

Networking May Sinclair / Les réseaux littéraires de May Sinclair

Université de Nantes, 18th-19th June 2020

Keynote speaker: Professor Suzanne Raitt, College of William & Mary

This international conference explores the diversity of connections, inspirations and influences in the work of modernist writer, May Sinclair (1863-1946). It will be held at the University of Nantes (France) on Thursday 18th and Friday 19th June 2019.

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, May Sinclair was one of the most successful and widely known of British women novelists (Wilson, 2001). She produced over twenty novels and six collections of short stories and collaborated with many modernist writers and poets, including Ford Madox Ford, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, H.D. and Richard Aldington. Her life was also exceptionally rich. She took an active part in the women's suffrage movement and published several pamphlets for women's rights between 1908 and 1917. In the early 1910s, she got involved in medico-psychological research, and wrote half a dozen psychoanalytical research papers. In 1915, she spent two weeks near the Belgian front with an ambulance unit and her *Journal of Impressions in Belgium* was one of the first wartime women's diaries published in Britain (Raitt 2000, 163). She was also the acclaimed author of two major philosophical essays on idealism (1917 and 1922) that led to her election to the Aristotelian Society. Last, she was an influential literary historian and literary critic and wrote several much-quoted articles and prefaces on the stream of consciousness, the Brontë sisters and imagist poetry.

Many reviewers and critics have shown that May Sinclair's modernism was not so much a derivation of other contemporary aesthetics but was rather a product of her idiosyncratic articulation of her many research interests and experiences. In addition, "the interdisciplinarity of Sinclair's output [...] eludes straightforward categorisation and this has arguably contributed to the traditional critical neglect of her writing" (Bowler & Drewery 2016, 1).

As May Sinclair is now "gaining critical legitimacy" (Raitt 2016, 23), this conference seeks to explore Sinclair's texts and contexts and aims to shed light on her place in literary history and on her contribution to "the radical modernist challenge to traditional assumptions about what it means to be human" (Bowler & Drewery 2016, 14). Papers comparing Sinclair and other writers are thus particularly welcome; suggested topics might include (but are not limited to):

- May Sinclair and her contemporaries: Thomas Hardy, Henry James, H. G. Wells, D. H. Lawrence, Ford Madox Ford, Charlotte Mew, H. D., Richard Aldington, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield, Elizabeth Bowen, Mary Butts, Olive Moore etc.
- May Sinclair and modernity/the modern/modernism
- May Sinclair & WW1 writers
- May Sinclair and Victorian and late nineteenth-century authors: the Brontë sisters, George Eliot, George Meredith etc.
- May Sinclair and romantic poets: Shelley, Byron etc.
- May Sinclair and philosophy: Henri Bergson, Bertrand Russell, Baruch Spinoza, T. H. Green, Arthur Schopenhauer, Samuel Butler, Francis Herbert Bradley etc.
- May Sinclair and psychology: William James, Sigmund Freud, C. G. Jung, Pierre Janet, Melanie Klein, Ella Sharpe, Joan Riviere, Alfred Adler, Charles Myers etc.
- May Sinclair and mysticism: Evelyn Underhill, the Society for Psychical Research, etc.
- May Sinclair and first-wave feminism
- Contemporary reception of May Sinclair

- May Sinclair and her literary legacy
- May Sinclair in translation
- May Sinclair and music
- May Sinclair and films or TV adaptations

Proposals no longer than 350 words, together with a 200-word biography, should be sent to the conference organisers before January 15th, 2020.

<https://maysinclairociety.com/2019/07/22/cfp-networking-may-sinclair-les-reseaux-litteraires-de-may-sinclair-universite-de-nantes-18th-19th-june-2020/>

Conference organisers:

Leslie de Bont, Université de Nantes leslie.debont@univ-nantes.fr

Isabelle Brasme, Université de Nîmes isabellebrasme@gmail.com

Florence Marie, Université de Pau florence.marie@univ-pau.fr