**English 116, Fall 2012**

**Supplemental readings for Week Two on Wallace Thurman’s novel *Infants of the Spring* (1932)**

Most of these readings are either on Honors Reserve shelves for English 116 or the English 116 Moodle site. The first 2 essays are contemporary, the others historical.

1. Amritjit Singh, introductory essay to *Infants of the Spring* (print edition available in the Swarthmore College bookstore or McCabe library/General Reserve [*not* Honors Reserve]).
2. Monica L Miller, “‘Passing Fancies’: Dandyism, Harlem Modernism, and the Politics of Visuality,” chapter 4 from *Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity*, Duke Univ. Press, 2009. pdf on English 116 Moodle site. Note especially pp. 211-18, on Thurman, but read and take notes on all of chapter 4. I’ll also place this book on 116 Honors Reserve.
3. Three short essays by Thurman from *Collected Writings of Wallace Thurman* (English 116 Honors Reserve):
   1. “Harlemese” (pp. 64-66, on slang)
   2. “Few Know Real Harlem, the City of Surprises….” (pp. 66-71)
   3. Thurman’s unpublished “review” of his own novel, *Infants of the Spring*, including self-criticism followed by barbed comments on how blacks and whites will both misunderstand his work (pp. 226-27).
4. *New Negro* anthology essays; the anthology is on English 116 Honors Reserve:
   1. Robert Hayden, “Preface”
   2. Alain Locke, “The New Negro” (anthology introduction)
   3. Alain Locke, “Legacy of the Ancestral Arts” (you may skim this, but pay close attention to the opening pages, 254-61.)
   4. W. A. Domingo, “Gift of the Black Tropics”
   5. James Weldon Johnson, “Harlem, the Culture Capital”
5. *Fire!!! A Quarterly Devoted to the Younger Negro Artists*, edited by Thurman. English 116 Honors Reserve. This is the most famous and influential avant-garde “little magazine” devoted to art and literature created during the Harlem Renaissance.
   1. Zora Neale Hurston, “Color Struck” [playscript] and “Sweat” [story]
   2. Langston Hughes, 2 poems (pp. 20-21)
   3. Richard Bruce [Nugent], “Smoke, Lilies and Jade” (short story employing James Joycean “stream of consciousness”)
   4. Wallace Thurman, “Fire Burns” (editorial comment on Carl Van Vechten’s best-selling novel about Harlem, *Nigger Heaven*)
   5. study also all the art, especially work by Aaron Douglas and Richard Bruce [Nugent]; characters inspired by both these artists and their work appear in *Infants of the Spring*
   6. I also recommend the 2 supplemental essays, one by Richard Bruce Nugent and one by Thomas Wirth, that accompanied the reprinting of *Fire!!!* in the 1980s. These essays are part of the edition that’s on Reserve.
6. George Schuyler, “The Negro-Art Hokum” (pdf on English 116 Moodle site): Schuyler’s attack on Locke’s “Ancestral Arts” essay listed above
7. Langston Hughes, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” (pdf) (compare to the Schuyler essay and Locke’s “Ancestral Arts”
8. 2 poems in *The New Negro* anthology on English 116 Honors Reserve:
   1. Hughes, “Youth” (p. 142)
   2. Countee Cullen, “Heritage” (pp. 250- )
9. H. L. Mencken, *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche* (1908), which influenced Thurman. English 116 Honors Reserve. Skim but take notes on the following short chapters. What are some different examples in *Infants of the Spring* of the “slave mentality” that Nietzsche castigated, or of the “superman” superiority complex that Nietzsche lauded?
   1. “Introduction”
   2. “Dionysus vs. Apollo”
   3. “The Superman”
   4. “Truth”
   5. “Civilization”