Anne-Charlotte Legrand - Académie de Versailles, Lycée Alain

Narrating the feminine "There are two powers in the world; one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a third power stronger than both, that of women." Malala Yousafzain	
	To what extent do female characters challenge or question society?
At the end of the Unit, I will	Re interpretate a character with a different perspective
What documents will be used ?	**1- Society Expectations** 1a- Félix Armand Heullant, In Gedanken (In Thought), 1834–1909 1b- Shall I mary him ? Charles Dickens, *Hard Times,* 1854 1c- Fallen Women, Ken Follet, *The Man from St. Petersburg,* 1982 1d- Bree Van de Kamp advertising her new cook book, Desperate Housewives, Season 5, 2009 1e- Family diner at the Van de Kamp, Desperate Housewives, season 1, 2004 1f- Room in New York, Edward Hopper (1932) 1g- Meeting the wife, Margaret Atwood, The handmaid's Tale (Chapter 4), 1985 **2- Marital prospect** 2a – Performing the Ceremony, Margaret Atwood, *The handmaid's Tale, Chapter 16*, 1985 2b- Mr Collins' proposal to Miss Elizabeth Benett, Jane Austen, *Pride & Prejudice,*1813 (Chap 19) 2c - Mr Darcy's first proposal to Miss Elizabeth Benett - Jane Austen, *Pride & Prejudice,*1813 (Chap. 34) 2d- Mr Darcy's second proposal to Miss Elizabeth Benett -Jane Austen, *Pride & Prejudice,*1813 (Chap. 58), 2e- Pride And Prejudice, BBC, 1995 (Mr Collins and Mr Darcy's proposal 2f- Pride and Prejudice, 2005, (Mr Collins and Mr Darcy's proposal) 2g – A suitable match, Oscar Wild, *The importance of being Earnest,* 1895 **3- Lost in insanity** 3a- The Yellow Wallpaper, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 1892 (excerpt) 3b- The oval portrait, Edgar Allan Poe, 1842 **4-Defiant woman** 4b- Arrested, Tracy CHEVALIER, *Falling Angels,* 2001 4a- Warrior Queen, Janet PAISLEY, *Warrior Daughter*, 2009 **5- Next-Gen Ladies**

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	5a -Woolfe: The Red Hood Diaries, *GriN Gamestudio*, 2015 5b - Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf - Roald Dahl, *Revolting Rhymes,* 1982 5c – Malificient, Walt Disney Studio, 1984
What will I learn about ?	The different aspect of the femine character How they have been used to express a critic That male writers have also used the femine voice
Final Task : EE	You have decided to take part to a writing contest, the theme of which is to reinterprate a female character for a new movie

Instructions for your Final Task :

1- You will have an hour full to write the synopsis of this movie

2- You will be allowed to use some notes but nothing fully written

3- You will need to instroduce us to your character precisely

4- explain the reason why you chose this character

5-And write the synopsis

Narrating the feminine

You have decided to take part to a writing contest, the theme of which is to reinterprate a female character for a new movie

	Qualité du contenu	Pt score	Cohérence de la construction du discours	Pt score	Correction de la langue écrite	Pt score	Richesse de la langue	Pt score
C2	J'ai rendu de **fines nuances** de sens en rapport avec un **sujet complexe**.	**30**	j'ai produit un texte cohérent et construit sur un **sujet complexe**	**30**	J'ai rédigé avec un **très haut degré de correction grammaticale**, y compris en mobilisant des **structures complexes** sur un **sujet complexe**.	**30**	J'ai employé de manière pertinente **un très vaste répertoire lexical** incluant des expressions idiomatiques, **des nuances de formulation** et des structures variées même sur un **sujet complexe**	**30**
C1+		**25**		**25**		**25**		**25**
C1	J'ai traité le sujet et produit un écrit **fluide et convaincant, étayé** par des éléments (inter)culturels pertinents.	**20**	J'ai produit **un récit ou une argumentation complexe** en démontrant un usage maîtrisé de moyens linguistiques de structuration et d'articulation.	**20**	J'ai maintenu tout au long de sa rédaction un haut degré de correction grammaticale, y compris en mobilisant des structures complexes	**20**	J'ai employé de manière pertinente un **vaste répertoire lexical** incluant des expressions idiomatiques, des **nuances de formulation** et des structures variées..	**20**
C1-		**15**		**15**		**15**		**15**
B2+		**12**		**12**		**12**		**12**
B2	J'ai traité le sujet de façon **claire, détaillée et globalement efficace :**	**10**	**J'ai produit un texte bien structuré** en indiquant la relation entre les faits et les idées	**10**	J'ai démontré une bonne maîtrise des structures simples et courantes. Les erreurs sur les structures	**10**	j'ai produit un texte dont l'étendue du lexique et des structures **est suffisante pour permettre précision et**	**10**
B2-		**8**		**8**		**8**		**8**

B1+		**6**		**6**	complexes ne donnent pas lieu à des malentendus.	**6**	**variété des formulation.**	**6**
B1 **B1-/ A2+**	j'ai traité le sujet de façon **intelligible et relativement développée :**	**5** **4**	J'ai **rendu compte** j'ai **exposé et illustré un point de vue** j'ai **raconté une histoire** de manière cohérente.	**5** **4**	J'ai démontré une bonne maîtrise des structures simples et courantes. Les erreurs sur les structures simples ne gênent pas la lecture. .	**5** **4**	j'ai produit un texte dont **l'étendue lexicale relative nécessite l'usage de périphrases et de répétitions.** .	**5** **4**
A2 **A2-**	jai traité le sujet, ma **production** est **courte**.	**3** **2**	j'ai **exposé une expérience ou un point de vue** en utilisant des connecteurs élémentaires.	**3** **2**	j'ai produit un Mon **texte étatt immédiatement compréhensible** malgré des erreurs fréquentes.	**3** **2**	j'ai produit un texte dont les mots sont adaptés à l'intention de communication, en dépit d'un répertoire l**exical limité**	**3** **2**
A1	J' ai simplement **amorcé une production écrite** en lien avec le sujet.	**1**	J'ai é**numéré des informations**	**1**	J'ai produit un **texte globalement compréhensible**mais dont la lecture est peu aisée.	**1**	J'ai produit un texte intelligible malgré un lexique très limité.	**1**

1- Society Expectations

1a- Félix Armand Heullant, In Gedanken (In Thought)**,** 1834–1909
travail sur le tableau, signification? Personnage?

1b- Shall I mary him ? Charles Dickens, *Hard Times,* 1854
un groupe travail sur le père, un groupe travail sur la fille, un groupe travail sur les éléments de société
mise en commu, // avec le tableau et TE commune

1c- Fallen women ken follet à retrouver

1d- Bree Van de Kamp advertising her new cook book, Desperate Housewives, Season 5, 2009
Travail sur la photo et sur la notion de Housewives

1e- Family diner at the Van de Kamp, Desperate Housewives, season 1, 2004 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_wwyWTtJQJ0&t=3s
réaction disproportionnée mère / fille, quelle image de la femme ?

1f- Room in New York, Edward Hopper (1932)

1g- Meeting the wife, Margaret Atwood, The handmaid's Tale (Chapter 4), 1985
travail de repérage à partir des mots en gras : que peuvent signifer les sous-entendus ?
Suite du travail avec 2b

2- Marital prospect

2a – Performing the Ceremony, Margaret Atwood, *The handmaid's Tale, Chapter 16*, 1985

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2b- Mr Collins' proposal to Miss Elizabeth Benett - *Pride & Prejudice*, (Chap. 19), Jane Austen (1813)

2c - Mr Darcy's first proposal to Miss Elizabeth Benett -*Pride & Prejudice*, (Chap. 34), Jane Austen, 1813
travail sur les éléments de narration: quels sont les deande, les exigences ? Comment sont présenté les personnages?
Moralité?

2d- Mr Darcy's second proposal to Miss Elizabeth Benett -*Pride & Prejudice*, (Chap. 58), Jane Austen, 1813

2e- Pride And Prejudice, BBC, 1995
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7XetUFwRhzg
and
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9K_9vpUnxh0&t=10s

2f- Pride and Prejudice, 2005, Mr Collins and Mr Darcy's proposal
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zS_vNnD5aU

and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBqyLoWtYg8

travail sur les différences filmiques, mis en valeur différence

2g – A suitable match, Oscar Wild, *The importance of being Earnest,* 1895
la demande en marriage / présentation à la mère

3- Lost in insanity
3a- The yellow wall paper (excerpt)
3b- The oval portrait, Edgar Allan Poe

travail sur la notion de folie, qu'est-ce qui rend fou ? Pourquelle raison ? Femme incomprise et femme soumise
quelle image de l'homme ?
Travail de rédaction : pamphlet en faveur ou contre la place de l'homme avec un regard moderne

4-Defiant woman
4b- Arrested, Tracy CHEVALIER, *Falling Angels,* 2001
4a- Warrior Queen, Janet PAISLEY, *Warrior Daughter*, 2009

5- Next-Gen Ladies
5a -Woolfe: The Red Hood Diaries, *GriN Gamestudio*, 2015
travail de repérage en amont de l'histoire de little red ridding hood à partir de la photo, // avec la photo du jeu puis

5b - Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf - Roald Dahl, *Revolting Rhymes,* 1982
travail de traduction après résumé et repérage des éléments (faire une translation puis une traduction ?

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5c – Malificient, Walt Disney Studio, 1984 : travail sur la photo, mise en valeur de la femme méchante
fascination pour les personnages maléfique
présentation d'un personnage maléfique – photo + explication de son choix, si possible une femme

the penelopiad → DST

Shall I mary him ?

Félix Armand Heullant, In Gedanken (In Thought), **1834–1909**

'My dear Louisa,' said her father, 'I prepared you last night to give me your serious attention in the conversation we are now going to have together. You have been so well trained, and you do, I am happy to say, so much justice to the education you have received, that I have perfect confidence in your good sense. You are not impulsive, you are not romantic, you are accustomed to view everything from the strong dispassionate ground of reason and calculation. From that ground alone, I know you will view and consider what I am going to communicate.'
He waited, as if he would have been glad that she said something. But she said never a word.
'Louisa, my dear, you are the subject of a proposal of marriage that has been made to me.'
Again he waited, and again she answered not one word. This so far surprised him, as to induce him

gently to repeat, 'a proposal of marriage, my dear.' To which she returned, without any visible emotion whatever:
'I hear you, father. I am attending, I assure you.'
'Well!' said Mr. Gradgrind, breaking into a smile, after being for the moment at a loss, (…) 'Mr. Bounderby has informed me that he has long watched your progress with particular interest and pleasure, and has long hoped that the time might ultimately arrive when he should offer you his hand in marriage. That time, to which he has so long, and certainly with great constancy, looked forward, is now come. Mr. Bounderby has made his proposal of marriage to me, and has entreated me to make it known to you, and to express his hope that you will take it into your favourable consideration.'
Silence between them.
'Father,' said Louisa, 'do you think I love Mr. Bounderby?'
Mr. Gradgrind was extremely discomfited by this unexpected question. 'Well, my child,' he returned, 'I - really - cannot take upon myself to say.'
'Father,' pursued Louisa in exactly the same voice as before, 'do you ask me to love Mr. Bounderby?'
'My dear Louisa, no. No. I ask nothing.'
'Father,' she still pursued, 'does Mr. Bounderby ask me to love him?'
'Really, my dear,' said Mr. Gradgrind, 'it is difficult to answer your question - '
'Difficult to answer it, Yes or No, father?
'Certainly, my dear. Because; 'because the reply depends so materially, Louisa, on the sense in which we use the expression. Now, Mr. Bounderby does not do you the injustice, and does not do himself the injustice, of pretending to anything fanciful, fantastic, or sentimental. Mr. Bounderby would have seen you grow up under his eyes, to very little purpose. Therefore, perhaps the expression itself - I merely suggest this to you, my dear - may be a little misplaced.'
'What would you advise me to use instead, father?'
'Why, my dear Louisa,' said Mr. Gradgrind, completely recovered by this time, 'I would advise you to consider this question, as you have been accustomed to consider every other question, simply as one of tangible Fact. (…) Now, what are the Facts of this case? You are, we will say in round numbers, twenty years of age; Mr. Bounderby is, we will say in round numbers, fifty. There is some disparity in your respective years, but in your means and positions there is none; on the contrary, there is a great suitability. Then the question arises, Is this one disparity sufficient to operate as a bar to such a marriage? (…) I find, on reference that a large proportion of marriages are contracted between parties of very unequal ages, and that the elder of these contracting parties is the bridegroom. The disparity I have mentioned, therefore, almost ceases to be disparity, and virtually disappears.(...) Confining yourself rigidly to Fact, the question of Fact you state to yourself is: Does Mr. Bounderby ask me to marry him? Yes, he does. The sole remaining question then is: Shall I marry him? I think nothing can be plainer than that?'
'Shall I marry him?' repeated Louisa, with great deliberation.
'Precisely. And it is satisfactory to me, as your father, my dear Louisa, to know that you do not come to the consideration of that question with the previous habits of mind, and habits of life, that belong to many young women.'
'No, father,' she returned, 'I do not.'
'I now leave you to judge for yourself,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'I have stated the case, as such cases are usually stated among practical minds; I have stated it, as the case of your mother and myself was stated in its time. The rest, my dear Louisa, is for you to decide.'
'Mr. Bounderby asks me to marry him. The question I have to ask myself is, shall I marry him? That is so, father, is it not? You have told me so, father. Have you not?'
'Certainly, my dear.'
'Let it be so. Since Mr. Bounderby likes to take me thus, I am satisfied to accept his proposal. Tell

him, father, as soon as you please, that this was my answer. Repeat it, word for word, if you can, because I should wish him to know what I said.'
'It is quite right, my dear,' retorted her father approvingly, 'to be exact. I will observe your very proper request. Have you any wish in reference to the period of your marriage, my child?'
'None, father. What does it matter!'
Mr. Gradgrind had drawn his chair a little nearer to her, and taken her hand. But, her repetition of these words seemed to strike with some little discord on his ear. He paused to look at her, and, still holding her hand, said:
'Louisa, I have not considered it essential to ask you one question, because the possibility implied in it appeared to me to be too remote. But perhaps I ought to do so. You have never entertained in secret any other proposal?'
'Father,' she returned, almost scornfully, 'what other proposal can have been made to me? Whom have I seen? Where have I been? What are my heart's experiences?'
'My dear Louisa,' returned Mr. Gradgrind, reassured and satisfied. 'You correct me justly. I merely wished to discharge my duty.'
'What do I know, father,' said Louisa in her quiet manner, 'of tastes and fancies; of aspirations and affections; of all that part of my nature in which such light things might have been nourished? What escape have I had from problems that could be demonstrated, and realities that could be grasped?'
As she said it, she unconsciously closed her hand, as if upon a solid object, and slowly opened it as though she were releasing dust or ash.
'My dear,' assented her eminently practical parent, 'quite true, quite true.'
'Why, father,' she pursued, 'what a strange question to ask me! You have been so careful of me, that I never had a child's heart. You have trained me so well, that I never dreamed a child's dream. You have dealt so wisely with me, father, from my cradle to this hour, that I never had a child's belief or a child's fear.'
Mr. Gradgrind was quite moved by his success, and by this testimony to it. 'My dear Louisa,' said he, 'you abundantly repay my care. Kiss me, my dear girl.'
So, his daughter kissed him.

Charles Dikens, *Hard Times (*1854) (abridged)

Mr Collins' proposal to Miss Elizabeth Benett

THE next day opened a new scene at Longbourn. Mr. Collins made his declaration in form. On finding Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth, and one of the younger girls together soon after breakfast, he addressed the mother in these words,

``May I hope, Madam, for your interest with your fair daughter Elizabeth, when I solicit for the honour of a private audience with her in the course of this morning?"

Before Elizabeth had time for any thing but a blush of surprise, Mrs. Bennet instantly answered,

``Oh dear! -- Yes -- certainly. -- I am sure Lizzy will be very happy -- I am sure she can have no objection. -- Come, Kitty, I want you up stairs." (…) Mrs. Bennet and Kitty walked off, and as soon as they were gone Mr. Collins began.

``Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty, so far from doing you any disservice, rather adds to your other perfections. You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there not been this little unwillingness; but allow me to assure you that I have your respected mother's

permission for this address. You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse, however your natural delicacy may lead you to dissemble; my attentions have been too marked to be mistaken. Almost as soon as I entered the house I singled you out as the companion of my future life. But before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject, perhaps it will be advisable for me to state my reasons for marrying -- and moreover for coming into Hertfordshire with the design of selecting a wife, as I certainly did.(…)

My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish. Secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly -- which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked too!) on this subject; "Mr. Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry. -- Chuse properly, chuse a gentlewoman for *my* sake; and for your *own*, let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her." Allow me, by the way, to observe, my fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine de Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. You will find her manners beyond any thing I can describe; and your wit and vivacity I think must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite. Thus much for my general intention in favour of matrimony; it remains to be told why my views were directed to Longbourn instead of my own neighbourhood, where I assure you there are many amiable young women. But the fact is, that being, as I am, to inherit this estate after the death of your honoured father (who, however, may live many years longer), I could not satisfy myself without resolving to chuse a wife from among his daughters, that the loss to them might be as little as possible, when the melancholy event takes place -- which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years. This has been my motive, my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem. And now nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with; and that one thousand pounds in the 4 per cents, which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to. On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married."

It was absolutely necessary to interrupt him now.

``You are too hasty, Sir," she cried. ``You forget that I have made no answer. Let me do it without farther loss of time. Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me, I am very sensible of the honour of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them."

``I am not now to learn," replied Mr. Collins, with a formal wave of the hand, ``that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favour; and that sometimes the refusal is repeated a second or even a third time. I am therefore by no means discouraged by what you have just said, and shall hope to lead you to the altar ere long."

``Upon my word, Sir," cried Elizabeth, ``your hope is rather an extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. -- You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make *you* so, -- Nay, were your friend Lady Catherine to know me, I am persuaded she would find me in every respect ill qualified for the situation."

``Were it certain that Lady Catherine would think so," said Mr. Collins very gravely -- ``but I cannot imagine that her ladyship would at all disapprove of you. And you may be certain that when I have

the honour of seeing her again I shall speak in the highest terms of your modesty, economy, and other amiable qualifications."

``Indeed, Mr. Collins, all praise of me will be unnecessary. You must give me leave to judge for myself, and pay me the compliment of believing what I say. I wish you very happy and very rich, and by refusing your hand, do all in my power to prevent your being otherwise. In making me the offer, you must have satisfied the delicacy of your feelings with regard to my family, and may take possession of Longbourn estate whenever it falls, without any self-reproach. This matter may be considered, therefore, as finally settled." And rising as she thus spoke, she would have quitted the room, had not Mr. Collins thus addressed her,

``When I do myself the honour of speaking to you next on this subject I shall hope to receive a more favourable answer than you have now given me; though I am far from accusing you of cruelty at present, because I know it to be the established custom of your sex to reject a man on the first application, and perhaps you have even now said as much to encourage my suit as would be consistent with the true delicacy of the female character."

``Really, Mr. Collins," cried Elizabeth with some warmth, ``you puzzle me exceedingly. If what I have hitherto said can appear to you in the form of encouragement, I know not how to express my refusal in such a way as may convince you of its being one."

``You must give me leave to flatter myself, my dear cousin, that your refusal of my addresses is merely words of course. My reasons for believing it are briefly these: -- It does not appear to me that my hand is unworthy your acceptance, or that the establishment I can offer would be any other than highly desirable. My situation in life, my connections with the family of De Bourgh, and my relationship to your own, are circumstances highly in its favor; and you should take it into farther consideration that in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made you. Your portion is unhappily so small that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualifications. As I must therefore conclude that you are not serious in your rejection of me, I shall chuse to attribute it to your wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females."

``I do assure you, Sir, that I have no pretension whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man. I would rather be paid the compliment of being believed sincere. I thank you again and again for the honour you have done me in your proposals, but to accept them is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect forbid it. Can I speak plainer? Do not consider me now as an elegant female intending to plague you, but as a rational creature speaking the truth from her heart."

``You are uniformly charming!" cried he, with an air of awkward gallantry; ``and I am persuaded that when sanctioned by the express authority of both your excellent parents, my proposals will not fail of being acceptable."

To such perseverance in wilful self-deception, Elizabeth would make no reply, and immediately and in silence withdrew; determined, that if he persisted in considering her repeated refusals as flattering encouragement, to apply to her father, whose negative might be uttered in such a manner as must be decisive, and whose behaviour at least could not be mistaken for the affectation and coquetry of an elegant female.

Pride & Prejudice, (Chap. 19), Jane Austen (1813)

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Mr Darcy's first proposal to Miss Elizabeth Benett

But (…) , to her utter amazement, she saw Mr. Darcy walk into the room. In an hurried manner he immediately began an enquiry after her health, imputing his visit to a wish of hearing that she were better. She answered him with cold civility. He sat down for a few moments, and then getting up, walked about the room. Elizabeth was surprised, but said not a word. After a silence of several minutes, he came towards her in an agitated manner, and thus began,

``In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you."

Elizabeth's astonishment was beyond expression. She stared, coloured, doubted, and was silent. This he considered sufficient encouragement, and the avowal of all that he felt and had long felt for her immediately followed. He spoke well, but there were feelings besides those of the heart to be detailed, and he was not more eloquent on the subject of tenderness than of pride. His sense of her inferiority -- of its being a degradation -- of the family obstacles which judgment had always opposed to inclination, were dwelt on with a warmth which seemed due to the consequence he was wounding, but was very unlikely to recommend his suit.

In spite of her deeply-rooted dislike, she could not be insensible to the compliment of such a man's affection, and though her intentions did not vary for an instant, she was at first sorry for the pain he was to receive; till, roused to resentment by his subsequent language, she lost all compassion in anger. She tried, however, to compose herself to answer him with patience, when he should have done. He concluded with representing to her the strength of that attachment which, in spite of all his endeavours, he had found impossible to conquer; and with expressing his hope that it would now be rewarded by her acceptance of his hand. As he said this, she could easily see that he had no doubt of a favourable answer. He *spoke* of apprehension and anxiety, but his countenance expressed real security. Such a circumstance could only exasperate farther, and when he ceased, the colour rose into her cheeks, and she said,

``In such cases as this, it is, I believe, the established mode to express a sense of obligation for the sentiments avowed, however unequally they may be returned. It is natural that obligation should be felt, and if I could *feel* gratitude, I would now thank you. But I cannot -- I have never desired your good opinion, and you have certainly bestowed it most unwillingly. I am sorry to have occasioned pain to any one. It has been most unconsciously done, however, and I hope will be of short duration. The feelings which, you tell me, have long prevented the acknowledgment of your regard, can have little difficulty in overcoming it after this explanation."

Mr. Darcy, who was leaning against the mantle-piece with his eyes fixed on her face, seemed to catch her words with no less resentment than surprise. His complexion became pale with anger, and the disturbance of his mind was visible in every feature. He was struggling for the appearance of composure, and would not open his lips, till he believed himself to have attained it. The pause was to Elizabeth's feelings dreadful. At length, in a voice of forced calmness, he said,

``And this is all the reply which I am to have the honour of expecting! I might, perhaps, wish to be informed why, with so little *endeavour* at civility, I am thus rejected. But it is of small importance."

``I might as well enquire," replied she, ``why, with so evident a design of offending and insulting me, you chose to tell me that you liked me against your will, against your reason, and even against your character? Was not this some excuse for incivility, if I *was* uncivil? But I have other provocations. You know I have. Had not my own feelings decided against you, had they been indifferent, or had they even been favourable, do you think that any consideration would tempt me to accept the man, who has been the means of ruining, perhaps for ever, the happiness of a most beloved sister?"

As she pronounced these words, Mr. Darcy changed colour; but the emotion was short, and he listened without attempting to interrupt her while she continued.

``I have every reason in the world to think ill of you. No motive can excuse the unjust and ungenerous part you acted *there*. You dare not, you cannot deny that you have been the principal, if not the only means of dividing them from each other, of exposing one to the censure of the world for caprice and instability, the other to its derision for disappointed hopes, and involving them both in misery of the acutest kind."

She paused, and saw with no slight indignation that he was listening with an air which proved him wholly unmoved by any feeling of remorse. He even looked at her with a smile of affected incredulity.

``Can you deny that you have done it?" she repeated.

With assumed tranquillity he then replied, ``I have no wish of denying that I did every thing in my power to separate my friend from your sister, or that I rejoice in my success. Towards *him* I have been kinder than towards myself."

Elizabeth disdained the appearance of noticing this civil reflection, but its meaning did not escape, nor was it likely to conciliate, her.

``But it is not merely this affair," she continued, ``on which my dislike is founded. Long before it had taken place, my opinion of you was decided. Your character was unfolded in the recital which I received many months ago from Mr. Wickham. On this subject, what can you have to say? In what imaginary act of friendship can you here defend yourself? or under what misrepresentation, can you here impose upon others?"

``You take an eager interest in that gentleman's concerns," said Darcy in a less tranquil tone, and with a heightened colour.

``Who that knows what his misfortunes have been, can help feeling an interest in him?"

``His misfortunes!" repeated Darcy contemptuously; ``yes, his misfortunes have been great indeed."

``And of your infliction," cried Elizabeth with energy. ``You have reduced him to his present state of poverty, comparative poverty. You have withheld the advantages, which you must know to have been designed for him. You have deprived the best years of his life, of that independence which was no less his due than his desert. You have done all this! and yet you can treat the mention of his misfortunes with contempt and ridicule."

``And this," cried Darcy, as he walked with quick steps across the room, ``is your opinion of me! This is the estimation in which you hold me! I thank you for explaining it so fully. My faults, according to this calculation, are heavy indeed! But perhaps," added he, stopping in his walk, and turning towards her, ``these offences might have been overlooked, had not your pride been hurt by my honest confession of the scruples that had long prevented my forming any serious design. These bitter accusations might have been suppressed, had I with greater policy concealed my struggles, and flattered you into the belief of my being impelled by unqualified, unalloyed inclination -- by reason, by reflection, by every thing. But disguise of every sort is my abhorrence. Nor am I ashamed of the feelings I related. They were natural and just. Could you expect me to rejoice in the inferiority of your connections? To congratulate myself on the hope of relations, whose condition in life is so decidedly beneath my own?"

Elizabeth felt herself growing more angry every moment; yet she tried to the utmost to speak with composure when she said,

``You are mistaken, Mr. Darcy, if you suppose that the mode of your declaration affected me in any other way, than as it spared me the concern which I might have felt in refusing you, had you behaved in a more gentleman-like manner."

She saw him start at this, but he said nothing, and she continued,

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``You could not have made me the offer of your hand in any possible way that would have tempted me to accept it."

Again his astonishment was obvious; and he looked at her with an expression of mingled incredulity and mortification. She went on.

``From the very beginning, from the first moment I may almost say, of my acquaintance with you, your manners, impressing me with the fullest belief of your arrogance, your conceit, and your selfish disdain of the feelings of others, were such as to form that ground-work of disapprobation, on which succeeding events have built so immoveable a dislike; and I had not known you a month before I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry."

``You have said quite enough, madam. I perfectly comprehend your feelings, and have now only to be ashamed of what my own have been. Forgive me for having taken up so much of your time, and accept my best wishes for your health and happiness."

And with these words he hastily left the room, and Elizabeth heard him the next moment open the front door and quit the house.

Pride & Prejudice, (Chap. 34), Jane Austen (1813)

Mr Collins' proposal to Miss Elizabeth Benett

THE next day opened a new scene at Longbourn. Mr. Collins made his declaration in form. On finding Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth, and one of the younger girls together soon after breakfast, he addressed the mother in these words,

``May I hope, Madam, for your interest with your fair daughter Elizabeth, when I solicit for the honour of a private audience with her in the course of this morning?"

Before Elizabeth had time for any thing but a blush of surprise, Mrs. Bennet instantly answered,

``Oh dear! -- Yes -- certainly. -- I am sure Lizzy will be very happy -- I am sure she can have no objection. -- Come, Kitty, I want you up stairs." (…) Mrs. Bennet and Kitty walked off, and as soon as they were gone Mr. Collins began.

``Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty, so far from doing you any disservice, rather adds to your other perfections. You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there not been this little unwillingness; but allow me to assure you that I have your respected mother's permission for this address. You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse, however your natural delicacy may lead you to dissemble; my attentions have been too marked to be mistaken. Almost as soon as I entered the house I singled you out as the companion of my future life. But before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject, perhaps it will be advisable for me to state my reasons for marrying -- and moreover for coming into Hertfordshire with the design of selecting a wife, as I certainly did.(…)

My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish. Secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly -- which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked too!) on this subject; "Mr. Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry. -- Chuse properly, chuse a gentlewoman for *my* sake; and for your *own*, let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her." Allow me, by the way, to observe, my fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine

de Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. You will find her manners beyond any thing I can describe; and your wit and vivacity I think must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite. Thus much for my general intention in favour of matrimony; it remains to be told why my views were directed to Longbourn instead of my own neighbourhood, where I assure you there are many amiable young women. But the fact is, that being, as I am, to inherit this estate after the death of your honoured father (who, however, may live many years longer), I could not satisfy myself without resolving to chuse a wife from among his daughters, that the loss to them might be as little as possible, when the melancholy event takes place -- which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years. This has been my motive, my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem. And now nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with; and that one thousand pounds in the 4 per cents, which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to. On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married."

It was absolutely necessary to interrupt him now.

``You are too hasty, Sir," she cried. ``You forget that I have made no answer. Let me do it without farther loss of time. Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me, I am very sensible of the honour of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them."

``I am not now to learn," replied Mr. Collins, with a formal wave of the hand, ``that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favour; and that sometimes the refusal is repeated a second or even a third time. I am therefore by no means discouraged by what you have just said, and shall hope to lead you to the altar ere long."

``Upon my word, Sir," cried Elizabeth, ``your hope is rather an extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. -- You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make *you* so, -- Nay, were your friend Lady Catherine to know me, I am persuaded she would find me in every respect ill qualified for the situation."

``Were it certain that Lady Catherine would think so," said Mr. Collins very gravely -- ``but I cannot imagine that her ladyship would at all disapprove of you. And you may be certain that when I have the honour of seeing her again I shall speak in the highest terms of your modesty, economy, and other amiable qualifications."

``Indeed, Mr. Collins, all praise of me will be unnecessary. You must give me leave to judge for myself, and pay me the compliment of believing what I say. I wish you very happy and very rich, and by refusing your hand, do all in my power to prevent your being otherwise. In making me the offer, you must have satisfied the delicacy of your feelings with regard to my family, and may take possession of Longbourn estate whenever it falls, without any self-reproach. This matter may be considered, therefore, as finally settled." And rising as she thus spoke, she would have quitted the room, had not Mr. Collins thus addressed her,

``When I do myself the honour of speaking to you next on this subject I shall hope to receive a more favourable answer than you have now given me; though I am far from accusing you of cruelty at present, because I know it to be the established custom of your sex to reject a man on the first application, and perhaps you have even now said as much to encourage my suit as would be consistent with the true delicacy of the female character."

``Really, Mr. Collins," cried Elizabeth with some warmth, ``you puzzle me exceedingly. If what I

have hitherto said can appear to you in the form of encouragement, I know not how to express my refusal in such a way as may convince you of its being one."

``You must give me leave to flatter myself, my dear cousin, that your refusal of my addresses is merely words of course. My reasons for believing it are briefly these: -- It does not appear to me that my hand is unworthy your acceptance, or that the establishment I can offer would be any other than highly desirable. My situation in life, my connections with the family of De Bourgh, and my relationship to your own, are circumstances highly in its favor; and you should take it into farther consideration that in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made you. Your portion is unhappily so small that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualifications. As I must therefore conclude that you are not serious in your rejection of me, I shall chuse to attribute it to your wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females."

``I do assure you, Sir, that I have no pretension whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man. I would rather be paid the compliment of being believed sincere. I thank you again and again for the honour you have done me in your proposals, but to accept them is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect forbid it. Can I speak plainer? Do not consider me now as an elegant female intending to plague you, but as a rational creature speaking the truth from her heart."

``You are uniformly charming!" cried he, with an air of awkward gallantry; ``and I am persuaded that when sanctioned by the express authority of both your excellent parents, my proposals will not fail of being acceptable."

To such perseverance in wilful self-deception, Elizabeth would make no reply, and immediately and in silence withdrew; determined, that if he persisted in considering her repeated refusals as flattering encouragement, to apply to her father, whose negative might be uttered in such a manner as must be decisive, and whose behaviour at least could not be mistaken for the affectation and coquetry of an elegant female.

Pride & Prejudice, (Chap. 19), Jane Austen (1813)

Shall I mary him ?

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'My dear Louisa,' said her father, 'I prepared you last night to give me your serious attention in the conversation we are now going to have together. You have been so well trained, and you do, I am happy to say, so much justice to the education you have received, that I have perfect confidence in your good sense. You are not impulsive, you are not romantic, you are accustomed to view everything from the strong dispassionate ground of reason and calculation. From that ground alone, I know you will view and consider what I am going to communicate.'
He waited, as if he would have been glad that she said something. But she said never a word.
'Louisa, my dear, you are the subject of a proposal of marriage that has been made to me.'
Again he waited, and again she answered not one word. This so far surprised him, as to induce him gently to repeat, 'a proposal of marriage, my dear.' To which she returned, without any visible emotion whatever:
'I hear you, father. I am attending, I assure you.'
'Well!' said Mr. Gradgrind, breaking into a smile, after being for the moment at a loss, (…) 'Mr. Bounderby has informed me that he has long watched your progress with particular interest and pleasure, and has long hoped that the time might ultimately arrive when he should offer you his hand in marriage. That time, to which he has so long, and certainly with great constancy, looked forward, is now come. Mr. Bounderby has made his proposal of marriage to me, and has entreated me to make it known to you, and to express his hope that you will take it into your favourable consideration.'
Silence between them.
'Father,' said Louisa, 'do you think I love Mr. Bounderby?'

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Mr. Gradgrind was extremely discomfited by this unexpected question. 'Well, my child,' he returned, 'I - really - cannot take upon myself to say.'
'Father,' pursued Louisa in exactly the same voice as before, 'do you ask me to love Mr. Bounderby?'
'My dear Louisa, no. No. I ask nothing.'
'Father,' she still pursued, 'does Mr. Bounderby ask me to love him?'
'Really, my dear,' said Mr. Gradgrind, 'it is difficult to answer your question - '
'Difficult to answer it, Yes or No, father?
'Certainly, my dear. Because; 'because the reply depends so materially, Louisa, on the sense in which we use the expression. Now, Mr. Bounderby does not do you the injustice, and does not do himself the injustice, of pretending to anything fanciful, fantastic, or sentimental. Mr. Bounderby would have seen you grow up under his eyes, to very little purpose. Therefore, perhaps the expression itself - I merely suggest this to you, my dear - may be a little misplaced.'
'What would you advise me to use instead, father?'
'Why, my dear Louisa,' said Mr. Gradgrind, completely recovered by this time, 'I would advise you to consider this question, as you have been accustomed to consider every other question, simply as one of tangible Fact. (…) Now, what are the Facts of this case? You are, we will say in round numbers, twenty years of age; Mr. Bounderby is, we will say in round numbers, fifty. There is some disparity in your respective years, but in your means and positions there is none; on the contrary, there is a great suitability. Then the question arises, Is this one disparity sufficient to operate as a bar to such a marriage? (…) I find, on reference that a large proportion of marriages are contracted between parties of very unequal ages, and that the elder of these contracting parties is the bridegroom. The disparity I have mentioned, therefore, almost ceases to be disparity, and virtually disappears.(...) Confining yourself rigidly to Fact, the question of Fact you state to yourself is: Does Mr. Bounderby ask me to marry him? Yes, he does. The sole remaining question then is: Shall I marry him? I think nothing can be plainer than that?'
'Shall I marry him?' repeated Louisa, with great deliberation.
'Precisely. And it is satisfactory to me, as your father, my dear Louisa, to know that you do not come to the consideration of that question with the previous habits of mind, and habits of life, that belong to many young women.'
'No, father,' she returned, 'I do not.'
'I now leave you to judge for yourself,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'I have stated the case, as such cases are usually stated among practical minds; I have stated it, as the case of your mother and myself was stated in its time. The rest, my dear Louisa, is for you to decide.'
'Mr. Bounderby asks me to marry him. The question I have to ask myself is, shall I marry him? That is so, father, is it not? You have told me so, father. Have you not?'
'Certainly, my dear.'
'Let it be so. Since Mr. Bounderby likes to take me thus, I am satisfied to accept his proposal. Tell him, father, as soon as you please, that this was my answer. Repeat it, word for word, if you can, because I should wish him to know what I said.'
'It is quite right, my dear,' retorted her father approvingly, 'to be exact. I will observe your very proper request. Have you any wish in reference to the period of your marriage, my child?'
'None, father. What does it matter!'
Mr. Gradgrind had drawn his chair a little nearer to her, and taken her hand. But, her repetition of these words seemed to strike with some little discord on his ear. He paused to look at her, and, still holding her hand, said:
'Louisa, I have not considered it essential to ask you one question, because the possibility implied in it appeared to me to be too remote. But perhaps I ought to do so. You have never entertained in secret any other proposal?'
'Father,' she returned, almost scornfully, 'what other proposal can have been made to me? Whom

have I seen? Where have I been? What are my heart's experiences?'
'My dear Louisa,' returned Mr. Gradgrind, reassured and satisfied. 'You correct me justly. I merely wished to discharge my duty.'
'What do I know, father,' said Louisa in her quiet manner, 'of tastes and fancies; of aspirations and affections; of all that part of my nature in which such light things might have been nourished? What escape have I had from problems that could be demonstrated, and realities that could be grasped?' As she said it, she unconsciously closed her hand, as if upon a solid object, and slowly opened it as though she were releasing dust or ash.
'My dear,' assented her eminently practical parent, 'quite true, quite true.'
'Why, father,' she pursued, 'what a strange question to ask me! You have been so careful of me, that I never had a child's heart. You have trained me so well, that I never dreamed a child's dream. You have dealt so wisely with me, father, from my cradle to this hour, that I never had a child's belief or a child's fear.'
Mr. Gradgrind was quite moved by his success, and by this testimony to it. 'My dear Louisa,' said he, 'you abundantly repay my care. Kiss me, my dear girl.'
So, his daughter kissed him.

Charles Dikens, *Hard Times,* 1854

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A Suitable Boy

Lady Bracknell. Mr. Worthing! Rise, sir, from this semi-recumbent posture. It is most indecorous.

Gwendolen. Mamma! [He tries to rise; she restrains him.] I must beg you to retire. This is no place for you. Besides, Mr. Worthing has not quite finished yet.

Lady Bracknell. Finished what, may I ask?

Gwendolen. I am engaged to Mr. Worthing, mamma. [They rise together.]

Lady Bracknell. Pardon me, you are not engaged to any one. When you do become engaged to some one, I, or your father, should his health permit him, will inform you of the fact. An engagement should come on a young girl as a surprise, pleasant or unpleasant, as the case may be. It is hardly a matter that she could be allowed to arrange for herself . . . And now I have a few questions to put to you, Mr. Worthing. While I am making these inquiries, you, Gwendolen, will wait for me below in the carriage.

Gwendolen. [Reproachfully.] Mamma!

Lady Bracknell. In the carriage, Gwendolen!

[**Gwendolen** goes to the door. She and **Jack** blow kisses to each other behind **Lady Bracknell**'s back. **Lady Bracknell** looks severely at her daughter through her lorgnette. **Gwendolen** goes out, looking back at **Jack**.]

Lady Bracknell. [Sitting down.] You can take a seat, Mr. Worthing.

[Looks in her pocket for note-book and pencil.]

Jack. Thank you, Lady Bracknell, I prefer standing.

Lady Bracknell. [Severely and note-book in hand.] I feel bound to tell you that you are not down on my list of eligible young men, although I have the same list as the dear Duchess of Bolton has. We work together, in fact. However, I am quite ready to enter your name, should your answers be what a really affectionate mother requires. Do you smoke?

Jack. Well, yes, I must admit I smoke.

Lady Bracknell. I am glad to hear it. A man should always have an occupation of some kind. There are far too many idle men in London as it is. How old are you?

Jack. Twenty-nine.

Lady Bracknell. A very good age to be married at. I have always been of opinion that a man who desires to get married should know either everything or nothing. Which do you know?

Jack. [After some hesitation.] I know nothing, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. I am pleased to hear it. I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance. Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone. The whole theory of modern education is radically unsound. Fortunately in England, at any rate, education

produces no effect whatsoever. If it did, it would prove a serious danger to the upper classes, and probably lead to acts of violence in Grosvenor Square. What is your income?

Jack. Between seven and eight thousand a year.

Lady Bracknell. [Makes a note in her book.] In land, or in investments?

Jack. In investments, chiefly.

Lady Bracknell. That is satisfactory. What between the duties expected of one during one's lifetime, and the

duties exacted from one after one's death, land has ceased to be either a profit or a pleasure. It gives one position, and prevents one from keeping it up. That's all that can be said about land.

Jack. I have a country house with some land, of course, attached to it, about fifteen hundred acres (...)

Lady Bracknell. A country house! How many bedrooms? Well, that point can be cleared up afterwards. You have a town house, I hope? A girl with a simple, unspoiled nature, like Gwendolen, could hardly be expected to reside in the country.

Jack. Well, I own a house in Belgrave Square (…).

Lady Bracknell. What number in Belgrave Square?

Jack. 149.

Lady Bracknell. [Shaking her head.] The unfashionable side. I thought there was something. However, that could easily be altered.

Jack. Do you mean the fashion, or the side?

Lady Bracknell. [Sternly.] Both, if necessary, I presume. (...) Now to minor matters. Are your parents living?

Jack. I have lost both my parents.

Lady Bracknell. To lose one parent, Mr. Worthing, may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness. Who was your father? He was evidently a man of some wealth. Was he born in what the Radical papers call the purple of commerce, or did he rise from the ranks of the aristocracy?

Jack. I am afraid I really don't know. The fact is, Lady Bracknell, I said I had lost my parents. It would be nearer the truth to say that my parents seem to have lost me . . . I don't actually know who I am by birth. I was . . . well, I was found.

Lady Bracknell. Found! (...)

Jack. [Gravely.] In a hand-bag.

Lady Bracknell. A hand-bag?

Jack. [Very seriously.] Yes, Lady Bracknell. I was in a hand-bag—a somewhat large, black leather hand-bag, with handles to it—an ordinary hand-bag in fact. (…) In the cloak-room at Victoria Station. It was given to him in mistake for his own.

Lady Bracknell. The cloak-room at Victoria Station?

Jack. Yes. The Brighton line.

Lady Bracknell. The line is immaterial. Mr. Worthing, I confess I feel somewhat bewildered by what you have just told me. (…) I would strongly advise you, Mr. Worthing, to try and acquire some relations as soon as possible, and to make a definite effort to produce at any rate one parent, of either sex, before the season is quite over. (…) You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our only daughter—a girl brought up with the utmost care—to marry into a cloak-room, and form an alliance with a parcel? Good morning, Mr. Worthing!

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[**Lady Bracknell** sweeps out in majestic indignation.]

A suitable match, Oscar Wild, *The importance of being Earnest,* 1895

2b- A Suitable Boy- part 1, Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest,* 1895

[**Lady Bracknell** and **Algernon** go into the music-room, **Gwendolen** remains behind.]

Jack. I would like to be allowed to take advantage of Lady Bracknell's temporary absence . . .

Gwendolen. I would certainly advise you to do so. Mamma has a way of coming back suddenly into a room that I have often had to speak to her about.

Jack. [Nervously.] Miss Fairfax, ever since I met you I have admired you more than any girl . . . I have ever met since . . . I met you.

Gwendolen. Yes, I am quite well aware of the fact. And I often wish that in public, at any rate, you had been more demonstrative. For me you have always had an irresistible fascination. Even before I met you I was far from indifferent to you. (…) My ideal has always been to love some one of the name of Ernest. There is something in that name that inspires absolute confidence. The moment Algernon first mentioned to me that he had a friend called Ernest, I knew I was destined to love you.

Jack. You really love me, Gwendolen?

Gwendolen. Passionately!

Jack. Darling! You don't know how happy you've made me.

Gwendolen. My own Ernest!(...)

Jack. Gwendolen, we must get married at once. There is no time to be lost.

Gwendolen. Married, Mr. Worthing?

Jack. [Astounded.] Well . . . surely. You know that I love you, and you led me to believe, Miss Fairfax, that you were not absolutely indifferent to me.

Gwendolen. I adore you. But you haven't proposed to me yet. Nothing has been said at all about marriage. The subject has not even been touched on.

Jack. Well . . . may I propose to you now?

Gwendolen. I think it would be an admirable opportunity. And to spare you any possible disappointment, Mr. Worthing, I think it only fair to tell you quite frankly before-hand that I am fully determined to accept you. (...)

Jack. Gwendolen, will you marry me? [Goes on his knees.]

Gwendolen. Of course I will, darling. How long you have been about it! I am afraid you have had very little experience in how to propose.

Jack. My own one, I have never loved any one in the world but you.

Gwendolen. Yes, but men often propose for practice. I know my brother Gerald does. All my girl-friends tell me so. What wonderfully blue eyes you have, Ernest! They are quite, quite, blue. I hope you will always look at me just like that, especially when there are other people present.
[Enter **Lady Bracknell**.]

Lady Bracknell. Mr. Worthing! Rise, sir, from this semi-recumbent posture. It is most indecorous.

Gwendolen. Mamma! [He tries to rise; she restrains him.] I must beg you to retire. This is no place for you. Besides, Mr. Worthing has not quite finished yet.

Lady Bracknell. Finished what, may I ask?

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Gwendolen. [Reproachfully.] Mamma!

Lady Bracknell. In the carriage, Gwendolen! [**Gwendolen** goes to the door. She and **Jack** blow kisses to each other behind **Lady Bracknell's** back. **Lady Bracknell** looks vaguely about as if she could not understand what the noise was. Finally turns round.] Gwendolen, the carriage!

Gwendolen. Yes, mamma. [Goes out, looking back at **Jack**.]

2c- A Suitable Boy- part 2, Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest,* 1895

Lady Bracknell. [Sitting down.] You can take a seat, Mr. Worthing.

[Looks in her pocket for note-book and pencil.]

Jack. Thank you, Lady Bracknell, I prefer standing.

Lady Bracknell. [Pencil and note-book in hand.] I feel bound to tell you that you are not down on my list of eligible young men, although I have the same list as the dear Duchess of Bolton has. We work together, in fact. However, I am quite ready to enter your name, should your answers be what a really affectionate mother requires. Do you smoke?

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Jack. I have lost both my parents.

Lady Bracknell. To lose one parent, Mr. Worthing, may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness. Who was your father? He was evidently a man of some wealth. Was he born in what the Radical papers call the purple of commerce, or did he rise from the ranks of the aristocracy?

Jack. I am afraid I really don't know. The fact is, Lady Bracknell, I said I had lost my parents. It would be nearer the truth to say that my parents seem to have lost me . . . I don't actually know who I am by birth. I was . . . well, I was found.

Lady Bracknell. Found! (...)

Jack. [Gravely.] In a hand-bag.

Lady Bracknell. A hand-bag?

Jack. [Very seriously.] Yes, Lady Bracknell. I was in a hand-bag—a somewhat large, black leather hand-bag, with handles to it—an ordinary hand-bag in fact. (…) In the cloak-room at Victoria Station. It was given to him in mistake for his own.

Lady Bracknell. The cloak-room at Victoria Station?

Jack. Yes. The Brighton line.

Lady Bracknell. The line is immaterial. Mr. Worthing, I confess I feel somewhat bewildered by what you have just told me. (…) I would strongly advise you, Mr. Worthing, to try and acquire some relations as soon as possible, and to make a definite effort to produce at any rate one parent, of either sex, before the season is quite over. (…) You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our only daughter—a girl brought up with the utmost care—to marry into a cloak-room, and form an alliance with a parcel? Good morning, Mr. Worthing!

[**Lady Bracknell** sweeps out in majestic indignation.]

Anne-Charlotte Legrand - Académie de Versailles, Lycée Alain

1d- *Room in New York,* Edward Hopper (1932)

A Suitable Boy Oscar Wilde

Lady Bracknell. Mr. Worthing! Rise, sir, from this semi-recumbent posture. It is most indecorous.

Gwendolen. Mamma! [He tries to rise; she restrains him.] I must beg you to retire. This is no place for you. Besides, Mr. Worthing has not quite finished yet.

Lady Bracknell. Finished what, may I ask?

Gwendolen. I am engaged to Mr. Worthing, mamma. [They rise together.]

Lady Bracknell. Pardon me, you are not engaged to any one. When you do become engaged to some one, I, or your father, should his health permit him, will inform you of the fact. An engagement should come on a young girl as a surprise, pleasant or unpleasant, as the case may be. It is hardly a matter that she could be allowed to arrange for herself . . . And now I have a few questions to put to you, Mr. Worthing. While I am making these inquiries, you, Gwendolen, will wait for me below in the carriage.

Gwendolen. [Reproachfully.] Mamma!

Lady Bracknell. In the carriage, Gwendolen! [**Gwendolen** goes to the door. She and **Jack** blow kisses to each other behind **Lady Bracknell's** back. **Lady Bracknell** looks vaguely about as if she could not understand what the noise was. Finally turns round.] Gwendolen, the carriage!

Gwendolen. Yes, mamma. [Goes out, looking back at **Jack**.]

Lady Bracknell. [Sitting down.] You can take a seat, Mr. Worthing.

[Looks in her pocket for note-book and pencil.]

Jack. Thank you, Lady Bracknell, I prefer standing.

Lady Bracknell. [Pencil and note-book in hand.] I feel bound to tell you that you are not down on my list of eligible young men, although I have the same list as the dear Duchess of Bolton has. We work together, in fact. However, I am quite ready to enter your name, should your answers be what a really affectionate mother requires. Do you smoke?

Jack. Well, yes, I must admit I smoke.

Lady Bracknell. I am glad to hear it. A man should always have an occupation of some kind. There are far too many idle men in London as it is. How old are you?

Jack. Twenty-nine.

Lady Bracknell. A very good age to be married at. I have always been of opinion that a man who desires to get married should know either everything or nothing. Which do you know?

Jack. [After some hesitation.] I know nothing, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. I am pleased to hear it. I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance. Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone. The whole theory of modern education is radically unsound. Fortunately in England, at any rate, education produces no effect whatsoever. If it did, it would prove a serious danger to the upper classes, and probably lead to acts of violence in Grosvenor Square. What is your income?

Jack. Between seven and eight thousand a year.

Lady Bracknell. [Makes a note in her book.] In land, or in investments?

Jack. In investments, chiefly.

Lady Bracknell. That is satisfactory. What between the duties expected of one during one's lifetime, and the

duties exacted from one after one's death, land has ceased to be either a profit or a pleasure. It gives one position, and prevents one from keeping it up. That's all that can be said about land.

Jack. I have a country house with some land, of course, attached to it, about fifteen hundred acres (...)

Lady Bracknell. A country house! How many bedrooms? Well, that point can be cleared up afterwards. You have a town house, I hope? A girl with a simple, unspoiled nature, like Gwendolen, could hardly be expected to reside in the country.

Jack. Well, I own a house in Belgrave Square (…).

Lady Bracknell. What number in Belgrave Square?

Jack. 149.

Lady Bracknell. [Shaking her head.] The unfashionable side. I thought there was something. However, that could easily be altered.

Jack. Do you mean the fashion, or the side?

Lady Bracknell. [Sternly.] Both, if necessary, I presume. (...) Now to minor matters. Are your parents living?

Jack. I have lost both my parents.

Lady Bracknell. To lose one parent, Mr. Worthing, may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness. Who was your father? He was evidently a man of some wealth. Was he born in what the Radical papers call the purple of commerce, or did he rise from the ranks of the aristocracy?

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idée DST:

Arrested

London in the early 20th century. Kitty, the narrator, has been arrested. Richard, her husband, has come to fetch her at the police station.

Richard's response was predictable - a rage he contained in front of the police but unleashed' in the cab home. He shouted about the family name, about the disgrace to his mother, about the uselessness of the cause. All of this I had known to expect, from hearing of the reactions of other women's husbands. Indeed I have been lucky to go this long without Richard complaining. He has thought my activities with the WSPU' a harmless hobby to be dabbled in3 between tea parties. It is only now he truly understands that I too am a suffragette.

"What about your daughter?" he shouted. "She needs a better example than you are setting." [...]

We were silent the rest of the way back. When we got home I took a candle from the hall table and went directly up to Maude's room. I sat on her bed and looked at her in the dim light, wondering how to tell her what I must tell her.

She opened her eyes and sat up before I had said anything. "What is it, Mummy?" she asked so clearly that I am not sure she had been asleep.

It was best to be honest and direct. "Do you know where I was today while you were at school?"

"At the WSPU headquarters?"

"I was at Caxton Hall for the Women's Parliament. But then I went to Parliament Square with some

others to try to get in to the House of Commons."
"And... did you?"
"No. I was arrested. I've just come back from Cannon Row Police Station with your father. Who is furious, of course."
"But why were you arrested? What did you do?"
"I didn't do anything. We were simply pushing through the crowd when policemen grabbed us and threw us to the ground. When we got up they threw us down again and again. The bruises on my shoulders and ribs are quite spectacular. We've all got them."
I did not add that many of these bruises came from the ride in the Black Maria' - how the driver took corners so sharply I was thrown about, or how the cubicles in the van were so small that I felt I had been shut in a coffin' standing up. [...]
"I'll be in court early tomorrow," I continued. "They may send me straight to Holloway'. I wanted to say goodbye now." "But... how long would you be in... in prison?"
"I don't know. Possibly up to three months."

Tracy CHEVALIER, *Falling Angels,* 2001

6b- First Date She / He

First Date SHE

I said I liked classical music.
It wasn't exactly a lie.
I hoped he would get the impression
That my brow was acceptably high.

I said I liked classical music.
I mentioned Vivaldi and Bach.
And he asked me along to this concert.
Here we are, sitting in the half-dark.

I was thrilled to be asked to the concert.
I couldn't decide what to wear.
I hope I look tastefully sexy.
I've done what I can with my hair.

Yes, I'm thrilled to be here at this concert.
I couldn't care less what they play
But I'm trying my hardest to listen
So I'll have something clever to say.

When I glance at his face it's a picture
Of rapt concentration. I see
He is totally into this music
And quite undistracted by me.

First Date HE

She said she liked classical music.
I implied I was keen on it too.
Though I don't often go to a concert,
It wasn't entirely untrue.

I looked for a suitable concert
And here we are on our first date.
The traffic was dreadful this evening
And I arrived ten minutes late.

So we haven't had much time for talking
And I'm a bit nervous. I see
She is totally lost in the music
And quite undistracted by me.

In that dress she is very attractive –
The neckline can't fail to intrigue.
I mustn't appear too besotted.
Perhaps she is out of my league.

Where are we? I glance at the programme
But I've put my glasses away.
I'd better start paying attention
Or else I'll have nothing to say.

Family Values, Wendy Cope, 2011 ■

Anne-Charlotte Legrand - Académie de Versailles, Lycée Alain

Warrior Queen

Skaaha walked to the hut in bright spring sunshine.

She wore a fine white woollen dress, glittering silver earrings and a blue cloak pinned with a brooch that shone like the moon. [...] Greeting Terra, who guarded the shut, she put her hand on the **catch** and opened it.

The man inside gripped his hands together to stop them shaking. Twenty of them had left Harak on this raid. Half had died on that beach. His only company in the hut were their heads, hanged from the roof to dry. The young queen who entered was finely dressed and beautiful. Glossy black hair, **braided** round her head, tumbled in **coils** down her back. But she was the same woman as that naked she-witch who'd smiled so coldly in the half-light of that brutal night.

[...] The red-haired woman warrior who came with her yanked him to his feet. Stumbling, he was propelled out of the hut into daylight. The queen strolled alongside. A priest fell in behind. His presence brought no comfort. They headed towards the sea, striking a high outcrop of rock. He could hear the wind howl high in the sky though the air was still, without a breeze.

"We have a custom in our country," the queen said. "Every spring, we dip rags in water and tie them, as our wishes, to a tree." She paused. "Do you do this?"

"No." He shook his head, hands still trembling. They passed the rock, the ground opening out to the sea. Ahead, a trader's boat waited beside a jetty. The trader, in a long, patterned coat, stood in the **prow.** Pale-faced, he stared towards them.

"You might like to tell your country of this custom," she suggested, nodding for him to look back. The wind **moaned** louder here, almost human.

He turned. Behind the rocks they had passed was a wide grassy circle. In its centre, a massive oak tree spread leafless branches. High among those branches hung the naked bodies of men, hung by their hair. His nine companions **swayed**, hands tied behind them. [...]

"Your boat was sacrificed in the sea," the queen said. "Beric will take you home." Her hand grasped his hair, forcing him to look at her. "You came to war against the Island of Wings. I let you live so your tongue will speak what it has seen." Her eyes were dark as night. "Tell your people the Land of Bride has a new warrior queen. Tell them she is the shadow of death. Tell them" - her voice rang hard as iron - "I am Skaaha!"

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Janet PAISLEY, Warrior Daughter, 2009

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pieces of fabric - *loquet* - *tressés* - curls - *proue* - *gémir* – swing- *emergence*

Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf

As soon as Wolf
began to feel
That he would like a
decent meal,
He went and
knocked on
Grandma's door.
When Grandma
opened it, she saw
The sharp white teeth, the horrid grin,
And Wolfie said, ``May I come in?"
Poor Grandmamma was terrified,
``He's going to eat me up!" she cried.

And she was absolutely right.
He ate her up in one big bite.
But Grandmamma was small and
tough,
And Wolfie wailed, ``That's not
enough!
I haven't yet begun to feel
That I have had a decent meal!"
He ran around the kitchen yelping,
``I've *got* to have a second helping!"
Then added with a frightful leer,
``I'm therefore going to wait right
here
Till Little Miss Red Riding Hood
Comes home from walking in the
wood."
He quickly put on Grandma's clothes,
(Of course he hadn't eaten those).
He dressed himself in coat and hat.
He put on shoes, and after that
He even brushed and curled his hair,
Then sat himself in Grandma's chair.
In came the little girl in red.
She stopped. She stared. And then she
said,
``What great
big ears you
have,
Grandma."
``All the better
to hear you
with," the Wolf
replied.
``What great
big eyes you have, Grandma."
said Little Red Riding Hood.
``All the better to see you with," the
Wolf replied.

He sat there watching her and smiled.
He thought, I'm going to eat this
child.
Compared with her old Grandmamma
She's going to taste like caviar.

Then Little Red Riding Hood said,
``But Grandma,
what a lovely great big furry coat you
have on."

``That's wrong!" cried Wolf. ``Have
you forgot
To tell me what BIG TEETH I've got?
Ah well, no matter what you say,
I'm going to eat you anyway."
The small girl smiles. One eyelid
flickers.
She whips a pistol from her knickers.
She aims it at the creature's head
And *bang bang bang*, she shoots him
dead.
A few weeks later, in the wood,
I came across Miss Riding Hood.
But what a change! No cloak of red,

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No silly hood upon her head.
She said, ``Hello, and do please note
My lovely furry wolfskin coat."

Roald Dahl, *Revolting Rhymes, 1982*

Walt Disney Studio 2014

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Woolfe: The Red Hood Diaries, *GriN Gamestudio*, 2015

The Yellow Wall-paper (excerpt)

It is very **seldom** that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer. A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate, I would say a **haunted** house, and reach the height of romantic felicity—but that would be asking too much of fate! Still I will proudly declare that there is something **queer** about it. Else, why should it be let so cheaply? And why have stood so long unrented?

John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage. John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he **scoffs** openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures. John is a physician, and PERHAPS—PERHAPS that is one reason I do not get well faster. You see he does not believe I am sick! And what can one do? If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression—a slight hysterical tendency—what is one to do?

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I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus—but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad. So I will let it alone and talk about the house. There was some legal trouble, I believe, something about the **heirs** and coheirs; anyhow, the place has been empty for years. There is something strange about the house—I can feel it.

We took the nursery at the top of the house. It is a big, airy room, the whole floor nearly, with windows that look all ways, and air and sunshine **galore**. It was nursery first and then playroom and gymnasium, I should judge; for the windows are barred for little children, and there are rings and things in the walls. The paint and paper look as if a boys' school had used it. It is **stripped** off—the paper—in great **patches** all around the head of my bed, about as far as I can reach, and in a great place on the other side of the room low down. I never saw a worse paper in my life.

I wish I could get well faster.

But I must not think about that. This paper looks to me as if it KNEW what a vicious influence it had! There is a recurrent **spot** where the pattern **lolls** like a broken neck and two bulbous eyes stare at you upside down. I never saw so much expression in an inanimate thing before, and we all know how much expression they have! I used to lie awake as a child and get more entertainment and terror out of **blank** walls and **plain** furniture than most children could find in a toy store.

There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me, or ever will. Behind that outside pattern the **dim** shapes get clearer every day. It is always the same shape, only very numerous. And it is like a woman stooping down and creeping about behind that pattern. I don't like it a bit. I wonder—I begin to think—I wish John would take me away from here!

It is so hard to talk with John about my case, because he is so wise, and because he loves me so. But I tried it last night. It was moonlight. John was asleep and I hated to waken him, so I kept still and watched the moonlight on that undulating wall-paper till I felt creepy.

The faint f**igure** behind seemed to shake the pattern, just as if she wanted to get out. I got up softly and went to feel and see if the paper DID move, and when I came back John was awake."What is it, little girl?" he said. "Don't go walking about like that—you'll get cold." I though it was a good time to talk, so I told him that I really was not gaining here, and that I wished he would take me away. "Why darling!" said he, "our l**ease** will be up in three weeks, and I can't see how to leave before.[...]

There is one marked peculiarity about this paper, a thing nobody seems to notice but myself, and that is that it changes as the light changes. When the sun shoots in through the east window—I always watch for that first long, straight ray—it changes so quickly that I never can quite believe it. That is why I watch it always. By moonlight I wouldn't know it was the same paper. At night in any kind of light,, it becomes bars! The outside pattern I mean, and the woman behind it is as plain as can be. I didn't realize for a long time what the thing was that showed behind that dim pattern but now I am quite sure it is a woman. By daylight she is **subdued,** quiet.

I fancy it is the **pattern** that keeps her so **still**. It is so **puzzling**. It keeps me quiet by the hour.

I, think that woman gets out in the daytime! And I'll tell you why—privately—I've seen her!

I can see her out of every one of my windows! It is the same woman, I know, for she is always **creeping**, and most women do not creep by daylight. I see her on that long shaded lane, creeping up and down. I see her in those dark grape arbors, creeping all around the garden. I see her on that long road under the trees, creeping along, and when a carriage comes she hides under the blackberry vines.

I don't blame her a bit. It must be very humiliating to be caught creeping by daylight!
I always lock the door when I creep by daylight. I can't do it at night, for I know John would suspect something at once.

And John is so **queer** now, that I don't want to irritate him. I wish he would take another room! Besides, I don't want anybody to get that woman out at night but myself. I often wonder if I could see her out of all the windows at once. But, turn as fast as I can, I can only see out of one at one time. And though I always see her she *may* be able to creep faster than I can turn!
I have watched her sometimes away off in the open country, creeping as fast as a cloud shadow in a high wind.
I have found out another funny thing, but I shan't tell it this time! It does not do to trust people too much.
There are only two more days to get this paper off, and I believe John is beginning to notice. I don't like the look in his eyes.
And I heard him ask Jennie a lot of professional questions about me. She had a very good report to give. She said I slept a good deal in the daytime.
John knows I don't sleep very well at night!
He asked me all sorts of questions, too, and pretended to be very loving and kind.
As if I couldn't **see through him**!
Still, I don't wonder he acts so, sleeping under this paper for three months.
It only interests me, but I feel sure John and Jennie are secretly affected by it. [...]

Hurrah! This is the last day, but it is enough. John is to stay in town over night, and won't be out until this evening.
As soon as it was moonlight, and that poor thing began to crawl and shake the pattern, I got up and ran to help her. I pulled and she shook, I shook and she pulled, and before morning we had peeled off yards of that paper. A strip about as high as my head and half around the room.
And then when the sun came and that awful pattern began to laugh at me I declared I would finish it to-day!
We go away to-morrow, and they are moving all my furniture down again to leave things as they were before. Jennie looked at the wall in amazement, but I told her merrily that I did it out of pure spite at the vicious thing. She laughed and said she wouldn't mind doing it herself, but I must not get tired.
But I am here, and no person touches this paper but me—not alive!
I quite enjoy the room, now it is bare again.
How those children did tear about here! This bedstead is fairly gnawed!
But I must get to work. I have locked the door and thrown the key down into the front path.
I don't want to go out, and I don't want to have anybody come in, till John comes. I want to astonish him.
I've got a rope up here that even Jennie did not find. If that woman does get out, and tries to get away, I can tie her!
But I forgot I could not reach far without anything to stand on!
This bed will not move!
I tried to lift and push it and then I got so angry I bit off a little piece at one corner—but it hurt my teeth.
Then I peeled off all the paper I could reach standing on the floor. It sticks horribly and the pattern just enjoys it! All those strangled heads and bulbous eyes just shriek with derision!
I am getting angry enough to do something desperate. To jump out of the window would be admirable exercise, but the bars are too strong even to try.

Besides I wouldn't do it. Of course not. I know well enough that a step like that is improper and might be misunderstood.
I don't like to look out of the windows even—there are so many of those creeping women, and they creep so fast.
I wonder if they all come out of that wallpaper as I did?
But I am securely fastened now by my well-hidden rope—you don't get me out in the road there!
I suppose I shall have to get back behind the pattern when it comes night, and that is hard!
It is so pleasant to be out in this great room and creep around as I please!
I don't want to go outside. I won't, even if Jennie asks me to.
Why, there's John at the door!
It is no use, young man, you can't open it!
How he does call and pound!
"John dear!" said I in the gentlest voice, "the key is down by the front steps, under a plantain leaf!"
That silenced him for a few moments.
And then I said it again, several times, very gently and slowly, and said it so often that he had to go and see, and he got it, of course, and came in. He stopped short by the door.
"What is the matter?" he cried. "For God's sake, what are you doing!"
I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder.
"I've got out at last," said I, "in spite of you and Jane! And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!"
Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time!

The Yellow Wall Paper, Charlotte Perkin Gilman, 1892

Seldom: *rare* – **haunted:** *hanté* – **queer:** *bizarre*
scoffs : *se moquer*
heirs: *héritiers*
galore : *en abondance* **– stripped off:** *arrachés au mur* **– patches :** *morceau*
spot : *endroit* – **loll :** *pendre* **blank:** *vide* **– plain :** *uni, simple*
dim: *vague, sombre*
figure: *silhouettte*
lease : *bail, location*
subdued : *sous contrôle, maitrisée*
pattern : *motif* – **still :** immobile – **puzzling :** *surprenant*
creeping : *ramper*
queer: *bizarre*
see through him : *deviner ses intentions*
tear: *ici, déchirer* – **gnawed** : *mordre*
shriek: *cri aiguë*

The Oval Portrait

The château into which my valet had ventured to make forcible entrance, rather than permit me, in my desperately wounded condition, to pass a night in the open air, was one of those piles of commingled gloom and grandeur which have so long frowned among the **Appennines**, not less in fact than in the fancy of **Mrs. Radcliffe**. To all appearance it had been temporarily and very lately abandoned. We established ourselves in one of the smallest and least sumptuously furnished apartments. It lay in a remote turret of the building. Its decorations were rich, yet tattered and antique. Its walls were hung with tapestry and bedecked with manifold and multiform armorial trophies, together with an

unusually great number of very spirited modern paintings in frames of rich golden arabesque. In these paintings, which depended from the walls not only in their main surfaces, but in very many nooks which the bizarre architecture of the château rendered necessary-in these paintings my incipient delirium, perhaps, had caused me to take deep interest; so that I bade Pedro to close the heavy shutters of the room-since it was already night-to light the tongues of a tall candelabrum which stood by the head of my bed-and to throw open far and wide the fringed curtains of black velvet which enveloped the bed itself. I wished all this done that I might resign myself, if not to sleep, at least alternately to the contemplation of these pictures, and the perusal of a small volume which had been found upon the pillow, and which purported to criticize and describe them.

Long-long I read and devoutly, devotedly I gazed. Rapidly and gloriously the hours flew by and the deep midnight came. The position of the candelabrum displeased me, and outreaching my hand with difficulty, rather than disturb my slumbering valet, I placed it so as to throw its rays more fully upon the book.

But the action produced an effect altogether unanticipated. The rays of the numerous candles (for there were many) now fell within a niche of the room which had hitherto been thrown into deep shade by one of the bed-posts. I thus saw in vivid light a picture all unnoticed before. It was the portrait of a young girl just ripening into womanhood. I glanced at the painting hurriedly, and then closed my eyes. Why I did this was not at first apparent even to my own perception. But while my lids remained thus shut, I ran over in my mind my reason for so shutting them. It was an impulsive movement to gain time for thought-to make sure that my vision had not deceived me to calm and subdue my fancy for a more sober and more certain gaze. In a very few moments I again looked fixedly at the painting.

That I now saw aright I could not and would not doubt; for the first flashing of the candles upon that canvas had seemed to dissipate the dreamy stupor which was stealing over my senses, and to startle me at once into waking life.

The portrait, I have already said, was that of a young girl. It was a mere head and shoulders, done in what is technically termed a vignette manner; much **in the style of the favorite heads of Sully**. The arms, the bosom, and even the ends of the radiant hair melted imperceptibly into the vague yet deep shadow which formed the back-ground of the whole. The frame was oval, richly gilded and filigreed in **Moresque**. As a thing of art nothing could be more admirable than the painting itself. But it could have been neither the execution of the work, nor the immortal beauty of the countenance, which had so suddenly and so vehemently moved me. Least of all, could it have been that my fancy, shaken from its half slumber, had mistaken the head for that of a living person. I saw at once that the peculiarities of the design, of the vignetting, and of the frame, must have instantly dispelled such idea-must have prevented even its momentary entertainment. Thinking earnestly upon these points, I remained, for an hour perhaps, half sitting, half reclining, with my vision riveted upon the portrait. At length, satisfied with the true secret of its effect, I fell back within the bed. I had found the spell of the picture in an absolute life-likeliness of expression, which, at first startling, finally confounded, subdued, and appalled me. With deep and reverent awe I replaced the candelabrum in its former position. The cause of my deep agitation being thus shut from view, I soughteagerly the volume which discussed the paintings and their histories. Turning to the number which designated the oval portrait, I there read the vague and quaint words which follow:

Anne-Charlotte Legrand - Académie de Versailles, Lycée Alain

"She was a maiden of rarest beauty, and not more lovely than full of glee. And evil was the hour when she saw, and loved, and wedded the painter. He, passionate, studious, austere, and having already a bride in his Art; she a maiden of rarest beauty, and not more lovely than full of glee; all light and smiles, and frolicsome as the young fawn; loving and cherishing all things; hating only the Art which was her rival; dreading only the pallet and brushes and other untoward instruments which deprived her of the countenance of her lover. It was thus a terrible thing for this lady to hear the painter speak of his desire to portray even his young bride. But she was humble and obedient, and sat meekly for many weeks in the dark, high turret-chamber where the light dripped upon the pale canvas only from overhead. But he, the painter, took glory in his work, which went on from hour to hour, and from day to day. And he was a passionate, and wild, and moody man, who became lost in reveries; so that he would not see that the light which fell so ghastly in that lone turret withered the health and the spirits of his bride, who pined visibly to all but him. Yet she smiled on and still on, uncomplainingly, because she saw that the painter (who had high renown) took a fervid and burning pleasure in his task, and wrought day and night to depict her who so loved him, yet who grew daily more dispirited and weak. And in sooth some who beheld the portrait spoke of its resemblance in low words, as of a mighty marvel, and a proof not less of the power of the painter than of his deep love for her whom he depicted so surpassingly well. But at length, as the labor drew nearer to its conclusion, there were admitted none into the turret; for the painter had grown wild with the ardor of his work, and turned his eyes from canvas merely, even to regard the countenance of his wife. And he would not see that the tints which he spread upon the canvas were drawn from the cheeks of her who sate beside him. And when many weeks had passed, and but little remained to do, save one brush upon the mouth and one tint upon the eye, the spirit of the lady again flickered up as the flame within the socket of the lamp. And then the brush was given, and then the tint was placed; and, for one moment, the painter stood entranced before the work which he had wrought; but in the next, while he yet gazed, he grew tremulous and very pallid, and aghast, and crying with a loud voice, 'This is indeed Life itself!' turned suddenly to regard his beloved: She was dead!

Edgar Allan Poe, *The Oval Portrait*, 1842

1. The Appennines (now spelled "Apennines") are a mountain system which runs the entire length of the Italian peninsula.
2. Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823) was a distinguished writer of Gothic romances employing vivid description, startling events and horrors.
3. Thomas Sully (1783-1872) was a well-known painter of portraits. It is thought by some that he painted certain portraits of John and Frances Allan, Poe's foster parents.
4. The Moors were people of Arabic and Berber descent who lived in northwest Africa. In the 8th century, they were converted to Islam, then conquered the southern half of Spain. Moresque art and architecture is known for its complex and intricate design, including high arches.

Meeting the Wife

I go out by the back door, into the garden, which is large and tidy: a lawn in the middle, a willow, weeping catkins; around the edges, the flower borders, in which the daffodils are now fading and the tulips are opening their cups, spilling out color. The tulips are red, a darker crimson towards the stem, as if they have been cut and are beginning to heal there.

This garden is the domain of the Commander's Wife. Looking out through my shatterproof window I've often seen her in it, her knees on a cushion, a light blue veil thrown over her wide gardening hat, a basket at her side with shears in it and pieces of string for lying the flowers into place. A Guardian detailed to the Commander does the heavy digging; the Commander's Wife directs, pointing with her stick. Many of the Wives have such gardens, it's something for them to order and maintain and care for.

I once had a garden. I can remember the smell of the turned earth, the plump shapes of bulbs held in the hands, fullness, the dry rustle of seeds through the fingers. Time could pass more swiftly thai way. Sometimes the Commander's Wife has a chair brought out, and just sits in it, in her garden. From a distance it looks like peace.

She isn't here now, and I start to wonder where she is: I don't like to come upon the Commander's Wife unexpectedly. Perhaps she's sewing, in the sitting room, with her left foot on the footstool, because of her arthritis. Or knitting scarves, for the Angels at the front lines. I can hardly believe the Angels have a need for such scarves; anyway, the ones made by the Commander's Wife are too elaborate. She doesn't bother with the cross-and-star pattern used by many of the other Wives, it's not a challenge. (...) Sometimes **I think these scarves aren't sent to the Angels at all, but unraveled and turned back into balls of yarn, to be knitted again in their turn**. Maybe it's just something to keep the Wives busy, to give them a sense of purpose. But I envy the Commander's Wife her knitting. It's good to have small goals that can be easily attained.

What does she envy me?

She doesn't speak to me, unless she can't avoid it. I **am a reproach to her; and a necessity**.

We stood face to face for the first time five weeks ago, when I arrived at this posting. The Guardian from the previous post brought me to the front door. On first days we are permitted front doors, but after that we're supposed to use the back. Things haven't settled down, it's too soon, everyone is unsure about our exact status. (...)

The Guardian rang the doorbell for me, but before there was time for someone to hear and walk quickly to answer, the door opened inward. She must have been waiting behind it, I was expecting a **Martha**, but it was her instead, i**n her long powder-blue robe, unmistakable**.

So, you're the **new one**, she said. She didn't step aside to let me in, she just stood there in the doorway, blocking the entrance. She wanted me to feel that I could not come into the house unless she said so. (...)

Yes, I said.

Leave it on the porch. She said this to the Guardian, who was carrying my bag. The bag was red vinyl and not large. There was another bag, with the winter cloak and heavier dresses, but that would be coming later.

The Guardian set down the bag and saluted her. Then I could hear his footsteps behind me, going back down the walk, and the click of the front gate, and I felt as if a protective arm were being withdrawn. The threshold of a new house is a lonely place.

She waited until the car started up and pulled away. (...)

You might as well come in, she said. She turned her back on me and limped down the hall. Shut the door behind you.

I lifted my red bag inside, as she'd no doubt intended, then closed the door. I didn't say anything to her. Aunt Lydia said it was best not to speak unless they asked you a direct question. **Try to think of it from their point of view**, she said, her hands clasped and wrung together, her nervous pleading smile. It isn't easy for them. In here, said the Commander's Wife. When I went into the sitting room she was already in her chair, her left foot on the footstool, with its petit point cushion, roses in a basket. Her knitting was on the

floor beside the chair, the needles stuck through it.
I stood in front of her, hands folded. So, she said. She had a cigarette(...). The cigarettes must have come from the black market, I thought, and this gave me hope. Even now that there is no real money anymore, there's still a black market. There's always a black market, there's always something that can be exchanged. She then was a woman who might bend the rules. But what did I have, to trade?
I looked at the cigarette with longing. **For me, like liquor and coffee, they are forbidden**.
So old what's-his-face didn't work out, she said.
No, ma'am, I said.
She gave what might have been a laugh, then coughed. Tough luck on him, she said. This is your second, isn't it?
Third, ma'am, I said.
Not so good for you either, she said. There was another coughing laugh. You can sit down. I don't make a practice of it, but just this time.
I did sit, on the edge of one of the stiff-backed chairs. (...)
I want to see as little of you as possible, she said. I expect you feel the same way about me.
I didn't answer, as a yes would have been insulting, a no contradictory.
I know you aren't stupid, she went on. She inhaled, blew out the smoke. I've read your file. As far as I'm concerned, this is like a business transaction. But if I get trouble, I'll give trouble back. You understand?
Yes, ma'am, I said.
Don't call me ma'am, she said irritably. You're not a Martha.
I didn't ask what I was supposed to cull her, because I could see that she hoped I would never have the- occasion to call her anvthing at all. I was disappointed. I wanted, then, to turn her into an older sister, a motherly figure, someone who would understand and protect me. The Wife in my posting before this had spent most of her time in her bedroom; the Marthas said she drank. I wanted this one to be different. I wanted to think I would have liked her, in another time and place, another life. But I could see already that I wouldn't have liked her, nor she me.
She put her cigarette out, half smoked, in a little scrolled ashtray on the lamp table beside her. She did this decisively, one jab and one grind, not the series of genteel taps favored by many of the Wives. As for my husband, she said, he's just that. My husband. I want that to be perfectly clear. Till death do us part. It's final.
Yes, ma'am, I said again, forgetting.

Margaret Atwood, The handmaid's Tale, chapter 4, 1985

Performing the Ceremony

The Ceremony goes as usual.
I lie on my back, fully clothed except for the healthy white cotton underdrawers. (...)
A mist of Lily of the Valley surrounds us, chilly, crisp almost. It's not warm in this room
Above me, towards the head of the bed, Serena Joy is arranged, outspread. Her legs are apart, I lie between them, my head on her stomach, her pubic bone under the base of my skull, her thigh on either side of me. She too is fully clothed.
My arms are raised; she holds my hands, each of mine in each of hers. This is supposed to signify that we are one flesh, one being. What it really means is that she **is in control, of the process** and **thus of the product.If any**. The rings of her left hand cut into my fingers. It **may or may not be revenge**.
My red skirt is hitched up to my waist, though no higher. Below it the Commander is fucking. What

he is fucking is the lower part of my body. I do not say making love, because this is not what he's doing. Copulating too would be inaccurate, because it would imply two people and only one is involved. Nor does rape cover it: nothing is going on here that I haven't signed up for. There wasn't a lot of choice but there was some, and this is what I chose.
Therefore I lie still and picture the unseen canopy over my head. I remember Queen Victoria's advice to her daughter: Close your eyes and think of England. But this is not England. I wish he would hurry up.
Maybe I'm crazy and this is some new kind of therapy. I wish it were true; then I could get better and this would go away. Serena Joy grips my hands as if it is she, not I, who's being fucked, as if she finds it either pleasurable or painful, and the Commander fucks, with a regular two-four marching stroke, on and on like a tap dripping. He is preoccupied, like a man humming to himself in the shower without knowing he's humming; like a man who has other things on his mind. It's as if he's somewhere else, waiting for himself to come, drumming his fingers on the table while he waits. There's an impatience in his rhythm now. But isn't this everyone's wet dream, two women at once? They used to say that. Exciting, they used to say. What's going on in this room, under Serena Joy's silvery canopy, is not exciting. It has nothing to do with passion or love or romance or any of those other notions we used to titillate ourselves with. It has nothing to do with sexual desire, at least for me, and certainly not for Serena. Arousal and orgasm are no longer thought necessary; they would be a symptom of frivolity merely, like jazz garters or beauty spots: superfluous distractions for the light-minded. Outdated. It seems odd that women once spent such time and energy reading about such things,thinking about them, worrying about them, writing about them. They are so obviously recreational.
This is not recreation, even for the Commander. **This is serious busines**s. The Commander, too, is doing his duty.
If I were going to open my eyes a slit, I would be able to see him, his not-unpleasant face hanging over my torso, with a few strands of his silver hair falling perhaps over his forehead, intent on his inner journey, that place he is hurrying towards, which recedes as in a dream at the same speed with which he approaches it. I would see his open eyes.
If he were better looking would I enjoy this more? (…)
He comes at last, with a stifled groan as of relief. Serena Joy, who has been holding her breath, expels it. The Commander, who has been propping himself on his elbows, away from our combined bodies, doesn't permit himself to sink down into us. He rests a moment, withdraws, recedes, rezippers. He nods, then turns and leaves the room, closing the door with exaggerated carebehind him, as if both of us are his ailing mother. There's something hilarious about this, but I don't dare laugh.
Serena Joy lets go of my hands. "You can get up now," she says. "Get up and get out." She's supposed to have me rest, for ten minutes, with my feet on a pillow **to improve the chances**. This is meant to be a time of silent meditation for her, hut she's not in the mood for that. There is loathing in her voice, as if the touch of my flesh sickens and contaminates her. I untangle myself from her body, stand up; the juice of the Commander runs down my legs. Before I turn away I see her straighten her blue skirt, clench her legs together; she continues lying on the bed, gazing up at the canopy above her, stiff and straight as an effigy. **Which of us is it worse for, her or me?**

Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale (Chapter 16)* 1985

Mr Darcy's 2nde proposal

"If you *will* thank me," he replied, "let it be for yourself alone. That the wish of giving happiness to you might add force to the other inducements which led me on, I shall not attempt to deny. But your *family* owe me nothing. Much as I respect them, I believe I thought only of *you*."

Elizabeth was too much embarrassed to say a word. After a short pause, her companion added, "You are too generous to trifle with me. If your feelings are still what they were last April, tell me so at once. *My* affections and wishes are unchanged, but one word from you will silence me on this subject for ever."
Elizabeth, feeling all the more than common awkwardness and anxiety of his situation, now forced herself to speak; and immediately, though not very fluently, gave him to understand that her sentiments had undergone so material a change, since the period to which he alluded, as to make her receive with gratitude and pleasure his present assurances. The happiness which this reply produced, was such as he had probably never felt before; and he expressed himself on the occasion as sensibly and as warmly as a man violently in love can be supposed to do. Had Elizabeth been able to encounter his eye, she might have seen how well the expression of heartfelt delight, diffused over his face, became him; but, though she could not look, she could listen, and he told her of feelings, which, in proving of what importance she was to him, made his affection every moment more valuable.
They walked on, without knowing in what direction. There was too much to be thought, and felt, and said, for attention to any other objects. She soon learnt that they were indebted for their present good understanding to the efforts of his aunt, who did call on him in her return through London, and there relate her journey to Longbourn, its motive, and the substance of her conversation with Elizabeth; dwelling emphatically on every expression of the latter which, in her ladyship's apprehension, peculiarly denoted her perverseness and assurance; in the belief that such a relation must assist her endeavours to obtain that promise from her nephew which she had refused to give. But, unluckily for her ladyship, its effect had been exactly contrariwise.
"It taught me to hope," said he, "as I had scarcely ever allowed myself to hope before. I knew enough of your disposition to be certain that, had you been absolutely, irrevocably decided against me, you would have acknowledged it to Lady Catherine, frankly and openly."
Elizabeth coloured and laughed as she replied, "Yes, you know enough of my frankness to believe me capable of *that*. After abusing you so abominably to your face, I could have no scruple in abusing you to all your relations."
"What did you say of me, that I did not deserve? For, though your accusations were ill-founded, formed on mistaken premises, my behaviour to you at the time had merited the severest reproof. It was unpardonable. I cannot think of it without abhorrence."
"We will not quarrel for the greater share of blame annexed to that evening," said Elizabeth. "The conduct of neither, if strictly examined, will be irreproachable; but since then, we have both, I hope, improved in civility."
"I cannot be so easily reconciled to myself. The recollection of what I then said, of my conduct, my manners, my expressions during the whole of it, is now, and has been many months, inexpressibly painful to me. Your reproof, so well applied, I shall never forget: 'had you behaved in a more gentlemanlike manner.' Those were your words. You know not, you can scarcely conceive, how they have tortured me;—though it was some time, I confess, before I was reasonable enough to allow their justice."
"I was certainly very far from expecting them to make so strong an impression. I had not the smallest idea of their being ever felt in such a way."
"I can easily believe it. You thought me then devoid of every proper feeling, I am sure you did. The turn of your countenance I shall never forget, as you said that I could not have addressed you in any possible way that would induce you to accept me."
"Oh! do not repeat what I then said. These recollections will not do at all. I assure you that I have long been most heartily ashamed of it."

Anne-Charlotte Legrand - Académie de Versailles, Lycée Alain

Darcy mentioned his letter. "Did it," said he, "did it soon make you think better of me? Did you, on reading it, give any credit to its contents?"
She explained what its effect on her had been, and how gradually all her former prejudices had been removed.

Jane Austen, *Pride And Prejudice* (Chapter 59), 1813

Fallen Women

As the carriage turned into the courtyard of their house, Charlotte glimpsed one of the street sleepers beside the gate. She decided she would take a closer look.

The coach stopped beside the front door. Charles handed Mama down, then Charlotte. Charlotte ran across the courtyard.William was closing the gates. "Just a minute," Charlotte called.

She heard Papa say: "What the devil...

She ran out into the street.

The sleeper was a woman. She lay slumped on the pavement with her shoulders against the courtyard wall.(...) Her head was slumped sideways and her face was turned toward Charlotte. There was something familiar about the round face and the wide mouth. The woman was young...

Charlotte cried: "Annie!"

The sleeper opened her eyes.

Charlotte stared at her in horror. Two months ago Annie had been housemaid at Walden Hall in a crisp clean uniform with a little white hat on her head, a pretty girl with a large bosom and an irrepressible laugh.

"Annie, what happened to you?"

Annie scrambled to her feet and bobbed a pathetic curtsy. "Oh, Lady Charlotte, I was hoping I would see you, you was always good to me, I've nowhere to turn"

"But how did you get like this?"

"I was let go, m'lady, without a character, when they found out I was expecting the baby; I know I done wrong—"

"But you're not married!"

"But I was courting Jimmy, the under-gardener." Charlotte recalled Belinda's revelations,and realized that if all that was true it would indeed be possible for girls to have babies without being married. "Where is the baby?"

"I lost it." (...)

"How horrible," Charlotte whispered. That was something else she had not known to be possible. "And why isn't Jimmy with you?"

"He run away to sea. He did love me, I know, but he was frightened to wed, he was only seventeen..."

Annie began to cry.

Charlotte heard Papa's voice. "Charlotte, come in this instant." (...)

Mama appeared and said: "Charlotte, get away from that creature!"

"She's not a creature, she's Annie."

"Annie!" Mama shrilled. "She's a fallen woman!"

"That's enough," Papa said. "This family does not hold discussions in the street. Let us go in immediately-"

Charlotte put her arm around Annie. "She needs a bath, new clothes and a hot breakfast."

"Don't be ridiculous!" Mama said. The sight of Annie seemed to have made her almost

hysterical.

"All right," Papa said. "Take her into the kitchen. The parlour-maids will be up by now. Tell them to take care of her. Then come and see me in the drawing-room." (...)

They went in.

Charlotte took Annie downstairs to the kitchen. A skivvy was cleaning the range and a kitchen-maid was slicing bacon for breakfast. It was just past five o'clock: Charlotte had not realized they started work so early. (...)

Charlotte said: "This is Annie. She used to work at Walden Hall. She's had some bad luck but she's a good girl. She must have a bath. Find new clothes for her and burn her old ones. Then give her breakfast."

For a moment they were both dumbstruck; then the kitchen maid said: "Very good, m'lady."

"I'll see you later, Annie," Charlotte said.

Annie seized Charlotte's arm. "Oh, thank you, m'lady."

Charlotte went out. Now there will be trouble, she thought as she went upstairs. She did not care as much as she might have. She almost felt that her parents had betrayed her. What had her years of education been for, when in one night she could find out that the most important things had never been taught her? No doubt they talked of protecting young girls, but Charlotte thought deceit might be the appropriate term. When she thought of how ignorant she had been until tonight, she felt so foolish, and that made her angry.

She marched into the drawing room. Papa stood beside the fireplace holding a glass. Mama sat at the piano, playing double-minor chords with a pained expression on her face. (…) Everything looked different today.

"Now, then, Charlotte," Papa began. "You don't understand what kind of woman Annie is. We let her go for a reason, you know. She did something very wrong which I cannot explain to you "

"I know what she did," Charlotte said, sitting down. "And I know who she did it with. A gardener called Jimmy."

Mama gasped.

Papa said: "I don't believe you have any idea what you're talking about."

"And if I haven't, whose fault is it?" Charlotte burst out. "How did I manage to reach the age of eighteen without learning that some people are so poor they sleep in the street, that maids who are expecting babies get dismissed, and that-that-men are not made the same as women? Don't stand there telling me I don't understand these things and I have a lot to learn! I've spent all my life learning and now I discover most of it was lies! How dare you! How dare you!" She burst into tears, and hated herself for losing control.

She heard Mama say: "Oh, this is too foolish."

Papa sat beside her and took her hand. "I'm sorry you feel that way," he said. "All young girls are kept in ignorance of certain things. It is done for their own good. We have never lied to you. If we did not tell you just how cruel and coarse the world is, that was only because we wanted you to enjoy your childhood for as long as possible. Perhaps we made a mistake." (...)

Charlotte's rage evaporated. She felt like a child again. She wanted to put her head on Papa's shoulder, but her pride would not let her.

"Shall we forgive each other, and be pals again?" Papa said.

An idea which had been quietly budding in Charlotte's mind now blossomed, and she spoke without thinking. "Would you let me take Annie as my personal maid?"

Papa said: "Well..."

"We won't even think of it!" Mama said hysterically. (...)

"Then what will she do?" Charlotte asked calmly.

"She should have thought of that when She should have thought of that before."

Anne-Charlotte Legrand - Académie de Versailles, Lycée Alain

Papa said: "Charlotte, we cannot possibly have a woman of bad character to live in this house. Even if I would allow it, the servants would be scandalized. Half of them would give notice. We shall hear mutterings even now, just because the girl has been allowed into the kitchen. You see, it is not just Mama and I who shun such people it is the whole of society." (...)

"Then what is to be done with her?" Charlotte said desperately.

"I'll make a bargain with you," Papa said. "I will give her money to get decent lodgings, and I'll see that she gets a job in a factory."

Fallen Women, Ken Follet, *The Man from St. Petersburg,* 1982