

Narrative in Fiction and Film--Fall 2007

Garrett-Stewart@uiowa.edu; 335-0441

E205 AJB TTh 9:30-10:45; Tues EPB 109, 3:55-5:55

Office Hours: TTh EPB 352, 11-12, and by appointment

THE TEXTUAL FANTASTIC

Under the general rubric of narrative structure in prose and film, this term's course will focus on the nature and interplay of the two separate media in their deployment of "uncanny" form and content. What special technical powers of the cinematic medium make film particularly good at maximizing the devices of fantastic prose narrative? How are we made aware of the film medium's own "spooky" powers, as compared with the hallucinatory evocations of literary writing? How do narrative framings tend to enhance even while distancing the effects of their core narratives? These are the kinds of questions our investigations will pursue from week to week, braced by theoretical readings and discussion. In both our screenings and our fiction reading, we will move between "genre fiction" (avowed tales and films of gothic horror, fantasy, or science fiction) and the more muted forms of these motifs in melodrama, psychological thrillers, avant-garde cinema, etc.

Please note that the Tues. afternoon screening is a mandatory part of the course. Attendance at all sessions is required (there will be a sign-up sheet daily, and twice on Tuesdays), and after a leeway of 3 absences your grade will be significantly lowered unless you have an official medical excuse. Books are available from Prairie Lights, and the assigned section should be read by the indicated class meeting. Do make sure to get the proper editions, so that we can all follow along in our discussion.

There will be two analytic papers (on topics to be announced), one 4-5 pages, double spaced, due Thurs Oct 4, by 5:00 pm in my mailbox (310 EPB), the other 5-7 pages due Wed Dec 12, to be turned in again by closing time in my box, as well as a final exam (partly based on film clips in class on the last day, partly take-home essay questions due by 5:00pm on Mon. Dec 17), details to be announced.

In-class discussion will often break up into smaller groups, so you will need to be especially prepared for such exchanges with fellow students, with good notes from both your reading and the screenings. Apart from this running "journal" of your reactions, keep a separate glossary of technical terms from both literary and film analysis to supplement the list of technical film vocabulary I'll be handing out. I will often ask you to turn in questions about a film or a novel via email by Wednesday afternoon, for consideration by the class in the next day's meeting. And there will be occasional brief writing assignments to practice your growing facility with textual and intermedial analysis. Finally, do note the "reading and writing period" (i.e. no class meeting) on Sept. 27 and the morning of Oct. 2 (though there will be an afternoon screening on the 2nd).

wk 1

T Aug 28 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Buster Keaton, Sherlock Jr. (1924); clips from Minority Report and Deja Vu

Afternoon screening: Cabinet of Dr. Caligari

Th Aug 30 FRAMING THE FANTASTIC

Mary Shelley, Frankenstein (1818), Signet ed., Chs. 1-8;
concentrating on preface, introduction, and opening letters

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wk2
T Sept 4

THE OPEN FRAME

Frankenstein, 9-16

Afternoon screening: Max Ophuls, Letter from an Unknown Woman (1948)

Th Sept 6 GHOSTS OF DESIRE

Finish Frankenstein, 17-24

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wk 3
T Sept 11 REPETITION COMPULSION

Henry James, The Turn of the Screw, Chs. 1-8

Afternoon Screening: Alfred Hitchcock, Vertigo
(1958)

Th Sept 13 RETURN OF THE REPRESSED (I)

Turn, Ch. 9-16

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wk 4
T Sept 18 NARRATIVE DESIRE

Finish Turn, 17-24
Clips from The Innocents
Afternoon Screening: Calvalcanti, Dead of Night (1945)

Th Sept 20 begin Robert Louis Stevenson, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
(1886),Dover ed.

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wk 5
T Sept 25 CYCLIC FORM AND NARRATIVE DOUBLING

Finish Dr. Jekyll; clips from Fight Club

Afternoon Screening: Chris Marker, La Jetée; clips from Terry Gilliam,
Brazil, The Sixth Sense

Th Sept 27 Reading period (no class)

NARRATIVE DOUBLING

Finish Dr. Jekyll
Clips from Fight Club

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wk 6
T Oct 2 No morning class: paper-writing time

SPLIT PERSONAE

Afternoon Screening: Ingmar Bergman, Persona (1963)

Th Oct 4 AESTHETIC DISTANCE

Oscar Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891), Penguin ed., Chs. 1-5

PAPER DUE AT 5 PM IN MY EPB MAILBOX (RM. 310)

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wk 7
T Oct 9

ALIENATED IDENTITY

Dorian Gray, 6-10

Clips from 2001: A Space Odyssey; AI Artificial

Intelligence

Afternoon screening: Stanley Kubrick, The Shining (1980)

Th Oct 11 Finish Dorian Gray, 11-20

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wk 8
T Oct 16

PROJECTIVE MEDIATION

Bram Stoker, Dracula (1897), Penguin ed., Chs. 1-5

Afternoon Screening: Alain Resnais, Providence (1977)

Th Oct 18 EPISTEMOLOGIES OF THE PERVERSE

Dracula, 6-10

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wk 9
T Oct 23

DREAMSCREENS

Dracula, Chs. 11-15

Afternoon Screening: Federico Fellini, 8½ (1963)

Th Oct 25 NARRATIVE TRANSFERENCE

Dracula, 16-20

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wk 10

T Oct 30 CONSCIOUSNESS REWIRED

Dracula, 21-25
Clips from Coppola version

Afternoon screening: Kieslowski, Double Life of Veronique (1991)

Th Nov 1 TERMINUS AD QUEM
Finish Dracula, 26-27

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wk 11

T Nov 6 UNCANNY TRACES

Afternoon screening: Michaelangelo Antonioni,

Blow-Up

Th Nov 8 FILTERINGS

Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness (1898), Signet, opening frame

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wk 12

T Nov 13 COINCIDENCE, RECURRENCE, TELEPATHY

Finish Heart of Darkness, I

Afternoon screening: Julio Medem, Lovers of the Arctic Circle (1998)

Th Nov 15 BREAKING FRAME

Heart of Darkness, pt. II

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wk 13

T Nov 20-22 THANKSGIVING RECESS

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wk 14

T Nov 27 SPECTERS OF COLONIAL GUILT

Finish Heart of Darkness
clips from Michael Haneke, Benny's Video (1992)

Afternoon Screening: Haneke, Caché (2005)

Th Nov 29 RETURN OF THE REPRESSED (II: THE POLITICAL

UNCAN

Subjectivity and point of view in Haneke and
Conrad: the nightmare recycled

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wk 15

T Dec 4 APOCALYPTIC NARRATION

Morning and afternoon Screening: Francis Ford
Coppola, Apocalypse Now (1979)

Th Dec 6 Discuss Conrad vs. Coppola; plus recap and review

The remaining screening on Dec. 11, with subsequent discussion--designed to revisit earlier structures, themes, and readings--will be chosen by group consensus once the pattern of our interests emerges more clearly over the course of in-class conversation. We may wish to pursue the heightened use of narrative distortion in recent cinema, including reverse temporal

construction in Betrayal or Memento or the last-minute "trick endings" of such films from various genres as Seven, The Usual Suspects, Frequency, Mulholland Drive, The Others, Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, etc. FYI--Following are important guidelines from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences:

Academic Fraud

Plagiarism and any other activities that result in a student presenting work that is not his or her own are academic fraud. Academic fraud is reported to the departmental DEO and then to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Services in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint

Students have the right to make suggestions or complaints and should first visit with the instructor, then with the course supervisor if appropriate, and next with the departmental DEO. All complaints must be made within six months of the incident. www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml#5

Accommodations for Disabilities

A student seeking academic accommodations first must register with Student Disability Services and then meet with a SDS counselor who determines eligibility for services. A student approved for accommodations should meet privately with the course instructor to arrange particular accommodations. See

www.uiowa.edu/~sds/

Understanding Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Visit

www.sexualharassment.uiowa.edu/ for definitions, assistance, and the full policy.

Administrative Home of the Course

The administrative home of this course is the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, which governs academic matters relating to the course such as the add / drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, issues concerning academic fraud or academic probation, and how credits are applied for various CLAS requirements. Please keep in mind that different colleges might have different policies. If you have questions about these or other CLAS policies, visit your academic advisor or 120 Schaeffer Hall and speak with the staff. The CLAS Academic Handbook is another useful source of information on CLAS academic policy: www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/index.shtml