

# Modernist Renaissance(s)

Organisé par Adrienne Janus (Université de Tours) et  
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## Joint Workshop

3-5 June 2021

### 3 June 2021

13h55 — Welcome – Hélène Aji (Présidente de la Société d'études modernistes), Anne-Marie di Biasio (Présidente de la Société d'études Woolfiennes)

14h — Anne Besnault (Université de Rouen), "The 'dialectical embrace' of Virginia Woolf's historiographical renaissance"

14h30 — Maryam Thirriard (Université Aix-Marseille), "Woolf's 'New Biography': revolution or renaissance?"

15h — Pause

15h30 — Leila Haghshenas (Université Catholique de l'Ouest – Angers), "The Rebirth of Humanist Thoughts in Leonard Woolf's Autobiography"

16h — Olivier Hercend (Sorbonne Université), "From Integrity to Constant Re-creation: Modernist Re-Imaginations of the Cartesian Cogito"

### 4 June 2021

9h — Nicolas Boileau (Université Aix-Marseille), "Voices and Silence: Cusk's Modernist Renaissance in her *Outline Trilogy* (2016-18)"

9h30 — Leslie de Bont (Université de Nantes), "May Sinclair's Romantic Corpus"

10h — Amélie Moisy (Université Paris-Est) "Thomas Wolfe : Bad Modernism and the Potential for Renaissance"

### 5 June 2021

9h30 — Marie Laniel (Université de Picardie), "Whatever laurels might be tossed to her: Echoes of Lycidas in *To the Lighthouse*"

10h — Kit Toda (Université de la Réunion), "No dead voices speak through the living voice: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Literary History among Modernists and Anti-Modernists"

11h — Emilie Georges (Université Paris-Nanterre), "Ezra Pound and the Italian Renaissance(s)."

11h30 — Diane Drouin (Sorbonne Université), "Coining New Words for Old Ideas: Mina Loy and the Surrealist Renewal of Language"

"Renaissance(s)": a key concept for Modernism. The term lends itself to various movements in the modernist *long durée* from the mid-19th to the 20th century – the "American Renaissance" we associate with Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson, the "Irish Literary Renaissance" with W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, the "Harlem Renaissance" with Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, the "San Francisco Renaissance" with poets of the Beat Generation. From Walter Pater's famous conclusion to "The Renaissance" (1873) and his "moments of intensity", through Virginia Woolf's "moments of being" and her attention to Elizabethan literary themes and forms (J. Dusinger, *Virginia Woolf's Renaissance: Woman Reader or Common Reader*), the Early Modern Renaissance also provided critical impetus in defining modernists' exploration of new spatio-temporal and aesthetic forms, just as the transnational migrations of both eras fuelled the expanded periodization and scale of New Modernist Studies (D. Mao, R. Walkowitz): transatlantic, global (L. Doyle), planetary modernisms (S. Stanford Friedman).

Most importantly, however, *Modernist Renaissance(s)* indexes the energies of rebirth and regeneration which infuse Modernist experimentation with new forms of art and life, experiments which transgress normative constraints of genre and gender, of literary style as well as life-style(s). Thus Virginia Woolf proposes to give "old" English words a second birth by arranging them in "new orders" ("Craftmanship"), criticizing writers who resisted new literary forms ("Modern Fiction"), in addition to celebrating possibilities where "perhaps for the first time in literature" "women like women" ("A Room of One's Own"). While Gertrude Stein and James Joyce inscribe the rebirth of literary forms at the heart of each phrase, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and W.B. Yeats seek to revive moribund English aesthetics by turning to Italian, Indian, Gaelic and Japanese traditions. In each case, new publishing organisations and social collaborations act as vehicles of modernist renewal: Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury Group, Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monnier's Shakespeare Co., and the modernist 'Little Magazines.' (P. Caughie, *Virginia Woolf in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*).

Yet in the age of technological warfare and mechanical reproduction, modernist rebirth is always in "dialectical embrace" (J. Edmond, *Make It the Same: Poetry in the Age of Global Media*) with mortality, degeneration, and repetition. In the wake of World War I, the energies of these multiple, transnational "renaissances" that fall under Ezra Pound's slogan "Make it new", accompany the dysphoric "Lost Generation", as well as Virginia Woolf's meditations on aging and the natural "embrace in death" in *Mrs Dalloway*. (K. Czarnecki, C. Rohman, eds, *Virginia Woolf and the Natural World*) The rise of modern totalitarianism in the 30s also shadows James Joyce's "generation, maturation, putrefaction" of language in *Finnegans Wake* (1939) and the modernist impasse marked by Samuel Beckett's "nothing new" (*Murphy*, 1938) in the advent of World War II.

Contemporary renewals of modernist energies of experimentation nonetheless suggest a *Modernist Renaissance* in the 21st century, (M. Perloff, *21st century Modernism: The New Poetics*; C. Dworkin, K. Goldsmith, *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing*) in the works, for example, of poets of the Language School (Susan Howe, Charles Bernstein, etc.) the Conceptualists (Vanessa Place, Caroline Bergvall), or British *neo modernists* such as Rachel Cusk or Jon McGregor.

This joint SAES workshop of the *Société d'Études Modernistes* and the *Société d'Études Woolfiennes* seeks to explore the theme of Modernist Renaissance(s) in all its multiplicity.