

#### Week 6, March 2: flash forward - contemporary novel, contemporary life writing

- + Tommy Orange, *\*There There\** (2018)
- + Terese Marie Mailhot, *\*Heart Berries\** (2018)
- + CopyrightX Week 5: Authorship
- + optional: autobiography and social media readings (in Dropbox)
- + 4:30 pm: *\*There There\** panel in McCabe
- + reviews
- + discussion and outline: Maya, Theo
- + close reading: Maya, Theo
- + criticism summary: Shaoni
- + seminar paper/reflection: Nicole
- + break: Shaoni

### ***There There***

#### Cast of Characters and Epigraphs and Prologue

How can we understand the character descriptions as part of the novel? What effect does a cast list have on realism or the visibility of the novel's fictionality? How can we view a modern or Victorian novel as a performance of sorts?

What effect does the extratextual material have on the novel? Examples: epigraphs, prologue, interlude. Examine the narrative voice of these sections--what effect does the shift in narration have on the reader? Does it take us out of the story or draw us further in? Are the boundaries between fiction and reality hardened or blurred (or both? or neither?)?

#### Narration and FID

How can we view the various narrative shifts throughout the novel as a sort of FID? Is the narrator always in control of the story (and is control stable and equal throughout the narrative, or does it fluctuate)? How do we understand the disjoint narratives as part of a cohesive whole? In other words, why is this a novel and not a series of linked short stories? (See handout)

Second-person in Thomas Frank's section, page 208

Questions of storytelling and oral tradition throughout (Rachel gives background via work on Simon Ortiz)

The movie about alien technology colonizing America, 31 - see also “Surveillance Capitalism” section, below

Fictionality - Dene’s uncles’s scripts, 33. Does Gallagher’s argument about the function of fictionality apply to *There There?* To *Heart Berries*

What effect does tense and perspective have on the temporality of the novel?

Maya close reading, page 141

The ending - ?

Modern novel vs. Victorian novel

Realism and verisimilitude (and kinship and relations and coincidence and counterfactuality)

\*Recall that Lukacs characterized the novel as the “concealed totality of life,” or that McKeon calls it “transcendental homelessness.” What are the aesthetic/narrative differences between Orange and, say, Trollope or Oliphant? How does each approach, circle, or explode the novel form?\*

Surveillance Capitalism

Drones (Daniel, page 194), the Internet (Edwin, page 63), cameras and lens (Dene, page 43)

“I got a camera with a grip like a gun” (37). Shooting camera vs. gun metaphor

The movie about alien technology colonizing America (31), and Edwin’s short story idea.

Blue’s phone and tracking devices (204-5)

Edwin and Facebook (69)

## ***Heart Berries***

Narration form: first person present autobiographical/second person epistolary?

How do we see this novel as similar to and different from Victorian “Life Writing” (re: Trev Lynn Broughton and our reading of Trollope’s autobiography)? Is there, perhaps with Sherman Alexie or Tommy Orange in mind, a “more porous boundary than we generally expect between the narrative conventions of nonfiction autobiography and the first-person novels” here? Especially considering her interviews at the end.

What is the significance of the heart(berry)s sprinkled throughout the chapters?

How does Mailhot both “theorize and intervene in” her life and culture--Theo close reading, page 66. “Words I never knew to be--I am.” (116)

Where does Mailhot engage with questions of female subjectivity and agency? Page 46, “My agency is degraded.” and the four other times she explicitly mentions it in the context of her relationship with Casey. Also the broader stylistic methods that evade rationalizing, opting for pure recounting.

## **CopyrightX**

Shaoni criticism summary

Creative authorship

Creators/writers/filmmakers in *There There*: Dene, Edwin

Oral storytelling and stories without authors/ownership