

L IDIOM

UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING

Introductory guides to today's critical

(and abuse) of the term
reading literary and cultural critic
presentation

and the widest possible breadth of
the approach to key topics in lit-

Actuality by Graham Allen

by Claire Colebrook

are by Peter Widdowson

al) Realism

gie Ann Bowers

or by David Punter

Rhythm and Verse Form

ip Hobsbaum

s by Matthew Potolsky

y Laurence Coupe

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MODERNISM

Second edition

Peter Childs

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INTRODUCTION

ANSWERING THE QUESTION: WHAT IS MODERNISM?

Romance

In medieval literature, a verse narrative [recounts] the marvelous adventures of a chivalric hero. . . . In modern literature, i.e., from the latter part of the 18th through the 19th centuries, a romance is a work of prose fiction in which the scenes and incidents are more or less removed from common life and are surrounded by a halo of mystery, an atmosphere of strangeness and adventure.

(William Rose Benét, *The Reader's Encyclopedia*)

Realism

A mode of writing that gives the impression of recording or 'reflecting' faithfully an actual way of life. The term refers, sometimes confusingly, both to a literary method based on detailed accuracy of description (i.e. verisimilitude) and to a more general attitude that rejects idealization, escapism, and other extravagant qualities of romance in favour of recognizing soberly the actual problems of life.

(Chris Baldick, *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*)

Modernism

Modernist art is, in most critical usage, reckoned to be the art of what Harold Rosenberg calls 'the tradition of the new.' It is experimental, formally complex, elliptical, contains elements of decreation as well as creation, and tends to associate notions of the artist's freedom from realism, materialism, traditional genre and form, with notions of cultural apocalypse and disaster ... We can dispute about when it starts (French symbolism; decadence; the break-up of naturalism) and whether it has ended (Kermode distinguishes 'paleo-modernism' and 'neo-modernism' and hence a degree of continuity through to post-war art). We can regard it as a timebound concept (say 1890 to 1930) or a timeless one (including Sterne, Donne, Villon, Ronsard). The best focus remains a body of major writers (James, Conrad, Proust, Mann, Gide, Kafka, Svevo, Joyce, Musil, Faulkner in fiction; Strindberg, Pirandello, Wedekind, Brecht in drama; Mallarmé, Yeats, Eliot, Pound, Rilke, Apollinaire, Stevens in poetry) whose works are aesthetically radical, contain striking technical innovation, emphasize spatial or 'fugal' as opposed to chronological form, tend towards ironic modes, and involve a certain 'dehumanization of art.'

(Malcolm Bradbury, in Childs and Fowler 2005)

Postmodernism

The new avant-garde literature (neomodernist or postmodernist) partly carried modernism further, partly reacted against it – for example against its ideology and its historical orientation. What it consistently pretended to be (and sometimes actually was) was *new*. Determinedly self-destructive, it attempted to cut off its branch of the past, by proposing entirely new methods, a fresh 'syllabus' or canon of authors (Nietzsche, Freud, Saussure, Proust) and a new register of allusions.

(*A History of English Literature*, Alastair Fowler)

If the idea that identity exists through difference is taken as a starting point, then modernism can begin to be understood in terms of possible distinctions from other literary forms. Modernism is, for example, frequently distinguished from realism,

the dominant mode of the novel from the eighteenth century with the rise of the present day. According to many critics by its attempt to offer up a mirror to the world, its own culturally conditioned processes and assumptions. Modelled on prose forms and journalism, realist writing thus offers a seemingly representative of the author's characters, language, and a spatial-temporal history, it is apparent that the hegemonic form of the novel was challenged in the twentieth century as alternative ways of the world were presented by modernist writers. Realism itself was once a new, innovative mode, authors such as Daniel Defoe (1660–1731) and John Bunyan (1628–1688) providing a different perspective on the previously dominant mode of prose which was parodied in one of the very first novels, *Quixote* (1605–15), and survives in George Orwell's *1984* (1949) to the present day, realism remains the dominant mode for most novelists, but many avant-garde writers have sought to undermine its assumptions. In speaking, the vast majority of attempts to break new modes of representation from the mid-nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century have been termed modernist, and this includes music, painting, film and architecture (and after this period). In poetry, modernism moves to break from the iambic pentameter, to introduce *vers libre*, symbolism and free writing. In prose, it is associated with stream of consciousness, subjectivity in ways more real than the novel, stream of consciousness, perception, emotion, meaning, relation to society through interior monologue, stream of consciousness, tunnelling, defamiliarisation and other terms that will be encountered in the study of Modernist writers therefore struggle

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the dominant mode of the novel from its inception in Britain in the eighteenth century with the rise of bourgeois capitalism to the present day. According to many critics, realism is characterised by its attempt to offer up a mirror to the world, thus disavowing its own culturally conditioned processes and ideological stylistic assumptions. Modelled on prose forms such as historiography and journalism, realist writing thus often presents itself as transparently representative of the author's society and so features characters, language, and a spatial-temporal setting familiar to its contemporary readers. Most importantly for a debate of literary history, it is apparent that the hegemony of realism as the dominant form of the novel was challenged by writers throughout the twentieth century as alternative ways of representing reality and the world were presented by modernists and then postmodernists. Realism itself was once a new, innovative form of writing, with authors such as Daniel Defoe (1660–1731) and Samuel Richardson (1690–1761) providing a different template for fiction from the previously dominant mode of prose writing, the Romance, which was parodied in one of the very first novels, Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605–15), and survives in Gothic and fantasy fiction. To the present day, realism remains the primary favoured style for most novelists, but many avant-garde, innovative, and radical writers have sought to undermine its dominance. Very broadly speaking, the vast majority of attempts to offer alternative modes of representation from the middle of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century have at one time or another been termed modernist, and this applies to literature, music, painting, film and architecture (and to some works before and after this period). In poetry, modernism is associated with moves to break from the iambic pentameter as the basic unit of verse, to introduce *vers libre*, symbolism, and other new forms of writing. In prose, it is associated with attempts to render human subjectivity in ways more real than realism: to represent consciousness, perception, emotion, meaning and the individual's relation to society through interior monologue, stream of consciousness, tunnelling, defamiliarisation, rhythm, irresolution and other terms that will be encountered later in the book. Modernist writers therefore struggled, in Ezra Pound's brief

phrase, to 'make it new', to modify if not overturn existing modes and subjects of representation, partly by pushing them towards the abstract or the introspective, and to express the new sensibilities of their time: in a compressed, condensed, complex literature of the city, of industry and technology, war, machinery and speed, mass markets and communication, of internationalism, the New Woman, the aesthete, the nihilist and the *flâneur*.

The dominant post-war conception of modernism has accentuated these aspects to its key texts; however, emphases in recent studies have moved towards alternative conceptualisations. Instead of the progressive model whereby literary modes eclipse or supersede older ones in a teleological line of development, like Virginia Woolf's gig-lamps symmetrically arranged, there is acknowledgement of, first, styles existing alongside one another in the text, and second, of modernism's involvement in the broader social structures of the period and with the mass movements and popular cultures of modernity. Here, the literary complexion starts to change once the dominant view of a break from previous, or indeed contemporary, forms and cultural practices is questioned, and marginalised voices from the *fin de siècle* and the Empire, as well as voices of those excluded for reasons of gender or sexuality, are placed closer to the centre of modernism's narrative. Also, a critic such as Lawrence Rainey explores the role played by various individuals, such as patrons and collectors, and institutions, such as the academy and the law courts, in initially promoting the avant-garde to a wider reading public, beyond which point literary modernism, whose engagement with popular culture is evident in the works of James Joyce and T. S. Eliot for example, would require the influence of the mass media as well as both 'critical approbation and some degree of commercial viability to ratify its status as a significant idiom' (Rainey 1998: 170). Starting with the little discussed pre-war visits to England of the Italian futurist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Rainey's sociologically oriented *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* reconstructs formative moments in the making of modernism, focusing on the decade after 1912 up to the publication of Joyce's *Ulysses* and Eliot's *The Waste Land* in 1922, and

then Ezra Pound's *Draft of* modernism between the ag universities, seeing it as s geois culture and the com thetics. Most importantly its inclinations away from cultural practices in the w modernism, Rainey sees a cultural institutions than idea of the deluxe edition and *The Waste Land* (both sive patronage), politics H.D. Thus, the significance to 'high modernism' can be extremes as Joyce's interest on the extremely successful But, the wider influence of and the sheer frenzy of c from market forces to mac depictions of modernism.

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then Ezra Pound's *Draft of XVI Cantos* in 1925. Rainey pitches modernism between the age of journalism and the coming of the universities, seeing it as situated between a passing elite bourgeois culture and the coming middle-brow world of media aesthetics. Most importantly, it was ambiguously caught between its inclinations away from and towards contemporaneous common cultural practices in the wider civil society. In his conception of modernism, Rainey sees a greater importance for all kinds of cultural institutions than has previously been acknowledged: the idea of the deluxe edition and *Ulysses*, the rise of the little review and *The Waste Land* (both forms of publication indebted to massive patronage), politics for Pound and 'a coterie politics' for H.D. Thus, the significance of popular and even demotic culture to 'high modernism' can be reacknowledged, from such seeming extremes as Joyce's interest in pornography to Eliot's 1923 essay on the extremely successful comedian and singer Marie Lloyd. But, the wider influence of jazz, art, music, romance, machinery and the sheer frenzy of economic, cultural and social change, from market forces to machines, is increasingly felt in the myriad depictions of modernism.

PLUNGING IN

With regard to literature, modernism is most readily understood through the work of the avant-garde authors who wrote in the decades before and after the turn of the twentieth century. It is a contentious term and should not be discussed without a sense of the literary, historical and political debates that have accompanied its usage. The problems of definition are such that many critics avoid providing one, even though they freely use the term. David Ayers avoids the issue of definition by stating a starkly contrasting problem with regard to *Ulysses*: Joyce's novel is such a touchstone for uses of the term in literature that it has become almost impossible to read it in any terms other than 'modernist', which means reference will be made to its symbolism, its variety of textual forms, and range of methods (see Ayers 2004: 66), and no matter how much contemporary critics try to analyse the novel's content, in terms of gender, nationalism, colonialism and

so on, rather than its form, content and form remain inseparable, and so do, it seems, *Ulysses* and modernism.

One of the first aspects of much modernist writing to strike contemporary readers was the way in which such novels, stories, plays and poems immerse them in an unfamiliar world with little of the orienting preambles and descriptions provided by most nineteenth-century realist writers, such as Jane Austen, Charles Dickens and George Eliot. In other words, modernist writing 'plunges' the reader into a confusing and difficult mental landscape which cannot be immediately understood but which must be moved through and mapped in order to understand its limits and meanings (see Mahaffey 2007). In this Introduction, I will briefly sketch features of this landscape so that some of the contours of modernism can be visible, but I recommend that the reader returns to the Introduction having read the entire book, at which time its broad brushstrokes will be better appreciated with the knowledge accrued from the later chapters.

But before plunging into the terms and the definitions employed by critics, I would like to plunge into a fictional narrative and discuss what is going on at the start of a modernist text which is in some ways exemplary but which would actually be sidelined by some definitions of modernism and by some overviews of modernist writers. Samuel Beckett's *Murphy* was published in 1938, supposedly eight years after modernism started to wane and be replaced by the neo-realism of writers such as Graham Greene, George Orwell, Ernest Hemingway, Rosamond Lehmann and Evelyn Waugh. It is also by a writer who is often cited as the first *postmodernist*. However, the elements of religious scepticism, deep introspection, technical and formal experimentation, cerebral game-playing, linguistic innovation, self-referentiality, misanthropic despair overlaid with humour, philosophical speculation, loss of faith and cultural exhaustion all exemplify the preoccupations of modernism. I shall quote the opening page of the novel, to give a strong flavour of the writing, and then offer a commentary on it.

The sun shone, having no alternative, on the nothing new. Murphy sat out of it, as though he were free, in a mew in West Brompton.

Here for what might have been six months he slept, and put his clothes on and off, in the north-western aspect commanding an unobstructed view of the south-eastern aspect. So other arrangements, for the mew had been built for other purposes, would have to buckle to and start eating and drinking, putting his clothes on and off, in quite a different way.

He sat naked in his rocking-chair of oak, not to crack, warp, shrink, corrode, or creep. It never left him. The corner in which he sat was the sun, the poor old sun in the Virgin. Seven scarves held him in position. Two of them were on his thighs, one on his back, one on his wrists to the strut behind. No other arrangements were possible. Sweat poured off his forehead, but his breath was not perceptible. The eyes, cold and staring, stared up at an iridescence splashed on the wall, shrinking and fading. Somewhere a clock struck between twenty and thirty, became the time, and now entering the mew gave *Quid pro quo*.

These were sights and sounds that he had never seen in the world to which they belonged. He hoped. He wondered dimly what was being cried. Dimly, very dimly, he saw that wares were being cried. Dimly, very dimly, he saw that way because it gave him pleasure! First it pleased his body. Then it set him free. Then it set him free until his body was appeased that he could not be appeased. description in section six. And life in the mew was such pleasure that pleasure was not the end.

When beginning to interpret or deconstruct a text, remember that modernist prose is enormous. It means that it ought to be read with a great deal of reserve for poetry or philosophy. Briefly, the ideas; comic set pieces enact philosophical ideas; a little attempt to relate the extreme situations in the novel to anything the reader can understand.

representing 'normality'. This opening contains many of the features associated with modernist stylistics and preoccupations: a solipsistic mental landscape, an unreliable narrator, psychological and linguistic repetition, an obsession with language, a questioning towards 'reality', uncertainty in a Godless universe, the constraints of convention against the drives of passion and black humour.

A Dubliner in London, *Murphy* is a quite typical Beckett (anti-)hero. This is at least in the sense that he follows Beckett's idea of the human condition and so has a supple mind shackled to an imperfect, cumbersome body: the one a sanctuary to which he wishes to retreat, the other a chaos which he wishes to control. This is one reason he is literally tied up at the opening of the novel, as he attempts to negate the body and escape into his mind by achieving some kind of nirvana through meditative contemplation. For our purposes, this immediately signals a greater interest, typical of modernism, in the workings of the mind than of the body. As discussed below, it is also a starting point for consideration of how the mind works and, in particular, how a mind in extremity works.

As would be common in a modernist narrative, the novel has been read as a search to climb inside the mind, away from the body's needs and wants: to be free from desire. On the superficial level, *Murphy* is a young man with a gull's eyes and a yellow complexion who suffers from violent heart attacks. His girlfriend Celia is a prostitute who is described via a perfunctory list of measurements and passport details at the start of Chapter 2 and yet is the most sympathetically portrayed of all the characters – Beckett calls them puppets – in his novels. It is *Murphy's* predicament that he is to be sought by each of the other characters in the novel while he only wishes to escape from himself. *Murphy* wants to flee the physical world and seek refuge in the indivisible, unextended, pain-free mental world, which is one reason why he later takes a job in a mental asylum. Beckett's interest is in the Cartesian problem of dualism: how do the mind and the body interact? They coexist together like the yolk and albumen sealed within an egg, but no one knows how they are connected. In an attempt to represent this dilemma, Beckett toys

with several theories such as Descartes' connection through the pineal gland, an explanation, related to the issue of free will, of how an individual wills their body to move. Such concerns, though often dismissed as mere preoccupations, exemplify modernist concerns with the mind processes or projects of the individual but which is often alienated from the world.

The novel is also deeply concerned with the question of the universe and with questioning the existence of God, with or without God. The opening of the novel, reminds us that there is a limit to human knowledge (Ecclesiastes 1:9) and also hints at the human will in the universe. The sun has a will of its own. In the second sentence we find *Murphy* is 'tied up though he were free', suggesting that *Murphy* is determined by his nature, driven by the impulses of which he knows very little. The novel has a more literal embodied meaning when we learn that *Murphy* is tied up in a room which is quite possibly a parody of the room in which Beckett famously used to sit on a deckchair in a bare room at Cambridge. The novel is a parody about Beckett's narrator as it does about the narrator, who at most later in the novel is undecided about the length of his stay in Brompton: 'what might have been the first hints that the narrator, though playful, is not going to follow the normal realist descriptions of his world, but will mock them instead.' *Murphy's* condemned mews as a parody of the western aspect.' The final sentence of the novel repeats the round of eating, drinking and mentioned in lines 3 and 4. In the point that, though *Murphy* will indeed be nothing new for

his opening contains many of the features of modernist stylistics and preoccupations: a first-person narrator, an unreliable narrator, psychological analysis, an obsession with language, a questioning of the certainty in a Godless universe, the struggle against the drives of passion and black

Murphy is a quite typical Beckett character in the sense that he follows Beckett's pattern and so has a supple mind shackled to the body: the one a sanctuary to which he retreats from a chaos which he wishes to control, the other is literally tied up at the opening of the novel to negate the body and escape into his ideal world. This kind of nirvana through meditative purposes, this immediately signals a theme of modernism, in the workings of the mind. As discussed below, it is also a starting point for how the mind works and, in particular, how it works.

In a modernist narrative, the novel has its roots inside the mind, away from the physical world. On the superficial level, it is a man with a gull's eyes and a yellow complexion, prone to violent heart attacks. His girlfriend is described via a perfunctory list of details at the start of Chapter 2 and is not fully portrayed of all the characters – but this is typical of his novels. It is Murphy's preoccupation by each of the other characters that he wishes to escape from himself. He wishes to escape from the physical world and seek refuge in the ideal, pain-free mental world, which is one of the main themes of a job in a mental asylum. Beckett's problem of dualism: how do the mind and body coexist together like the yolk and the egg, but no one knows how they are to be reconciled. To represent this dilemma, Beckett toys

with several theories such as Descartes's belief that there is a connection through the pineal gland and also the theological explanation, related to the issue of free will, that whenever the individual wills their body to move, God causes the action to be performed. Such concerns, though flavoured by Beckett's peculiar preoccupations, exemplify modernism's fascination with the way the mind processes or projects a reality which surrounds the individual but which is often alienating and oppressing.

The novel is also deeply concerned with religious explanations of the universe and with questions of what it means to be human with or without God. The opening line of this, Beckett's first novel, reminds us that there is nothing new under the sun (cf. Ecclesiastes 1:9) and also hints at the belief that there is no free will in the universe. The sun has no alternative but to shine, and in the second sentence we find Murphy sitting out of the sun 'as though he were free', suggesting that he, like the sun, is actually determined by his nature, driven by biological and psychological impulses of which he knows very little. This comment on restriction has a more literal embodied relevance in the next paragraph when we learn that Murphy is tied to a chair, a predicament that is quite possibly a parody of the philosopher Wittgenstein who famously used to sit on a deckchair beneath a fan in his otherwise bare room at Cambridge. The third sentence tells us as much about Beckett's narrator as it does about Murphy. This is because the narrator, who at most later times will appear omniscient, is undecided about the length of time Murphy has been at West Brompton: 'what might have been six months' (l. 3). It is one of the first hints that the narrator, who we have already realised is playful, is not going to follow the usual conventions of storytelling, but will mock them instead. So he has little time for the normal realist descriptions of homes and is content to describe Murphy's condemned mews as 'a medium-sized cage of north-western aspect.' The final sentence of the paragraph introduces another of Beckett's favourite techniques: repetition. Lines 8 and 9 repeat the round of eating, drinking, sleeping and dressing mentioned in lines 3 and 4. In this case, the echoing underlines the point that, though Murphy will soon have to move, there will indeed be nothing new for the sun to shine on. This is a

modernist preoccupation with repetitive, cyclical rather than chronological, teleological time which will be discussed later.

The second paragraph immediately matches Murphy's undressed body with the undressed teak of his rocking chair, the perfect vehicle in which to be constantly moving and yet going nowhere. The difference between the two is that Murphy's body is not guaranteed not to 'crack, warp, shrink, corrode, or creak at night' (l. 11). The reader is then once more reminded of nature's unremitting cycles at the level of the cosmos and of animal sexuality, with 'the poor old sun [son] in the virgin again for the billionth time' (l. 13). The extra significance of this is that Beckett substitutes astrology for God as a system of faith for Murphy. The following sentences concerning Murphy's bondage are a typical Beckett set piece in that they contain the detailed but flawed over-explanation of a situation containing permutations. Murphy is tied up with seven scarves: two on his shins, one round his thighs, two at his torso, and one round his wrists. The inadequate or delinquent rather than unreliable narrator leaves the reader with two questions: where is the seventh scarf, and how did Murphy on his own achieve this Houdini-like position, in which his hands are tied and he is restricted to 'the most local movements' (ll. 16-17)? Beckett's points here are that, first, mathematics, the purest science, does not adequately represent the world; for example, try to work out, to as many decimal places as your mind can tolerate, the exact number of weeks in a year by dividing the number of days in a year [365] by the number of days in a week [7]; and, second, that Murphy's mind is always ensnared in and unable to escape from his body, and hence is always 'tied up'. Bringing these two points together provides a clue to why Murphy later calls another character 'Thou surd' (Beckett 1973: 47). A surd is an irrational number, such as the square root of minus one. The mathematical way of recording these imagined figures which exist in theory but not in practice is with the symbol i , which, curiously, is also when capitalised the pronoun used to represent the individual, who is always an irrational and *absurd* figure in Beckett's imagined fiction, where the perverse, neurotic, thought-tormented characters of modernism find their fullest expression.

Murphy sits, sweats and waits for the cuckoo clock to strike the ceiling. A cuckoo clock strikes twenty and thirty and echoes the difference between the capitalist world against which freedom, is a precursor of one philosophical themes: that the a is always constant, though it ma is that life is a closed system, eased, another is made worse. buckets ... one going down to be emptied' (Beckett 1973: 36- theory is that though things cannot get worse either. Things always were' (Beckett 1973: 36 the book, there is 'nothing ne redistribution: quid pro quo. operates on the divine level by r the gospels it is stated that one Jesus was saved and the other o the individual should neither de a balanced if inexplicable and u often wants to draw our attent several of his works, as in *Murph saved*' (1973: 121; from St Aug

The third paragraph tells us distractions breaking into his c from his pleasure, which is to again raises the question of fre freedom of the mind depends u a fact that the narrator, again br tells us we will have to wait u Such metafictional comments modernist techniques. The las was not the word' for the pleas repeated trope in the book (cf. 21), 'not quite the right word'

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 rs of modernism find their fullest

Murphy sits, sweats and watches the sunlight's play on the ceiling. A cuckoo clock strikes the improbable time of between twenty and thirty and echoes the barterer's shout *Quid pro quo!* (one thing in exchange for another). This business cry, signalling the difference between the commercial preoccupations of the capitalist world against which the modernists pitted artistic freedom, is a precursor of one of the novel's major speculative philosophical themes: that the amount of suffering in the world is always constant, though it may change in form. The argument is that life is a closed system, that 'For every symptom that is eased, another is made worse ... Humanity is a well with two buckets ... one going down to be filled, the other coming up to be emptied' (Beckett 1973: 36-7). The supposed comfort of this theory is that though things cannot overall get better they cannot get worse either. Things 'will always be the same as they always were' (Beckett 1973: 36); or, to return us to the start of the book, there is 'nothing new' under the sun, there is only redistribution: *quid pro quo*. Beckett suggests that this also operates on the divine level by reference to the fact that in one of the gospels it is stated that one of the thieves on the cross beside Jesus was saved and the other one damned, the moral being that the individual should neither despair nor presume. This suggests a balanced if inexplicable and unfair universe, to which Beckett often wants to draw our attention in a phrase which occurs in several of his works, as in *Murphy*: 'Remember also one thief was saved' (1973: 121; from St Augustine).

The third paragraph tells us that Murphy does not like such distractions breaking into his consciousness because they detract from his pleasure, which is to 'set him free in his mind', which again raises the question of free will. Murphy believes that the freedom of the mind depends upon the appeasement of the body, a fact that the narrator, again breaking the frame of the narrative, tells us we will have to wait until section six to have described. Such metafictional comments are anticipatory of many post-modernist techniques. The last sentence tells us that 'pleasure was not the word' for the pleasure in Murphy's mind and this is a repeated trope in the book (cf. 'hardly the word' (Beckett 1973: 21), 'not quite the right word' (1973: 39), and 'pleasant was not

the word' (1973: 66)). This is partly a questioning of language's ability to represent the world adequately and is also a questioning of boundaries: can pleasure be pushed so far that it becomes something else, such as pain, which leaves aside the other question as to whether pleasure is felt by the body rather than the mind?

The chapter ends by returning to its beginning: the narrator contemplates 'most things under the moon' while Murphy rests back in his rocking chair: 'Soon his body would be quiet, soon he would be free.' Murphy is eventually freed from his desires, when, while he is seated in his rocking chair, a gas leak is ignited and Murphy at last achieves the oblivion he has sought in a final 'big bang'. It is an ending that is inevitable in a world in which, reminding us of the novel's fatalistic opening sentence, 'all things hobble/limp together for the only possible' (Beckett 1973: 127 and 131). *Murphy* is a very funny but deeply pessimistic novel, and it is entirely appropriate that Murphy's will asks for his burnt remains to be flushed down the toilet in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, 'where their happiest hours have been spent'. It is appropriate to Beckett's sense of life's irony and futility that they will actually be scattered across the floor of a London pub in a brawl.

Having plunged into an in-some-ways-representative modernist piece of writing, and thus offered a microcosmic bottom-up perspective of a segment of modernism through one literary example, I want now to move to the other end of the spectrum of approaches and offer a top-down macrocosmic overview of the terms and critical stances associated with modernism. It is only through the negotiation of these two understandings of modernism, as specific textual examples and as a number of gross cultural movements, that the word itself can become meaningful.

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS: MODERN, MODERNISM, MODERNITY

Modernism is variously argued to be a period, style, genre or combination of the above; but it is first of all a word, one that exists alongside cognate words. Its stem, 'modern-', is a term that, from the latin *modo*, means 'current', and so has a far wider

currency and range of meaning. In the fifth century, for example, the Latin *modernus* was a Christian present in opposition to the classical past, distinguished from Middle English literature is considered to be modern, although it is sometimes used in a different way. More generally, 'modern' has been embraced by the avant-garde, though since the 1960s it has been shifted from meaning 'new' to this sense of the avant-garde, revolutionary side to the modernist coinage 'modernism', and it has appeared when insisting 'It must be modern absolutely).

It is now, however, perhaps more appropriate to speak of a single 'modernism' or 'modernisms' dates back to the 19th century. The term is simply an imposition on a group of unrelated authors and movements, such as imagism and vorticism, which have developed in literary studies a recognition of modernist authors and texts. It has arisen an ever-growing body of work, grounding alternative and other approaches, but also, for example, the Renaissance and, more recently, the Euro-America, whose work has been staked by the assertions, claims, names and their critics. It is not clear what modernism was, but the definition insinuates many implications. It has predominantly been represented by American middle-class terms, and each of these aspects either reflects the elitism of a pantheon of modernist writers or one of a plurality of modernist movements. It is a sufficient currency and investment

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WORDS: MODERN, MODERNITY

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currency and range of meanings than 'modernism'. In the late fifth century, for example, the Latin *modernus* referred to the Christian present in opposition to the Roman past; modern English is distinguished from Middle English; and the modern period in literature is considered to be from the sixteenth century on, although it is sometimes used to describe twentieth-century writing. More generally, 'modern' has been frequently used to refer to the avant-garde, though since the Second World War this sense has been embraced by the term 'contemporary' while 'modern' has shifted from meaning 'now' to 'just now' (Williams 1989). It is this sense of the avant-garde, radical, progressive or even revolutionary side to the modern that was the catalyst for the coinage 'modernism', and it is to this meaning that Rimbaud appealed when insisting 'Il faut être absolument moderne' (One must be modern absolutely).

It is now, however, perhaps both impossible and undesirable to speak of a single 'modernism,' and the practice of referring to 'modernisms' dates back to the 1960s. Some critics argue that the term is simply an imposition, applied after the fact to a small group of unrelated authors and a series of genuine movements such as imagism and vorticism. Undoubtedly, there has developed in literary studies a recognisable but not immutable canon of modernist authors and texts, just as there has more recently arisen an ever-growing body of critics since the 1980s foregrounding alternative and other writers: female authors in particular, but also, for example, the writers of the Harlem Renaissance and, more recently, novelists and poets from outside Euro-America, whose work contests the ground that has been staked by the assertions, claims and practices of the familiar names and their critics. It is consequently invidious to have to say what modernism was, precisely because any history or definition insinuates many implicit exclusions. Modernism has predominantly been represented in white, male, heterosexual, Euro-American middle-class terms, and any of the recent challenges to each of these aspects either reorients the term itself and dilutes the elitism of a pantheon of modernist writers, or introduces another one of a plurality of modernisms. This reveals that there is sufficient currency and investment in the term itself that writers

and critics seek to contest its parameters and scope, its application(s) and meaning(s). Even the assertion that modernism was internationalist (in the sense of European and transatlantic) raises a question mark over the extent to which critics can speak of a 'British' literary modernism, just as in fine art the assumed precedence of continental painters has been questioned in the light of re-examinations of neglected and previously unfashionable British artists from the turn of the century. While the works of Picasso and Matisse have had more impact, there is an alternative history of modern(ist) art to be deduced from paintings such as those of the Camden Town Group and the London Group.

Despite those critics who argue that it is a specious label, the term 'modernism' appears to be here to stay; though most of the points that would have been asserted of it in the 1970s are challengeable. For example, that it is fundamentally Euro-American is open to immediate querying, when it can as persuasively be argued that modernism marked the regeneration of a tired Western artistic tradition by other cultures: African, African-American, Asian, Chinese, and, more generally, diasporic. Similarly, the view that modernist writers simply rejected or broke away from Victorian literature, for example, has been more and more challenged as critics point out connections with rather than departures from the writings of such figures as Robert Browning, Walter Pater, A. C. Swinburne and even Rudyard Kipling.

'Modernist' is a comparatively old word which in the late sixteenth century named a modern person and came by the eighteenth century to denote a follower of modern ways and also a supporter of modern over ancient literature. By contrast, 'modernism' was first used in the early eighteenth century simply to denote trends characteristic of modern times, while in the nineteenth century its meaning encompassed a sympathy with modern opinions, styles or expressions. In the later part of the nineteenth century, 'modernism' referred to progressive trends in the Catholic Church. In literature, it surfaced in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), to denote what he called a general and unwelcomed creeping industrial 'ache of Modernism'. The term also gained wider and earlier use in relation to other arts, but in literary criticism, the context with which this book is

concerned, the expression gain currency – with Robert Pound's study *A Survey of Modernism* – with the conviction that there was a new literary movement in circulation before the Second World War. Pound's 'make it new' was a call to disparate writers such that they might create that 'modernism' is a past constructed and mythologised. It is true that many writers were recognised in the early decades of the twentieth century trends toward radical, innovative writing that would remain were removed.

It was only in the 1920s that the term was widely used as a descriptor of a new literary phase that was beginning. Its literary roots have been traced to the poet and essayist Charles Baudelaire, Flaubert, in the Romantic period, while its culmination occurred after the First World War, by which time it had impacted on all the arts, including Joyce's *Ulysses*, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, *The Garden Party*, May Sarton's *Frean*, and Virginia Woolf's *War and Peace*. The war dates for modernism in British and also US literature. Its end is 1930, 1940, 1950, or even later. A literary reaction, as neo-realism, a traditional art term, it covers movements that proliferated: imagism, surrealism, futurism, and, in writing if not painting, is most particularly complex, its formalism and its 'the new'. Its historical

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concerned, the expression emerged most notably – but failed to
gain currency – with Robert Graves's and Laura Riding's 1927
study *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*. However, it is also true that a
conviction that there was a 'modern movement' came into broad
circulation before the Second World War, and the spirit of Ezra
Pound's 'make it new' was consciously embraced by many and
disparate writers such that, while it is commonplace to maintain
that 'modernism' is a partial version of literary history con-
structed and mythologised long after the fact, it is nonetheless
true that many writers and especially their harshest critics
recognised in the early decades of the twentieth century multiple
trends toward radical, innovative, challenging and experimental
writing that would remain even if the retrospective label itself
were removed.

It was only in the 1960s that the term 'modernist' became
widely used as a description of a generation of writers and of a
literary phase that was both identifiable and in some sense over.
Its literary roots have been said to be in the work of the French
poet and essayist Charles Baudelaire and the novelist Gustave
Flaubert, in the Romantics, or in the 1890s *fin-de-siècle* writers,
while its culmination or apogee arguably occurred before the
First World War, by which point radical experimentation had
impacted on all the arts, or in 1922, the *annus mirabilis* of James
Joyce's *Ulysses*, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Katherine Mansfield's
The Garden Party, May Sinclair's *The Life and Death of Harriett
Frean*, and Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* (see North 1999). Post-
war dates for modernism's high-point make sense in terms of
British and also US literature but, perhaps, not in terms of any
other in Europe. Its end is variously defined, in terms of time, as
1930, 1940, 1950, or even yet to happen, and, in terms of lit-
erary reaction, as neo-realism or postmodernism. As an interna-
tional art term, it covers the many avant-garde styles and
movements that proliferated under the names of expressionism,
imagism, surrealism, futurism, Dadaism, vorticism, formalism
and, in writing if not painting, impressionism. Modernist writ-
ing is most particularly noted for its experimentation, its com-
plexity, its formalism and for its attempt to create a 'tradition of
the new'. Its historical and social background includes the

emergence of the New Woman, the peak and downturn of the British Empire, unprecedented technological change, the rise of the Labour Party, the appearance of factory-line mass production, war in Africa, Europe and elsewhere. Modernism has, therefore, almost universally been considered a literature of not just change but crisis.

'Modernity' is a word first used by Baudelaire in the mid-nineteenth century. In his essay 'The Painter of Modern Life', Baudelaire describes modernity as the fashionable, fleeting and contingent in art, in opposition to the eternal and immutable. In relation to modernism, modernity is considered to describe a way of living and of experiencing life which has arisen with the changes wrought by industrialisation, urbanisation and secularisation; its characteristics are disintegration and reformation, fragmentation and rapid change, ephemerality and insecurity. It involves certain new understandings of time and space: speed, mobility, communication, travel, dynamism, chaos and cultural revolution. This societal shift was differently theorised at the turn of the century by, for example, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber and Ferdinand Tönnies. Durkheim focused on the increased division of labour inherent in modern production, Weber on the disenchantment of a rationalised world, and Tönnies on the gradual move from the interrelations of the close-knit rural community, the *Gemeinschaft*, to the heterodoxy and anonymity of urban society, which he termed the *Gesellschaft* (see the Introduction to Bradbury and McFarlane 1976). The foundations of sociology lie in these attempts to come to terms with changes that were also being processed by the modernists.

The most notable writers on modernity in the first half of the twentieth century were the Frankfurt School of Critical Theorists, such as Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Walter Benjamin. Benjamin's ninth thesis in his 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' provides a famous image of 'the nightmare of history' as the modernists saw it. He describes an 'Angel of History':

His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage

upon wreckage and to stay, awaken the But a storm is blow with such violence storm irresistibly p turned, while the pi is what we call prog

This image complem tus and shored ruins, Franz Kafka, of Eliot tion of the past and moment of potential aesthetic representatio and responses bifurca Le Corbusier, Mayako the primarily conden Eliot, W. B. Yeats, E

More generally, 'mo It has been said to ei sance, or the epoch th entific revolutions o Descartes; it has also the eighteenth-centur mastery of nature and ality has been consid organisation, understa Marshall Berman (19 1500–1800 (when p describe modern life) Revolutions through nineteenth century), world became involv natively, modernity h epoch (Foucault 198 attempt to place hur the centre of everyth



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the word first used by Baudelaire in the mid-19th century. In his essay 'The Painter of Modern Life', he defines modernity as the fashionable, fleeting and in opposition to the eternal and immutable. In the 20th century, modernity is considered to describe a way of experiencing life which has arisen with the processes of industrialisation, urbanisation and secularisation. Modernists are disintegration and reformation, rapid change, ephemerality and insecurity. It is a new understanding of time and space: speed, movement, travel, dynamism, chaos and cultural change. The cultural shift was differently theorised at the turn of the century. For example, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber and Karl Marx focused on the increased division of labour in modern production, Weber on the disenchantment of the world, and Tönnies on the gradual transformation of the close-knit rural community into the heterodoxy and anonymity of urban life. He named the *Gesellschaft* (see the Introduction to the second edition, 1976). The foundations of sociology lie in the changes that came to terms with changes that were also the modernists.

Writers on modernity in the first half of the 20th century were the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, particularly Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Walter Benjamin. Benjamin's ninth thesis in his 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' provides a famous image of 'the nightmare of modernity' which modernists saw it. He describes an 'Angel of

history' looking toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees a single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage

upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.

(Benjamin 1973: 259–60)

This image complements the emerging view of history, as detritus and shored ruins, in the world of Charles Baudelaire and then Franz Kafka, of Eliot and Joyce. Modernity is both the culmination of the past and the harbinger of the future, pinpointing a moment of potential breakdown in socio-cultural relations and aesthetic representation. It is not surprising that artistic reactions and responses bifurcated into the largely celebratory (Marinetti, Le Corbusier, Mayakovsky) and, particularly in the British Isles, the primarily condemnatory or apocalyptic and despairing (T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, T. E. Hulme, D. H. Lawrence).

More generally, 'modernity' is an imprecise and contested term. It has been said to encompass Western history from the Renaissance, or the epoch that began with the seventeenth-century scientific revolutions of Galileo, Hobbes, Newton, Leibniz and Descartes; it has also been argued to have been inaugurated by the eighteenth-century Age of Enlightenment and its drive to a mastery of nature and society through reason, since which rationality has been considered the key to justice, morality, control, organisation, understanding and happiness. One influential critic, Marshall Berman (1983), divides modernity into three phases, 1500–1800 (when people struggled to find a vocabulary to describe modern life), the 1800s (from the American and French Revolutions through the great upheavals across Europe in the nineteenth century), and the 1900s (in which almost the whole world became involved in the process of modernisation). Alternatively, modernity has been said to be an attitude rather than an epoch (Foucault 1986). Above all, it is characterised by the attempt to place humanity and, in particular, human reason at the centre of everything from religion and nature to finance and

science. Modernity describes the rise of capitalism, of social studies and state regulation, of belief in progress and productivity leading to mass systems of industry, institutionalisation, administration and surveillance. Defended by its supporters as a universal endeavour that leads to the gradual emancipation of all human beings, its adversarial critics contend that reason and knowledge are merely used to enslave and control people in alternative ways to premodern society, which employed coercion, religion and 'natural' authority to achieve social domination. One of modernity's staunchest defenders, the critic Jürgen Habermas, argues that 'The project of modernity, formulated in the eighteenth century by the philosophers of the Enlightenment, consisted in their efforts to develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic ... for the rational organization of everyday life' (Habermas 1981: 9). For Habermas, modernity is an incomplete project because it continues to attempt its own self-redefinition through many instances and utterances of identification and projection. But, the counter-argument runs, while the dominance of reason and science has led to material benefit, modernity has not fostered individual autonomy or profitable self-knowledge. It has not provided meaning to the world or to spiritual life, religious or otherwise, perhaps reducing humans merely to rational(ising) animals who are increasingly perceived as more complex and consequently more emotionally, psychologically and technologically dependent. Humanity arguably appears without purpose and is instead merely striving for change and transformation which produce only momentary satisfaction or meaning. Modernity is also associated with the period of European global expansion such that its universalising thrust has been concomitant with and dependent upon near-global systems of subjugation and navigation despite its Eurocentric focus. Suggestions of countermodernities based on colonial or post-colonial models have been made by critics such as Homi Bhabha (1991) and Paul Gilroy (1993) among others.

Modernism has, therefore, frequently been seen as an aesthetic and cultural reaction to late modernity and modernisation. On the one hand, modernist artists kicked against the homogenisation

required by mass systems and conditions of production, ordered by technology, paradoxical if not oppositional positions, fear of the old, nihilism and

PERIODS, GENRES

Modernism is regularly defined as a genre-bound art form located in the years 1900-1945 that it develops from the late nineteenth century, lose its influence in the period in which it was dominant, conversely, most literature is postmodernist. When genre-bound art form and novelty are defined, and Irish figures as well as Coleridge and Laurence Sterne as 'modernist' writing, the spatial or rhythmic, conscious reflexivity of the human subject and reality. Any adequate definition of both views and of the relationship between the national and interdisciplinary of the twentieth century.

Another approach to the representative of the modernist movement, for example, see Whitman, offered what he called 'the following' with the following historicism because something requiring more than the macrocosm of social. It was concerned with that was about itself.

describes the rise of capitalism, of social study, of belief in progress and productivity leads to the gradual emancipation of all human beings. Defended by its supporters as a universal project, critics contend that reason and knowledge enslave and control people in alternative ways, which employed coercion, religion and technology to achieve social domination. One of modernism's defenders, the critic Jürgen Habermas, argues that modernity, formulated in the eighteenth century by philosophers of the Enlightenment, consisted in the development of objective science, universal morality and art according to their inner logic ... for the improvement of everyday life' (Habermas 1981: 9). For Habermas, modernity is an incomplete project because it consists in its own self-redefinition through many instances of identification and projection. But, the modern project, while the dominance of reason and scientific progress has brought material benefit, modernity has not fostered a more profound or profitable self-knowledge. It has not opened up the world or to spiritual life, religious or philosophical, reducing humans merely to rational(ising) beings. Increasingly perceived as more complex and uncertain, emotionally, psychologically and technologically, humanity arguably appears without purpose, merely striving for change and transformation, without any momentary satisfaction or meaning. Modernity, with the period of European global expansion, and the globalising thrust has been concomitant with and has created global systems of subjugation and navigation, with a global focus. Suggestions of countermodernities or post-colonial models have been made by Homi Bhabha (1991) and Paul Gilroy (1993).

Therefore, frequently been seen as an aesthetic project of late modernity and modernisation. On the one hand, artists kicked against the homogenisation

required by mass systems. On the other, they celebrated the new conditions of production, circulation and consumption engendered by technological change (Harvey 1989: 23). There were paradoxical if not opposed trends towards revolutionary and reactionary positions, fear of the new and delight at the disappearance of the old, nihilism and fanatical enthusiasm, creativity and despair.

PERIODS, GENRES, MODELS

Modernism is regularly viewed as either a time-bound or a genre-bound art form. When time-bound, it is often primarily located in the years 1890–1930, with a wider acknowledgement that it develops from the mid-nineteenth century and begins to lose its influence in the mid-twentieth century. This is certainly the period in which most modernist literature was written, but, conversely, most literature written in the period was not modernist. When genre-bound, modernism is associated with innovation and novelty and has been stretched to include such British and Irish figures as John Donne, William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Laurence Sterne: typical aspects to this kind of 'modernist' writing are radical aesthetics, technical experimentation, spatial or rhythmic rather than chronological form, self-conscious reflexivity, scepticism towards the idea of a centred human subject and a sustained inquiry into the uncertainty of reality. Any adequate discussion, however, has to take note of both views and of their meeting point in the intense international and interdisciplinary artistic revolutions around the start of the twentieth century.

Another approach is to attempt to construct a description of the representative features of modernist writing or style (for example, see Whitworth 2007). One critic, Norman Cantor, has offered what he calls a Model of Modernism (Cantor 1988: 35), with the following characteristics. Modernism favoured anti-historicism because truth is not evolutionary and progressive but something requiring analysis. It focused on the micro- rather than the macrocosm, and, hence, the individual more than the social. It was concerned with self-referentiality, producing art that was about itself and texts that were self-contained rather

than representational. It leant towards the disjointed, disintegrating and discordant in opposition to Victorian harmony. Modernism also advocated that an object exists in terms of its function; a house is, therefore, seen as a machine for living in (Le Corbusier) and a poem 'a machine made for words' (William Carlos Williams). It was frequently and unashamedly elitist, in that, for example, modernist art stressed complexity and difficulty and also emphasised that culture had changed in response to the machine age. In terms of sexuality and the family, modernism introduced a new openness with candid descriptions often sympathetic to feminism, homosexuality, androgyny and bisexuality beside a questioning of the constraints of the nuclear family which seemed to hamper the individual's search for personal values. Modernists did not view ethics as superior to art, seeing the latter instead as the highest form of human achievement. If Victorian literature was concerned with morality, modernist writing was concerned with aesthetics. Lastly, Cantor notes a tendency towards feelings of apocalypse and despair following decades of creeping Victorian doubt. In this spirit, modernist texts often focus on social, spiritual or personal collapse and subsume history under mythology and symbolism.

Other oft-noted characteristics are a focus on the city and a championing as well as a fear of technology; technical experimentation allied with radical stylistic innovation; a suspicion of language as a medium for comprehending or explaining the world; and an attack on nineteenth-century stalwarts such as empiricism and rationalism. Above all, however, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, what has come to be called modernism appears retrospectively to have been a wide-ranging and far-reaching series of vigorous and persistent attempts to multiply and disturb modes of representation. Its artistic expansion seemed to follow on from other kinds of growth: scientific, imperial and social. These lucrative material changes were accompanied by individual and collective crises, especially spiritual, which issued in a new literature that was rebellious, questioning, doubtful and introspective but confident and even aggressive in its aesthetic conviction. In 1857, the cultural commentator and poet Matthew Arnold gave a lecture entitled 'On the Modern Element in Literature'. He

described this modern style of life as "freedom, elegance, free activity of the spirit" (Gide, 1957). Fifty years later the author described the opposite: alienation, plight, and disenchantment with Europe.

Modernism can be taken several things, including technological change and nineteenth century experience. Existing models of the world were transformed and Darwin, who respectively social, the individual and Chapter 1 prior to an over cultural genres in Chapter sensibilities to alternative The First World War, and it, brought about the dem the class system was rock Labour Party; beliefs in K were betrayed by the carn archy was challenged as w and the suffrage movement of the war itself, the effect overstated. It resulted in t submarines, aeroplanes, po 75 miles, and produced m and an additional 5 mill millions of war-related i such a scale, it became abs dignity in art, or blithely The war produced a de teleological understanding severing event that show teenth-century rationalism war was a defining momer vidual, such that the fractu shell shock seemed to repr

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 -n the Modern Element in Literature'. He

described this modern style in terms of repose, confidence, tol-
 -erance, free activity of the mind, reason and universals (Arnold
 1857). Fifty years later the avant-garde of literature expressed the
 opposite: alienation, plight, chaos, unreason, depression and a
 disenchantment with European culture.

Modernism can be taken as a response by artists and writers to
 several things, including industrialisation, urban society, war,
 technological change and new philosophical ideas. Because the
 nineteenth century experienced a spreading disillusionment with
 existing models of the individual and the social, the Western
 world was transformed and reinterpreted by Marx, Freud and
 Darwin, who respectively changed established notions of the
 social, the individual and the natural, as will be discussed in
 Chapter 1 prior to an overview of their effects on literary and
 cultural genres in Chapter 2. Imperialism had exposed European
 sensibilities to alternative cultures, ethics and social structures.
 The First World War, and the years immediately before and after
 it, brought about the demise of many institutions and beliefs:
 the class system was rocked by the rise of trade unions and the
 Labour Party; beliefs in King and Country, patriotism and duty
 were betrayed by the carnage of the war; the strength of patri-
 archy was challenged as women went to work outside the home
 and the suffrage movement gained hold. In terms of the trauma
 of the war itself, the effect on modern consciousness cannot be
 overstated. It resulted in the invention of new weapons, such as
 submarines, aeroplanes, poison gas and cannons with ranges over
 75 miles, and produced more than 33 million military casualties,
 and an additional 5 million civilian deaths, not counting the
 millions of war-related influenza deaths. With devastation on
 such a scale, it became absurd to celebrate noble ideas like human
 dignity in art, or blithely to assert a belief in human progress.
 The war produced a deep distrust of optimistic secular or
 teleological understandings of history and seemed a climactic,
 severing event that showed conclusively the failures of nine-
 teenth-century rationalism. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, the
 war was a defining moment in terms of both society and the indi-
 vidual, such that the fracturing of minds that came to be known as
 shell shock seemed to represent in miniature what was happening

to societies and nations, as much of the world went to war, Europe was torn apart, and Russia was thrown into revolution.

Technological changes meant that modernism was an art of a rapidly transforming world of industrial development, mechanisation, urbanisation, secularisation and mass forms of social interaction. By 1900, there were on the planet eleven cities with populations of over 1 million. London and New York stood at over 5 million people, while Paris had 3 million inhabitants and Berlin 2 million. At the end of the nineteenth century, there were several key areas of technological advancement whose importance has also to be appreciated: motor power (internal combustion engine, diesel engine, steam turbine); fuel (electricity, oil and petroleum as new power sources); transport (automobile, motor bus appeared in London in 1905, aeroplane, tractor); communication (telephone, typewriter, tape machine – all leading to modern office organisation); synthetic materials (chemical industry was revolutionised, man-made fibres, plastics). Also, in 1895, modern physics began with the use of X-rays, the discovery of the radioactive properties of uranium and the initial work with radium; in 1897 electrons were detected for the first time, and the quantum theory of energy was proposed in 1900. Albert Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity appeared in 1905, and when his theories of a fourth dimension appeared a decade later, the accepted picture of the physical universe, which had been fixed by the 1884 Prime Meridian Conference which enshrined the universal day with Greenwich as its zero point, was fundamentally altered. Such changes created modern living, which was now about distance, speed, consumption, communication and mechanisation. Most famously, Marinetti openly celebrated change in 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism':

We say that the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed. A racing car whose hood is adorned with great pipes, like serpents of explosive breath – a roaring car that seems to ride on grapeshot – is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace* ... Time and Space died yesterday. We already live in the absolute because we have created eternal, omnipresent speed.

(Cahoon 1996: 187)

There was also a new perception of art. The previous dominant modes had been verisimilitude and realism. By contrast, modernism was a movement towards increased sophistication, profound introversion, technical disavowal of representationalism. In music, modernist symphonies of the nineteenth century progressively undermined realism. Impressionism, expressionism, cubism, atonality, Dadaism, futurism and surrealism presented a different way of viewing the world, spearheaded a rejection of several central tenets of realism, such as a dependable narrative, a stable self; history as a progressive line; and a world which advocated reform not radical change. It was all narrative strands, or 'closure'.

Modernism can also be discussed in terms of its critical reformulations. I have mentioned its reaction to mass culture and to feminism, but, in its reactionary aspects, it also responded to mass culture and to feminism upon a masculinist elitism. This is evident in the pronouncements, in fiction and in criticism, of the time, and it also describes the approach to modernism until recently. As a result, literature was increasingly perceived as being therefore, supposedly outside of what was beginning to be seen as a social world that had to be assessed and regulated. What had been considered suitable for the early 1900s it was more and more being an escapist amusement, a way of behaviour and define national identity. The 'world' became colonised by various didactic interests: the *Times Literary Supplement*, the 'World's Classics' series of World's Classics Press, the Nobel Prize for Literature, the creation of the English Association, the essential role English literature

ations, as much of the world went to war, part, and Russia was thrown into revolution. Changes meant that modernism was an art of a new world of industrial development, mechanisation, secularisation and mass forms of social organisation. By 1900, there were on the planet eleven cities with over 1 million. London and New York stood at the top, while Paris had 3 million inhabitants and so on. At the end of the nineteenth century, there were areas of technological advancement whose value was so to be appreciated: motor power (internal combustion, diesel engine, steam turbine); fuel (electricity, petroleum as new power sources); transport (the motor bus appeared in London in 1905, aeroplane, wireless telegraph, telephone, typewriter, tape machine – modern office organisation); synthetic materials (plastic was revolutionised, man-made fibres, plastics); science (in 1905, modern physics began with the use of X-rays, discovery of the radioactive properties of uranium and radium; in 1897 electrons were detected for the first time; the quantum theory of energy was proposed in 1900; Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity appeared in 1905; his theories of a fourth dimension appeared in 1907). The accepted picture of the physical universe, which was set at the 1884 Prime Meridian Conference which established the day with Greenwich as its zero point, was changed. Such changes created modern living, modernity, about distance, speed, consumption, communication, modernisation. Most famously, Marinetti openly declared in 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism':

The world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty, the beauty of speed. A racing car whose hood is adorned with many grilles like serpents of explosive breath – a roaring car that seems to ride on grapeshot – is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace* and *Space* died yesterday. We already live in the future. We have created eternal, omnipresent speed.

(Cahoone 1996: 187)

There was also a new perception of reality and the function of art. The previous dominant modes had been a poetics of mimesis, verisimilitude and realism. By contrast, modernism marked a movement towards increased sophistication, studied mannerism, profound introversion, technical display, self-scepticism and anti-representationalism. In music, modernists responded to the lush symphonies of the nineteenth century with atonalism; in art, they progressively undermined realism in movements like post-impressionism, expressionism, cubism, symbolism, imagism, vorticism, Dadaism, futurism and surrealism (see Chapter 2). Each presented a different way of viewing reality. In fiction, new writers spearheaded a rejection of several of the fundamentals of classic realism, such as a dependable narrator; the depiction of a fixed, stable self; history as a progressive linear process; bourgeois politics, which advocated reform not radical change; and the tying up of all narrative strands, or 'closure'.

Modernism can also be discussed in terms of its exclusions and its critical reformulations. I have mentioned its Eurocentric bias, but, in its reactionary aspects, it has also been characterised as a response to mass culture and to feminisation, and thus as resting upon a masculinist elitism. This construction chimes with many of the pronouncements, in fiction and in essays, by male writers of the time, and it also describes the character of much criticism on modernism until recently. Around the turn of the century, literature was increasingly perceived as a 'profession' and as, therefore, supposedly outside of women's domestic sphere, and it was beginning to be seen as a serious academic discipline, one that had to be assessed and regularised. Previously, literary study had been considered suitable for women and not for men, but in the early 1900s it was more and more thought that instead of being an escapist amusement, literature could teach codes of behaviour and define national identity. Consequently, the literary 'world' became colonised by various benign commercial and didactic interests: the *Times Literary Supplement*, the Oxford University Press' series of World's Classics and the Everyman imprint, the Nobel Prize for Literature (founded in 1901), and the creation of the English Association (1907) to establish the essential role English literature should play in British culture.

This growing emphasis on a masculine national culture culminated in the setting up in 1910 of the Academic Committee, a coterie of male writers gathered together with the aim of establishing all that was best and most important in English literature. It included Thomas Hardy, W. B. Yeats and Joseph Conrad and at times, constituted a dining and debating club which was to a degree set upon establishing a virile, manly English literature. One of the Committee's conclusions was that Victorian literature had been too feminine and moralistic, and that writers such as George Eliot, whose reputation has never been lower, had helped back the English novel in comparison with its European equivalents. Much of this can be easily read as a reaction to the rise of the suffragette movement and its equivalent in writing, the *New Woman*, against whom Kipling composed 'The Female of the Species', Henry James created Henry Ransom in *The Bostonians* and Edmund Gosse railed in 'The Decay of Literary Taste'.

(Ledger 1997: 177–98). Since the 1980s, modernist writing has been questioned and broadened, in terms of both its authors and its poetics. For example, writers such as Katherine Mansfield, Mina Loy, Dorothy Richardson, Sylvia Warner and Charlotte Mew have been added to Virginia Woolf's token inclusion in the modernist canon, which was previously summarised as *The Making of 1914: T.S. Eliot and Early Modernism* or *The Pound Era*, in the titles of well-known books (replied to in Scott's *Refiguring Modernism: The Women of 1928*). Critics such as Alice Jardine (1985) and Rachel Blau DuPlessis (1985) have also registered the commonality between modernist writing and *écriture féminine*, irregular, fluid and experimental 'feminine' writing theorised by French feminist critics such as Julia Kristeva and Hélène Cixous (see Moi 1985).

However, claims by such critics as Andreas Huyssen that there is a 'powerful masculinist mystique' explicit in modernism seem too passive in their acceptance of the self-definition embarked upon by certain male writers and critics. Huyssen suggests that even more than an exclusion of women (for example, Jean Rhys, Elizabeth Bowen, Mary Butts) in established modernist criticism, there is a celebration of maleness, a phallic triumphalism which informs the 'movement', and this has often characterised the canon

celebrated by critics of US literature ever, have sought to reconstruct the mentation and newness of the period claims of a literary elite as the avant-garde. It included Thomas Hardy, W. B. Yeats and Joseph Conrad and an inclusive apprehension of challenges to formal or social and political norms. One of the Committee's conclusions was that Victorian literature had been too feminine and moralistic, and that writers such as George Eliot, whose reputation has never been lower, had helped back the English novel in comparison with its European equivalents. Much of this can be easily read as a reaction to the rise of the suffragette movement and its equivalent in writing, the *New Woman*, against whom Kipling composed 'The Female of the Species', Henry James created Henry Ransom in *The Bostonians* and Edmund Gosse railed in 'The Decay of Literary Taste'.

From these divergent viewpoints, chapters, on influences, genres and this book sketch a syncretic picture of modernism, writers and theorists of modernism, using the key formal, thematic and range of influential fiction and poetry. Chapter 1 explains the influence of Freud, Nietzsche, Saussure and Eliot. Chapter 2 illuminates the radical literary changes that took place in the twentieth centuries. Chapter 3 then analyses modernist writers at the end of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Chapter 2 illuminates the radical literary changes that took place in the twentieth centuries. Chapter 3 then analyses modernist writers at the end of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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celebrated by critics of US literature in particular. Others, however, have sought to reconstruct the idea of the literary experimentation and newness of the period by avoiding the hegemonic claims of a literary elite as the avant-garde in favour of a more inclusive apprehension of challenges to accepted aesthetic and formal or social and political norms coming from various underprivileged or embattled quarters. There has also been greater emphasis on the texts of Caribbean and African-American literary modernism since studies like Houston A. Baker's key 1989 tract *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance*. These critiques contrast the traditional picture of modernism as an urban movement, centred on Paris, London, New York, etc., with newer emphases on, *inter alia*, the black Atlantic (see Paul Gilroy), modernism in anti-colonial resistance movements (see Boehmer), new mythologies of the Caribbean in writers such as Wilson Harris and Kamau Brathwaite (see Pollard).

From these divergent viewpoints, the three highly structured chapters, on influences, genres and texts, that form the rest of this book sketch a syncretic picture while introducing the precursors, writers and theorists of modernism as well as summarising the key formal, thematic and aesthetic preoccupations of a range of influential fiction and poetry written by avant-garde authors. Chapter 1 explains the impetus that Darwin, Marx, Freud, Nietzsche, Saussure and Einstein gave to experimental writers at the end of the nineteenth and the start of the twentieth centuries. Chapter 2 illuminates the pan-European origins of the radical literary changes that occurred in the novel, poetry and drama, as well as the many revolutions in art and film. Chapter 3 then analyses modernist elements in the texts of familiar writers such as Joyce, Woolf, Mansfield, Lawrence, Yeats, Eliot and Conrad, as well as in the work of less commonly studied authors such as Charlotte Mew and Rebecca West.

To develop a reasonable grasp of the subject, there is, of course, no substitute for reading modernist texts themselves, but, from a critical standpoint, the best follow-up to the introduction offered here is to read one of the many edited books of manifestos, extracts and documents that have been published on modernism, of which I would particularly recommend the valuable anthology

of important background material by Kolocotroni, Goldman and Taxidou (1998), and, for a more recent but very different assembly as the effects on British life are Rainey (2005).

INTERNATIONAL ANGLOPHONE MODERNISMS

The broader phenomenon of transatlantic modernism pivots on what Malcolm Bradbury has called 'dangerous pilgrimages': the heavy traffic between the old and new worlds, whose dangers and attractions would be repeatedly analysed by myriad writers (such as Henry James, Edith Wharton and Ford Madox Ford). More important here is the fact that American writers came to Europe to help revivify language and literature. Before Pound and Eliot came to Britain, Gertrude Stein came to Paris in 1903, and, for thirty years, turned her quiet courtyard apartment on the rue de Fleurus, adjacent to the cafés of Montparnasse, into 'the great hub of cosmopolitan aesthetic activity' (Bradbury 1995: 253). Paris itself burnt into life in the pre-war years as, *inter alia*, Diaghilev and Stravinsky, Proust and Gide, Picasso and Apollinaire took centre stage. Stein herself came into her own at this time but entered the prime of her influence in the 1920s when every visiting American writer had to stop and sojourn at her studio. As C. Barry Chabot notes, American literature would have been both very different and much poorer if Gertrude Stein had not taken up residence in Paris and 'made her home a shrine to everything that was culturally up-to-date' (Chabot 1997: 10).

It is also true, however, that prior to the vogue for Paris London had drawn more than its fair share of writers, and it continued as a cultural centre to attract artists through the decades up to the Second World War. After Henry James and George Bernard Shaw came to London in 1876, the list of exiles and émigrés includes Conrad, Pound, Eliot, Mansfield, H.D., Wilde, Olive Schreiner and many others. London also served as a magnet for those within Britain who were fighting feminist and socialist causes, making the influx to the capital from around the country and the world one of the most important stimuli to a revolution in culture that would probably have been matched by

a revolution in politics had not the effects on British life are argued, the coming together of so articulate representatives of count the empire produced 'the readiness traditions, [and] doctrines of the 178). Edward Said goes further. He

was necessary to 'deal with' a new occasioned by texts and artefacts for symbol of this is the shock not of mask with all that it signified to transgression, marking a primal moment painting *Les Demoiselles D'Avignon*

An example of transatlantic collaboration (1966), a radical poet whose involvement Ezra Pound, modern art and futurism produced poems from 1910 onwards, notoriety, about 'Joyce's Ulysses', 'Ineffectual Marriage' or 'Parturition'

a woman's contractions in labour. and violent imagery in poems such as editors to declare: 'To reduce erotic and to do so without verbs, sentences more offensive' (Scott 1990: 233).

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a revolution in politics had not the Great War intervened. As far
as the effects on British life are concerned, as Lyn Innes has
argued, the coming together of some of the most gifted and
articulate representatives of countries and cultures throughout
the empire produced 'the readiness to question the assumptions,
traditions, [and] doctrines of the English ruling class' (2002:
178). Edward Said goes further. He argues that modernist form
was *necessary* to 'deal with' a new sense of Europe's vulnerability
occasioned by texts and artefacts from the Empire. The familiar
symbol of this is the shock not of the new but of the African
mask with all that it signified to Europe of primitivism and
transgression, marking a primal moment of modernism in Picasso's
painting *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907).

An example of transatlantic connections is Mina Loy (1882–
1966), a radical poet whose involvement with Gertrude Stein and
Ezra Pound, modern art and futurism, free verse and free love,
produced poems from 1910 onwards that gained a contemporary
notoriety, about 'Joyce's Ulysses', 'Brancusi's Golden Bird', 'The
Ineffectual Marriage' or 'Parturition' – a poem whose form mimics
a woman's contractions in labour. Her characteristic cynical wit
and violent imagery in poems such as 'Love Songs' led one of her
editors to declare: 'To reduce eroticism to the sty was an outrage,
and to do so without verbs, sentence structure, punctuation, even
more offensive' (Scott 1990: 233). Loy's influence on modernism
has often been underestimated, as has the role of the feminist
movement on changing aesthetics more generally. For instance, it
is fundamental to the course of imagism's development that on
15 June 1913, Dora Marsden and Harriet Shaw Weaver produced
the first edition of their paper, the *New Freewoman*. They entrusted
Ezra Pound with soliciting literary contributions, and he
duly accepted work from Wyndham Lewis, Robert Frost, Wil-
liam Carlos Williams, Amy Lowell, H.D., Richard Aldington
and other imagists. From the start of 1914, the *New Freewoman*
was transformed into *The Egoist*, the journal which was to last for
a year longer than the war and, after serialising James Joyce's *A
Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in its first two years, was to
introduce as its assistant editor, in 1917, an American expatriate
called T. S. Eliot (Ross 1967: 60–70).

Considering Anglo-American intersections, a further dimension to modernism's experimentation particularly crucial to the US context is noted by Michael North:

Writers as far from Harlem as T. S. Eliot and Gertrude Stein imagined themselves as black, spoke in a black voice, and used the voice to transform the literature of their time. In fact, three of the accepted landmarks of literary Modernism in English depend on racial ventriloquism of this kind: Conrad's *Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, Stein's 'Melanchtha', and Eliot's *The Waste Land*. If the racial status of these works is taken at all seriously, it seems that linguistic mimicry and racial masquerade were not just shallow fads but strategies without which modernism could not have arisen.

(North 1994: Preface)

In his first sentence, North is alluding to the Harlem Renaissance, a term that has come to be used to refer to a range of artists, musicians and writers of the 1920s, including Claude McKay (1890–1948), Nella Larsen (1891–1964), Langston Hughes (1902–67), Countee Cullen (1903–64), and Jean Toomer (1894–1967), who were some of the first African-American cultural and social commentators to engage the idea of the modern. Influential early book-length publications were the British Jamaican poet Claude McKay's new black urban poetry in *Harlem Shadows* (1922), which Michael North says in *The Dialect of Modernism* inaugurates the movement (North 1994: 8), and Jean Toomer's fragmented, impressionistic, mixed-genre prose in *Cane* (1923). The heyday was the 1920s, but important works relevant to the movement were published up to 1940, and one of the most important writers of the 1930s was Zora Neale Hurston (1901–60), whose anthropological analysis of her ethnicity influenced the writers of the Harlem Renaissance as well as many other black authors.

Alain Locke's anthology *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (1925) was a key publication that included nearly all those who would later be seen as a part of the Renaissance. However, in his influential book *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance*, Houston A. Baker Jr locates the beginning of African-American modernism

in a speech by Booker T. Washington which was given as the opening address where he 'offered guiding premises and would be expanded in his autobiography. The extensive use of rhetoric and disti are then what come to define African Baker, but the Renaissance was also hig ment with issues such as black pov American identity. More recently, it terms of the relationship between mo that, when Jean Toomer's novel *Cane* (1 Waste Land (1922) and Claude McKa allusions to Hemingway's *The Sun A American texts may be shown to repeatedly. Baker in fact says that*

Modernist 'anxiety' in Afro-American fear of replicating outmoded forms of formalisms. Instead, the anxiety of Moore in the first instance, by the black speaker employing audible extant forms in which he is so wonderfully and re-soundingly away from

Another key influence on African-Renaissance was W. E. B. DuBois (his tract *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) 'double-consciousness' in white society line of its second chapter: 'The problem is the problem of the color-line' (1903). DuBois founded the National Association of Colored People, and he wished directed towards political ends, but to channel their efforts that way or propaganda. The broader interest of inspired many Harlem writers, while DuBois represented wanted a general improvement and social conscience.

lo-American intersections, a further dimension of experimentation particularly crucial to the work of Michael North:

From Harlem as T. S. Eliot and Gertrude Stein themselves as black, spoke in a black voice, and used that in the literature of their time. In fact, three of the works of literary Modernism in English depend on a form of this kind: Conrad's *Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, Pound's *Mauberley*, and Eliot's *The Waste Land*. If the racial status of the poet is taken at all seriously, it seems that linguistic mimicry and parody were not just shallow fads but strategies of modernism could not have arisen.

(North 1994: Preface)

Michael North is alluding to the Harlem Renaissance, which has come to be used to refer to a range of writers of the 1920s, including Claude McKay, Nella Larsen (1891–1964), Langston Hughes (1897–1967), and Jean Toomer (1894–1967). Some of the first African-American cultural and literary figures to engage the idea of the modern. Influential publications were the British Jamaican poet's new black urban poetry in *Harlem Shadows* (1930). Michael North says in *The Dialect of Modernism* (North 1994: 8), and Jean Toomer's novelistic, mixed-genre prose in *Cane* (1923). The 1920s, but important works relevant to the period published up to 1940, and one of the most influential of the 1930s was Zora Neale Hurston (1891–1960). A sociological analysis of her ethnicity influenced the Harlem Renaissance as well as many other

anthology *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (1925), a publication that included nearly all those who were considered as a part of the Renaissance. However, in his book *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance*, Houston Baker, at the beginning of African-American modernism

in a speech by Booker T. Washington on 18 September 1895, which was given as the opening address at an Atlanta Exposition where he 'offered guiding premises and discursive strategies' that would be expanded in his autobiography *Up from Slavery* (1901). The extensive use of rhetoric and distinctive forms of expression are then what come to define African-American modernism for Baker, but the Renaissance was also highly notable for its engagement with issues such as black poverty, racism and African-American identity. More recently, it has been noted how, in terms of the relationship between modernisms, it can be argued that, when Jean Toomer's novel *Cane* (1923) alludes to Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) and Claude McKay's 'Home to Harlem' has allusions to Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), African-American texts may be shown to 'signify' upon white texts repeatedly. Baker in fact says that

Modernist 'anxiety' in Afro-American culture does not stem from a fear of replicating outmoded forms or of giving way to bourgeois formalisms. Instead, the anxiety of Modernist influence is produced, in the first instance, by the black spokesperson's necessary task of employing audible extant forms in ways that move clearly *up*, masterfully and re-soundingly away from slavery.

(Baker 1987: 101)

Another key influence on African-American writing and the Renaissance was W. E. B. DuBois (1868–1963), and especially his tract *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), with its idea of black 'double-consciousness' in white society and the famous opening line of its second chapter: 'The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line' (DuBois 1994: 9). In 1909, DuBois founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and he wished African-American art to be directed towards political ends, but most of the authors declined to channel their efforts that way or see their works in terms of propaganda. The broader interest of the period in the primitive inspired many Harlem writers, while the intellectual community DuBois represented wanted a greater emphasis on economic improvement and social conscience.

Considering Locke's *The New Negro* the key manifesto of the Harlem Renaissance (1882–1961), Langston Hughes and other modernists, Simon Gikandi concludes: 'one can see how deeply concerned with social and cultural blackness existed both inside and outside the country. Chabon's work is a product of the dominant notions of the Modernist aesthetic. For one, the contestation of modernism and its insistence on the newness of the Negro echoed Baudelaire's experimentation and definition of Modernism as the art of the fleeting and their with history. Such a view of modernism (Gikandi 1997: 161) Locke himself declared that Harlem modernism have also occupied the same role to play for the New Negro as Dublin has had to have looked at the view of the New Ireland or Prague for the New Czechoslovakia' (Locke 1991: 17). Locke saw a new psychology and a new spirit at work while many critics see the texts of many African-American writers, and it is this that is perhaps by disillusion at the interior focus of black modernism with that of traditional Anglo-American modernism. Gikandi argues for an 'experimental modernism' environment.

Explaining his desire to put the Harlem Renaissance in the internationalist movement in the mainstream of discussion about modernism, Baker says that for an 'Afro-American student of literature like me', it is difficult to see the eclecticism of the modernist intimacy either in the modernists' hostility to *civilization* that, as Havelock [1861–1934], A. D. Nivedita [Margaret Eliot] and prototypical form, is exclusively Western, preeminently bourgeois, and optically white' (Baker 1987: 6). However, in partial agreement with Baker, Gikandi argues that high modernism, with its ideological emphases, from the critique of civilisation to the privileging of the bourgeois subject, might be said to be in tension with the drive in the Harlem Renaissance for a new 'black modernity' (Gikandi 1997: 161).

the transformative power of civilization and progress and its effect on the collective character of the masses. But this radical modernism conceals, I believe, an identity of means. In other words, as Boehmer, experimental modernism set out to deploy the aesthetic ideology of modernism as 'a nexus of power' to affirm and sustain what we may call the incomplete project of 'black modernity'.

(Gikandi 1997: 161)

This identity of means in some ways has helped to reorient the discussion of Anglo- and especially American modernism away from the Postcolonial. Its conventionally heavy accent on largely apolitical concerns, modernism outside of its common with several of the authors above, C. Barry Chabon's white phenomenon in his 1997 book *Writers for the Nation* argues that American modernism is restricted, and especially modernists (including Willa Cather, Allen Tate (1899–1979), James Joyce, the works of writers

ke's *The New Negro* the key manifesto of black modernism. Gikandi concludes: 'one can see how advocates of modernism existed both inside and outside the dominant Modernist aesthetic. For one, the continuous awareness of the Negro echoed Baudelaire's definition of modernism as the art of the fleeting and the new.' (Locke 1968: 1) Locke himself declared that Harlem 'has the look of the New Negro as Dublin has had for the look of the New Czechoslovakia' (Locke 1968: 1). The new psychology and a new spirit at work in the work of the African-American writers, and it is this that aligns the work of black modernism with that of traditional modernism.

The desire to put the Harlem Renaissance into the context of the discussion about modernism, Baker says that for a student of literature like me, it is difficult 'to find the modernists' hostility to *civilization* that, in its exclusively Western, preeminently bourgeois, character' (Baker 1987: 6). However, in partial disavowal, Gikandi argues that high modernism's rejection of the bourgeois subject, from the critique of civilisation to the rejection of the bourgeois subject, might be said to stand the Harlem Renaissance for

the power of civilization and progress and its evocative character of the masses. But this radical difference, in other words, 'black modernism' is not to deploy the aesthetic ideology of modernism to sustain what we may call the incomplete project of

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modernism in some ways has helped to reorient disavowal especially American modernism away from its heavy accent on largely apolitical concerns. In the work of the authors above, C. Barry Chabot in *Writing for the Nation* argues that American modernism, from William S. Burroughs to Allen Tate (1899–1979), Jessie

Fauset (1882–1961), Langston Hughes and Wallace Stevens) were deeply concerned with social values, community and the political life of the country. Chabot and others have thus helped to deflect analyses of modernism away from the more traditional emphases on experimentation and artistic innovation towards an engagement with history. Such reconceptualisations of Anglo-American modernism have also occurred alongside non-Eurocentric studies that have looked at the work of writers inventing new literatures outside of the West.

While many critics see the aesthetic revolutions of modernism shaped by disillusion at the failure of imperialism, Elleke Boehmer argues for an 'expanded picture of a globalized and constellated modernism' enveloping the modernist-inflected writings of nationalist movements in the empire's outer regions:

the eclecticism of the 1900s Bengal art movement pioneered by E. B. Havell [1861–1934], Abanindranath Tagore [1871–1951], and Sister Nivedita [Margaret Elizabeth Noble, 1867–1911]; the Jamaican Claude McKay's 1910s articulations both in Caribbean patois and standard English; the atmospheric 1920s poetry of the Australian Ken Slessor [1901–71] or the Fauvist paintings of his compatriot Margaret Preston [1875–1963]; and the Eliot-influenced progressive Hindi poetry of Ajneya [1911–87] and Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh [1917–64] in the 1940s and 1950s.

(Boehmer 2002: 175)

For Boehmer, experimental writing can be seen in a post-colonial context as 'a nexus of uneven developments' in which it is emphasised that modernism was shaped by global influences and modernist self-scrutiny is understood to have taken place in a period of imperial expansion and colonial contact.

Though Boehmer argues for a broader understanding of experimental literature of the period in her book *Empire, the National and the Postcolonial, 1890–1920: Resistance in Interaction*, literary modernism outside of the Harlem Renaissance remains a largely white phenomenon in critical studies – but only if one retains a restricted, and especially a time-bound, notion of modernism. The works of writers such as Wilson Harris, from Guyana, and

Gabriel Okara, from Nigeria, have a great deal in common with Caribbean modernist forms and styles though these authors use them for different ends in non-European contexts, while Latin American modernism with colonial domination and Caribbean writing has been said to use the language of modernism for anti-colonial struggle (see Iris Zavala's *Modernism and Culture*, 1992). Indeed, in *The Black Jacobins* (1968) the influential critic C. L. R. James made this claim long ago through aesthetics, writer Aimé Césaire, who uses Eliot's vision of a unified human history to exorcise enslavement 'The Dry Salvages' to found Negritude (James 1980: 10). Thus, a concept of history, a parallel to Charles Pollard thus goes on to talk about the 'New Caribbean Modernisms' of the Caribbean in writers such as Wilson Harris and Kamau Brathwaite.

Caribbean writers such as Harris and Césaire have openly admitted those gestures of control and modernist linguistic strategies and formal approaches, and challenge colonial history and the realignment of modernist aesthetics has altered modernism's relationship to history, colonialism and political systems. However, the convergence of modernism from the margins of the modern world system inevitably forces us to question previous definitions of the term itself and to recognise its variegated genealogies and contradictory categorisations (Gikandi 1992: 254). Noting that the key foundational work of Caribbean modernism were written outside the West Indies (as Césaire's *Cahier d'un Retour au Pays Natal*, Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, C. L. R. James's *The Black Jacobins*, George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin*, V. S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr Biswas*), Gikandi also argues that exile for Caribbean modernists was 'as an instrument for transcending the prison-house of colonialism'. It is also significant that in both a psychological and an ideological sense, exile would be adopted as an imaginary zone distanced from the values and structures of colonialism; it would hence be posited as the space of departure for ... anticolonial discourse' (Gikandi 1992: 34).

Considering a generation of diverse writers from George Lamming (1927-) and Sam Selvon (1923-94) to Wilson Harris (1921-) and Paule Marshall (1929-), Gikandi argues that Caribbean as in Anglo-American literature: 'exile and the displacement'.

Caribbean modernism has evolved out of an anxiety toward the colonizing structure in general and its history, language and ideology; exile generates nationalized Caribbean spaces'.

kara, from Nigeria, have a great deal in common with the forms and styles though these authors use them in different contexts, while Latin American Caribbean writing has been said to use the poeticism for anti-colonial struggle (see Iris Zavala's *Colonial Culture*, 1992). Indeed, in *The Black Jacobins* (1938) the critic C. L. R. James made this claim long ago. James, who uses Eliot's vision of a unified human time, 'Salvages' to found Negritude (James 1980: 40). Ballard thus goes on to talk about the 'New World' of the Caribbean in writers such as Wilson Harris and Brathwaite.

Writers such as Harris and Césaire have openly adopted linguistic strategies and formal approaches, and such a use of modernist aesthetics has altered modernism's relationship to history, colonialism and political systems. Simon Gikandi maintains 'that a consideration of modernity and modernity at the margins of the modern world system inevitably questions previous definitions of the term itself and its variegated genealogies and contradictory categories' (1992: 254). Noting that the key foundational works of Caribbean modernism were written outside the West Indies (Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism*, Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, C. L. R. James's *The Black Jacobins*, George Lamming's *Exile and the Politics of the Mind*, V. S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr Biswas*), Gikandi argues that exile for Caribbean modernists was used as a metaphor for transcending the prison-house of colonialism. In a psychological and an ideological sense, exile would be an imaginary zone distanced from the values and structures of colonialism; it would hence be posited as the point of departure for ... anticolonial discourse' (Gikandi 1992: 34). Among a generation of diverse writers from George Lamming (1927–) and Sam Selvon (1923–94) to Wilson Harris (1932–) and Paule Marshall (1929–), Gikandi argues that

develops as a narrative strategy and counter-discourse away from outmoded and conventional modes of representation associated with colonial domination and colonizing cultural structures.

(Gikandi 1992: 5)

While Anglo-American modernism often wanted to escape history through aesthetics, writers of Caribbean origin and influence sought to exorcise enslavement and the ahistorical positioning of colonial subjectivity. Thus, alongside the arrival at a Caribbean concept of history, a parallel decolonisation of the mind required working through the terminology of Western political history and its totalising ideological concepts to understand and depart from those gestures of control. Caribbean modernism thus came to challenge colonial history through the creation of a form of representation that emphasises or acknowledges displacement, otherness, contradiction and reversal.

However, the convergence of modernism and late colonialism remains a particular matter of anxiety for Caribbean writers who have borrowed from the European literary avant-garde, naturalising European language to West Indian culture. However, this syncretic approach has been symptomatic of the broader thrust and 'creolization' has come to represent a unique kind of Caribbean Modernism, one that resists the colonizing structures through the diversion of the colonial language and still manages to reconcile the values of European literacy with the long-repressed traditions of African orality' (Gikandi 1992: 16).

It is also significant that for both Caribbean and Anglo-American modernists, a key issue was how to remake subjectivity, narrative and language for the purposes of liberation. The figure of the Maroon, or escaped slave, provided a model for this in the Caribbean, indicating a strategy for literary reworking by using knowledge of a dominant culture to oppose it. The tropes of doubling, displacement and linguistic invention are as common in Caribbean as in Anglo-American modernist writers. Gikandi writes: 'exile and the displacement it engenders constitutes the ground zero of West Indian literature, its radical point of departure; exile generates nationalism and with it the desire for decolonized Caribbean spaces' (Gikandi 1992: 33).

Caribbean modernism has evolved out of an anxiety toward the dominant structure in general and its history, language and ideology in particular; ... this modernism, which is closely related to creolization

remains true that a partial critique of empire lies in canonical modernism in central works such as *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway*. In the first novel by Woolf

Dalloway family, *The Voyage Out* (1915), the patriarchy are already linked explicitly to Empire. In the novel, Woolf casts Richard Dalloway as the imperialist who says, 'I can conceive no more to be the citizen of the Empire' (Woolf 1978: 63). In the elimination of his discussion of Empire with Miss Kilman, he has asked him what is his ideal. For Richard Dalloway, 'dominion' emerge as expressions of the ideal. For him the 'voyage out' concerns the spread of the imperial centre.

values associated with Dalloway in Woolf's *A Voyage Out* are the opposite to those in Edward Said's concept of 'the voyage in' which brings colonial values back to the metropolitan. It is a conscious effort to enter into the discourse of Empire, to mix with it, transform it, to make it acknowledge its own 'colonized or suppressed or forgotten histories ... I call it the voyage in' (Said 1993: 260–1). As a result of this, Woolf thinks the high-point of modernism marks the end for the Grand Narratives that reinforce the Empire, signalled by the disquieting appearance of various people from the Empire who by their very presence challenged and resisted familiar metropolitan understandings and beliefs and histories in the works of writers like Conrad, Mann, Proust, Woolf, Pound, Lawrence, Joyce

Louis Gates has pointed out, it can thus be argued that modernism is a 'mulatto movement' in which newness came through syncretism and fusion, typified by the art of the Renaissance and Paul Gilroy's theory of the black Atlantic which brings an explicitly intercultural perspective to the metropolitan. It focuses on a complex cultural system: the transatlantic exchange of people, goods and capital between Europe, Africa and the Americas (the term 'black Atlantic' denotes a webbed network of the local and the global, as opposed to the linear cultural histories which fail to explain transcultural

and transnational mixtures of ideas, categories and identities in the involved genealogy of black Atlantic culture that alone can explain such topics as the development of hip-hop, soul and jazz).

It is almost certainly incontrovertible that the apogee of modernism marks a time at which Western art forms were shaped by international culture. In addition to the influence of Japanese and Chinese art on key figures such as Pound, there is the impact of African art on European artists like Derain and Picasso and the popularity of jazz rhythms with classical musicians and poets. There are the allusions to Indian subjects and imagery in the poetry of Yeats and T. S. Eliot, Eliot's use of African-American references and Conrad's questioning of the prevailing assumptions of racial superiority justifying European imperialism, matched by Leonard Woolf (1880–69) in his fiction and letters about Sri Lanka.

Which is to say that, increasingly, modernist art and writing appear to critics as in some ways a consequence of the growing awareness of different cultures in the oscillation of the voyage out and the voyage in. Additionally, this double voyage was not simply a geographical one but a temporal one also, as both mythology and anthropology brought the traditions of other cultures into contemporary Western thinking. Thus, when asked in 1919 what he thought comprised *modern* culture, T. S. Eliot first listed 'Byzantine, Polynesian, African, Hebridean, [and] Chinese ...' art (1988: 317). There is also the regard held by Pound and Yeats for Chinese and Japanese drama and poetry, as well as the allusions to Indian subjects and Eastern imagery in the poetry of Yeats and Eliot.

Modernism was a metropolitan phenomenon that drew on the outposts of empires, yet a critic such as Fredric Jameson has argued that only Joyce is uniquely placed to treat imperial issues within modernist form. In this, he reveals a common blindness with regard to modernism outside of Euro-America. As Edward Said notes,

Most histories of European aesthetic modernism leave out the massive infusions of non-European cultures into the metropolitan heartland during the early years of this century, despite the patently

