

Ask me about majoring in English! jjjeon@uci.edu

CLASS #9: *GHANA MUST GO* 3/3

ENGL 10: GLOBAL FICTIONS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wycjnCCgUes>



GONE

>>>

GOING

>>>

GO

-
1. Backward Structure of Progression
 2. Moves not toward progress or development, but toward obsolescence and death.
 3. Movement backward implies a diagnostic imperative.



mel·o·dra·ma

/ˈmeləˌdræmə/

noun

1. a sensational dramatic piece with exaggerated characters and exciting events intended to appeal to the emotions.
"he gloated like a villain in a Victorian melodrama"
2. **HISTORICAL**
a play interspersed with songs and orchestral music accompanying the action.

<https://literaryterms.net/melodrama/>

Moral Occult

The desire to express all seems a fundamental characteristic of the melodramatic mode. Nothing is spared because nothing is left unsaid; the characters stand on stage and utter the unspeakable, give voice to their deepest feelings, dramatize through their heightened and polarized words and gestures the whole lesson of their relationship. They assume primary psychic roles, father, mother, child, and express basic psychic conditions. Life tends, in this fiction, toward ever more concentrated and totally expressive gestures and statements. Raphaël de Valentin is given a lesson by the old antiques dealer: "*Desire sets us afire, and power destroys us*"—terms which reveal the true locus and the stakes of his drama. Eugène de Rastignac, in *Le Père Goriot*, is summoned to choose between Obedience, represented by the family, and Revolt, represented by the outlaw Vautrin. The metaphoric texture of the prose itself suggests polarization into moral absolutes: Rastignac's "last tear of youth," shed over Goriot's grave, from the earth where it falls "rebounds into heaven." The world is subsumed by an underlying manichaeism, and the narrative creates the excitement of its drama by putting us in touch with the conflict of good and evil played out under the surface of things—just as description of the

surfaces of the modern metropolis pierces through to a mythological realm where the imagination can find a habitat for its play with large moral entities. If we consider the prevalence of hidden relationships and masked personages and occult powers in Balzac, we find that they derive from a sense that the novelist's true subject is hidden and masked. The site of his drama, the ontology of his true subject, is not easily established: the narrative must push toward it, the pressure of the prose must uncover it. We might say that the center of interest and the scene of the underlying drama reside within what we could call the "moral occult," the domain of operative spiritual values which is both indicated within and masked by the surface of reality. The moral occult is not a metaphysical system; it is rather the repository of the fragmentary and desacralized remnants of sacred myth. It bears comparison to unconscious mind, for it is a sphere of being where our most basic desires and interdictions lie, a realm which in quotidian existence may appear closed off from us, but which we must accede to since it is the realm of meaning and value. The melodramatic mode in large measure exists to locate and to articulate the moral occult.



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par·a·tax·is

/ˌperəˈtaksəs/ 

noun GRAMMAR

noun: **parataxis**; plural noun: **parataxes**

the placing of clauses or phrases one after another, without words to indicate coordination or subordination, as in *Tell me, how are you?*

Ghana Must Go

Ghana Must Go?

little step back, making Sadie lean forward, then rise off the bench. The assembled crowd claps with delight at this progress. Sadie flushes red, shakes her head, "No, I can't." She is seconds from weeping; she feels the thing building, the knot in her stomach, the accumulating bile. She takes a step back, but the girl pulls her forward, and she hasn't the heart to use force to break free. Her siblings are watching with what looks like a mixture of worry and encouragement, their eyes and smiles wide, as if watching a baby trying to learn how to walk, ready to spring to their feet when she falls.

She doesn't fall.

When they speak of it later they'll say that a girl came to Sadie and pulled her up off of their bench, gave a little demonstration of the base two-step footwork, which Sadie repeated a few times herself, that the drummers, encouraged, started drumming a little faster, that Sadie kept pace, to the delight of the crowd, and that before they all knew it, she was dancing in the clearing as if she'd been born doing traditional Ga dance. No one will know what it is in this moment that overwhelms Sadie, not even Sadie herself, as the insistent lead dancer catches hold of her elbow and repeats, tugging gently, "Please sees-tah, please come." She pulls Sadie forward, away from the benches. "Like so," she says, demonstrating the footwork: one, two. There are tears in Sadie's eyes that will fall if she doesn't, so she stares at the ground, at the girl's small bare feet. One two, one two, one two, one two. A surrogate heartbeat. Calmer and surer. She takes a few steps. Hears the onlookers cheering. Goes red with embarrassment. Too late to sit down. She stares at the ground, at her feet, willing movement. The feet obey, shockingly, and move, left to right. The girl cries, "Ebn-hebn!" with great pride in her pupil. Sadie

rap·proche·ment

/ˌrɑpˌrɒʃhˈmæn,ˌrɑpˌrɒʃhˈmæn/

noun

(especially in international relations) an establishment or resumption of harmonious relations.

"there were signs of a growing rapprochement between the two countries"

synonyms: reconciliation, increased understanding, detente, restoration of harmony, agreement, cooperation, harmonization, softening

"growing political and diplomatic rapprochement between the two countries"

Sadie

Prolepsis – representation of a thing as existing before it actually does or did so

... was lonely. I was a coward. I was afraid of disappointing you, of holding you back from the things you deserved. You were gifted, so brilliant, even smarter than Olu. Your teachers all said it. 'She's special,' they said. 'Make sure that you challenge her, stimulate, encourage her.' I feared I'd be the reason that you didn't excel. I was afraid that I'd fail you. So I sent you to . . . him . . . and he hurt you. And Kehinde. I failed anyhow." Fola stops talking abruptly, embarrassed. This isn't at all what she wants to be saying. Taiwo is silent, her arms around Fola, her chest quivering palpably against Fola's breasts. Fola pulls back, just enough to see Taiwo, to hold the girl's face with her fingers. "I'm sorry."

Her daughter looks back at her, blinking, eyes bloodshot, dry-raw from the salt of her tears and her sweat. *She looks like an infant*, thinks Fola. *My infant*. My baby, my daughter. *And not Somayina*. The eyes don't remind her at all of her mother's, perhaps for the first time since Taiwo was born. The clear amber eyes look to Fola like Taiwo's: the eyes of a child, not a ghost's but a girl's. Taiwo says nothing, just stares at her mother, who stares at her child, overwhelmed by her want. She wants to give healing and comfort and answers. She wants to undo what was done to her twins. She wants to find Kehinde and hold him here also. She wants to find Femi, to kill him. By hand. Very slowly. To torture him. She wants to stop crying. She wants to make Taiwo stop crying. But can't. All she can do is stand weeping with Taiwo alone on this beach in the bearing down heat, knowing someone has damaged her children irreparably, unable to fix it. Able only to hold.

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Taiwo

"I'm an artist," says Kehinde.


The man starts to laugh. "An artist." Pronounced *ab-teest*. "You are a Sai then." He drops Kehinde's hand and goes waddling to the shutters. He unlatches and pushes them out to rich light. Kehinde shields his eyes with one hand and squints, blinking, at the workspace now visible at the back of the hut. Half-finished coffins lie in piles by a worktable. Four men are painting what looks like a loaf. "We can't make a new one in time for the funeral—"

"What does that mean, sir? 'I am a Sai then?'"

The man turns to look at him, surprised by the inflection. Kehinde, surprised also, looks down at his hands. He presses them together, holding left hand with right, thumb to palm, trying to rub out the burning beneath. There is something in the smug, dismissive manner of this stranger that calls up aggression, a strange thing itself, to feel anger, simple anger, this burning sensation, this urge to do violence to some yielding thing. He is so rarely angry he finds himself nervous, alarmed by the feeling, the heat in the hands. He is certain that the stranger can sense his aggression, but the man just keeps talking, still laughing, "*Chalé*. Go and see that one, the house in the compound. The first one, he drew it. An *ab-teest* like you. Then came the boy, that your father, an *ab-teest*. His mother would send him to watch me, you see. They said he was coming to learn how to doctor, but no: he was just like his father. Just drew. Drawing and drawing, *zss*, all the day drawing. Never learned about bodies, never learned about wood. They were *ab-teests*. Like you." He looks closely at Kehinde. "You see. Now you're crying. You Sais, all the same."

Their classmates used to ask him if twins were telepathic, if the one could feel in real time what the other sibling felt. This was in high school, when they first grew their dreadlocks, when Taiwo stopped combing, he cutting his hair, when they'd walk around campus in oversized sweaters and Doc Marten boots, clothed in black and blank

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Kehinde

The man came from nothing; he struggled, I *know*. I *want* to be proud of him. Of all he accomplished, I know he accomplished so much. But I can't. I hate him for living in that dirty apartment. I hate him for being that African man. I hate him for hurting my mother, for leaving, for dying, I hate him for dying alone."

Tears. But not as for Taiwo and Kehinde, the dam giving way and the tide rushing out. They begin without noise and he stands without moving, as strange as they feel, left to flow, on his face. He leans on the doorframe, too tired to keep speaking, and hears in the silence the bullfrogs outside. He doesn't hear the creak of the bed as she leaves it. He feels her small hands on the sides of his face. "Maybe it was the best he could do," she says softly. "Maybe what he did was the best he could do." He nods, though it hurts to. He opens his eyes now. She smiles at him, wiping her tears off, then his. He touches the hand that she's placed on his cheekbone. She thinks that he wants her to stop and pulls back. But he presses his palm to her hand, to his jawbone. "I want to do better." He kisses her lips.

He can sense her surprise as she turns her mouth upward, the way that she used to when they were at school, when he'd walk her to her door on Old Campus and pause in the lamplight to consider the shape of her mouth. Feeling his gaze, the pink lips would drift up, as if moving of their volition, not their owner's, not his. He'd kissed girls in high school but never like this, with their lips playing puppet, his eyes playing string. And had never had sex (is the truth he's never told her, half embarrassed, half touched by his own lack of breadth. He always assumed that he'd want other women, come to desire other bodies as the months turned to years, but he didn't, and hasn't, as the years blur to decades. His first is his only). He touches her neck. He feels the pulse quicken beneath his four fingers. He feels his heart speed to the pace of her breath. "I want to do better," he whispers, through kisses—her chin, then her neck, down the length to her chest. Placing his palm

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Olu

having a new thing to care for, the other things appearing to have all fluttered off.

But Ama shakes her head. "I won't stay, please," she says, voice staccato and steady. "I brought these for you." She holds out a bag, a plastic Ghana Must Go bag, her smile and raised eyebrows belying her pride. Her movements as before seem to replicate Fola's: she presents the plaid bag as Fola presented the flowers. The mimicry is touching, almost paining. Fola smiles.

"Thank you," she says. "Are you sure you won't stay?"

Ama glances back at the taxi. "I won't, please." Mirroring Fola's pained expression, she smiles, then she leaves. Fola, surprised by the sudden departure, holds up one hand as the taxi drives off. She cradles the plastic bag, pulling on her cigarette. Mr. Ghartey steps forward and closes the gate.

She returns to the chair. She peers in the bag. She laughs with such force that Mr. Ghartey looks scared. Cigarette in one hand, she retrieves with the other the slippers: battered slip-ons, thin, worn to the soles. She stubs out her cigarette to free both her hands up and only now sees the face drawn in the dirt. Kweku, however gestural (it must have been Kehinde). She looks at the mouth, at the angled-up eyes. "There you are."

Here I am.

"Your wife's a bloody genius. Slippers." Starts to laugh, picks them up from her lap. "I mean, really."

Genius. He is laughing. She is laughing. *Why did I ever leave you?*

"I also left you." She breathes in the smell of forgotten familiar. She presses the soles to her dampening cheeks. "We did what we knew. It was what we knew. Leaving."

Was it?

"We were immigrants. Immigrants leave."

Not good enough.

"Cowards."

We were lovers.

"We were lovers, too."

Couldn't we have learned? Not to leave?

"I don't know." She is quiet for a moment. She knows that they're watching, the staff, from the gate, with confusion, alarm. But still can't be bothered. She thinks but doesn't say it: one can learn only so much in one life. "Still there?"

Yes. Forever.

She laughs. Yes, most likely. "We learned how to love. Let them learn how to stay."

How are they? The children?

"They're here," she says, pointing. "I got what I wanted. You sent them all home. They're all here for Christmas. We're roasting a game fowl. Your Olu insists upon carving, of course."

My Olu.

"Well, yes. He was always your favorite."

Your Sadie.

"Then whose—?"


They're each other's. The twins.

"The twins..." She trails off. Hears a car engine idling. The honk of the horn. "They've come back. I should go." But doesn't. She sits, slips her fingers in the slippers as if they were mittens and covers her face. "You should go," she says softly. She squeezes her eyes shut. The gate rattles. Tires turn. "I know, I know, I know." Then there is quiet. Car doors open, shut. She slips out her fingers and opens her eyes.

A dawn-colored sunset.

"We found one!" calls Sadie.

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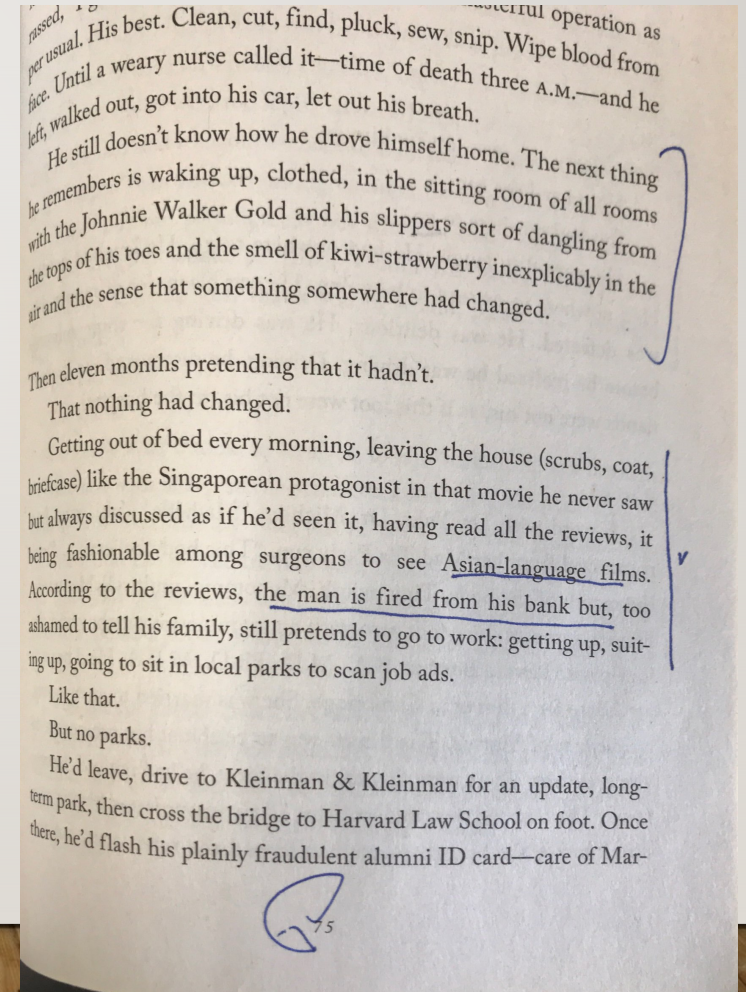
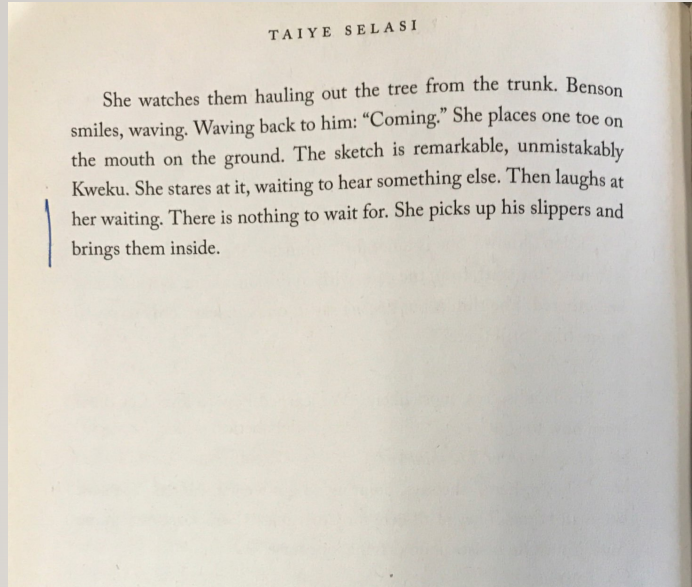
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Fola

Happy End

NOVEL IMAGINES GLOBAL HARMONY BY IMAGINING FAMILIAL HARMONY.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT COMES TO MIRROR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.



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