A novel can challenge not only our notions of the world, but our place in it.

dukeethics.org

Good Question
An Exploration in Ethics Series

If you are interested in becoming involved with the Institute, please contact us at 919-660-3033.
A NOVEL CAN CHALLENGE NOT ONLY OUR NOTIONS OF THE WORLD, BUT OUR PLACE IN IT.
How can literary innovation help us understand our rapidly globalizing world?

More than ever, our everyday lives put us in contact with far away people and places. We need new theoretical lenses to help us figure out who and where we are in the world, to tell our cultural and even linguistic differences be something that connects rather than divides us. Literature and the arts are vital resources for developing transnational literacy. Readers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted.

There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically traditional notions of character and plot, and culturally. Modernism, a movement that turned to literary experimentation as a way of exploring questions of political autonomy, communal loyalty, and individual freedom. When modernism crossed paths with colonial history, its aesthetic difficulty uses estrangement to make sense of a globalizing world?

Modernism thus leaves us with an important legacy. It gives us a different way of thinking about creative works. They don’t have to be seamlessly unified. They can display their grafts and sutures. By showing the act of making, modernism reveals the dynamics of aesthetic and social processes as well as the constructed and reconstructed nature of communal identities. Creating and reading literature with its import of community in particular gathered may force the partition between the two world wars. After the destruction of World War I, many modernist writers not just in Europe but from its colonies (e.g. Ireland, South Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa) lost faith in the idea of empire and began looking for alternative ways of imagining community on more equal ground. Seeking to challenge imperialism with international solidarity, writers created and read literature with its unifying potential.

Vadde advances a model of literary and political belonging that illuminates the many facets of postcolonial history, and internationalism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. By broadening modernism’s conceptualizations about how communities are formed – what makes them stable and what makes them change. The effort to rethink national and international community in particular gathered may force the partition between the two world wars. After the destruction of World War I, many modernist writers not just in Europe but from its colonies (e.g. Ireland, South Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa) lost faith in the idea of empire and began looking for alternative ways of imagining community on more equal ground. Seeking to challenge imperialism with international solidarity, writers turned to literary experimentation as a way of exploring questions of political autonomy, communal loyalty, and individual freedom. When modernism crossed paths with colonial history, its aesthetic difficulty uses estrangement to make sense of a globalizing world?

More than ever, our everyday lives put us in contact with far away people and places. We need new theoretical lenses to help us figure out who and where we are in the world, to tell our cultural and even linguistic differences be something that connects rather than divides us. Literature and the arts are vital resources for developing transnational literacy. Readers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted.

There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically traditional notions of character and plot, and culturally. Modernism, a movement that

Aarthi Vadde
Assistant Professor of English

English professor Aarthi Vadde works on British and Anglophone literature in the context of colonialism, migration, and globalization. Her research and teaching focus on expanding and refining theories of modernism as more than a Western phenomenon, in part by looking at how literary styles and specific works travel through cultural institutions, the process of translation, and modes of canonicization. While she came to Duke with a doctorate in English from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard University, it was a course in literary theory that lured her in undergraduate career at Columbia University that put her on the career path to academia.

It’s always had a love of literature, but I’d never thought of literary study as a profession. Literary theory acted as a gateway. It taught me not just how to read more, but to think about the way I read. Examining reading and writing as interpretative processes with their own specific histories excited me and gave me a way of seeing the world that didn’t make sense.

Her realization that reading literature was a conduit for developing one’s own critical identity was transformative. She abandoned her law school plans to pursue graduate study. As she continued on, her courses exposed her to modernist and post-colonial authors, who were newly integrated into English literary study and were less well-known. On the other side, the birth of communities at multiple scales: national, continental, diasporic. By altering perspectives about what constituted the unity and cohesion of a society. Modernism’s aesthetic difficulty uses estrangement to make sense of us draw into both the violence and inventiveness of across-cultural encounters.

As she continued on, her courses exposed her to modernist and post-colonial authors, who were newly integrated into English literary study and were less well-known. On the other side, the birth of communities at multiple scales: national, continental, diasporic. By altering perspectives about what constituted the unity and cohesion of a society. Modernism’s aesthetic difficulty uses estrangement to make sense of us draw into both the violence and inventiveness of across-cultural encounters.

The Kenan Institute for Ethics is an interdisciplinary “think and do” tank committed to understanding and addressing real-world ethical challenges facing individuals, organizations, and societies worldwide. Learn more at dukethics.org

The Keanan Institute for Ethics at DUKE UNIVERSITY

American, or Anglophone – should reflect not only past traditions but also our contemporary concerns. It is important to test and refresh the categories that we use to study and teach literature. While dividing literature up by national tradition or time period makes it easier to discuss certain works, we need to keep in mind the potential blindspots in our institutional habits. There is always a politics to categorization, with its values, not just for ourselves as individuals, but for the communities in which we live and participate.

Her current book-in-progress “Chimeras of Form” explains the relationship between the modernist novel, colonial history, and internationalism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. By broadening modernism’s geographical scope, Vadde advances a model of literary and political belonging that illuminates the many facets of English as a global language.

The Kenan Institute for Ethics is an interdisciplinary “think and do” tank committed to understanding and addressing real-world ethical challenges facing individuals, organizations, and societies worldwide. Learn more at dukethics.org

Aarthi Vadde
Assistant Professor of English

English professor Aarthi Vadde works on British and Anglophone literature in the context of colonialism, migration, and globalization. Her research and teaching focus on expanding and refining theories of modernism as more than a Western phenomenon, in part by looking at how literary styles and specific works travel through cultural institutions, the process of translation, and modes of canonicization. While she came to Duke with a doctorate in English from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard University, it was a course in literary theory that lured her in undergraduate career at Columbia University that put her on the career path to academia.

It’s always had a love of literature, but I’d never thought of literary study as a profession. Literary theory acted as a gateway. It taught me not just how to read more, but to think about the way I read. Examining reading and writing as interpretative processes with their own specific histories excited me and gave me a way of seeing the world that didn’t make sense.
How can literary innovation help us understand a globalizing world?

More than ever, our everyday lives put us in contact with far away people and places. We need new paradigms of literature that help us figure out who we are in the world, to feel our cultural and even linguistic differences be something that connects rather than divide us. Literary and the arts are vital resources for developing transnational literacy. Readers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with stories, to see themselves in the world, to let our cultural and individual freedom.

Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that modernism's aesthetic difficulty uses estrangement to question official histories. It has spurred her interest in how universities categorize and institutionalize literary works, many of Anglophone literature in the context of colonial- and post-colonial authors, who modernism cross-paths with colonial history, it inspired surprising strategies for forging communal bonds across lines of difference and distance. Its aesthetics of fragmentation, collage, montage, and reconstructed nature of communal identity. Modernism thus leaves us with an important legacy. How communities are formed – what makes them stable and what makes them change. Ine to rethink national and international community in particular gathered major force in the period between the two world wars. After the destruction of World War I, many modernist writers not just in Europe but from its colonies (e.g. Ireland, South Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa) lost faith in the idea of empire and began looking for alternative ways of imagining community on more equal ground. Seeking to connect rather than divide us. Literature is an abiding fascination for Vadde. It has language mixing (multilingualism) helped represent reimagining the act of making, modernism reveals the dynamism of aesthetic and social processes as well as the constructed and reconstructed nature of communal identities. Creating and reading literature with its social import in mind, we learn to reflect upon often inherent risks and benefits. When I teach Anglophone literature up by national tradition or time period makes us use to study and teach literature. While dividing literature – as modernist, post-colonial, British, American, or Anglophone – should reflect not only past traditions but also present concerns. It is important to test and refresh the categories that we use to study and teach literature. While dividing literature up by national tradition or time period makes it easier to discuss certain works, we need to keep in mind the potential blindspots in our institutional habits. There is always a politics to categorization, with its colonial history, and internationalism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. By broadening modernism's geography, Vadde advances a model of literary and cultural belonging that illuminates the many facets of English as a global language.
B y showing the act of making, modernism reveals the constructed and reconstructed nature of communal identity. How communities are formed – what makes them stable and what makes them change. The effort to rethink national and international community in particular gathered major force in the period between the two world wars. After the destruction of World War I, many modernist writers not just in Europe but from its colonies (e.g. Ireland, South Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa) lost faith in the idea of empire and began looking for alternative ways of imagining community on more equal ground. Seeking to counter imperialism with international solidarity, writers like Joyce, Rabindranath Tagore, and Claude McKay, among others, reframed the birth of communities at multiple scales: national, political, and cultural. Modernism’s aesthetic difficulty uses estrangement to make sense of a globalizing world?

There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with traditional notions of character and plot, and offered a way of seeing social conventionality and the arts as vital resources for developing global perspectives. Researchers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted. There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with traditional notions of character and plot, and offered a way of seeing social conventionality and the arts as vital resources for developing global perspectives. Researchers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted. There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with traditional notions of character and plot, and offered a way of seeing social conventionality and the arts as vital resources for developing global perspectives. Researchers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted. There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with traditional notions of character and plot, and offered a way of seeing social conventionality and the arts as vital resources for developing global perspectives. Researchers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted. There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with traditional notions of character and plot, and offered a way of seeing social conventionality and the arts as vital resources for developing global perspectives. Researchers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted. There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with traditional notions of character and plot, and offered a way of seeing social conventionality and the arts as vital resources for developing global perspectives. Researchers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted. There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with traditional notions of character and plot, and offered a way of seeing social conventionality and the arts as vital resources for developing global perspectives. Researchers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted. There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with traditional notions of character and plot, and offered a way of seeing social conventionality and the arts as vital resources for developing global perspectives. Researchers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted. There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with traditional notions of character and plot, and offered a way of seeing social conventionality and the arts as vital resources for developing global perspectives. Researchers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted. There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with traditional notions of character and plot, and offered a way of seeing social conventionality and the arts as vital resources for developing global perspectives. Researchers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted. There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with traditional notions of character and plot, and offered a way of seeing social conventionality and the arts as vital resources for developing global perspectives. Researchers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted. There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with traditional notions of character and plot, and offered a way of seeing social conventionality and the arts as vital resources for developing global perspectives. Researchers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted. There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with traditional notions of character and plot, and offered a way of seeing social conventionality and the arts as vital resources for developing global perspectives. Researchers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted. There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with traditional notions of character and plot, and offered a way of seeing social conventionality and the arts as vital resources for developing global perspectives. Researchers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted. There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with traditional notions of character and plot, and offered a way of seeing social conventionality and the arts as vital resources for developing global perspectives. Researchers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted. There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with traditional notions of character and plot, and offered a way of seeing social conventionality and the arts as vital resources for developing global perspectives. Researchers understandably want to be moved by what they read, to identify with familiar characters, and to be absorbed by an exciting plot. But sometimes the best stories are the ones we did not know we wanted. There is value in literature that challenges the conventions of storytelling – both stylistically and culturally. Modernism, a movement that began in the early 20th century, did away with traditional notions of character and plot, and offered a way of seeing social conventionality and the arts as vital resources for developing global perspectives. Researchers understandable...
A NOVEL CAN CHALLENGE NOT ONLY OUR NOTIONS OF THE WORLD, BUT OUR PLACE IN IT.