

MA in Modern and Contemporary Literature and Culture

2019-20

CORE MODULE: READING MODERNITY

AUTUMN TERM

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This module addresses some of the major literary trends and cultural debates of modern and contemporary times. It considers the different ways that 'modernity' has been understood – whether it be as a period or as a particular constellation of values or some combination of both – and focuses on the multiple art-forms and theories of art this yielded. We will proceed in a loose chronological fashion, examining a broad swathe of writers, genres and intellectual disciplines. The aim is not to provide an exhaustive survey, but to focus on some salient or representative moments of recent cultural history that will allow you to make informed choices about more specialised options of study. The module is conducted through seminars, offering a broad variety of teaching styles and critical approaches. For each seminar there is *core reading* which is compulsory preparation, and also a selection of *further reading* which you are encouraged to sample as widely as possible.

THE TERM AT A GLANCE

Week 1:	Introductory Meeting (Adam Kelly)*
Week 2:	Of Modernity and Modernism(s) (Nicoletta Ascianto)
Week 3:	Modernist Poetry and the Politics of Allusion (Hugh Haughton)
Week 4:	Expatriate Modernism: An American in Paris (Hannah Roche)
Week 5:	Confession and Death at Mid-Century (JT Welsch)
Week 6:	Reading Week
Week 7:	Masters and Slaves, Race and Modernity (Adam Kelly)
Week 8:	Paul Muldoon and Contemporary Poetry (Matt Campbell)
Week 9:	The Contemporary Novel's Aesthetic Debts (Alexandra Kingston-Reese)
Week 10:	Signifying Katrina (Bryan Radley)

*Note that this meeting is for students on the MA Modern and Contemporary Literature and Culture, rather than all students taking Reading Modernity.

All seminars meet on Tuesdays at either 11am or 2pm.

2) Of Modernity and Modernism(s)

Nicoletta Asciuto

Do we live in a modern age? Are our experiences in the twenty-first century “modern”?

In this seminar we shall investigate what we mean exactly when we talk about the modern in literature, and also think about how best to approach modernist texts. Can the word ‘modernism’ be applied to a variety of texts beyond the canonical names of T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce?

We will look at the various declinations of modern and modernist, starting with Charles Baudelaire’s own influential definition of modernity and Virginia Woolf’s famous statement that ‘On or about December 1910 human character changed.’ We will then move on to consider how the scholarly conversation on the modern has developed from the second half of the twentieth century onwards. You will be joining a lively scholarly debate which is still ongoing!

By the end of this seminar you will have gained a deeper understanding of the debates surrounding modernism/modernity, its theorization, and its current appropriation stretching out to global literature.

Preparatory questions to consider:

- What do we mean by ‘modernity’? And what do we mean by ‘modernism’? Do these terms overlap?
- What makes a text modern? How do we go about locating and labelling literary texts? Can we recognize a modernist text when we encounter one?
- How have different authors (from Charles Baudelaire to contemporary scholars) theorized the concepts of modernity and modernism?
- Can we define a geography of modernity and modernism(s)? If so, what would that look like in your opinion?

Core Reading (in this order)

Charles Baudelaire, ‘Modernity’, in *The Painter of Modern Life, and Other Essays*, trans. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1964), pp. 12-15. **[VLE]**

Virginia Woolf, ‘Character in Fiction’, in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf. Volume III (1919-1924)*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (London: Hogarth Press, 1986), pp. 420-438. **[VLE]**

Harry Levin, ‘What was Modernism?’, *The Massachusetts Review*, vol. 1 no. 4 (1960), pp. 609-630. **[JSTOR]**

Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity* (London: Verso, 2002). Compulsory excerpts: pp. 17-22 (Part I, Chapter 1), and pp. 31-41 (Part I, Chapter 3). **[VLE]**

Susan Stanford Friedman, ‘Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of Modern / Modernity / Modernism’, *Modernism/modernity*, vol. 8 no. 3 (2001), pp. 493-513. **[PROJECT MUSE]**

Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, ‘Locating the Modern’, in *Geographies of Modernism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), pp. 1-5. **[VLE]**

Further Reading

Tim Armstrong, *Modernism: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005).

Jessica Berman, ‘Imagining Justice’, *Modernist Commitments: Ethics, Politics, and Transnational Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), pp. 1-36.

Malcolm Bradbury, *Modernism 1890-1930* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976).

Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987).

Jürgen Habermas, 'Modernity: An Unfinished Project', in *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity: Critical Essays on the Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, ed. Maurizio Passerin-D'Entreves and Seyla Benhabib (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), pp. 38-55.

Andreas Huyssen, 'Geographies of Modernism in a Globalizing World', in *Geographies of Modernism*, ed. Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), pp. 6-18.

Fredric Jameson. *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

Michael H. Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine, 1908-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984). David Punter, *Modernity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Raymond Williams, *Politics of Modernism* (London: Verso, 1989).

Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

3) Modernism and the Poetics and Politics of Allusion: 'Difficulty' and Inter-textuality in T.S. Eliot and Marianne Moore

Hugh Haughton

In his essay on 'Metaphysical Poetry' of 1921, T.S. Eliot wrote that:

We can only say that it appears likely that poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be *difficult*. Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results. The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning.

Addressing the question of 'difficulty' and the claim that modern poetry must be 'more allusive', the seminar will focus principally on T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) and Marianne Moore's poems 'Marriage' (1923), 'Poetry' and 'The Octopus' (1924), published in *Observations* (1924). *The Waste Land* and *Observations* presented 1920s readers with verse that was multiply allusive, poly-vocal and often palimpsest-like. Both books also notoriously included extensive notes alongside the texts of the poems, para-textually foregrounding the dimension of allusion within their texts.

I would also ask you to read two essays by Randall Jarrell that bear on the problem as seen from the mid twentieth-century, 'The End of the Line' and 'The Obscurity of the Poet.' Taking off from there, the seminar will reflect on related questions.

Preparatory questions to consider:

- Is modernist poetry inherently difficult? If so, is it more so than poetry from earlier periods? Is it more allusive, or simply allusive in a different way?
- Is there a crisis of transmissibility and the accessibility of poetic experience? Is the allusive modernist text necessarily elitist? What is the relationship between poet and audience in these poems?
- How does poetic form impact on notions of history and 'tradition' and vice versa?
- Is 'Modernist' poetry of the kind represented by Moore and Eliot now irrevocably past and *passé*?

Core Reading (these texts will be available on the VLE)

T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* (1922) in *The Complete Poems and Plays* (London: Faber, 2004) or Lawrence Rainey ed. *The Annotated Waste Land with Contemporary Prose* (Yale, 2006)
--- 'Metaphysical Poetry' (1921), 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919) in *Selected Essays* (London: Faber, 1934), 'Ulysses, Order and Myth' (*The Dial*, 1923)
Randall Jarrell, 'The Obscurity of the Poet', and 'The End of the Line', *Poetry and the Age* (London: Faber, 1955)
Marianne Moore, *Observations* (1924) in Robin G. Schulze ed. *Becoming Marianne Moore: The Early poems 1907-28* (University of California Press, 2002)

Further Reading

Victoria Bazin, *Marianne Moore and the Culture of Modernity* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010)
Ron Bush, 'Intensity by association': Eliot's Passionate Allusions', *modernism/modernity* 20.4 November 2013 (Project Muse)
Bonnie Costello, *Marianne Moore: Imaginary Possessions* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1981)
Hugh Haughton, 'Allusion: The Case of Shakespeare', in Jason Harding ed. *T.S. Eliot in Context* (Cambridge, 2011)

A. Walton Litz, 'The Allusive Poet: Eliot and his Sources' in Ronald Bush ed., *The Modernist in History* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991)
Robert Potts, 'Smirk Host Panegyric', a review of J.H. Prynne *Poems*, *LRB* 2nd June 2016.
Jahan Ramazani, 'Transnational Poetry', *American Literary History* 18.2 (2006) 332-359
I.A. Richards, "'The Allusiveness of Modern Poetry,'" in *The Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924)

4) Expatriate Modernism: An American in Paris

Hannah Roche

In 1903, shortly after her expatriation to Paris, Gertrude Stein finished her first novella, *Q.E.D.* The final part of *Q.E.D.* opens with a reflection on homesickness:

There is no passion more dominant and instinctive in the human spirit than the need of the country to which one belongs. One often speaks of homesickness as if in its intense form it were the peculiar property of Swiss mountaineers, Scandinavians, Frenchmen and those other nations that too have a poetic background, but poetry is no element in the case. It is simply a need for the particular air that is native, whether it is the used up atmosphere of London, the clean-cut cold of America or the rarefied air of the Swiss mountains. The time comes when nothing in the world is so important as a breath of one's own particular climate. If it were one's last penny it would be used for that return passage.

Although she would go on to make 'that return passage' only twice in her lifetime, Stein spent much of her writing career exploring new ways of articulating her own 'dominant and instinctive' passion for America. Focusing on two key texts, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933) and *Paris France* (1940), this seminar will examine the many problems and paradoxes that have come to define Gertrude Stein. How might we read the relationship between Stein's expatriate identity and her experimental aesthetics? Why did Stein claim that 'writers have to have two countries, the one where they belong and the one in which they live really'? Where does Stein's expatriate identity intersect and interact with her sexual identity? Why would a 'completely and entirely american' [sic] writer choose to absent herself from America?

Preparatory questions to consider:

- *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* and *Paris France* are two of Stein's most accessible texts. What makes them modernist?
- How would you describe the relationship between art and modernity in these texts?
- '[T]he director of the Grafton Press is under the impression that perhaps your knowledge of english. But i am an american, said Gertrude Stein indignantly' (*The Autobiography*, 76). Why would Stein's American identity free her from the rules of English grammar?
- How does *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* subvert the genre expectations of a memoir? Why would Stein adopt the narrative voice of her own partner?

Core Reading

Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (London: Penguin, 2001).

Gertrude Stein, *Paris France* (New York: Liveright, 1996).

Gertrude Stein, 'An American and France', in *What Are Masterpieces?* (New York: Pitman, 1970) [available online via the library website].

Extracts from Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* (London: Arrow, 2011) [available on the VLE].

Further Reading

Shari Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank: Paris 1900-1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).

Natalia Cecire, 'Ways of Not Reading Gertrude Stein', *ELH: English Literary History*, 82.1 (2015), 281-312.

Gilbert A. Harrison (ed.), *Gertrude Stein's America* (New York: Liveright, 1996).

Daniel Katz, *American Modernism's Expatriate Scene: The Labour of Translation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

Sarah Posman and Laura Louise Schultz (eds.), *Gertrude Stein in Europe: Reconfigurations Across Media, Disciplines, and Traditions* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

Jahan Ramazani, *A Transnational Poetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

Hannah Roche, *The Outside Thing: Modernist Lesbian Romance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019).

Gertrude Stein, *Three Lives and Q.E.D.* (Norton Critical Editions, 2006).

Phoebe Stein Davis, 'Subjectivity and the Aesthetics of National Identity in Gertrude Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 45.1 (1999), 18-45 [available on JSTOR].

Barbara Will, *Gertrude Stein, Modernism, and the Problem of 'Genius'* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000).

5) Confession and Death at Mid-Century

JT Welsch

Content Notice: Much of the reading material (and therefore seminar discussion) for this week concerns mental illness, suicide, and other potentially difficult themes.

This seminar will explore the sense of cultural and personal loss in the work of John Berryman and Delmore Schwartz. We'll consider their fraught associations with other mid-century 'confessionalist' writing, focusing on the elegiac forms by which both writers registered a perceived death of modernism. Berryman and Schwartz's use of personae will also be an opportunity to consider the critical challenges posed by radically autobiographical writing. The main reading will be Berryman's *Dream Songs* and selections from Schwartz's writing, although you are encouraged to explore both writers further.

Preparatory questions to consider

- Both writers were resistant to associations with 'confessionalism'. Is this a useful term? How does the use of persona affect their 'confession'?
- What are their perspectives on death? How are these influenced by personal history or a sense of more general cultural loss?
- How do different forms capture different aspects of grief or nostalgia (for Schwartz especially)?
- Can the social consciousness of Berryman's elegies be reconciled with his appropriation of minstrel voices?

Core Reading

John Berryman, *The Dream Songs* (FSG, 1969).

- The text of the poems is the same in any edition, but please read Michael Hoffmann's introduction to the 2014 FSG Classics edition.
- Within the whole, please focus on the elegies for Delmore Schwartz (No. 146-158), and other writers: Theodore Roethke (No. 18), Robert Frost (Nos. 37-39), Sylvia Plath (Nos. 153 and 172), R. P. Blackmur (No. 173), Ernest Hemingway (No. 235), Randall Jarrell (No. 259), Louis MacNeice (No. 267), and William Carlos Williams (No. 324).

Delmore Schwartz, *Once and for All: The Best of Delmore Schwartz*, ed. Craig Morgan Teicher (New Directions, 2016).

- Please focus on the foreword by John Ashbery, 'In Dreams Begin Responsibilities', 'The Ballad of the Children of the Czar', 'In the Naked Bed, in Plato's Cave', excerpts from *Genesis: Book 1*, 'Summer Knowledge', 'Baudelaire', and 'The Mind is an Ancient and Famous Capital'.

Further Reading

John Berryman, *Collected Poems 1937-1971*, ed. Charles Thornbury (FSG, 1989).

Philip Coleman, *John Berryman's Public Vision: Relocating the Scene of Disorder* (University College Dublin Press, 2014).

Philip Coleman and Philip McGowan (eds.), *'After Thirty Falls': New Essays on John Berryman* (2007)

Amanda Golden, 'John Berryman at Midcentury: Annotating Ezra Pound and Teaching Modernism,' *Modernism/Modernity* (Vol. 21, No. 2, April 2014), pp. 507-528.

Andrew Gross, 'Imaginary Jews and True Confessions: Ethnicity, Lyricism, and John Berryman's *Dream Songs*,' *Journal of Transnational American Studies* (Vol. 1, No. 1, 2009).

Eric Haralson (ed.) *Reading the Middle Generation Anew: Culture, Community, and Form in Twentieth-Century American Poetry* (University of Iowa Press, 2006)

- Jim Keller, 'Delmore Schwartz's Strange Times,' pp. 153-182.
- Stephen Burt, 'My Name is Henri: Contemporary Poets Discover John Berryman,' pp. 233-252.

Adam Kirsch, *The Wounded Surgeon: Confession and Transformation in Six American Poets* (WW Norton, 2005).

Robert Lowell, 'For John Berryman' and 'To Delmore Schwartz', *Collected Poems*

Jahan Ramazani, 'American Family Elegy I', in *Poetry of Mourning: The Modern Elegy from Hardy to Heaney*, (University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 241-247.

Alex Runchman, *Delmore Schwartz: A Critical Reassessment* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

Peter A. Stitt, 'The Art of Poetry, No. 16, John Berryman,' *Paris Review* (No. 53, Winter 1972)

Melissa Fran Zeifer, 'Avatars of Eurydice: John Berryman's *Dream Songs*', in *Beyond Consolation: Death, Sexuality, and the Changing Shapes of Elegy* (Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 83-106.

7) Masters and Slaves, Race and Modernity

Adam Kelly

This seminar will address arguably the most important American novel of the twentieth century, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), against the specific background of a Hegelian reading of modern consciousness. Hegel's dialectic of master and slave is among the most famous passages in modern philosophy, and we will consider its impact on Ellison and its usefulness for a reading of the themes and forms of his major novel. We will also consider the racial coding of "modernity" itself, and the kinds of possibilities and limitations the concept affords to a history concerned with equality and freedom.

Preparatory questions to consider:

- What makes *Invisible Man* a modern novel? Is it also a modernist one?
- In what ways does the notion of "modernity" allow us/encourage us to think about race?
- What is the relationship between modernity and visibility?
- What conception of freedom does Ellison's protagonist seek?

Core Reading

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (London: Vintage, 1995).

G. W. F. Hegel, from *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, excerpted in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch et al (Norton, 2010), pp. 541-47. **VLE**

Mark Greif, from *The Age of the Crisis of Man: Thought and Fiction in America, 1933-1973* (Princeton UP, 2015), pp. 165-89. **VLE**

Susan Buck-Morss, "Hegel and Haiti," *Critical Inquiry* 26.4 (2000): 821-65. **VLE**

Further Reading

From the debate about African American writing at mid-century (all available in the *Norton Anthology of African American Literature*):

Wright, Richard. "Blueprint for Negro Writing" (1937).

Baldwin, James. "Everybody's Protest Novel" (1949).

Howe, Irving. "Black Boys and Native Sons" (1963).

Ellison, Ralph. "The World and the Jug" (1964).

On Marx's critique of Hegel and its relevance for *Invisible Man*:

Karl Marx, from *The German Ideology*, excerpted in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch et al (Norton, 2010), pp. 655-56. **VLE**

Barbara Foley, from *Wrestling with the Left: The Making of Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man* (Duke UP, 2010), pp. 1-10. **VLE**

Key later texts on race, slavery, and modernity:

Buck-Morss, Susan, *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History* (Pittsburgh, 2009).

Davis, David Brion. *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Cornell, 1966).

Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Verso, 1993).

Hartman, Saidiya. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford, 1997).

Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Harvard, 1992).

Patterson, Orlando. *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Harvard, 1982).

Warren, Kenneth W. *What Was African American Literature?* (Harvard, 2011).

8) Paul Muldoon and Contemporary Poetry: From the Local to the Geopolitical

Matthew Campbell

This seminar will explore the early achievement and influence of Irish poet Paul Muldoon through the last volume he wrote before moving to the USA. It is a very influential book, treating in an oblique way the matter of poetry and violence, innovation and experiment, the limits of representation and the limits of form. Its poems are sometimes very short and sometimes very long, as in the extraordinary sonnet-narrative "The More a Man Has the More a Man Wants," which closes the book. Muldoon and his contemporaries used to be called "post-modern" and this seminar will address the validity of that label. We will also explore Muldoon's significance for broader UK and US literary culture, given his subsequent influence on Anglophone poetry – as a critic, poetry editor of *The New Yorker*, Princeton Professor and (part-time) rock musician.

Preparatory questions to consider:

- How does poetry function in times of extreme political violence?
- What does it mean to write innovative poetry?
- How do seemingly traditional matters, such as rhyme, figure in contemporary poetry?
- Is obliquity of address - through metaphor, allegory, metamorphosis - adequate to ideas of the modern or post-modern?

Core Reading

Paul Muldoon, *Quoof* (London: Faber, 1983)
- More recent poems will be made available in the seminar.

Further Reading

Campbell, Matthew (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Contemporary Irish Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)
Dawe, Gerald, *The Cambridge Companion to Irish Poets* (Cambridge: CUP, 2018)
Holdridge, Jefferson and Ó Conchubhair, Brian (eds.), *Post-Ireland? Essays on Contemporary Irish Poetry* (Winston-Salem: Wake Forest, 2017)
Karhio, Anne, *Slight return : Paul Muldoon's poetics of place* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2017)
Kendall, Tim and McDonald, Peter (eds), *Paul Muldoon: Critical Essays* (Liverpool English Texts and Studies, 2003)
Muldoon, Paul, *To Ireland, I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
Princeton University Library Chronicle (Special Issue on Irish Poetry), 59, 3 (1998).
Quinn, Justin, *The Cambridge introduction to Modern Irish poetry, 1800-2000* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008)

9) The Contemporary Novel's Aesthetic Debts

Alexandra Kingston-Reese

This seminar will explore the aesthetic and formal legacies of modernism in the contemporary novel. Critics often compare the works of modernist authors (Woolf, Eliot, Joyce, Kafka, Beckett) to contemporary inheritors, but how do contemporary writers continue to engage with modernity's aesthetic concepts, strategies, and techniques, even when they seek to recast them?

We'll be taking a specific look at contemporary modernism through Zadie Smith, one of the 21st-century's most innovative and exciting novelists and her critically lauded novel, *On Beauty* (2006). "It should be obvious from the first line that this is a novel inspired by a love for E.M. Forster, to whom all my fiction is indebted, one way or the other"—so goes Smith's Acknowledgements to *On Beauty*, an "homage" to Forster's classic modernist novel, *Howard's End* (1910). Here, we will consider what methods contemporary writers like Smith use to extend and alter modernist aesthetics (through an attention to style, affect, and ethics) when they feel in aesthetic debt.

Preparatory questions to consider:

- What makes *On Beauty* a modern novel? Is it also a modernist one?
- Building on your discussions in Week 7, in what ways does the notion of "modernity" allow us/encourage us to think about race in the 21st-century?
- In what ways can we think about *influence*, *homage*, and *allusion* as tropes of modernity?
- How would you characterise the relationship between modernity and the present, and modernism and the contemporary period?
- What do you make of altermodernism and metamodernism?

Although we won't be doing a one-to-one comparison between the two novels, I thoroughly recommend you read Forster's *Howard's End*, since knowledge of the plot that Smith modernises will be helpful in discussion.

Core Reading

James, David, "Modern/Altermodern" in *Time: A Vocabulary of the Present*, eds. Amy J. Elias and Joel Burges, NYU Press, 2016: 66-81. **[VLE scan]**

Rachel Haidu, "Transmission/Influence" in *Time: A Vocabulary of the Present*, eds. Amy J. Elias and Joel Burges, NYU Press, 2016: 323-336. **[VLE scan]**

Smith, Zadie, "E.M. Forster, Middle Manager", in *Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays*, London: Penguin, 2009: 14-27. **[VLE scan]**

---. "Love, actually", *The Guardian* (1 November 2003):

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/nov/01/classics.zadiesmith>. **[Web Link]**

---. *On Beauty*, London: Penguin, 2006.

Further Reading

Batra, Kanika, "Kipps, Belsey, and Jegede: Cosmopolitanism, Transnationalism, and Black Studies in Zadie Smith's *On Beauty*", *Callaloo* 33.4 (Fall 2010): 1079-1092.

Childs, Peter and James Green, *Aesthetics and Ethics in Twenty-First Century British Novels: Zadie Smith, Nadeem Aslam, Hari Kunzru, and David Mitchell*, London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Connor, Steven, 'Modernism After Postmodernism', *The Cambridge History of Modernism*, ed. Vincent Sherry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017): 820-34.

D'Arcy, Michael, and Mathias Nilges, *The Contemporaneity of Modernism: Literature, Media, Culture*, NY: Routledge, 2016. "The Introduction" and "Afterword" will be of particular use.

Forster, E.M., *Aspects of the Novel*, ed. Oliver Stallybrass, London: Penguin Classics, 2005.

- . *Howard's End*, London: Penguin, 2012.
- Gasiorek, Andrzej, "A Renewed Sense of Difficulty: E.M. Forster, Iris Murdoch, and Zadie Smith on ethics and form", in *Legacies of Modernism: Historicising Postwar and Contemporary Fiction*, ed. David James, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011: 170-186.
- Hale, Dorothy, "On Beauty as Beautiful?: The Problem of Novelistic Aesthetics By Way of Zadie Smith", *Contemporary Literature* 53.4 (Winter 2012): 814-844.
- James, David, "Introduction: mapping modernist continuities", in *Legacies of Modernism: Historicising Postwar and Contemporary Fiction*, David James (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011.
- . *Modernist Futures: Innovation and Inheritance in the Contemporary Novel*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012.
- Smith, Zadie, *Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays*, London: Penguin, 2009. Key essay: "Two Directions for the Novel", 71-96. **[VLE scan]**
- Tew, Phillip ed., *Reading Zadie Smith: The First Decade and Beyond*, London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

10) Signifying Katrina: Disaster Capitalism, Displacement, and Race

Bryan Radley

This seminar will examine the political and cultural legacies of Hurricane Katrina, the storm that devastated much of the southern United States in 2005. The focus will be on Mary Robison's 2009 experimental novel *One D.O.A., One on the Way*. Does Robison's fragmentary, blackly comic, and generically mutable narrative provide an apposite aesthetic response to the challenge of representing the political ruptures, psychic wounds, and temporal discontinuities of New Orleans after Katrina? The critical coordinates for our discussion will include the biopolitics of disposability and ideas of disaster capitalism / apartheid (via the work of Henry Giroux and Naomi Klein respectively).

Preparatory questions to consider

(In each case, please key your notes to specific textual examples and pages from the core reading. If referring to a passage from *One D.O.A., One on the Way*, you should make a note of the page and section number. This will allow discussion to move smoothly.)

- Is *One D.O.A., One on the Way* simply a novel in pieces or something altogether stranger? What (other) descriptor of genre or mode would you use?
- Building on your discussion of the contemporary novel's aesthetic debts in Week 9, what do you make of *One D.O.A.*'s experimental form? Did you spot any (dis)continuities with the techniques of modernism—or, indeed, postmodernism?
- What is the relationship of this fragmented narrative to the real world of post-Katrina New Orleans? Why might this be a key question when considering the novel's aesthetics?
- Does the concept of “disaster capitalism” allow/encourage us to think about the presentation of class, disability, gender/sexuality, nationality, & race in Robison's book?
- What does *One D.O.A.* tell us about the modern city, life in 21st-century America, and/or contemporary subjectivity? Is this a political novel? (If so, why? If not, why not?)

Core Reading

Mary Robison, *One D.O.A., One on the Way* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2009; reissued in paperback in 2018).

Henry A. Giroux, “Reading Hurricane Katrina: Race, Class, and the Biopolitics of Disposability,” *College Literature* 33.3 (Summer 2006): 171-196.

Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine* (London: Allen Lane, 2007; rpt. Penguin, 2008), Chapter 20 (“Disaster Apartheid”).

Further Reading / Viewing

Dave Eggers, *Zeitoun* (San Francisco, CA: McSweeney's, 2009; rpt. Penguin, 2010).

Jane Elliott, “Life Preservers: The Neoliberal Enterprise of Hurricane Katrina Survival in *Trouble the Water*, *House M.D.*, and *When the Levees Broke*,” in *Old and New Media after Katrina*, ed.

Diane Negra (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 89-111.

Henry A. Giroux, *Stormy Weather: Katrina and the Politics of Disposability* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2006).

Nandini Gunewardena and Mark Schuller, eds., *Capitalizing on Catastrophe: Neoliberal Strategies in Disaster Reconstruction* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2008), esp. the three chapters that comprise Part 3, “Exposing Katrina: Class, Race, and Displacement”, pp. 117-156.

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