











































spiritual transformation, confronting us with the shocking truths of art, reconfiguring—sometimes obliterating—the players themselves as well as the things we thought we knew. As said, the literary characters thrust into these larger realms can be transformed, undone, annihilated. But what happens to the reader who negotiates such landscapes? This would be literature's knowledge.

### Take It Out for a Spin

The discussion sections in my courses used to take place in Brown's science and engineering buildings, and for years there was a beguiling poster on one of the bulletin boards that spoke directly to my heart: it was a picture of a human brain (not a heart). This particular brain was figured like an automobile chassis, and it was outfitted with four spiffy wheels. The caption under the image read: "Take it out for a spin." This is sage advice, and eminently more palatable than Socrates's severe insistence that we know nothing, because it aligns with the outward voyage that all new learning generates inside us. In the past I chided my undergraduates, telling them that they seem willing to engage in the most strenuous physical exercises imaginable (such as I see in the huge, crowded gym rooms I walk past, with their shiny equipment and their sweating youths), whereas the exercise I am urging on them is different, at once cardiac and neural, but distinctly undisplayable by today's electronic monitors, whether EKG or EEG.

That brain-on-wheels, making its way through time and space, is unsurpassable as image, for it figures the very engine itself that is needed for the explorations and trips that lie ahead. Try it on! Strap yourself in! Far too long we've subscribed, in our schools, to a *work ethos*, drumming into our students the need to labor mightily, to strain with all their might—as if they were constipated—so as to absorb and ingest the materials we put their way. Have we missed the larks of it all?

Very often, today's literature courses are courses of correction: how the author was either blind or ideologically at fault. And I know how much good can come from this. Of course, we need to know about the sins of the past and the present, and we need to see how tenacious old,

encrusted beliefs can be. But we are nonetheless talking about literature. Writers and artists are not primarily trying to reform the world; their mission is to imagine it, to deliver it. Yes, there can be a profound ethical payload in such work, but it is rarely prescriptive or amenable to legislation. Works of literature do demand work, but, as I see it, of a different sort. What sort? The academy's reply is often: rigor, objectivity, theory; those have their place and their value, but you won't find very much of them in my classroom or in my book. In my crazier moments I think that rigor may be akin to rigor mortis. I am after other game: synthesis as well as analysis; connections that both bind and expand; even might-have-beens that never came to fruition but still live in the human heart.

### Dead Letters, Live Letters

But the tenor of the text, whether comic or tragic, whether declarative or subjunctive, does not alter the basic exchange in play. The umbilical cord linking teacher and text and student—with its implied imperative of nurturance, from the one to the other, of hallowing *life's* basic needs—that compact, indeed that covenant, writes large the very rationale of school as institution. Teaching, as I've said, is a vital generational compact, involving teachers and learners, hinging on the fact that *books do not speak for themselves*. Teachers speak them, make them live, help convert them from dead letters to living script.

Dead letters. You recognize the words but you don't get the meaning. Think about that. How much of your verbal world—books you've read, conversations you've had—consists in dead letters? Any honest tally would be immense. As my own mind starts to rot, I find this generic threat even more depressing than usual. We're not far from Kafka's frozen sea either, since the failure of communication is more often existential than merely lingual. Is there anything more miraculous than the unsimple event of words becoming alive, real? This entails more than some linguistic view of sign and referent; it is closer to magic, to the kinds of faith central to Pascal and Kierkegaard, when the language bridge works.

Education = to lead out. It's a trip. These matters are *vehicular*. The teacher does more than guide or contextualize; he or she lights the fuse, explodes the dynamite, sees to it that it goes off, where it is meant to, in the minds of the students who are brought into this age-old contract between the word and the life. For too long, we've thought these matters to be docile and discreet, a quiet affair of language and pedagogy; but they can be eye-opening, heart-opening, as the ceaseless semiotic miracle takes place, and we discover how volatile these forces are, how inflammable they and we are. I've intentionally enlisted melodramatic, fiery language here, because good teaching, even when it proceeds via whisper or wink or ironic aside, opens doors, so as to blow you through them.

### Going Out, Coming Home

How does one put teaching and writing—the two activities I've poured my life into—together, in such a way that highlights their remarkable common ground? My solution is: I want this book to do justice to the exploratory, expanding vistas of literature and teaching, while also attending to the pitfalls and reversals that can stud the entire enterprise. These two perspectives do not cancel each other out. One way to describe this two-way street is to see it as the “voyage out” and the “return home,” a round-trip model that is at once kinetic and reflective, or centrifugal and centripetal, committed to both the life voyage each of us makes and the sense we might make of it, before, during, and after. These terms risk seeming esoteric, but I have my sights on elemental things.

I have learned that my books inhabit me every bit as much as I inhabit them. The cohabitation makes clear boundaries and origins impossible. If I opine on any topic whatsoever, it is likely that the usual suspects (Sophocles, Shakespeare, the Brontës, Melville, Dickinson, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Twain, Strindberg, Kafka, Proust, Joyce, Woolf, Faulkner, Morrison, Coetzee, the whole crowd) are financing the party, whether or not I quote them, whether or not I even know they are there. The opposite is no less true: when I teach or write about the books that

matter most to me, I not only find/bring myself into the equation, but I seek overtly to translate them into the sentient and existential terms and issues that impact on my students, our society, our lives. Transport, *transport*.

However, I am acutely aware that the above paragraph could not possibly make sense for my students. For them, the words of the whole gang, from Sophocles to Morrison and Coetzee, are likely exotic, new, unknown. Untried. Perhaps even soporific. Certainly at risk of being or becoming dead words. And I wonder what they must think of the old man who seems larded with them, who claims his own inwardness is stocked with these words and thoughts, making up this payload he seems so intent on delivering. It is as if my mission were to dig into my own depths—for that is where my writers now live—and find ways to get these materials into theirs. I have no shovel or pickax available. Just a classroom with a couple of hours a week.

Isn't it odd that we know more about the etiology of disease than we do about the origins of thought? Or the deposits and transfers that take place in the dark?

For all these reasons, this book is *interwoven*. I write about my life path, about teaching as career, and about literature itself.

The account of my voyage from Memphis six-year-old to senior Brown University professor displays a version of those centrifugal energies I earlier mentioned, whereas my looking back with questions obeys the homecoming injunction no one escapes: what does it all mean? The very enterprise of teaching is cued to this same duet of exploratory and critical moves. Finally, the book harvest that will be central to many of these pages is no less keyed to these same matters: the cost of knowing, the dimensionality of narrative, the gathering retrospect. The books I discuss, and the "I" who is discussing them, have kept each other company, had their affair, for many long years. I don't want to separate them.

Yet that particular couple—the books and me—live by different rules, despite my conviction of what they share. Life itself has a way of talking back, and a half century in the trenches can teach the teacher a great deal that is not in the lesson plan. I am not speaking about the predictable failures: that the students don't read or understand either

the books or the teacher; that particular booby trap is baked into the system. There's worse. Anyone who has put in fifty years doing anything becomes a specialist about other types of wreckage as well, going well beyond classroom fiascoes to further more intimate threats involving the teacher's own machinery. There'll be a place for this too.

### Working for Your Bread

"Old men ought to be explorers," T. S. Eliot wrote, but exploration carries its own risks, especially for the old. And my openly incendiary account of what teaching entails has, as anyone can see, little in common with the subtle Socratic manner of gentle prodding and strategic indirection. (I wouldn't have gone far in a philosophy department.)

*Working for your bread*: my guess is that everyone reading this sentence has, at some time or another, come across or invoked this venerable phrase, to denote what they do to earn a living. It states a core algorithm in human life: the relation between effort and reward. It may surprise you that my mentor, Kierkegaard, explicitly brings it up—"Only one who works gets bread"—in order to blast it as blatantly untrue: many people work and receive no bread; many others receive bread without working. Here would be the elemental material injustice that resides deep within so many social and economic systems. Yet the philosopher goes on to claim that things are different in the soul. There, he says, it does not rain on the just and the unjust alike. There, in the soul, labor and reward align. What does he mean?

Kierkegaard is, I believe, talking about the severe law of *understanding*. You have to work through to knowledge. You cannot merely receive it or log on to it. His primary example, as I've said, is Abraham: you won't understand him until you factor in the fear and trembling he experienced, in obeying God's command. But we are free to apply this austere, beautiful notion to our own labors and to our grasp of mankind's efforts at large. We are awash with outcomes, but do we grasp the human drama that preceded and produced them?

"Working for your bread" has, of course, an unmistakable further fit with this book as well. After all, I am writing about fifty-plus years of



working for my bread: what I did, what it meant, what its value was. My students received grades, I received a salary, yet I am still pondering that critical relation between work and reward. There was a time when these matters seemed more self-evident and required no special pleading. It seemed to make obvious sense to study literature. CEOs even told us that the critical skills we were teaching would be highly valued in all walks of life. And few argued that it was foolhardy to spend time (and money) reading Shakespeare. These issues were uncontroversial.

But the world has changed. Today's students come to our universities well aware of the great prestige of STEM fields, and of its inevitable corollary: that a major in the humanities is impractical at best and a dicey choice or even death sentence at worst. Therefore, in a gnawing, unwanted way, the phrase also applies to the basic dilemma of my field itself: students (and their tuition-paying parents) today must suspect that the study of literature fails exactly this stubborn real-life test: it will not lead to a job or career; it will not yield bread. So, at least, the naysayers say.

This book is about what it does yield.

## Satyr Play

And here's the rub. We know the books are ageless. We also know the books are unflinching in their bookkeeping, about comeuppance, lost illusions, and cashing in of prior beliefs. What about teachers? The Greeks mixed comedies with their tragedies, and they included satyr plays as well. I cannot quite fill the bill on that front, but my retrospect would be hollow and fraudulent if it did not shine its critical, indeed satirical, light on the teacher (*moi*), to expose the foibles, hubris, failures, and other asserted messes that are threaded into my career but that I've never acknowledged or earlier noticed. I've come to see them all too clearly now, shiny and embarrassing, in the murky mirror. I now see that my end-of-career tale is also one of occasional pratfalls and error, of occasional purblind ignorance regarding my audience, of frequent arrogance and benightedness. Of only sensing now how inflated and pretentious many of my moves and claims might actually be.

And so there's a late chunk of this otherwise drum-beating book that delves into what the French call gaffes—errors, mistakes, or screwups. I don't find it easy to laugh at myself—my tone is frequently exalted, puffed up, declamatory; I suspect you've noted that—but these lower-to-the-ground gaffes have their own overdue, corrective, salty truths to deliver. They are owed in late reckonings. They demand their place in the trip home. Maybe, maybe, they will allow the teacher to learn some belated final lessons. Or, if not, at least they round out the story. We're never through discovering who we are.

## INDEX

- Abraham: Kierkegaard and, 16, 131–33, 135, 177, 212, 251, 256, 262, 297; Proust and, 262
- Absalom, Absalom!* (Faulkner), 18, 79–80, 118, 195–207, 313, 320–21
- Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Twain), 1, 75, 163–71
- Ailes, Roger, 309
- Alphaville* (Godard), 275–79, 324–25
- Amherst, 58
- Ancestry.com, 89
- Anderson, Benedict, 68
- Aristotle, 7–9, 137, 331
- As I Lay Dying* (Faulkner), 112, 303
- Bakunin, Mikhail, 116
- Balcony, The* (Genet), 290–92
- Balzac, Honoré de, 152, 280
- Banchoff, Thomas, 252–53
- Bar Mitzvah, 90–92
- Barth, John, 4–5
- “Bartleby” (Melville), 67
- Baudelaire, Charles: alienation and, 18; cohabitation and, 21; “Le Cygne,” 231–34; as explorer, 231–38; Godard and, 275, 277; hashish and, 235; Hugo and, 231, 234; imagination of, 233–34; Joyce and, 263; map of human dimensions and, 230–38, 241, 243, 254, 262–63, 266, 275, 277–78, 281; municipal bonds and, 234; Pascal and, 234; “Les Petites Vieilles,” 234–38; poetry and, 231–38; Strindberg and, 241, 243
- Beckett, Samuel, 120–21, 290
- becoming the other, 171, 192, 210
- Being Mortal* (Gawande), 304–5
- Beloved* (Morrison), 206–23
- Bendemann, Georg, 113
- “Benito Cereno” (Melville), 18, 177–83, 189, 292, 313
- Bergman, Ingmar, 77–78, 302–3
- Berlin Wall, 33
- Bernlef, J., 326
- Bible, 5–6, 16, 67, 90, 102, 166, 174, 209, 302
- Bismarck, 33
- Black Lives Matter movement, 204–5, 207
- Black Plague, 76–77
- Blake, William, 225
- Bleak House* (Dickens), 78–79
- Bob and Nancy, 27–33, 85, 90, 92–93, 98, 109, 322, 327, 330
- Boccaccio, 76
- Borges, 62, 68, 183, 214, 277
- Bread Loaf Summer School, 316
- Brecht, Bertolt, 10
- bridges: into other minds and hearts, 11, 20, 26, 44, 51, 161, 190–91, 195, 200, 312, 321, 324, 329; Kierkegaard and, 20; language and, 11, 20, 195, 329; Pascal and, 20; teacher as cannibal, 51–53
- Brontë, Charlotte, 1, 21, 62, 67, 75, 175, 329
- Brontë, Emily, 21, 131, 171–77, 192, 206, 329
- Brown Alumni Magazine*, 39
- Brown University, 22; advertising and, 42; cost of knowing and, 163; Coursera and, 43, 54, 59, 322; discussion sections and, 19; distance learning and, 54, 59–60, 65,

- Brown University (*continued*)  
69–70; gaffes and, 286–90, 293–94, 297–300, 302, 306, 309, 314; gender and, 309–11; Human Studies, 36–39; map of human dimensions and, 224, 265, 277; Neoplatonism authority at, 44–45; *New Curriculum* of, 36, 286; reading and, 82, 85, 89, 98; seminars and, 30; tenure and, 49, 287, 306, 322; “Text and Teachers” program and, 38
- Buffon, 251
- Burroughs, William, 314
- Buttes-Chaumont, 254–62
- Byron, 116
- calculus, 115–16, 121, 129, 318, 321
- Calvino, Italo, 230, 276, 279–83
- Cambridge, 57
- cannibalism, 51–53, 179–80
- Cartesian analytic principles, 58
- Cavafy, C. P., 280
- Cervantes, Miguel de, 45
- Charcot, Jean-Martin, 244
- Chou En-lai, 96
- Chronicle of Higher Education*, 128
- “City and the Arts, The” (Weinstein), 36
- City in History, The* (Mumford), 275–76
- Clemens, Samuel. *See* Twain, Mark
- Coetzee, J. M., 21–22, 62, 308–11, 315
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, 2
- Columbus, Christopher, 180–81, 224
- coming-of-age stories, 90–92, 315
- Compton’s Encyclopedia*, 28
- computer science, 26, 39, 57, 63
- Confirmation, 90–91
- connectivity: distance learning and, 74; Hamsun and, 324; information and, 7; map of human dimensions and, 228, 230, 241, 244–45, 248–49, 254, 262; Pascal and, 228; Proust and, 262; Strindberg and, 244–45, 248–49, 254
- Conrad, Joseph, 171
- Corinthians, First Bible book of, 6
- coronavirus pandemic: distance learning and, 43, 54–55, 69–81; massive open online courses (MOOCs) and, 69, 71, 73; Zoom and, 69–81
- Corsican Brothers, The* (film), 3
- cost of knowing: becoming the other and, 171, 192, 210; Brontës and, 131, 171–77, 192, 206; Brown University and, 163; Dickinson and, 8, 131, 151–62, 181, 189; education and, 134, 142, 147–48, 152, 164, 167, 183, 186; Faulkner and, 131, 150, 152, 171, 177, 193–208, 213; fear and trembling and, 133–34, 157, 177, 182, 184, 187, 189, 206, 212; gender and, 135, 139, 187, 194, 198, 217; great books and, 135–50; humanities and, 135–36, 201; information and, 133–43, 146–47, 157, 172, 175, 177, 184, 189, 196, 201, 209–11, 217; Joyce and, 214, 218; Kafka and, 8–11, 113, 131, 162, 171, 177, 183–94, 206, 223, 270; Kierkegaard and, 133–34, 157, 177, 182, 184, 187, 189, 206, 212; language and, 146, 164–65, 185, 190, 192–93, 195, 199, 218; Melville and, 8, 131, 171, 177–83, 206; Morrison and, 131, 169, 206–23; Pascal and, 134, 156; poetry and, 151–62, 195; prose and, 151, 186; Proust and, 8, 161, 168, 215; retrospect and, 140–41, 147, 182; Shakespeare and, 2, 131, 147–50, 188, 192, 223; slavery and, 163–65, 169–70, 177, 179–83, 189, 206–23; Sophocles and, 131, 137–50, 166, 176–77, 202, 210, 213; Strindberg and, 161; teaching’s mission and, 14–17; Twain and, 131, 163–71; understanding and, 13, 134, 137, 157, 164, 171–72, 176–77, 182, 184, 191–92, 200–201, 203, 206–8, 219, 221
- “Country Doctor, A” (Kafka), 187–88, 191, 302
- Coursera: Brown University and, 43, 54, 59, 322; distance learning and, 14, 43, 54–69, 74, 76, 322
- creative projects, 203, 293–97, 322

- critical thinking, 91, 135
- “Cygne, Le” (Baudelaire), 231–34
- Dead Ringers* (film), 3
- “Death of Ivan Ilych” (Tolstoy), 302, 307
- Defoe, Daniel, 76, 80
- DeLillo, Don, 122
- delta, 116, 128–29, 318, 321–22
- “Delta Autumn” (Faulkner), 318–21
- Descartes, René, 116
- Dickens, Charles, 78–80, 152, 16, 213, 280
- Dickinson, Emily: cost of knowing and, 8, 131, 151–62, 181, 189; Despair and, 155–57, 162; difficult style of, 151, 302; economy of, 156; Higginson and, 151; “I Felt a Funeral in by Brain,” 157–59; impact of, 21, 329; Kafka and, 189; on success, 152–56; poetry of, 8, 151–63, 302; Proust and, 161–62; Strindberg and, 161; violent epistemology of, 159–60
- Disgrace* (Coetzee), 62, 308–11, 315
- distance learning: Brown University and, 54, 59–60, 65, 69–70; connectivity and, 74; coronavirus pandemic and, 43, 54–55, 69–81; Coursera and, 14, 43, 54–69, 74, 76, 322; credit and, 60, 62, 68; edX and, 68; faculty and, 56, 59–61, 68; “Fiction of Relationship” course and, 43, 54, 59–60, 76, 308, 314; humanities and, 56–59, 61, 63, 65, 68; massive open online courses (MOOCs) and, 42–43, 54–63, 68–69, 71, 73; Sophocles and, 78, 80; transmission and, 55, 72, 74; Udacity and, 68; Zoom and, 14, 43, 55, 69–81
- Don Juan* (Molière), 118
- Dostoevsky, Fyodor, 113, 116–17, 129, 171, 303
- Dream Play, A* (Strindberg), 122, 285
- Dumas, Alexandre, 3
- Edson, Margaret, 307–8
- education: accretive work of, 51; afterlife and, 45–46; aptitude tests and, 35; Bob and Nancy characters and, 27–33, 85, 90, 92–93, 98, 109, 322, 327, 330; Brontës and, 62, 67, 75; Brown University and, 19 (*see also* Brown University); common course and, 38, 64; coronavirus pandemic and, 43, 54–55, 69–81; cost of knowing and, 134, 142, 147–48, 152, 164, 167, 183, 186; Coursera and, 14, 43, 54–69, 74, 76; creative projects and, 203, 293–97, 322; credit and, 41, 60, 62, 68, 288, 294; credit ratings of teachers and, 46–50; curiosity and, 2; dead/live letters and, 20–21; discussion forums and, 60–68; distance learning and, 54 (*see also* distance learning); eureka moments and, 35, 318; fasting student and, 295–98; Faulkner and, 44, 62, 65, 67, 75, 79–80; fear and trembling and, 17; feeling with, 17–18; “Fiction of Relationship” course and, 43, 54, 59–60, 76, 308, 314; gaffes and, 287, 293, 305–6, 311, 315; gender and, 65, 67, 75, 77; going out and, 21–23; grade school and, 98, 121, 125; grading and, 36, 59, 100, 119, 288, 293–94; The Great Courses and, 40–42, 71, 322; Hazelwood and, 28–29, 33, 40, 44, 46, 50, 93, 98, 316, 322, 329; high school and, 28, 30, 38–39, 48, 85, 98, 115, 135, 164; Holland’s course and, 32–33; Human Studies and, 36–39 (*see also* humanities); information and, 14–15, 28, 35, 47, 56–63, 133, 135, 211, 217, 330; journals and, 285–89; kindergarten and, 27, 82, 84; Kronwald and, 29, 44, 46, 50, 93, 316; language and, 11, 54, 56–59, 63, 68, 70, 78, 80, 93, 322; to lead out by, 21; map of human dimensions and, 270; massive open online courses (MOOCs) and, 42–43, 54–69, 71, 73; mathematics and, 128 (*see also* mathematics); Melville and, 62, 65, 67; mentally-challenged student and, 299–300; Morrison and, 62; motivation and, 18–20; national model for, 38; neoliberalism and, 41; new partnerships in, 37; online, 43, 54, 56–57, 63, 68; reading and, 82–98;

- education (*continued*)  
sense of mission for, 34–35; Shakespeare and, 44, 48, 62; Socratic model of, 57; Sophocles and, 78, 80; STEM fields and, 24, 36, 41; student-driven, 36; teacher as cannibal, 51–53; teaching’s mission and, 14–17; tearing down walls and, 37–40; tenure system and, 16, 47–49, 68, 107, 125, 134, 275, 287, 292, 306, 322; as transmission, 11; as transportation, 12; tutorial system and, 57–58; understanding and, 12, 16, 28, 91, 134; university, 10, 16, 36–47, 50, 55–56, 59–62, 65–70, 75, 82, 85, 90, 97–103, 115, 119, 130, 134–36, 199, 204, 274–75, 287, 292; Woolf and, 62, 67; working for your bread and, 23–24, 65, 88, 97, 120, 131–32, 195, 237, 274, 285, 330; writing and, 98–115 (*see also* writing); Zoom and, 14, 43, 55, 69–81
- edX, 68
- Einstein, Albert, 185
- Eliot, T. S., 23, 120, 163, 233, 322
- Ellison, Ralph, 170, 178
- Eluard, Paul, 277
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 52, 108, 117, 275, 278
- eureka moments, 35, 318
- Eurocentrism, 135, 224
- Eurydice, 132
- Face Off* (film), 3
- faculty, 36, 38–39, 47, 56, 59–61, 68, 99, 287, 289, 316
- Fairbanks, Douglas, Jr., 3
- faith: Abraham and, 16, 23, 131–35, 177, 212, 251, 256, 262, 297; Kierkegaard and, 13, 16, 20, 132, 262; Pascal and, 13, 20, 227, 273
- fake news, 15–16, 97, 131
- Faulkner, William, 27; *Absalom, Absalom!*, 18, 79–80, 118, 195–207, 313, 320–21; *As I Lay Dying*, 112, 303; coming-of-age stories and, 90–92; continued teaching of, 313; cost of knowing and, 131, 150, 152, 171, 177, 193–208, 213; “Delta Autumn,” 318–21; education and, 44, 62, 65, 67, 75, 79–80; gaffes and, 298–99, 303, 313; gender and, 84, 89, 112, 194, 320; *Go Down, Moses*, 83, 85, 89–91, 318–21; Holland course on, 32; impact of, 21, 330; Kafka and, 194; *Light in August*, 67, 193; map of human dimensions and, 229; mathematics and, 118, 150, 318; Morrison and, 207–8, 213; overpass metaphor of, 205, 229; political trauma and, 8; race and, 18, 75, 79–80, 87–89, 195, 204–8, 319–22; reading and, 83–94, 98; *Sanctuary*, 79; slavery and, 18, 75, 87–89, 206–8; *Soldier’s Pay*, 193; *The Sound and the Fury*, 85, 193, 195, 198, 205, 298–99; taint of the South and, 86–93; writing and, 112
- fear and trembling: cost of knowing and, 133–34, 157, 177, 182, 184, 187, 189, 206, 212; education and, 17; gaffes and, 297; Kierkegaard and, 16, 133, 182, 184, 212, 251, 256, 261, 297; map of human dimensions and, 251, 256, 261; Melville and, 177, 182–83, 189; understanding and, 23
- Fear and Trembling* (Kierkegaard), 16, 133, 297
- “Fiction of Relationship, The” (Weinstein course), 43, 54, 59–60, 76, 308, 314
- Flaubert, Gustave, 317
- Floyd, George, 207
- forking path, 50, 68, 183, 253
- freedom of speech, 104
- French Revolution, 96
- Freud, Sigmund, 2, 45, 139, 141, 143, 175, 209, 227, 244, 249, 257, 309
- gaffes, 24–25, 321; Brown University and, 286–90, 293–94, 297–300, 302, 306, 309, 314; CEOs and, 289–93; creative projects and, 293–97; education and, 287, 293, 305–6, 311, 315; fasting student and, 295–98; Faulkner and, 298–99, 303, 313; fear and trembling and, 297; gender and, 308–13, 315; humanities and, 290, 301–2, 306–7; journals and, 285–89; Joyce and, 313; Kafka and, 302; Kent County Hospital and, 300–304; Kierkegaard and, 284, 297;

- Melville and, 292, 313; mentally-challenged student and, 299–300; mortality and, 302–8; *Ordinary People* and, 300–301, 304; prose and, 293; Proust and, 289, 313–15; Shakespeare and, 302–3, 311; Strindberg and, 285; understanding and, 284, 312–13
- Garcia Marquez, Gabriel, 214
- Gawande, Atul, 304–5
- gender: Brontës and, 75; Coetzee and, 308–11, 315; cost of knowing and, 135, 187, 194; education and, 65, 67, 75, 77; Faulkner and, 84, 89, 112, 194, 320; gaffes and, 308–13, 315; Kafka and, 77; mathematics and, 121; #MeToo and, 309–12, 315; rape and, 187, 189, 310–12; reader-identification and, 9; Women’s March and, 309; Woolf and, 67
- Genesis, Bible book of, 16
- Genet, Jean, 179, 290–92
- Ghosts* (Ibsen), 94, 231
- Girard, René, 139–40, 143
- Godard, Jean-Luc, 230; *Alphaville* and, 275–79, 324–25; Baudelaire and, 275, 277; information and, 275–79; Ithaca and, 279; Merrill and, 275; Pascal and, 277; Proust and, 278; slavery and, 278; Strindberg and, 275
- Go Down, Moses* (Faulkner): coming-of-age stories and, 90–91; reading and, 83–91; “Rites of Passage” course and, 90; taint of the South and, 86–93; teaching and, 318–21
- Goethe, 17, 33, 161, 229
- Gone with the Wind* (Mitchell), 199
- grading, 36, 59, 100, 119, 288, 293–94
- Great Courses, The, 40–42, 71, 322
- Great Expectations* (Dickens), 280
- Hamlet* (Shakespeare), 1–2, 17, 114, 156, 302
- Hamsun, Knut, 105–9, 115, 295, 322–24
- Harvard, 18, 34, 57, 79, 98, 128, 195, 197, 202–3, 207, 289
- Hazelwood, Mr., 28–29, 33, 40, 44, 46, 50, 93, 98, 316, 322, 329
- Heidegger, Martin, 226
- Hemingway, Ernest, 97, 104, 106, 193
- Higginson, Thomas Wentworth, 151
- high school, 28, 30, 38–39, 48, 85, 98, 115, 135, 164
- Hiroshima, 77
- Hirsch, Judd, 300–301
- Hitler, Adolph, 83, 117
- Holland, Laurence, 32–33, 316, 329
- Homer, 27, 263–64, 267–68, 272, 279, 303
- Hugo, Victor, 116, 231, 234
- humanities: cost of knowing and, 135–36, 201; critique and, 37; distance learning and, 56–59, 61, 63, 65, 68; gaffes and, 290, 301–2, 306–7; last stand for, 10; massive open online courses (MOOCs) and, 43, 56–59; National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and, 37–40; Neoplatonism and, 45; pricing out of, 41; reading and, 93; STEM fields and, 24; writing and, 99
- Human Studies, 36–39
- Hunger* (Hamsun), 105, 115, 295, 324
- Hutton, Timothy, 300
- hypercube, 252–53
- Ibsen, Henrik, 83, 94–96, 104, 221–22, 300, 323
- Inferno* (Strindberg), 245–50, 285
- information: Aristotle and, 7–8; connectivity and, 7; cost of knowing and, 8, 133–43, 146–47, 157, 172, 175, 177, 184, 189, 196, 201, 209–11, 217; cultural, 6; education and, 14–15, 28, 35, 47, 56–63, 133, 135, 211, 217, 330; fake news and, 16; Godard and, 275–79; language and, 57, 277; literature vs., 7–8, 330; map of human dimensions and, 231, 257–58, 266–67, 275–79; rationality and, 7; reading and, 87–90
- information technology, 35, 122, 227, 231, 276–79, 322
- In Search of Lost Time* (Proust), 254
- interpretation, 60–66, 69, 95, 170, 184, 250, 279
- “In the Penal Colony” (Kafka), 109–15, 189–92

- Invisible Cities* (Calvino), 276, 279–83  
*Invisible Man* (Ellison), 170, 178  
Ionesco, Eugène, 290  
Isaac, 16, 131–33, 212, 214  
Ithaca: Calvino and, 283; Godard and, 279;  
Homer and, 263; Pascal and, 269; as  
personal estate, 241; returning home  
and, 27; Strindberg and, 243  
“Ithaca” (Cavafy), 280  
“Ithaca” (Joyce), 126, 262, 266, 269–73, 280
- Jane Eyre* (Brontë), 1, 67, 75  
Jesus, 133–34, 189  
Johnson, Samuel, 116  
*Journal of the Plague Year* (Defoe), 76  
journals, 285–89  
Joyce, James, 8, 35, 327, 330; alienation and,  
18; Baudelaire and, 263; breaking of  
conventions by, 263; continued teaching  
of, 313; cost of knowing and, 214, 218;  
encyclopedist style of, 270; gaffes and,  
313; Holland course on, 32; impact of,  
21, 330; “Ithaca,” 126, 262, 266, 269–73,  
280; map of human dimensions and,  
230, 262–75, 278, 280; mathematics and,  
126–28; Merrill and, 263; *Portrait of the  
Artist as a Young Man*, 32; Proust and,  
263, 270, 274; reading and, 95; Strindberg  
and, 263, 270; *Ulysses*, 18, 126–27, 262–75
- Kafka, Franz: cost of knowing and, 8–11,  
113, 131, 162, 171, 177, 183–94, 206, 223,  
270; “A Country Doctor,” 187–88, 302;  
Dickinson and, 189; Einstein and, 185;  
Faulkner and, 194; Flaubert and, 111;  
frozen seas of, 9, 20, 95, 190; gaffes and,  
302; gender and, 77; impact of, 21, 330;  
“In the Penal Colony” and, 109–15,  
189–92; language and, 110–12, 185, 192;  
Machine of, 9, 110–11, 189, 191–92, 223;  
Mann and, 185; Melville and, 189,  
192; “Metamorphosis,” 65, 67, 183–87;  
Morrison and, 223; Murakami on, 192;  
reflection and, 62; Shakespeare and, 188,  
192; writing and, 109–15  
*Kafka on the Shore* (Murakami), 192  
Kant, Immanuel, 152, 161  
Keats, John, 29, 85, 161  
Kennedy, John F., 33  
Kent County Hospital, 300–304  
Khan, Kublai, 281–83  
Kierkegaard, Søren, 35; Abraham and, 16,  
131–33, 135, 177, 212, 251, 256, 262, 297; cost  
of knowing and, 133–34, 157, 177, 182, 184,  
187, 189, 206, 212; faith and, 13, 16, 20, 132,  
262; fear and trembling of, 16, 133, 182,  
184, 212, 251, 256, 261, 297; gaffes and, 284,  
297; labor vs. reward and, 42; language  
bridge and, 20; map of human dimen-  
sions and, 251, 256, 261; mathematics and,  
133; Morrison and, 208–9, 214; Proust  
and, 256, 261–62; Strindberg and, 251;  
theory of narrative and, 134–35; under-  
standing and, 13, 96, 134; working for  
your bread and, 23, 131–32  
*King Lear* (Shakespeare), 1, 8, 41, 91, 120, 131,  
147–50, 309  
knowledge: belated, 46; cost of, 22 (*see also*  
cost of knowing); fake, 15–16, 97, 131;  
honoring, 130–31; information and, 7–8  
(*see also* information); massive open  
online courses (MOOCs) and, 42–43,  
54–63, 68–69, 71, 73; Pascal and, 227–28;  
self, 4; understanding and, 12 (*see also*  
understanding)
- Kronwald, Fröken, 29, 44, 46, 50, 93, 316  
*Kubooa*, 106, 322–24, 326
- Lacan, Jacques, 140  
Lang, Fritz, 278  
language: as armament, 11–12; as bauble,  
328; beauty of, 17; as bridge, 11, 20, 195,  
329; cost of knowing and, 146, 164–65,  
185, 190, 192–93, 195, 199, 218; education  
and, 11, 54, 56–59, 63, 68, 70, 78, 80, 93,  
322; feeling and, 31; as force multiplier,



- 323; French, 31, 33; German, 32–33, 110; Hamsun and, 105–7; hearing, 31; hollowing process and, 325–26; Ibsen and, 94–95; information and, 57, 277; inventing words and, 106; Kafka and, 110–12, 185, 192; Latin, 30; Mallarmé and, 327–29; map of human dimensions and, 243, 248, 256, 274, 277, 281; mathematics and, 128; medieval use of conceit and, 112; oral context and, 30–31; otherness of, 92–93, 325; reading and, 82–84, 86, 91–93; seeing, 31; as self-enactment, 31; somaticizing and, 113; Spanish, 30–31; Tower of Babel and, 92, 111, 152, 328; as transport, 323; verbal contract and, 324; voice and, 31–34; writing and, 99, 105–7, 322; Yiddish, 32
- Lemann, Nicolas, 128
- Levin, Harry, 264
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 139, 143
- liberal arts, 41–42, 50, 128
- Light in August* (Faulkner), 67, 193
- Lincoln, Abraham, 79
- Literature and Medicine* (Weinstein), 36
- “Literature and Mortality” (Weinstein lecture), 302–8
- Little Eyolf* (Ibsen), 300
- “London” (Blake), 225
- Mallarmé, Stéphane: cohabitation and, 21; impact of, 21, 327–29; life’s experiences and, 6; poetry and, 5, 31–32, 91–92, 327–29; reading and, 91–93; understanding and, 91; voice and, 31–32, 327–29
- Mann, Thomas, 185
- Manon Lescaut* (Prévost), 62
- map of human dimensions: Baudelaire and, 230–38, 241, 243, 254, 262–63, 266, 275, 277–78, 281; Blake and, 225; Brown University and, 224, 265, 277; Calvino and, 230, 276, 279–83; connectivity and, 228, 230, 241, 244–45, 248–49, 254, 262; education and, 270; Faulkner and, 229; fear and trembling and, 251, 256, 261; Freud and, 227, 244, 249, 257; Godard and, 230, 275–79; information and, 231, 257–58, 266–67, 275–79; Joyce and, 230, 262–75, 278, 280; Kierkegaard and, 251, 256, 261; language and, 243, 248, 256, 274, 277, 281; Merrill and, 230, 238–41, 263, 266, 275, 278; open/opened heart and, 228–31; Pascal and, 226–28, 231, 234, 245, 252, 255–56, 258, 268–69, 274, 277; poetry and, 225–26, 231–38, 240–41, 243, 245, 269, 273, 277; prose and, 230, 236, 263; Proust and, 230, 239, 254–63, 265–66, 270–71, 274, 278; Strindberg and, 230, 241–54, 257–58, 262–63, 266, 270, 274–75, 278; understanding and, 224, 250, 265, 268
- Martin, Trayvon, 3
- Marxism, 10
- “Masque of the Red Death, The” (Poe), 79
- massive open online courses (MOOCs), 42, 54–55; access and, 58, 61–62; answers and, 60–61; coronavirus pandemic and, 69, 71, 73; Coursera and, 43, 56–69; credit for, 62; discussion forums and, 60–68; free, 61–62; global perspectives in, 65–66; grading issues and, 59; humanities and, 43, 56–59; interpretation and, 60–66, 69; opposition to, 58–59; populism and, 63; social media and, 62–63; tutorial system and, 57–58
- mathematics, 3, 26, 307; algorithms, 23, 120; Banchoff and, 252; Beckett and, 120–21; Brown and, 36; calculus, 115–16, 121, 129, 318, 321; Cartesian analytic principles and, 58; cognition and, 13; cost-profit ratios and, 119–20; delta, 116, 128–29, 318, 321–22; Descartes and, 116; Dostoevsky and, 117; education and, 128; Faulkner and, 118, 150, 318; gender and, 121; The Great Courses and, 41; humanities and, 56, 65, 138; hypercube and, 252–53; Joyce and, 126–28; Kierkegaard and, 133;

- mathematics (*continued*)  
language and, 128; Lear and, 150; Lemann's schema and, 128; life experience and, 41; Minerva Project and, 128; online education and, 57, 63; Pascal and, 13, 118, 226; poetry and, 120; precision and, 104; prose and, 119, 121; Proust and, 117, 122; punishment scenario and, 125–26; rethinking curriculum for, 128–29; Sacks and, 119; SAT and, 119; Shakespeare and, 120; Strindberg and, 122–26; thinking in terms of, 116; Yale-Singapore NUS college curriculum and, 128; zero-sum games and, 120, 154
- McCarthy, Mary, 314
- McLuhan, Marshall, 7, 261, 276
- Melville, Herman: “Bartelby,” 67; “Benito Cereno,” 18, 177–83, 189, 292, 313; cannibalism and, 51, 179–80; cost of knowing and, 8, 131, 171, 177–83, 206; education and, 62, 65, 67; fear and trembling of, 177, 182–83, 189; gaffes and, 292, 313; historical narratives and, 18; Holland course on, 32; impact of, 21, 330; Kafka and, 189, 192; retrospect and, 182; slavery and, 18, 177–83, 189
- Merrill, James: Godard and, 275; Joyce and, 263; map of human dimensions and, 230, 238–41, 263, 266, 275, 278; Strindberg and, 241; “An Urban Convalescence,” 238–41 “Metamorphosis” (Kafka), 65, 67, 183–87
- #MeToo movement, 309–12, 315
- Metropolis* (film), 278
- Milton, John, 45
- Minerva Project, 128
- Mitchell, Margaret, 199
- Mitempfinden* (to feel with), 18
- Modern Language Association Convention, 46
- Molière, 11, 116, 118, 270
- Mona Lisa* (da Vinci), 259
- Moore, Mary Tyler, 300
- Morrison, Toni: *Beloved*, 206–23; cost of knowing and, 131, 169, 206–23; education and, 62; Faulkner and, 207–8, 213; Ibsen and, 221–22; impact of, 21, 330; Kierkegaard and, 208–9, 214; race and, 206–23; Sophocles and, 8, 22; Twain and, 169
- mortality, 127–28, 302–8
- Mount Moriah, 16, 131–33, 135, 150, 255–56, 258
- Moynihan, Daniel Patrick, 97
- Mumford, Lewis, 275–76
- Munch, Edvard, 64, 245, 251–52
- Murakami, Haruki, 192
- Musk, Elon, 159
- Nagasaki, 77
- Naked Lunch* (Burroughs), 314
- Napoleon III, 117, 231
- National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), 37–40
- Nègres, Les* (Genet), 179
- Neoplatonism, 44–46
- Newton, Isaac, 124
- New York Review of Books*, 42
- New York Times*, 42
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, 143
- Notes from Underground* (Dostoevsky), 117
- Notre Dame, 259
- Nuland, Sherwin, 304–5
- Obama, Barack, 3
- Odyssey* (Homer), 27, 263, 267, 272, 279
- Oedipus the King* (Sophocles), 1, 11, 332; Barth on, 4–5; beds mother, 4–5; cost of knowing and, 8, 137–50, 166, 177, 210; Freud and, 45; gaffes and, 270; Greek humanism and, 138; information and, 133–43; innocence and, 139; murders father, 4–5; Oracle and, 4, 137–39, 147; Sophocles and, 2, 4, 8, 137–47, 332
- Ole Man River, 165, 170
- One Hundred Years of Solitude* (Garcia Marquez), 214
- online education, 43, 54, 56–57, 63, 68.  
*See also* distance learning
- Ordinary People* (film), 300–301, 304

- Orpheus, 132  
Orwell, George, 116  
*Out of Mind* (Bernlef), 326  
Oxford, 57
- Paris: Baudelaire and, 18, 231–34; impact of, 30–33, 50, 93, 98, 103, 322, 327–28; language and, 30–32; Proust and, 254; Strindberg and, 242, 244–48, 251
- Pascal, Blaise: aphorisms of, 226–27; Baudelaire and, 234; connectivity and, 228; cost of knowing and, 134, 156; faith and, 13, 20, 227, 273; Godard and, 277; Ithaca and, 269; language bridge and, 20; map of human dimensions and, 226–28, 231, 234, 245, 252, 255–56, 258, 268–69, 274, 277; mathematics and, 13, 118, 226; Proust and, 255; quest for knowledge and, 227–28
- Paul, Apostle, 6, 209  
*Pensées, Les* (Pascal), 226  
“Petites Vieilles, Les” (Baudelaire), 234–38  
plagiarism, 50–52  
Poe, Edgar Allan, 79, 156
- poetry, 45; Arnold on, 51; Baudelaire and, 231–38; Blake and, 225; commonwealth of, 52, 108; cost of knowing and, 151–62, 195; Dickinson and, 8, 151–63, 302; Emerson and, 52, 108; Godard and, 324; Hamsun and, 105–7; Hazelwood and, 29, 44, 93; Higginson and, 151; Homer and, 27, 263–64, 267–68, 272, 279, 303; Joyce and, 269; Kronwald and, 29, 44; Mallarmé and, 5, 31–32, 91–92, 327–29; map of human dimensions and, 225–26, 231–38, 240–41, 243, 245, 269, 273, 277; mathematics and, 120; Merrill and, 240–41; reading and, 91–93, 95; Rimbaud and, 2, 105; Shakespeare and, 50; Strindberg and, 241–54, 285; Woolf and, 67; writing and, 105–8
- Polo, Marco, 281–83  
Prévost, Antoine, François, 62  
*Prince and the Pauper, The* (Twain), 166
- prose, 35; cost of knowing and, 151, 186; gaffes and, 293; map of human dimensions and, 230, 236, 263; mathematics and, 119, 121; reading and, 86, 88, 94; writing and, 101, 103–4, 109
- Proust, Marcel, 27; Abraham and, 262; Buttes-Chaumont and, 254–62; cohabitation and, 21; connectivity and, 262; continued teaching of, 313; cost of knowing and, 8, 161, 168, 215; Dickinson and, 161–62; dislike of cinema by, 230; fantasy and, 18; gaffes and, 289, 313–15; Godard and, 278; impact of, 330; *In Search of Lost Time*, 254; Joyce and, 263, 270, 274; Kierkegaard and, 256, 261–62; map of human dimensions and, 230, 239, 254–66, 270–71, 274, 278; mathematics and, 117, 122; Pascal and, 255
- PTSD, 97, 209  
*Puddn’head Wilson* (Twain), 166, 171
- Quixote, Don, 1
- race, 229; Baudelaire and, 231, 266, 281; Black Lives Matter movement, 204–5, 207; Coetzee and, 311; colonialism and, 95–96, 177, 311; Faulkner and, 18, 75, 79–80, 87–89, 195, 204–8, 319–22; Floyd and, 207; Martin and, 3; Melville and, 18, 177–83, 189; Morrison and, 206–23; taint of the South and, 86–93; Twain and, 18, 75, 86, 163–71
- Rand, Ayn, 116
- reading: as bridge to other minds and hearts, 11, 20, 26, 44, 51, 161, 190–91, 195, 200, 312, 321, 324, 329; Brown University and, 82, 85, 89, 98; coming-of-age stories and, 90–92; commerce and, 10, 50–51, 219, 236; cost of knowing and, 8–11 (see also cost of knowing); education and, 82–86, 91–93; Faulkner and, 83–94, 98; feeling and, 3; as giving time, 1–2; The Great Courses and, 40–42; hired

- reading (*continued*)  
pedagogues and, 84; humanities and, 93;  
identification and, 9–10, 13, 205; information and, 87–90; interpretation and, 97;  
iPhones and, 64; Joyce and, 95; Kindles and, 64; language and, 82–84, 86, 91–93;  
lusläsa, 96; Mallarmé and, 91–93; one’s environment and, 84; poetry and, 91–93,  
95; prose and, 86, 88, 94; prospective, 9, 96–97; Shakespeare and, 91; slavery and, 86–89, 93, 96; taint of the South and, 86–93; understanding and, 12, 89,  
91, 96, 110, 191
- Redford, Robert, 300–301
- retrospect, 22; cost of knowing and, 140–41,  
147, 182; education and, 24, 28, 33; Melville and, 182; Sophocles and, 4, 8–9, 140–41,  
147; sting of, 285, 305, 312; truth and, 96,  
305; understanding and, 286
- Revue Blanche* (Strindberg), 251
- Rimbaud, Arthur, 2–3, 31, 105
- “Rites of Passage” (Weinstein course), 75,  
90, 97
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 10
- Sanctuary* (Faulkner), 79
- San Jose State, 58
- Sartre, Jean-Paul, 290
- satyr play, 24, 284
- Saussure, Ferdinand de, 324
- Schiller, 139, 143
- Scholes, Robert, 68
- Scream Goes Through the House, A*  
(Weinstein), 302
- Seventh Seal, The* (film), 77
- Shakespeare, William, 51; cost of knowing and, 2, 131, 147–50, 188, 192, 223; education and, 44, 48, 62; enrichment from, 50; gaffes and, 302–3, 311; *Hamlet*, 1–2, 17, 114, 156, 302; illusory appearances and, 148–49; impact of, 21, 24, 50, 329; Kafka and, 188, 192; *King Lear*, 1, 8, 41, 91, 120,  
131, 147–50, 309; mathematics and, 120;  
reading and, 91; understanding, 48;  
writing and, 114, 120
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe, 29, 161
- Silicon Valley, 128, 305
- Slack, 74
- slavery: cost of knowing and, 163–65, 169–70,  
177, 179–83, 189, 206–23; Faulkner and,  
18, 75, 87–89, 206–8; Godard and, 278;  
Lincoln and, 79; Melville and, 18, 177–83,  
189; Morrison and, 206–23; reading and,  
86–89, 93, 96; Twain and, 86, 163–71
- social media, 15, 62–63, 104, 277
- Socrates, 15–16, 19, 57
- Soldier’s Pay* (Faulkner), 193
- Sophocles: cost of knowing and, 131, 137–47,  
176, 202, 213; education and, 78, 80; feeling of murder and, 141–42; impact of, 21–22,  
329; information and, 133–43; *Oedipus the King*, 2, 4, 8, 137–47, 332; retrospect and,  
4, 8–9, 140–41, 147
- Sound and the Fury, The* (Faulkner), 85, 193,  
195, 198, 205, 298–99
- Stalin, Joseph, 117
- Stein, Gertrude, 104
- STEM fields, 24, 36, 41
- Sterne, Laurence, 127
- Stone, Phil, 83
- “Street Scenes” (Strindberg), 245
- Strindberg, August: “Avenue de Neuilly,”  
241–45; Baudelaire and, 241, 243; circuits of, 245–54; connectivity and, 244–45,  
248–49, 254; cost of knowing and, 161;  
Dickinson and, 161; *A Dream Play*, 122,  
285; gaffes and, 285; Godard and, 275;  
hypercube and, 252–53; impact of, 21;  
*Inferno*, 245–50, 285; Ithaca and, 243;  
Joyce and, 263, 270; map of human dimensions and, 230, 241–54, 257–58,  
262–63, 266, 270, 274–75, 278; mathematics and, 122–26, 126; misogyny of,  
241, 285; Munch and, 245, 251–52; poetry

- and, 241–54, 285; *Revue Blanche* article of, 251; “Street Scenes,” 245; toxins and, 8
- Summers, Larry, 121
- Sutherland, Donald, 300
- Teaching Company, The, 40
- Temple Israel, 91
- tenure system, 16, 47–49, 68, 107, 125, 134, 275, 287, 292, 306, 322
- “Text and Teacher” program, 37–38
- Textual Power* (Scholes), 68
- theory of narrative, 134–35
- thesis-argument-conclusion schema, 101–2, 107, 323
- Tolstoy, Leo, 302, 307–8
- Torah, 90
- To the Lighthouse* (Woolf), 67
- Tower of Babel, 92, 111, 152, 328
- transmission, 11, 43, 55, 72, 74, 275, 277–78, 316, 329
- Tristram Shandy* (Sterne), 127
- Trump, Donald, 119, 309
- Turgenev, Ivan, 116
- Turkle, Sherry, 277
- Twain, Mark: brilliant style of, 164; choice of pen name, 165; cost of knowing and, 131, 163–71; Holland course on, 32; *Huckleberry Finn*, 1, 75, 163–71; impact of, 21, 330; individual freedom and, 164; moral of story and, 163; Morrison on, 169; “Ole Man River” and, 165, 170; on tainted Standard Oil, 86; political trauma of, 8; *The Prince and the Pauper*, 166; *Pudd’nhead Wilson*, 166, 171; race and, 18, 75, 86, 163–71 Saussurean semiotics of, 166; writer’s block and, 165, 168–69
- Udacity, 68
- Ulysses* (Joyce), 18, 126–27, 262–75
- understanding: affective, 157; cost of knowing and, 13, 134, 137, 157, 164, 171–72, 176–77, 182, 184, 191–92, 200–201, 203, 206–8, 219, 221; education and, 12, 16, 28, 91, 134; fear and trembling and, 23; gaffes and, 284, 312–13; information and, 133 (see also understanding); Kierkegaard and, 13, 96, 134; Mallarmé and, 91; map of human dimensions and, 224, 250, 265, 268; massive open online courses (MOOCs) and, 42–43, 54–63, 68–69, 71, 73; reading and, 12, 89, 91, 96, 110, 191; retrospect and, 286; writing and, 110–11, 312
- “Urban Convalescence, An” (Merrill), 238–41
- “Vid Avenue de Neuilly” (Strindberg), 241–45
- voice, 31–34, 50–51
- Voltaire, 64
- Walden Pond, 161
- Wall Street* (film), 152
- Waste Land* (Eliot), 233
- Weinstein, Ann, 33–34
- Weinstein, Harvey, 309
- White Noise* (DeLillo), 122
- White Station School, 27
- Whitman, Walt, 26–27, 161, 244
- Wigand, Johann, 116
- Wikipedia, 15, 116
- Wild Strawberries* (film), 301
- Wit* (Edson), 3307–8
- Woolf, Virginia, 21, 62, 67, 329
- working for your bread, 23–24, 65, 88, 97, 120, 131–32, 195, 237, 274, 285, 330
- writing: Beckett and, 120; becoming the other and, 171, 192, 210; challenges of, 98–105; coming home and, 21–23; coming-of-age stories and, 90–91, 315; cost-profit ratios and, 119–20; courses for, 99; creative, 103, 106–7; critical, 99–103, 108; dissertations and, 47, 99–100, 298; education and, 99, 101; Faulkner and, 112; freedom of speech and, 104; Gothic, 16, 52, 155, 176, 192, 213, 222; grading, 100; Hamsun

- writing (*continued*)  
and, 105–9, 115, 295, 322–24; Hemingway and, 97, 104, 106, 193; humanities and, 99; identification and, 9–10, 13, 205; Kafka and, 109–15; language and, 99, 105–7, 322; poetry and, 105–8; prose and, 101, 103–4, 109; Shakespeare and, 114, 120; somaticizing and, 113; thesis-argument-conclusion schema and, 101–2, 107, 323; understanding and, 110–11, 312
- Writing Fellows Program, 99
- Wuthering Heights* (Brontë), 171–77
- Yale, 57, 83, 128
- Yiddish, 32
- Zoom: Brown University and, 69–70; connection issues and, 73; coronavirus pandemic and, 69–81; distance learning and, 14, 43, 55, 69–81; equipment failure and, 73; hidden costs of, 70; lag time issues and, 71–72; literature translating into, 74–81; massive displacements of, 71; muting and, 72–73; raising hands and, 71–72; seeing self on, 71