

THE MODERNIST SHORT STORY: A BIBLIOGRAPHY

The preparation of a list of bibliographical references on the modernist short story raises a number of questions and implies certain choices, which I intend to address in this brief introductory note.

A first important observation to be made is that the short story as a genre remains largely neglected in the greater part of book-length studies on literary modernism, even in the more recent ones.¹ The scholarly interest in the modernist short story—which continues to be relatively small, especially when considering the quantity and quality of short stories in the modernist period, as well as the crucial role of the modernist short story in the development of both literary modernism and the short narrative genre—seems to move almost exclusively from short story studies. Hence, the present bibliography not only intends to be a useful tool for students and scholars, but by its very limits it hopes to raise awareness of the need for more (diverse) theoretical reflection on the modernist short story.

A second problem this bibliography has to deal with, is the partial overlapping of the notions “modernist” and “modern” in the context of short story studies. Given the fact that an important number of textual characteristics experimented and matured during the modernist period have retrospectively been defined as distinctive traits of the “modern” (i.e. 20th-

¹ Among many examples, let me cite Rachel Potter's *Modernist Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012) and *A Companion to Modernist Literature and Culture* (eds. Bradshaw and Dettmar. New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005).

and 21th-century) short story, it is a quite arduous task to distinguish the studies on the modernist short story from general theoretical reflections on the short story as a genre. These theoretical articles on the short story have been included in the reference list only insofar as they focus on (or are related to) the development of the form in the modernist period.

On the matter of the categorical problems raised by the notion of “modernism” itself, the bibliography tries to continue the difficult exercise of this entire journal issue, which questions the centrality of “high modernism” and seeks to contextualize this specific literary movement in the broader modernist period (roughly 1900-1940). As the articles of this issue demonstrate, this broadening of perspective by no means can be seen as a generalization of “modernist” to “modern,” but rather expresses a renewed awareness of the many specific interactions between the numerous agents involved in the cultural development in a particular historical era, of which canonical high-modernist writers represent only one part. For these reasons, I have included also relevant studies on magazine and print culture in the first decades of the twentieth century.

The reference list below comprises four parts. The first part collects all book-length studies that in some way treat the modernist short story from a theoretical perspective. Given the observations above, studies such as Head’s *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice* are rather scarce, and a great deal of the included monographs only partly discuss the specific problems posed by the short story in the modernist period. The second part contains all theoretical articles on the modernist short story, while the third part comprises relevant special journal issues.

The fourth and final part of the reference list includes monographs and articles dealing with short fiction by a specific modernist author, as well as by authors on the margins of high modernism treated in the articles of this journal issue (such as Kipling and Somerset Maugham). I want to stress that the selection of authors is arbitrary and necessarily incomplete. In my opinion, more work needs to be done on the interaction between “the” modernist short story and its margins (be they temporal, geographical or aesthetic), before such a list can be expanded. The mere adding of short story writers orbiting around the canonical centre, without a thorough reflection on their relation to that centre, would mean depriving this bibliography of its specificity.² Furthermore, the list of studies on each author is not exhaustive,

² Apart from the authors listed, no specific (theoretical) studies were found on the short fiction by E.M. Forster, Radclyffe Hall, T.F. Powys, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair, and Nathaniel West.

but should be seen as a selection of core studies dedicated to their short fiction.

Keeping in mind the usefulness of this bibliography as a tool, I've excluded all monographs on modernist authors that do not specifically treat short fiction (all kinds of *Readers*, *Companions* and *Introductions*), all monographs limited to narrow thematic issues that do not study the short story in the context of the modernist period, all articles on single modernist short stories that lack a theoretical focus and all studies on the short story cycle, which is a literary form in its own right and therefore deserves a separate bibliography.

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