

Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies
EN122 MODES OF READING, 2017-2018
First Assessed Essay

Write an essay of approximately 3,500 words in response to **one** of the following questions. Essays **MUST** be submitted electronically via TABULA by **12.00 noon on Tuesday 16th January 2018 (week 2, term 2)**. Note that this is a departmental, centrally-set deadline. Any request for an extension must be made in advance directly to the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Please make sure that you are aware of the departmental guidelines for the presentation of essays and of the regulations on plagiarism (see 'Useful Links' / 'Essays' link on the Modes of Reading website, under 'Assessments').

1. How useful is the label 'typewriter jazz' in assessing the sound and rhythm of Ginsberg's "Howl"?
2. "Let us revolt against the rule of thoughts" (Marx and Engels). Consider how (and how successfully) normative ideologies are challenged in any one or more of the texts (which may include theoretical texts) that we have studied this term.
3. "According to the standard historical narrative, the Beats challenged the postwar Age of Consensus by dodging and denouncing all traditions in the name of personal liberty. The historian Christopher Lasch crystallized this widely held view when he wrote that "pastlessness" is the Beats' "very essence". Accordingly, many commentators have portrayed Ginsberg's standpoint in the 1950s as fundamentally private, personal." (J. Jesse. Ramírez, "The Ghosts of Radicalisms Past", p. 48)
Do you agree with this assessment of Ginsberg's standpoint in the 1950s? Explain your answer with reference to "Howl".
4. "The goal of art is to create the sensation of seeing, and not merely recognizing, things; the device of art is the "enstrangement" of things and the complication of the form, which increases the duration and complexity of perception, as the process of perception is, in art, an end in itself and must be prolonged" (Viktor Shklovsky, "Art, as Device", 162).
Discuss the meaning and significance of this statement, drawing out its implications through an analysis of "Howl" and / or *The Lonely Londoners*.
5. "The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (Barthes, in Lodge, p. 316). Discuss the meaning and significance of this statement. In addition to Barthes, you should draw on at least one other text (whether theoretical or fictional) that we have read this term.
6. Examine the ways in which Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* represents processes of cultural contact, mixing, and creolization at the levels of both content and form.

7. To what extent, and why, can we consider Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* a 'postmodern' text, as Jameson understands that term?

8. "Throughout [*The Lonely Londoners*] the pleasures of migration, and the pleasures of the city, are almost exclusively organized through the optic of male sexual desire" (Bill Schwarz, "Creolization West One", p. 5). Analyse the representation of gender and sexuality in Selvon's novel.

9. "The Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter – that is, he will come closer to being a real human being – in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language" (Fanon, in Lodge, p. 127). Discuss the relationship between language and race as this presented in Selvon's novel.

10. "The conversion of orality into literariness becomes a pronounced characteristic of West Indian writing after Selvon" (Kenneth Ramchand). How – and how successfully – does Selvon convert 'orality' into 'literariness' in *The Lonely Londoners*?

11. "'Country' and 'city' are very powerful words, and this is not surprising when we remember how much they seem to stand for in the experience of human communities." (Raymond Williams in Lodge, 339).

Discuss this statement, drawing on Williams' further development of his argument. How might one want to apply it to a reading of *The Lonely Londoners*?

12. "Always, from the first time [Galahad] went [to Piccadilly Circus] to see Eros and the lights, that circus have a magnet for him [. . .]. Every time he go there, he have the same feeling like when he see it the first night, drink coca-cola, any time is guinness time, bovril and the fireworks, a million flashing lights, gay laughter, the wide doors of theatres, the huge posters, everready batteries [. . .]" (*Lonely Londoners*, p. 90).

Critically analyse the representation of the urban landscape in Selvon's novel.