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978-1-107-01252-3 - The Legacies of Modernism: Historicising Postwar and Contemporary Fiction

Edited by David James

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## THE LEGACIES OF MODERNISM

An engagement with the continued importance of modernism is vital for building a nuanced account of the development of the novel after 1945. Bringing together internationally distinguished scholars of twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature, these essays reveal how the most innovative writers working today draw on the legacies of modernist literature. Dynamics of influence and adaptation are traced in dialogues between authors from across the twentieth century: Lawrence and A. S. Byatt, Woolf and J. M. Coetzee, Forster and Zadie Smith. The book sets out new critical and disciplinary foundations for rethinking the very terms we use to map the novel's progression and renewal, enhancing our understanding not only of what modernism was but also what it might still become. With its global reach, *The Legacies of Modernism* will appeal to scholars working not only in the new modernist studies, but also in post-colonial studies and comparative literature.

DAVID JAMES is Lecturer in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Literature at the University of Nottingham.

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*Historicising Postwar and Contemporary Fiction*

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*the Word: Intellectual History and Twentieth-Century Literature* (1997). Along with *The Blackwell History of British Fiction 1945–Present*, she is currently at work on two books: *Thinking with Feeling: English Literary Studies and the Biologisation of Culture*, and *The Neo-Moderns: British Fiction and Intellectual Histories after 1945*. She has also edited several books, including *Postmodernism: A Reader* (1992), *Modern Literary Theory* (1992), *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide* (2006), and, with David Fuller, *The Arts and Sciences of Criticism* (1999).

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If one aim of this book is to address what exactly we mean when we speak of the ‘afterlives’ of modernism, it seems apt to note that this volume has already led a long and varied life of its own. Many people have played a crucial part in that upbringing; more still devoted considerable time and professional energy as the book matured and expanded, even when the prospect of tackling something as multifarious as the modernist legacy within coherent parameters seemed unlikely – or at least unwieldy. Among the various colleagues who encouraged me to pursue this project in its earliest stages and despite its organisational challenges, I would above all like to thank Peter Boxall, Laura Marcus and Peter Nicholls. They got me thinking about the range of critical questions that only a volume with multiple perspectives can hope to address. Following their initial inspiration to solicit diverse, tenacious and adventurous contributors, I feel all the more fortunate for having secured this book’s ensemble. It has been a pleasure and an honour to work with scholars who have each made their own interventions with individual flair while also remaining in tune with this collection’s shared aims. For their exemplary commitment, for their patience throughout the editing process, and for the intellectual verve they show in the essays themselves, I am deeply grateful.

As anyone involved in editing collections will know, bringing this sort of book to fruition demands a rather different level and distribution of attention than other scholarly activities. Retaining that attention depends as much upon institutional backing as anything else, and I would therefore like to acknowledge the support of the School of English Studies at the University of Nottingham, which provided a generous period of research leave that facilitated my preparation of the final manuscript.

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