

English 294
Spring 2012
Tu Th 11:30-12:50
Webster 217

Andrew Parker
Johnson Chapel 17
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Hours: W 2-4 & by appt.

LITERATURE AND VENTRILOQUISM

This course explores *ventriloquism* as a literary and cultural phenomenon. What does it mean to “throw” one’s voice? Is it possible to do so? How is a ventriloquized voice different from one’s “own”? Why has ventriloquism been a frequent subject of literary works from the ancient world to the present? What consequences ensue when voice and body put distance between each other?

Requirements include voice-throwing and other in-class exercises, contributions to the class wiki, and four five-page papers. Late papers will be graded without comment.

Required Texts:

Edgar Bergen, *How to Become a Ventriloquist (Try Your Hand at Ventriloquism)*
Dover 0486410862

Robert Montgomery Bird, *Sheppard Lee, Written by Himself*
NYRB Classics 1590172299

Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland; or the Transformation*
Oxford UP 0199538778

William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*
McGraw Hill 0075536579

Mario Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller (El hablador)*, trans. Helen Lane
Picador 0312420285

These books are available at the Amherst Books, 8 Main Street, Amherst. **Please use these editions** (their ISBN’s are included above), whether you purchase them new or used. Other materials will be posted on e-reserve (e).

Syllabus

T 1/24	Introduction; Elizabeth Bishop, “In the Waiting Room” (handout)
Th 1/26	Ovid, “Echo and Narcissus” (e); Plato, <i>Ion</i> (e)
T 1/31	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Wieland, or the Transformation</i> , Chapters 1-11
Th 2/02	<i>Wieland</i> , Chapters 12-20

- T 2/07 *Wieland*, Chapters 21-27
- Th 2/09 Leigh Eric Schmidt, “From Demon Possession to Magic Show” (e); Edgar Bergen, *How to Become a Ventriloquist (Try Your Hand at Ventriloquism)*
- T 2/14 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” (e); Roland Barthes, “The Grain of the Voice” (e)
- Th 2/16 Edgar Allan Poe, “The Raven” (e) and “The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar” (e)
- F 2/17 **First paper due**
- T 2/21 Henry Cockton, *The Life and Adventures of Valentine Vox*, chpts. 1-22 (e)
- Th 2/23 *The Life and Adventure of Valentine Vox*, chpts. 23-37 (e)
- T 2/28 *The Life and Adventures of Valentine Vox*, chpts. 38-conclusion (e)
- Th 3/01 Anonymous, *Ventriloquism Explained*, pp. 1-147 (e); Robert Ganthony, *Practical Ventriloquism: Being a Thoroughly Reliable Guide to the Art of Voice Throwing and Vocal Mimicry by an Entirely Novel System of Graded Exercises* (e)
- T 3/06 No class
- Th 3/08 Robert Montgomery Bird, *Sheppard Lee*, Books I-II
- T 3/13 *Sheppard Lee*, Books III-V
- Th 3/15 *Sheppard Lee*, Books VI-VIII
- F 3/16 **Second paper due**
- T 3/20 Spring break
- Th 3/22 Spring break
- T 3/27 *The Great Gabbo*, dir. James Cruz (1929, 92 mins.), with Erich von Stroheim
- Th 3/29 *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, dir. Fritz Lang (1935, 122 mins.)

- T 4/03 William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* Chapters 1-3
- Th 4/05 *Absalom*, Chapters 4-5
- T 4/10 *Absalom*, Chapters 6-7
- Th 4/12 *Absalom*, Chapters 8-9
- F 4/13 **Third paper due**
- T 4/17 Samuel Beckett, *Krapp's Last Tape* (e); *Krapp's Last Tape*, dir. Atom Egoyan (2001, 58 mins.), screened in class
- Th 4/19 Alice Lagaay, "Between Sound and Silence: Voice in the History of Psychoanalysis" (e); Mladen Dolar, "The Linguistics of the Voice" and "The 'Physics' of the Voice," from *A Voice and Nothing More* (e)
- T 4/24 *Singin' in the Rain*, dir. Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen (1952, 102 mins.)
- Th 4/26 Mario Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller*, pp. 1-70
- T 5/01 Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller*, pp. 71-188
- Th 5/03 Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller*, pp. pp. 189-246
- F 5/04 **Fourth paper due**

E-RESERVES

Anonymous, *Ventriloquism Explained* (1834)

Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," from *The Responsibility of Forms* (1985)

Samuel Beckett, *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958)

Elizabeth Bishop, "In the Waiting Room" (1977)

Henry Cockton, *The Life and Adventures of Valentine Vox* (1840)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1797-98)

Mladen Dolar, "The Linguistics of the Voice" and "The 'Physics' of the Voice," from *A Voice and Nothing More* (2006), pp. 12-33 and 58-81

Robert Ganthony, *Practical Ventriloquism: Being a Thoroughly Reliable Guide to the Art of Voice Throwing and Vocal Mimicry by an Entirely Novel System of Graded Exercises* (1904)

Alice Lagaay, "Between Sound and Silence: Voice in the History of Psychoanalysis" (2008)

Ovid, "Echo and Narcissus," from *Metamorphoses*, trans. Charles Martin

Edgar Allan Poe, "The Raven" (1845) and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (1845)

Plato, *Ion*, trans. Benjamin Jowett

Leigh Eric Schmidt, "From Demon Possession to Magic Show" (1998)