle's ideal plot structure

* Campbell: heroic journey's plot
### James Joyce. Ulysses

Text as labyrinthine structure w multiple points of entries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Hour</th>
<th>Organ</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Art</th>
<th>Technic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telemachus</td>
<td>The Tower</td>
<td>8am</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>White / gold</td>
<td>Heir</td>
<td>Theology</td>
<td>Narrative (young)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nestor</td>
<td>The School</td>
<td>10am</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Horse</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Catechism (personal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proteus</td>
<td>The Strand</td>
<td>11am</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Tide</td>
<td>Philology</td>
<td>Monologue (male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calypso</td>
<td>The House</td>
<td>8am</td>
<td>Kidney</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Nymph</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Narrative (mature)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lotus Eaters</td>
<td>The Bath</td>
<td>10am</td>
<td>Genitals</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Eucharist</td>
<td>Botany / chemistry</td>
<td>Narcissism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hades</td>
<td>The Graveyard</td>
<td>11am</td>
<td>Heart</td>
<td>White / black</td>
<td>Caretaker</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Incubism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aeolus</td>
<td>The Newspaper</td>
<td>12pm</td>
<td>Lungs</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Rhetoric</td>
<td>Enthymemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lestrygonians</td>
<td>The Lunch</td>
<td>1pm</td>
<td>Oesophagus</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Constables</td>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Peristaltic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scylla and Charybdis</td>
<td>The Library</td>
<td>2pm</td>
<td>Brain</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Stratford / London</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Dialectic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wandering Rocks</td>
<td>The Streets</td>
<td>3pm</td>
<td>Blood</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>Labyrinth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sirens</td>
<td>The Concert Room</td>
<td>4pm</td>
<td>Ear</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Barmaids</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td><em>Fuga per canonem</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclops</td>
<td>The Tavern</td>
<td>5pm</td>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Fenian</td>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>Gigantism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nausicaa</td>
<td>The Rocks</td>
<td>8pm</td>
<td>Eye, nose</td>
<td>Grey / blue</td>
<td>Virgin</td>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>Tumescence / detumescence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxen of the Sun</td>
<td>The Hospital</td>
<td>10pm</td>
<td>Womb</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>Embryonic development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circe</td>
<td>The Brothel</td>
<td>12am</td>
<td>Locomotor apparatus</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Whore</td>
<td>Magic</td>
<td>Hallucination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eumaeus</td>
<td>The Shelter</td>
<td>1am</td>
<td>Nerves</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Sailors</td>
<td>Navigation</td>
<td>Narrative (old)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ithaca</td>
<td>The House</td>
<td>2am</td>
<td>Skeleton</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Comets</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Catechism (impersonal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penelope</td>
<td>The Bed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Flesh</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Monologue (female)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MODERNISM AND FANTASY SIMILARITIES

Thematize human being’s struggle to make his way in maelstrom of world
Reject realism

Innovative narrative techniques: metafiction, stream of consciousness, shifting point of view
Rewritings, fragmented micronarratives, oral histories, make audible othered voices*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODERNISM</th>
<th>FANTASY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of expression, radicalism, experimentation</td>
<td>Keeps romantic subject of experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elitist</td>
<td>Keeps respecting tradition, history, myth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M: focus on form, design PoMo: focus on antform, self-deconstructing, open text</td>
<td>popular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confrontation with nothingness in Godless, secularized world, nihilism, disillusion</td>
<td>Recycles grand masternarratives, monomyths, archetypes, mythemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depthlessness, formal experimentation, mindgames</td>
<td>significance of enchantment in disenchainting universe: wonder, eucatastrophe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Even anti-hero fights w passion for deeply dvped land, faith, fantasy world more real than real world</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The asterisk (*) indicates that the relevance of this point is somewhat controversial.
Brian McHale: postmodernism shifts from epistemology to ontology (problems of knowing → problems of being) (eg. Sci-fi)

Ubiquitous indeterminacy (TODOROV: UNCERTAINTY)

The likeness of the real becomes interchangeable w the real (3D CGI cinema)

Primary, secondary reality (Tolkien), (non)acknowledgement of being in story

Narrative subversion in postmodern fiction:

-- metanarrativity: “You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel, If on a winter's night a traveler.”

-- confusion of author and character (Paul Auster. New York Trilogy)

-- fictitious preface

-- extensive footnotes Susanna Clarke: Jonathan Strange and Mrs Norrell

transcending limits of the page: postcard book

-- pastiche (stylistic mimicry), bricolage, crossover fantasy

-- rhizomatic narrative, intertexts, ergodic/ludic lit.

19th c: supernaturalism → 20th c: secularized, PSYCHOLOGY (Freud)

conventional diabolism, internalized demon → self-generated ghosts (H. James. The Turn of the Screw)
Well, as it turned out, he was just a really ugly duckling. And he grew up to be just a really ugly duck. The End.
THE END
of the evil Stepmother
said "I'll HUFF and SNUFF and
give you three wishes."
The beast changed into
SEVEN DWARVES
HAPPILY EVER AFTER
for a spell had been cast by a Wicked Witch
Once upon a time

"That's your story?" said Jack.
"You've got to be kidding. That's not a
Fairly Stupid Tale. That's an Incredibly Stupid Tale.
That's an Unbelievably Stupid Tale. That is
the Most Stupid Tale I Ever—awwuck!"
The Giant grabbed Jack and dragged him to the next page.
Guardian: Three Little Pigs
• **Gormenghast Trilogy** by Mervyn Peake (1946-59)
• +4th volume published by widow
• Titus Groan, Gormenghast, Titus Alone
• Gothic enclosure, claustrophobic/fallen world
• suffers deprivation of certainty, kaleidoscopic significations
• Endless quest, everything is futile, meaningless rituals
• Grotesques, doubles, disembodied selves
• Fantasy of manners
• Fight of good and evil
• Allegory of evils of World War II, Holocaust in library (official war artist)
• Freedom vs tradition, soc. duty vs rebellion
• Madness, hunger for power
• Fake story of coming-of-age
• Linear plot frustrated by endless, meaningless spirals, deadends

• [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcW3xbpSn_g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcW3xbpSn_g)
FANTASY FEATURES OF POST-MODERNIST CLASSICS

✓ Thomas Pynchon. The Crying of Lot 49, 1966
✓ California housewife Oedipa Maas entangled in historical mystery, tries to unveil what may or may not be a world conspiracy involves conflict of 2 mail distribution companies inherits from deceased lover stamps that may have been used by secret underground postal delivery service, the Trystero
✓ aim: decipher signifying system, BUT she seeks meaning IN VAIN
✓ Unclear= conspiracy theory , paranoia, practical joke, hallucination?
✓ secret web of correspondences (W.A.S.T.E=We await silent Tristero’s empire), silent post horn)
✓ unresolved hesitation
✓ Exemplary or pastiche POSTMODERN
• Visit to artmuseum: ekphrasis: Remedios Varos painting
• Maidens weaving a tapestry that flows out of the windows: constitutes the world outside of tower.
• Oedipa's reaction to the tapestry (=TEXT!): her difficulty in determining what is real+what is fiction
• She had looked down at her feet and known, then, because of a painting, that what she stood on had only been woven together a couple thousand miles away in her own tower, was only by accident known as Mexico, and so Pierce had taken her away from nothing, there'd been no escape.
Magical Realism
*the name of the genre as a misnomer: oxymoron
*a genre/ a mode of writing/ representational strategy/ lit. device/ attitude twds reality/ a modality of interpreting existence/ a way of seeing?
* defamiliarization & fantastification
(magic revealed as real, real revealed as magical)

1. Magic Realism (Magischer Realismus, 1920, German painting)
2. Marvellous Realism (Lo real maravilloso, 1940) Latin America as source of wonder
3. Magical Realism (realismo magico 1950) LatAm fiction

*“a simple matter of the most complicated sort”,
*“a capacity to write about all dimensions of reality” (Allende)
*“all narrative fiction that includes magical happenings in a realist matter-of-fact tone, the supernatural as an everyday occurrence, integrated into rationality and materiality of literary realism”,
* the realistic mingles with the unexpected and inexplicable, elements of dream, mythology, fairy-story combine with the everyday in a kaleidoscopic pattern of refraction+recurrence

*”A reality not of paper, but one that lives within us and determines each instant of our countless daily deaths, & that nourishes a source of insatiable creativity, full of sorrow and beauty”
(Gabriel Garcia Marquez: Nobel lecture, 1982)