

<b>Veranstalterin</b>	<b>Dr. Julia Boll</b>
<b>Thema</b>	<b>Contemporary Transatlantic Verse Novels as Recomposed Epics</b>
<b>Art der Veranstaltung</b>	<b>Seminar II</b> [ENG-6, ENG-6a, ENG-7, ENG-7a, ENG-12, ENG-13, AA7, AA10, AA11, LAA9, LAA10, LAA12, LAA13, AA-MA01, AA-MA02, AA-MA04, AA-MA06]
<b>Veranstaltungsnummer</b>	<b>53-548</b>
<b>Zeit</b>	<b>Do 14-16</b>
<b>Raum</b>	<b>(digital)</b>
<b>Beginn</b>	<b>05.11.20</b>

This course invites students to discover the stylistic experiments of several writers who adopted an adventurous hybrid form: the verse novel. After its emergence in the late Romantic and Victorian period, it overwintered Modernism and most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in a niche position, resurfacing in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century as a genre that fully embraces its composite, transgressive identity as both poetry and novel. The verse novel often questions binary thinking, portrays characters on the fringes of society and rewrites classical epics or composes new ones, crossing borders between ancient myth and contemporary experimental literature.

Starting out with a quick overview of the form's roots in epic and verse narratives, we will then look at a part of Saint Lucian-Trinidadian poet Derek Walcott's counter-Odyssey, *Omeros* (1990), read Canadian author Anne Carson's romance *Autobiography of Red* (1998) (and excerpts from its sequel, *Red Doc* [2013]), move to British writer Bernardine Evaristo's picaresque *The Emperor's Babe* (2001), meet Mexican-American Chicana author Ana Castillo's cast of *Watercolor Women Opaque Men* (2005), until we arrive at US-American poet Philip Schultz's search for *The Wherewithal* (2015). As we find and identify the old and new epics running through these novels, we will explore the narrative strategies, determine who is given a voice and to tell whose history, think about monsters and their quests, and explore how cultures can be read from the monsters they generate.



From the cover art of Anne Carson's 1998 novel *Autobiography of Red* (Vintage Contemporaries edition, 2003). The main character of the novel will learn how to fly inside this volcano.

### Reading List:

Some material and secondary reading will be made available. Students are asked to obtain the following:

- Evaristo, Bernardine (2001). *The Emperor's Babe*. (Penguin new edition [2002]; also available as Kindle edition)
- Carson, Anne (1998). *Autobiography of Red*. Any edition (Cape Poetry or Vintage Contemporaries: this edition also available as Kindle edition)
- Castillo, Ana (2005). *Watercolor Women Opaque Men: A Novel in Verse*. (Curbstone Press, or North Western Univ. Press new edition [2017, this edition also available as Kindle edition])
- Schultz, Philip (2015). *The Wherewithal: A Novel in Verse*. (Norton and Company: also available as Kindle edition)

**Note:** If you use an e-reader, make sure you know how to navigate quickly and expertly within the text, how to mark passages (and find them again), how to make annotations, and how to quote properly from an eBook. I advise against working on smartphones for scholarly purposes.

**Studienleistung:** regular and active participation (also in teamwork), detailed knowledge of assigned texts/material, preparation of discussion questions and discussion leading, small course assignments (e.g. preparation of short audio clips).

**Prüfungsleistung,** in addition to the above:

- annotated bibliography on 6 critical texts (due in January 2021)
- a scholarly essay (date TBA)

**Note:** Registered students who fail to show up for the first session will automatically be set "inactive" on Stine, so that another student may take up their place.