

Mini-Syllabus: Isolation to Engagement, A Beginner's Guide

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“It’s about a man that is ‘apart from,’ at the beginning; he becomes a part of only at the end. The premise of it was that what’s broken is healed by love only” – Bernstein on *Mad Max: Fury Road*

We live our lives in orbit around the planets of loneliness and connection. Alternating between the two. We are, all of us, at times apart from the world around us. Separate in some way. Isolated. But, we are also engaged in the world. Connected. Reaching out and touching the world. We circle back to old feelings, old friends then propel forward to new places, new faces. Whatever we are feeling at one moment, we are not doomed to feel forever. Instead, it’s a constant movement from isolation to hesitation to engagement. From within ourselves, to without and then back again.

This syllabus will explore pieces that capture a moment of this orbit between isolation and engagement. Characters cast aside by society or separate, somehow, but also characters engaged with the world. Characters, perhaps, stuck between the two, scared but reaching out anyway to touch the world again after being apart from it. They engage, they connect, they heal.

In engaging in this media, we will be exploring what it is that pushes characters, and by association ourselves, to isolation. But, also, what brings them through it to engaging again. We will learn, too, how to be more comfortable with the way we are both, at one, isolated, and engaged, locked in our orbits around loneliness.

“Engage to heal” – Bernstein on *Mad Max: Fury Road*

Poems:

- ["The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"](#) by T.S. Eliot
 - "I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each. / I do not think that they will sing to me."
- ["Sonnet 29"](#) by William Shakespeare
 - "When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes / I all alone beweep my outcast state"
- ["Litany in Which Certain Things Are Crossed Out"](#) by Richard Siken
 - "Every morning the same big / and little words all spelling out desire, all spelling out / You will be alone always and then you will die."
- ["For Grace, After a Party"](#) by Frank O'Hara
 - "And someone you love enters the room / and says wouldn't / you like the eggs a little / different today?"

Films:

- *Moonlight*
- *Amelie*
- *God's Own Country*
- *Mad Max: Fury Road*
- *The Apartment*

Works Cited:

- Bernstein, Abbie. *The Art of Mad Max: Fury Road*. London: Titan Books, 2015.



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