

Take home exam SS 2012

1. Prüfungsphase:

VL Geschichte und Kultur der englischen Literatur im mentalitätshistorischen Kontext
Horatschek: Britische Literatur des Modernismus im literaturhistorischen und kulturellen Kontext (WS 11/12)

Do's and Don'ts:

Please select **either I. (Woolf) or II. (Joyce)** as the topic for your take home exam. Answer the questions **with reference to the quotes given**. Your answer should be based on the lecture (you can use or refute positions presented in the lecture). Do not give any summary of the books and do not quote from the ppt presentations, but present your reading and your definitions in your own words.

Your answer should be about 700 words (ca. 1 ½ pages, 12 point) and should present an argument.

I. Virginia Woolf, Orlando

1. Here he came then, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year. He saw the beech trees turn golden and the young ferns unfurl; he saw the moon sickle and then circular; he saw – but probably the reader can imagine the passage which should follow and how every tree and plant in the neighbourhood is described first green, then golden; how moons rise and suns set; how spring follows winter and autumn summer; how night succeeds day and day night; how there is first a storm and then fine weather; how things remain much as they are for two or three hundred years or so, except for a little dust and a few cobwebs which one old woman can sweep up in half an hour; a conclusion which, one cannot help feeling, might have been reached more quickly by the simple statement that ‘Time passed’ (here the exact amount could be indicated in brackets) and nothing whatever happened. (61)
2. We may take advantage of this pause in the narrative to make certain statements. Orlando had become a woman – there is no denying it. But in every other respect, Orlando remained precisely as he had been. The change of sex, though it altered their future, did nothing whatever to alter their identity. Their faces remained, as their portraits prove, practically the same. His memory – but in future we must, for convention's sake, say ‘her’ for ‘his’, and ‘she’ for ‘he’ – her memory then, went back through all the events of her past life without encountering any obstacle. [...]
But let other pens treat of sex and sexuality; we quit such odious subjects as soon as we can. (86f.)

Questions:

- a) What kind of implied characterisation of the narrative instance do the quotes supply? What is the function of the narrator in this novel? In which way are his comments on ‘time’ in quote 1 juxtaposed to Woolf's concept of ‘psychological realism’ in literature?
- b) In which way does quote 2 illustrate Woolf's concept of androgyny? What is modernist about this concept of identity? In which way does this concept dramatise the (modernist) ‘prison house of language’?

II. James Joyce, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

1. The Vances lived in number seven. They had a different father and mother. They were Eileen's father and mother. When they were grown up he was going to marry Eileen. He hid under the table. His mother said: "O, Stephen will apologise.
Dante said: "O, if not, the eagles will come and pull out his eyes. –
Pull out his eyes,
Apologise,
Apologise,
Pull out his eyes.
Apologise,
Pull out his eyes,
Pull out his eyes,
Apologise. (P. 7-8)
2. His soul had arisen from the grave of boyhood, spurning her gravecloths. Yes! Yes! Yes! He would create proudly out of the freedom and power of his soul, as the great artificer whose name he bore, a living thing, new and soaring and beautiful, impalpable, imperishable. (174)

Questions:

- a) Please compare the two quotes given above and interpret them with regard to the following questions: In which way do the quotes illustrate 'psychological realism' on the discourse level of the novel? How do they illustrate 'the prison house of language' and how do they try to transcend the limits? What function does the language have to illustrate the Bildung of the narrator?
- b) What concept of the artist does quote 2 imply? How does this differ from the concept of the author in British Romanticism?