

# Introduction: A History of “Modernism”

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In one received understanding, “modernism” emerges as a working term only in the teaching cultures of postwar universities in England and (especially) America. According to this understanding, “modernism” earned its currency as a word mainly in those academic settings, where it offered itself chiefly as a term of convenience, providing a departmental curriculum with course titles or doctoral dissertations with historical frames. In those college classrooms and library studies, “modernism” is supposed to have exerted a neutral, mostly descriptive, non-controversial and certainly non-polemical function – at least at its inception. This is not an accurate understanding, and the history it outlines is wrong. The word “modernism” is circulating noticeably and in fact clamorously at the turn of the twentieth century. It emerges already and first of all as a fighting word, being fraught from the start with strident and contestable claims about the meaning of the experience of history in general and contemporary history in particular. This is the historical moment for which “modern” has recently been accepted as a designation and “ism” its newly challenging, and increasingly challenged, intensive. Such is the power of the denominator, in fact, that this *Cambridge History of Modernism* frames its broad historical subject through the word itself. “Modernism” provides the point of reference in this Introduction because it centers a debate about the meaning of being “modern,” especially in the inflection which the additional “ism” attributes to it, and because this controversy frames many of the critical issues and interpretive questions that are most cogent to the body of work that is brought under its heading. The debate is lengthening now into its second (actually third) century. In a fashion at least mildly appropriate to the temporal imaginary of its subject, this Introduction will move through this period counterclockwise as well as clockwise – from the beginning of the twenty-first century to the end of the nineteenth – by entering in medias res.

“What is ‘Modernism?’” So opens the annual Presidential Address at the English Association meeting in London in 1937. The interrogative mood dissolves quickly as the speaker, the Very Rev. W.R. Inge, turns to the etymology of the word he has pronged between those inverted commas:

The barbarous Latin word *modernus* (from *modo*, ‘just now’) occurs first in the sixth century, in the grammarian Priscian, and Cassiodorus, an official of Theodoric. In the twelfth century it was applied to the Nominalists by the Realists, and Roger Bacon called Alexander of Hales and Albert *duo moderni gloriosi*; even Thomas Aquinas was called a Modernist by the Platonists and Augustinians. During the Renaissance it was applied to the new humanistic ways of thought. In the seventeenth century a ‘middle age’ was intercalated between ‘ancient’ and ‘modern’. Our own age will perhaps some day be called the middle age, unless they prefer to call it ‘the meddle and muddle age’.<sup>1</sup>

The after-dinner humor concluding this first paragraph does not obscure a skepticism edging into enmity, which is manifest in that opening blast at the babbling Latinity of the early Dark Ages. Obviously motivated for attack, the philological learning in this overture includes nonetheless a precise understanding of the specific inflection of the Latin radical, which is indeed the root of the issue for Inge. *Modo*, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* informs him, means something narrower than an adjectival understanding of “recent” or “current”; it finds its meaning as a temporal adverb, telling the time of an action occurring not simply “today” or even “now” but “just now.” So, *modo* enters into late antiquity as a most timely register of a temporality pressured by an immense sense of eventful change: a special present, a brink of time, a precipitous instant, all in all, a crisis time. These several associations move to the acutest register in the twentieth century through the addition of the suffix “ism,” which adds a self-conscious awareness to this special experience of the “modern” moment, turning the uncertainty of instantaneous time into not just a feeling but an idea, maybe even a faith or belief in this condition of constantly disruptive change.

The special motive and pressure for Inge’s riposte comes then from the modern context of the twentieth, the assignably “modern,” century, which, in his fearful apprehension, is realizing the meaning of a word introduced into late Roman antiquity as the original indicator of crisis time. The notion of “just now” has been lived out indeed in a century already divided into decades with names and nicknames, ranging from the dynastic to the dynamic, from Edwardian to Roaring. Most important, an instant-by-instant difference in the actual experience of historical time lives out – and in – the

rhythms of an unprecedented and accelerating pace of change in the history of material cultures. Accordingly, the imaginative experience of temporality moves beyond one of crisis time to one of time itself in crisis: a formerly natural, apparently gradual time of diurnal days and seasonal rounds has been sliced ever more finely and grandly by the developing mechanisms of chronometry, which have worked in ways little and large – from the division of the globe into twenty-four equal time zones to the parsing of micro-times within a supposedly seamless instantaneity – to unsettle temporal measurement itself. It is the feeling of free-fall within these conditions that most unsettles critics like Inge. And so his and their attacks, which are more like counterattacks in the sense that they are manifestly reactive and panicky, tend to deflect from the source of their profounder dread to images of the predictably ridiculous, say, in the characterization of “modernist” sculpture as “figures apparently suffering from elephantiasis or acromegaly” or “modernist” painting as “zigzags” crisscrossing “a woman with green hair.”<sup>2</sup> No, it is not about the mannerisms, odd or otherwise, that are attached to “modernism” as its characterizing styles, which, in any case, are much too various to conform to any one version. No, it is about time: it is about this new experience of vertiginous instants in which “modernism” is most self-consciously involved, and it was about time, in the minds of those identified with this sensibility over the long turn of the twentieth century, that works of art constitute themselves in awareness of time and the changing conditions of time in their work. So, if the feeling of crisis time and time in crisis was undergone first in Inge’s history in the final collapse of classical culture in the sixth century, it is, now in the fourth decade of the twentieth, implicitly but insistently – and recognizably, in the currency of this word “modernism” – the present condition of things.

The decade-by-decade chronology in the twentieth-century history of modernism begins of course with the “fin de siècle,” where the French nomenclature frames an interval with an equal degree of self-consciousness about its own special time. Accordingly, in the archaeologies of the twentieth-century uses of this word, cultural historians usually find the foundational source of “modernism” in the later nineteenth century, specifically, in the histories of European and especially French Roman Catholicism.<sup>3</sup> This “modernist movement” included an effort at updating the formulations of traditional church doctrines and, most important, at understanding the history of these doctrinal positions as historically determined and, so, as relative and changeable. And so it is clear that the “just now”-ism of the modernist sensibility was scored into the founding

principles of this religious movement, too. What needs to be recognized, however, is that this ecclesiastical “modernism” was not the inaugural form of the word in European usage. Roman Catholic “modernism” was echoing developments in the broader cultural histories of Europe, where the term “modern” was already flourishing in contemporary continental milieus with that charged and often fraught sense of a special present, of crisis time and time in crisis.

Through the last two decades of the nineteenth century, cognates of the term “modern” were appearing with increasing frequency in Italy and Spain, in Germany and Austria, in Denmark and Scandinavia and Russia. Primary bibliographies display a range of periodicals and magazines, novels and anthologies of poetry as well as discursive works, which feature the word “modern” in the title. This flourish occurs with special intensity in Germany, where the pressures of modernization were occurring in the most accelerated form in Europe. German journals include *Die Moderne*, *Moderne Blätter*, and *Freie Bühne für modernes Leben*, while monographs particularize this “modern” condition in a number of specifically topical considerations: *Das sexuelle Problem in der modernen Litteratur* (1890), for example, or *Der Übermensch in der modernen Litteratur* (1897), and already in 1890 in *Zur Kritik der Moderne*. The increasing frequency of this word indicates a sense sufficiently self-conscious as to mean, in every relevant way, “modernism.”

What is equally remarkable in continental Europe and, as Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane have pointed out, especially in Germany, is the sudden lapse of interest in the “modern,” which occurs just as the supposedly “modern” century has turned. In 1909, for indicative instance, Samuel Lublinski titles his monograph *Der Ausgang der Moderne* (*The Exit of the Modern*).<sup>4</sup> Similarly, in Italy, where the federation of the “modern” (as opposed to classical or Roman) state in 1870 coincided with the energies of a much-promulgated modernization: these developments of political and cultural history crested toward the century’s end as their moment or realization, when, however, a change of terms occurs and, as Luca Somigli succinctly notes, “the label of ‘*decadentismo*’ has come to identify much of what in other traditions is described as ‘modernism.’”<sup>5</sup> The Spanish variant on this pattern appears in *modernismo*, which, as a synonym of “modernity,” centers an intensity of debate in the years approaching the turn of the century. In that process, however, and especially after 1900, *modernismo* was always disaggregating into a composite topic in cultural and literary history, where the still uncertain associations of the term look backward as well as forward for its markers and come to include Parnassianism,

Symbolism, Decadentism, even pre-Raphaelitism.<sup>6</sup> This backward-turning aspect in the term emerges in Latin America as a point of strong reaction "around the turn of the last century," as Rubén Gallo notes in this *History* in his chapter on "modernism" in Spanish America. Here a "once" but no longer "controversial verse became the rallying cry of a new movement called *post-modernismo* (not to be confused with postmodernism), which called for a poetic renewal and a new aesthetics."

The sense of crisis time and time in crisis in "modernism" thus clusters around the century's turn as its likeliest temporal environment. As Frank Kermode has written about the end-and-beginning feeling of the turn of centuries, it is at this (recurring) point in history that a sense of instability is at its most intense.<sup>7</sup> In this understanding, the feeling of unease is as urgently uncertain as it is necessarily brief. There are other ways of explaining the brief but intense life of the turn-of-the-century "modern," however, which involve the more particular history of the century then ending on the European continent. Recalling this history may allow us to understand some of the reasons why "modernism" fades as a critical descriptor for subsequent cultural histories on the continent even while it gains strength as a counter of value and center of attention from the beginning through the end of the twentieth century in Britain and America.

Continental Europe had known crisis times in the century then ending with an intensity worth remembering. If we understand revolution in its profoundest dimension as an effort of returning to some radical version of human sociality and, in effect, beginning history anew, we can see that the pan-European revolutions of the period extending from 1789 through 1848 or 1851 witness a continuing and increasingly desperate attempt at this renovation of historical time. This impetus finds a signature, original formulation in the new calendar of revolutionary France, which renames the months of the calendar year as the most explicit sign of the imaginative aspiration for a new time. It is not just those measures of temporality that are being renamed. Time itself is being reinvented as a dimension of novel possibility in the future perfect tense of visionary history. The manifest failure of this ambition is scored into the title of Karl Marx's 1852 documentary memoir of revolutions lapsing now across Europe as well as in France: *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*. There is a specially condensed, bitter eloquence here. Where the word from the revolutionary calendar of republican France echoes ahead to the next Bonaparte, we hear the token of a new future closing down around a name that is not just recurring and so dynastic but institutionalized: by the end of this phrase, as by the end of the

period the title frames, the quality of improvisational time in revolutionary temporality has all too obviously run down. This history of disappointed as well as expectant time converges as a complex sensibility, then, toward the turn of the century, when the force of this precedent history charges that otherwise arbitrary marker. This memory bears all too evident witness to the fact that a moment of round-numbered chronology may not be the circumstance of some apocalyptic transformation. And so the verbal token of crisis time – conveying not just the expectation of change or renovation but the feeling of an acute present, a preoccupation with and in a brink instant, of living in a Now explicitly different from a Then or even a Next – is let go with the feeling of crisis fatigue for which this history is prequel and explanation. In France, indeed, where the history of failed revolutions is perhaps most acute, the French cognate for “modernism” has never enjoyed any strong purchase as a term of interest or denominator of value in literary and cultural history, as Jean-Michel Rabaté points out in his chapter on Proust and Gide and Larbaud in this *History*. Such is the power of the word, it seems, that it has been displaced from the cultural histories in which its meaning has been made most starkly real.

But not unrealized: the radical meaning of “modernism” is readily and necessarily applicable to the cultural productions of the countries covered in this *History*. In the work of many different and in fact changing and emerging nations (Russia and Ireland and Austria among them), the strong sense of the root meaning of the word is not at all attenuated: it is extended, diversified, even intensified. This work occurs under the rubric of the term more enduringly in Britain and North America, where the sense of crisis time and time in crisis does not include the events and memory, all in all, the form of historical consciousness, which put pressure on the sense of the word on continental tongues. So, in English, “modernism” operates as a denominator for a more chronic pattern of consciousness and a more diachronic experience of history. This is not to say, however, that the word abides in English in the quiet of consensus understandings in the long and lengthening era of the transatlantic midcentury. In the entity of faith or belief that this suffix makes of the modern condition, “modernism” suggests not just the awareness but the acceptance of crisis time as the abiding time of the modern century. And the fight over this idea flares up first as the end of the previous century begins.

In 1891, in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Thomas Hardy produces a phrase that will echo across the turn of the century as a resonant expression of crisis time and its contemporary discontents: “the ache of modernism.” Hardy’s narrator

uses this phrase to describe the feeling Tess experiences in seeing a vision of days winding away into a future that is at once infinite and diminishing, an eternity that is both meaningless and menacing.<sup>8</sup> This is a vision of time future as time indeterminate, as time unblessed and unbound from the covenants of eschatology, all in all, as time detached from the patterns of traditional biblical significance. Indeed, the insignificance of traditional time provides a new significance, a new critical condition. And "modernism" is the word for this condition. In Tess's vision, the experience of time is suspended ever in a moment that recurs without meaningful sequence or consequence, where the root of the "just now" meaning of "modernism" includes the even more challenging sense of "only now" or "no more than now." Tess stands thus in the exceptionality of her own instant as a radical "modernist." And while her experience is historically grounded and broadly shared (her feelings are "those of the age"),<sup>9</sup> her vision stands for the sense of a present that is an isolated and radicalized piece of time, being at once full of itself and emptied of precedents or destinies. This is the modernism that hurts, and, in view of the whole "age" that shares this feeling, there is a lot of pain to go around. The hurt may be located most indicatively where older, accustomed understandings of time are confronted by an assignably "modern" one, which includes not just the diminishment of the post-Enlightenment idea of progressive history but the intensification of the feeling of existence in the sheerest of instants, in a phrase, the emergent menace of existentialism. So, "modernism" already enfolds the complexity of a fully and doubly measured sense, which includes the promise and the disappointment of the futurity Tess views in advancing but diminishing days. The deep time of "modernism" is this counter-rhythmic condition, which runs through the commentary on either side of that turning century.

"The Ache of Modernism": in 1897, the phrase is already resonant and still provocative enough to provide the title for an essay in *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*. In this venue, one might expect George Northcroft to complain about Hardy's already well-known apostasy, but he concentrates instead on the meaning of his title phrase for this particular historical moment. "We are too much the children of the hour to be untouched by it," Northcroft admits, and reiterates: "It is widely felt, and in many cases keenly. It is more than a literary fashion. It is a striking phase of the temper of to-day." The "to-day" that Northcroft is marking is implicitly but irresistibly the short and shortening day of the end of the century, when a particularly "modern pessimism" and "modern sadness" attends the art of that "modern writer" and all those "modern novelists" that provisions "the public library of any

modern city.” Repeating “modern” with an insistence equal to its frequency in that reiterative bibliography of German periodicals on or about the same year, Northcroft consolidates his self-consciousness about the condition to which the word refers, expressing the sense of the “ism” suffix in this conspicuous refrain. And this is a “modernism” that hurts just where Hardy feels it most keenly, that is, where the art of this self-consciously “modern” moment produces “no *lasting* satisfaction.”<sup>10</sup> The cultural value being threatened shows clearly in the title of the next article in this issue of the journal: “*Lasting Happiness*.”<sup>11</sup> The impermanence that is scored into the root meaning of radical “modernism” is a condition equally of threat and opportunity, where an improvisatory “modern” is always allied with a sense of disintegration, so that the message of this mercurial instant includes also and inevitably a hermeneutic of decay.

Those are the threats against which R.A. Scott-James attempts to defend his “modernism” in the first book-length work of literary criticism to carry the English word in its title: *Modernism and Romance* (1908). He moves the meaning of the first of his title words toward the side of improvisatory opportunity. He puts “modernism” on the plotline of a “romance” novel of history that is driven to ever-better ends by a Progress-minded ideology. In this way, Scott-James’s book offers an inaugural form of a one-sided but defensive construction of “modernism” that will continue to be heard for at least a century longer. This early instance is indeed a radical form. So hard is Scott-James pushing this single-minded idea of Progress-minded modernism, he reads even the novels of a late imperial age, Conrad’s most conspicuously and in fact preposterously, as testaments to the assertion “that our civilisation so far from being very old is really in its infancy.”<sup>12</sup> All of this effortful work represents an attempt to counter the negative inflection of its Latin radical, the “passing moment” sense of its “just now” meaning, which is more than an inference insofar as it has already found a timely habitation and alternative name: “Decadence.”

This sensibility flourished (if “decadence” can be said to flourish) in the English as well as the continental *fin de siècle*. This last decade before the last century of the millennium provides an initial, defining instance of the idea of crisis time or time in crisis that “modernism” denominates. This so-called “decade of Decadence” provides a primary, paradigmatic location of the imaginative time of “modernism” as a verbal concept. And it is a measure of the threat presented by this negative side of dissolving time – told and tolled in the countdown letdown of Northcroft’s self-consciously “modern” time – that Scott-James has to counter it so strenuously. This work extends



past his chapter “The Decadents,” which includes a single- and bloody-minded denunciation of that group, and into the strenuous efforts of passages like this:

It is a wearisome tale to tell . . . He is happy indeed who does not understand what I have sought to suggest rather than to explain . . . if he has not felt these and all the other parts of our over-developed community shaking and shivering in self-conscious postures, groaning in the agonies either of actual physical pain or the self-imposed torture of affectation, then he belongs to the happy few who have not been compelled to witness the “ache of modernism.”<sup>13</sup>

Readers still familiar with the art and literature of the fin de siècle recognized the type characters of *décadence* in this *mise-en-scène*. Their febrile exhaustion, more specifically their *overripe* (“over-developed”) condition – these figures repeat the trope of civilization at its decaying-before-dying end that recurs among Decadent writers from Théophile Gautier on. Scott-James’s *tableau mordant* revives it all, and all for his own strenuous purpose – to make these figures alien to the optimist’s “modernism,” which he is trying to cure of the “ache” Hardy’s phrase preserves still in the nerve it touches. The pain of decaying time remains a constitutive element of this modernism even – or especially – as Scott-James works so hard to alleviate it.

This archive of turn-of-the-century writings restores some of the fullness of the discursive work being performed with and through “modernism.” In this original force field, the verbal radical generates the primary terms of the relevant debate, which swings between the opposite possibilities of its twofold sense. These root meanings may be attenuated in due course, even in short course, but, even when renamed and rehabbed in the longer durée of its ongoing use, the core ideas will continue to apply.

In shorter course, those potent signifiers of instability and diminishment are shifted into an increasingly indeterminate range of dangers which, in their variety, preserve some of the original negativity but diffuse its particular threat. So dispersed, the meanings of “modernism” do not so much constellate as conjure up many (or any) convention-dismaying qualities, which, lacking specificity, come quickly enough to be tolerated, even fondly tolerated, and so accommodated. Already in 1913 in *The Athenaeum*, for early instance, the author of “Modernism at the Albert Hall” asks “liberal-minded men” to look past the evidently “dangerous tendency” in some of the work on view, which includes cubism and futurism as well as post-impressionism, and recognize that “this revolution, if it is a real revolution, cannot be checked.” The use of “revolution” in this article, which includes the

intensifying repetition of the word, includes a history of political revolutions in Europe that has been rewritten and reoriented in English, it seems, into a promissory cultural rebirth. Recognized as inevitable, needing thus to be allowed, this specifically cultural revolution is accommodated now, in the closing note of the piece, as “the immediate herald of a new Renaissance.”<sup>14</sup> So, in 1917, in the American journal *New Opinion*, the worst that can be said about the impresario of the original Parisian production of Stravinsky’s *Le sacre du printemps*, which earned far worse for its recognizably or assignably “modernist” quality in 1913, is: “Jean Cocteau, the daring modernist poet.”<sup>15</sup> So in 1925, in a review of Marianne Moore’s poems in the American *Dial*, a magazine already sided with a poetics identifiably and also nominally “modernist,” William Carlos Williams can write to this evolving consciousness of popular acceptance: “modernism is distressing to many who would at least tolerate it if they knew how. These individuals, who cannot bear the necessary appearance of disorder in all immediacy, could be led to appreciation through critical study.”<sup>16</sup>

The “critical study” that Williams asks for is the activity necessary to accommodate the quality of “difficulty” that comes increasingly to be attributed to “modernism.” This “difficulty” needs to be understood as an attributed, not a synonymic or intrinsic, condition, and so denaturalized. It may be understood best in terms of the uses and motives it serves in a cultural economy broader than one reader’s, one viewer’s, one listener’s experience.

While landmark works of modernism – from Schoenberg’s to Joyce’s to Kandinsky’s – create perplexity even for their most assiduous critics, the assigning of “difficulty” to this work also serves as a simpler equivalent – a euphemism – for the more challenging “difference” the works of modernism may register from conventional styles of representation. In fact, “difficulty” represents a quality of experience or a category of value that a number of modernists pointedly contest, seeing it as a misplaced understanding about what a work of art is or can do. “Never explain,” T.S. Eliot is said to have said, providing that cryptic motto for this authorial advice for remaining cryptic. The elusiveness – the irreducibility – of an art identified as “modernist” may locate the essential difference it presents to mass-educated notions. In a cultural history that has witnessed a burgeoning growth in the extent of “general” education, which emphasizes basic comprehension as the aim or merit of its activity, a standard-issue art will be regarded as a conveyer of content, as a statement of reducible truths. An art that presents, however, rather than represents: such is the motive and means of work identified as

"avant-garde," which, often staged as an art of its own event, its own making or happening, defines the moment of its occurrence as the limiting but signifying condition of its existence. In its own ideation, at least, it cannot be converted into something else: there is no revisiting of some putative referent or anterior (let alone ulterior) meaning; the presentation of sheer experience locates the ground and warrant of the "special present" this radical form of modernism defines and occupies – however briefly. And brevity is the condition of the dozens and even hundreds of avant-garde phenomena in early and midcentury modernism, where their go-and-come-and-go pattern manifests the quality of the transitory in the core meaning of "modernism."

The displacement of this essential difference into "difficulty," however, is one of the chief means by which mainstream cultures first acknowledge and tolerate products identified as "modernist." What happens for a mass-educated readership applies as well to public consumption, to modernism as an increasingly mass-consumed product. This process is given a motivated pressure in the understanding of critics such as Theodor Adorno, who sees the threatening expressions of this avant- or radical modernism being converted by a master capitalist class into the commodities of a "culture industry," which stylize the difference and, converting it into the acceptable, ultimately the desirable, neutralize its danger.<sup>17</sup> Whether one accepts the explicitly Marxist terms of Adorno's analysis, one of the subplots in the cultural history of the 1920s witnesses this growing acceptance of "modernism" as a term and reference, and this development spurs the countermotioning efforts of artists and critics to hold onto the difference "modernism" constitutes in the more radical manifestations of avant-garde attitudes and practices.

Sheldon Cheney writes of the increasing pressure of this normalization of difference in the wryly titled "America Shakes Hands with the Modernists," in 1926, in a piece of cultural commentary in *The Independent*. "The proprietor of a small gallery that became one of the pioneer footholds of the modernists in America recently said to me: 'The landslide has come; the town has gone modern. There isn't even the fun of a fight any more.'" The fun of the fight of the difference this advocate of "modernism" is already nostalgic for has been quieted by the cultural production of modernism in one of the major New York museum shows, which provides the occasion for this piece. "For those who have been accustomed to consider modernist art merely a symptom of abnormality or eccentricity on the part of a few detached artists," Cheney rues humorously but pointedly, the once "unusual, the

eccentric thing, modern art has become the normal accepted thing in New York.”<sup>18</sup> Here the cultural institution converts the challenge of the “unusual” or the “eccentric” into the classificatory logic of an exhibition, where docents or academics will explain and so normalize it. Already in 1924, on the other side of the continent, at the University of Washington, Elias Thornleif Arnesen has submitted a doctoral dissertation, “Modernism and Literature,” which offers an earnest attempt to pull the immensities of the two title words into a reductive understanding; one senses the subtleties of understanding a good deal less than the pressures of reduction.<sup>19</sup> Against such pressures Robert Graves and Laura Riding will push back with the emphases they make in 1927, in *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, which confronts the “plain reader” as the primary opponent, indeed the establishing antagonist, of their ideal “modernist” poet.<sup>20</sup> Graves and Riding are clearly seeking to reclaim the oppositional elusiveness of this poetry, of which they find plenty in the poems they choose to illustrate this understanding of the “modernist” impulse, Riding’s own most noticeably and so most of all.

Three decades later, as a young American poet, Donald Hall had a conversation with the critic who had done the most in the interim to put the literature of transatlantic, Anglo-Irish and Anglo-French modernism into the classrooms of American and English universities: Edmund Wilson, author of *Axel’s Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1870–1930* (1931). The tête-à-tête occurred at a party being given at Harvard by Harry Levin, who was using Wilson’s book as a critical frame for a course that covered most of the writers it featured: Eliot and Joyce and Yeats, Stein and Valéry and Proust. Attempting to ingratiate himself with “the master,” Hall conspicuously delivered the word “modernist” as a sign of his knowingness about things current. Wilson exploded, angrily but incoherently, about that “filthy and disgusting word.” Being sure “modernist” could not be “the offending word,” and attempting to regain the advantage, Hall repeated it: Wilson blew up again, even more angrily.<sup>21</sup> While no other report of the incident seems to have survived, it stands nonetheless as a parable and indeed a parabolic account of the rising and falling fortunes of “modernism” in the previous – and, in fact, subsequent – three decades.

As the currency of the term “modernism” was increasing, it was also working in the service of its own institutionalization, which the more radical understandings of modernism would perforce oppose. Obviously enough, Wilson hadn’t used it in his book, perhaps because he sensed those incipient pressures of institutionalization, which he would resist as a point of his own cultural politics. He had become more committed as a Marxist in the decade

of the Great Depression, making explicit a set of political attitudes and values that were at least implicit in this formative critical book. There is indeed a residual if not polemical commitment to the principles of transformative revolutionary change in political history, not just literary history, in *Axel's Castle*.<sup>22</sup> The influence of Wilson's book was so great that his own personal politics exerted a profound effect on subsequent generations' understandings of a politics of modernism. Indeed, surprising as it might now seem, and as Robert Spiller notes in a retrospective essay in *The Nation* in 1958 (the year of Hall's encounter with its author), its prominence in university curricula helped to create an environment in which “a love of Eliot, Joyce, Proust, and Yeats seemed compatible with radical politics.”<sup>23</sup> In a midcentury American university culture, this “radical” energy was strongly and particularly leftward leaning, but, in any absolute sense, a radically “modernist” cultural revolution did not have a prescribed politics. The absolute Now could point Left or Right on the metaphorical spectrum of political opinion if not backward or forward on its figurative clock. In any case, the memory of radical modernism in the avant-moment of its own revolutionary making is working through Wilson's book in ways little and large, subtle and striking.

The battle over the status of this memory will be one of the primary issues centering the discursive work being performed through “modernism” in the postwar decades. Although the word is doing some work in the university worlds of the 1950s, it is spreading widely only by the later 1980s. Yet the three decades of the sixties, seventies, and eighties witness a consistent and consecutive engagement not just with the word but with the intellectual and political issues implicit in it. This colloquy may be represented best at the focal points of the turns of decades. Here, as a measure of the pressure the term is exerting, some of the major voices of literary criticism and cultural commentary are working its root meanings toward contemporary circumstances, where the new inflections often turn on the recognition that, whatever “modernism” means, it is no longer new, for its referent is dead.

In 1960, Harry Levin gave a talk at Queen's University in Canada that would be reprinted a number of times in subsequent years: “What Was Modernism?” The past tense of the verb in the title indicates all too clearly that its predicate nominative has passed into history, an historical fact that ramifies through this midcentury commentary as a formative orientation and issue. As a kind of tuning fork for this commentary, Levin opens his lecture with a humorous but rueful anecdote of “The Picasso,” now the name of a posh “modern” apartment building in Manhattan. “Picasso,” he reminds his auditors, has only recently appeared as a signature under images of “rootless

transience,” of “collapsible stairways” and “rooms without floors.”<sup>24</sup> This imagery focuses Picasso’s own signature version of the most volatile qualities of modernism in its radical sense, all in all, of the incandescent impermanence that is at once the insignia and the stimulus of its most breathtaking inventions. Now, however, “The Picasso” is obviously as secure as the building behind it and as definite as the article in front of a name that has become a common noun. And so Levin moves between a record of that development and a compensatory effort to locate the moment of an original, singular or proper “modernism” in history – a center of definitional, legitimating attention, which would properly occupy the consciousness of scholars. For Levin, this is the era flowing into and through the years of the First World War, where crisis time and time in crisis were all too manifestly apparent. In this location he is able to claim – more accurately, reclaim – the original and now it seems aboriginal moment of the special present, of crisis time and time in crisis. This “interval,” he observes assertively, “thought of itself in the present tense . . . Ernest Hemingway’s first book of stories was aptly entitled *In Our Time*, and its grasp of immediacy was heightened by . . . His intensive concentration on the instant.” “Whatever the language,” Levin concludes, “the meaning is imminence; and that ‘nowness’ is a precondition of the search for newness.”<sup>25</sup> The point of significant interest is not so much the correctness of that placement of modernism in or around the war years, which would be contested and reasserted repeatedly over the next half-century. What seems most noteworthy is the ambitious precision of the effort to find that center of reference; so to locate an epicenter of activity in this original force field of “modernism”; so to repossess an energy that appears now to be an erstwhile force, its cultural production an increasingly archival record.

There is an essential tension between living the history of “modernism,” that is, and outliving it: this tension is inevitable in a verbal concept that has the idea of a radical present as its core sense. The tension is generative already in this still early moment of the long midcentury establishment of the canon of “modernist” art for university curricula, when that era of putatively revolutionary activity has become an area of academically organized study. Fairly or not, though fairness is not the issue here, the later institutionalization of the term will come to stand for the institutional quality of its referent, which, for a revolution, let alone a revolution for the sake of the impermanence of its own moment, seems contradictory at best. In this respect, it is at once indicative and prescient that Levin should be compelled to defend his “modernism,” especially in the radical meaning he has

recovered for it, against “its Post-Modern attackers.”<sup>26</sup> As Steven Connor notes in the Epilogue to this *History*, the generation of “postmodernism,” both as word and era, concurs with and is spurred by – it may also serve to spur – the development of “modernism” as a working term in the institutional language of university study and book publishing into and through the 1980s. In a longer view of cultural history, as Connor also shows, many of the now typical features of postmodernism can be read as an extended echo of attitudes and practices that are recognizably, even adamantly, “modernist.” What we can see here, in an even longer view, is a vying for the authority of an original, legitimating force of a Just Now moment – in 1968 as well as 1914 – where the once revolutionary energy of “modernism,” muted in its university work, would be revived now in unrest in those universities, as experienced and told in the cultural histories of the 1960s in England and the Americas as well as on the European continent, especially France.

This current circumstance is also encouraging the recognition that the innovative energy of “modernism” is a matter of finished history, although, as a function of the core meanings of the word, the admission continues to be interestingly and significantly difficult. It lives on as an issue in the odd combination of diminuendo and bravado in the title of Irving Howe’s landmark volume of 1970: *Decline of the New*. Howe’s opening essay, “The Culture of Modernism,” radicalizes the meaning of “modernism” as a “catastrophe” that is “unique” in history but, he claims adamantly, has not passed into history: this “catastrophe,” he warrants, is “the experience of *our age*.” Whether or not the art of the late 1960s looks like that of the 1910s, its establishing circumstance, Howe wants to say, is the same. Such is the power of this idea of a perpetual threshold moment in history, so prepossessed is Howe by the notion of chronic catastrophe, that he has obviously memorized but misremembered the formulation Virginia Woolf so famously gave it nearly a half-century earlier: “On or about December 1910 human nature [Woolf wrote “character”] changed.”<sup>27</sup> Yet it is a manifest fact to Howe that the convention-dismaying energy of an avant-garde modernism has been assimilated to mainstream culture in the same way that his sometime fellow-traveling Marxist Adorno has emphasized. This is the concern he worries recursively throughout the essay. It leads him nowhere near the extremity of Marxist critique that Georg Lukács formulated a decade earlier in his polemical essay “The Ideology of Modernism,” which presents the word as a malicious contradiction: here “modernism,” no revolution of its own or anyone else’s, represents in fact a counter-revolutionary force,

all in all, a reaction formation to the energies of emancipated “potentiality” (his word for Progress) in European socialism; it presents a bourgeois obstacle right – wrong – from the start.<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, the disappointment Howe cannot help but announce in the failure of the historical avant-garde locates a growing point of the postmodernist critique that is emerging simultaneously with and not independently from it.

At the beginning of the next decade, in prefatory acknowledgements dated “January 1981,” Howe is included among the formative influences on Marshall Berman’s *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. This book resumes where Howe left off: Berman makes an impassioned attempt to live the history of modernism forward from the point at which Howe feared it had ended. To do so, Berman makes a move that is intellectually ambitious but tactically simplistic, a measure all in all of the difficulty of the project and the urgency of a solution. The effort gains particular significance in terms of the existing history of the criticism of “modernism,” which he recapitulates, and recapitulates at just that moment when “modernism” is about to emerge and flourish as a term in the discursive as well as analytical work of the decade.

Berman takes the paradox in the verbal concept of “modernism” – the improvisatory energy, the force of decay – and their elaborated consequences – the technical inventiveness, a refusal of futurity – and shifts these oppositions into the schemes and tropes of a dialectic that is explicitly Marxist (his main title is a phrase from Marx) and implicitly but insistently Hegelian. Progress, the resolving value in Scott-James’s early account of “modernism,” once again provides the compelling conceptual force. In developing this argument, Berman turns the word “modernism” into an historical protagonist, a virtual character who is propelled by motivating aims and directive values and so, in the process of realizing these, faces situational difficulties, experiences global setbacks as well as local successes. This dramatic narrative emerges with the eloquence of a believer in Berman’s book, drawing it a great deal of critical attention. If his simplifications come from the fact that he has forgotten that “modernism” is first and last a word, his narrative character “modernism” also represents his defiance of the historicity of “modernism” as a verbal concept: for him, the story of its referent is far from over. Indeed, in the subjunctive mood of Berman’s report, in the imaginative grammar of his political commitment, the ideology of Progress that is inseparable from “modernism” must and will be spoken, in the future perfect tense, as its promissory consequence. Extending the memory of his “modernism” back to romanticism, then, he sends it forward as well in



the last passages of his “Introduction”: “I want to bring the dynamic and dialectical modernism of the nineteenth century to life again,” he begins his peroration, so “that going back can be a way to go forward: that remembering the modernisms of the nineteenth century can give us the vision and courage to create the modernisms of the twenty-first.”<sup>29</sup>

The decade opened by this book ends with the publication of a volume that features “modernism” in its title (the first of those we’ve considered in the postwar era to do so): *The Politics of Modernism*, a posthumously published collection of essays and lectures by Raymond Williams. The framing piece, his recent (1987) talk “When Was Modernism?”, offers a nearly thirty-year-old echo and variation to the “What Was Modernism?” question of 1960, but it also launches a stronger, more pointed riposte to the dramatic exaggerations in Berman’s particular history of “modernism.” So well-known is this account, in fact, Williams does not refer to it by name – although the editor of this retrospective collection makes a point of picking through a lot of its negative press in his “Introduction.”<sup>30</sup> In the talk itself, Williams counters Berman’s hyperboles, in particular the distended temporalities of the Progress plot for “modernism,” by returning attention to the word, which is spurred not just by the currency it has earned in the intervening years but also by the inflation of sense that Berman both initiates and typifies. Thus Williams carefully establishes the “just now” meaning in the root as he follows the modulating sense of this verbal concept from its beginnings in late Latinity through a now nearly millennium-and-a-half lifecycle. Williams brings this long story of the “just now” moment to its meaningful use for the period stretching from the 1890s to roughly midcentury; he emphasizes how the extraordinary range and pace of change over these years stimulated the intense consciousness about time that lies in the inherent idea of the word: here, then, is the “when” for which his “modernism” is the proper denominator.<sup>31</sup> But his tightening of the borders of its historical reference also coincides with a narrowing of its political possibilities. One of the strongest points in Williams’s critique of any idea of a revolutionary or progressive and evolving “modernism” goes to the same fact that Levin and Howe and a lot of the commentators have already confronted in the years when the word is earning its sense. “Modernism” is becoming a subject of academic study just as the era to which it refers is ending, and the idea of crisis time or time in crisis, lived out as the very claim on currency is outlived, seems to loop back from the circumstantial belatedness of the commentators into the motivating values of its subject. In this force field of acquired associations, “modernism” includes associations very close to the

received order of things, so that any “anti-bourgeois” associations are indeed long gone.<sup>32</sup> Any putative involvement of “modernism” in dynamic change – cultural as well as political – is effectively questioned. Williams certainly interrogates those notions.

This narrative line through four decades of midcentury scholarship follows a commentary that shows a predominance of Marxists, but not because Marxists owned – or opposed – “modernism” in any instrumental way. Rather, the time-mindedness of its verbal concept is critical to the story unfolding in the history to which Marxists bring their own political interests. And so the essential, definite, specifically temporal sense of the word is furthered, contested, and confirmed, and confirmed as it is contested, in a criticism committed equally to longer- and shorter-range stories of historical change. These issues are simplified considerably in some of the slogans to which the consciousness of modernism is routinely reduced, say, “Make it New” (not written by Pound in fact until the mid-1930s, a date which might locate the moment when modernism is beginning to be made Old). Nonetheless, the idea of transformational change in cultural and political histories as well as in works of aesthetic invention remains in place as a frame of reference and a standard of value in a proliferating work on “modernism,” which occurs through the turn of the next century.

Here, Marxist or not, Berman’s view of the future proves to have been prescient. His pluralizing of “modernisms,” in the remarkable tour-de-force finale to that book, was particularly prophetic. He already forecasts the reorienting work that Peter Nicholls will formalize in his 1995 volume, *Modernisms: A Literary Guide*.<sup>33</sup> In multiplying the number of “modernisms” across cultural histories as well as cultural geographies, Nicholls’s book provides a foundation for the soon-to-be-called New Modernist Studies, which will extend the frame of temporal reference for the Old Modernism as well as diversify its personnel. The forward slash of *Modernism/Modernity*, the journal of a Modernist Studies Association formed in 1999, points the referent of its first word into the future tense perennial of its second. In this wise, in gesturing to the emergence of contemporarily “modernist” work on the African continent and the Indian subcontinent, Berman was also already bringing into focus an interest in global modernisms that has now grown under various rubrics. These range from the problematic principle of “uneven development” to the directing premises of scholars like Susan Stanford Friedman, who see an experience of “modernism” as intrinsic to the historical progressions and lifecycle of any cultural history and, so, decisively and even polemically pluralize the noun. What is occurring in a

larger sense is a conversion of a mostly exclusionary idea, where the “ism” or “ist” of the “modern” requires the decision of an individual sensibility, to an inclusive notion, where, beyond any cénacle of chosen or choosing ones, an entire historical period may be called “modernist.”<sup>34</sup> Given the temporal significance of the root of the word, there is a constant, often productive tension between “modernism” as the *circumstance* of the modern and the *sensibility* of the modern, and much of the best recent scholarship turns this difference into a frame of reference and framework of analysis that is highly productive.

These developments also reveal impetuses not so abstract, and a memory of the particulars of the instigating history may help to put some of the motivating interests of recent work into intellectual – and political – perspective. The consolidation of interest in “modernism” from the late 1970s through the late 1980s focused interest, predictably, on the then “usual suspects.” “The Men of 1914” – Pound, Eliot, Joyce, and Wyndham Lewis – provides as a referential phrase a site of passage between modernisms new and old. The fact that three of those four men – Pound, Eliot, Lewis – maintained political commitments at odds with anything like Berman’s model of tolerantly progressive politics was certainly disconcerting to the institutionalization of “modernism” in university culture, which, at least in its transatlantic sphere, tended to go more rather than less “liberal.” A counterturn occurred, and the political trials of “modernism” were pursued and fueled in the 1990s with energy commensurate with earlier efforts to suppress those truths. By diversifying its personnel, however, by multiplying its subsidiary or contributory “isms,” all in all, by extending its temporal longevity, the “M” word earned its reprieve, and, newly spoken, offered a rubric renewed for a new era of “modernist studies,” which, to switch the plurals, is now the “study of modernisms.”

The title for this *History* remains in the singular, but not as a gesture of constriction or reaction to those developments in the history of criticism. Rather, the singular provides a means of maintaining a focus no less radical for remaining true to the root sense of the word, whose representative expressions are indeed multiple. Its brink-instant sensibility is associated necessarily with the ever-accelerating conditions of change in the circumstances of urban modernity, but it is essential to maintain the difference between “modern” (or “modernization”) and “modernism,” which, in turn, refer to the chronological location of the twentieth century (with its dynamic of change) and a special, ramifying self-consciousness about living in these specific conditions. *The Cambridge History of Modernism* uses its title term

thus to identify a distinctive temperament of “modernism” within the “modern” period, establishing the circumstances of modernized life as the ground and warrant for an art that becomes “modernist” by virtue of its demonstrably self-conscious involvement in this modern condition. This involvement dramatizes itself in the expression of a sensibility, the practice of an attitude, and, while the effects or metrics of its presence will vary necessarily from art to art and genre to genre, there will be a steady effort in these essays to discern this special identity of “modernism” as a particular (if diversely manifested) state of artistic and cultural mind. This “mind of modernism” may be invoked variously as sensibility, temperament, disposition, attitude, outlook – a range that indexes the extensive import of the special awareness we designate as “modernism” and that suggests as well something of the protean consciousness this *History* will document in its multiple centers of attention.

As already indicated, advance signals of this sensibility appear at specific points of mid-late nineteenth-century European culture, especially in France; the essays in this *History* follow it as it grows and changes in pan-European and transatlantic contexts, while developments in imperial and late imperial histories are reflected in representative postcolonial settings. The historical coverage moves between 1890 and (for reasons that have to do with space limitations and current uncertainty about end-dates) roughly 1970. There is of course a tapering effect at the ends of that historical spectrum. In the four major sections of this *History*, there is an increasing preponderance of attention to literary modernism in particular; unlike painting or sculpture or music, literature requires translation or at least multilingual knowledge to exert its influence, and it gains greatest emphasis here, among other reasons, because it serves to assert and test the internationalism that is understood commonly to be the establishing circumstance of artistic modernism (the importance of translation warrants a chapter in this *History*). In the comprehensive logic this volume follows from its initial sections, however, the emphasis on literature occurs within an understanding of “modernism” that presents this sensibility in its most widely working expressions, which include major developments in music, philosophy, psychology, and sociology, theoretical as well as practical science, painting and sculpture, and also the allied arts of architecture and urban design.

In any comprehensive account of “modernism,” its dominance as a category moves in tension – sometimes amiable, sometimes not – with its various, constitutive, subsidiary “isms”: Symbolism, imagism, futurism, vorticism, Dadaism, surrealism, expressionism, etc. These groups will not be

the subjects here of separate, dedicated chapters; they form a composite subject in a single chapter, which presents the evolving avant-garde of modernism in a kind of vertical profile across the early midcentury. These movements may differ considerably from each other in their visual and literary signatures, but they join in expressing the intensified faith of their adherents in particular programs of artistic attitude and practice and, as such, demonstrate the “just now” idea of modernism as an aesthetic sensibility and expression. As advance-guards in cultural history, moreover, these movements locate the action of modernism in a signal time, a signature tense – a present intensified with the sense of the break it is making from the past and the breakthrough it makes to a future. At this core of modernism as a sensibility, a temporal imaginary dominates its consciousness, and for this reason, among others, the first of the four sections that organize this *History* is “Modernism in time.”

“Modernism in time,” “Modernism in space,” “Modernism in and out of kind: genres, new genres, and composite genres,” and “Modernism in person, modernism in community”: the titles for the four sections of this *History* divide further in accordance with the frames of reference and the kinds of inquiry they organize.

Featuring time and space, the first two sections identify categories of perception and understanding that are fundamental to the sensibility of modernism. These headings also situate the expressions of this sensibility in the times and spaces of twentieth-century modernity. “Modernism in time” begins thus with a consideration of time as a subject of scientific and philosophical discussion as well as aesthetic representation, then moves this temporal imaginary in the complementary directions of the “avant-garde” and the “primitive” in the second and third chapters, then follows this sensibility through the historical locations which the consecutive decades mark. Similarly, in “Modernism in space,” an opening essay on the science and sociology as well as the philosophy and aesthetics of space leads to chapters which feature the sensibility of modernism in visual and spatial media but also, necessarily, in the spatiality of urban modernity in various locations and modalities. In the larger frame of global space, newly imaginable with the closing of frontiers, the concluding chapter of this section follows modernism into Latin American locations, where, in no peripheral instance, interaction between New and Old Worlds reveals an autonomously powered extension and refinement of continental sensibilities in Latin American locations.

The third and fourth sections feature the forms in which a consciousness of modernism reorganizes existing systems of thinking about individuality

and sociality as well as types and kinds in aesthetic representation. In sum, “Modernism in and out of kind: genres, new genres, and composite genres” connects the major inventions in the traditional genres of artistic expression to equally experimental thinking about categories of identity in the established taxonomies of cultural systems – gender and race as well as art and advertising, politics and technology. As a signal of existing divisions overcome, an essay on “Literature between media” in the middle of this section indicates the space between older forms of literature and newer media of transmission as a signal site of modernism’s improvisatory work with genre and media. This section opens thus with an essay on the *Gesamtkunstwerk* or total work of art, which, as it developed first in Wagnerian opera, expanded the thinking about the genres of aesthetic experience, seeking to combine visual and aural materials in a newly enriched synthesis: this is the impulse followed in its many turns and counterturns in subsequent chapters across that range of cultural production. Where this third section focuses on the forms of organization external to the persons of modernism, the fourth, “Modernism in person, modernism in community,” provides an account of some of the most significant individual figures in its history, who are seen both from the outside in and the inside out. An opening essay on Freud and Freudianism sets out the terms of then new and revolutionary notions of the person, which, among other things, unmade and remade a nineteenth-century idea of the liberal individual as an autonomous rational agent. This is the premise compelling developments in conceptions of the woman, or re-conceptions of the already New Woman, who has appeared in the third section of this *History* as a newly constituted agent of her gender and now, in the second essay of the fourth section, becomes the subject who registers best some of the developing pressures on an older idea of individuality. These new ideas also set the pattern for the interactions of the characters of modernism in the rest of the essays in this section. The featured artists and critics – even the forty-five followed here are intended not as a comprehensive but a representative selection – are offered as case studies of modernism in person, but also in groups, here in groups of three. One figure in these trios sometimes provides an unexpected point of resemblance with the other two and so, in the triangulated pattern, may offer a newly revealing view on each of those in the group. They may also be seen thus as individuals developing as artists in relation to the main lines of a modernism that is evolving with them and that is embodied in the works of the artists with whom they are associated in the individual chapters and, in large, in this section as a whole.

As the “Epilogue” indicates in its subtitle, “Modernism after postmodernism,” modernism’s long history is lengthening beyond the compass of this volume. Developments in cultural zones far from those associated with the generative grounds or staging areas of early mid-twentieth-century “modernism” do not need that term to be legitimated, however, and time will tell what those names should be. In any case, the critical activity on “modernism” promises longevity equal to the vitality of inquiry in the pages that follow. May this *History* take its place – whether provocation or cornerstone – in the work of Modernisms New and Old: the modernism of a twentieth century lengthening into a modernist study of many decades to come.

Notes

- 1 The Very Rev. W.R. Inge, D.D., K.C.V.O., “Modernism in Literature,” The English Association Presidential Address, 1937 (London: The English Association, 1937), 3. The series includes titles by T.S. Eliot, W.P. Ker, Stanley Baldwin, E.M.W. Tillyard, and other highly visible figures of political and literary cultures.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 3.
- 3 A good account of this history comes from Marvin R. O’Connell, *Critics on Trial: An Introduction to the Catholic Modernist Crisis* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1994).
- 4 Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, “The Name and Nature of Modernism,” in Bradbury and McFarlane (eds.), *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature* (1976; repr. London: Penguin, 1991), 19–55 (at 38–40).
- 5 Luca Somigli, “In the Shadow of Byzantium: Modernism in Italian Literature,” in Vivian Liska and Astradur Eysteinnsson (eds.), *Modernism*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2007), vol. II, 911–30 (at 922).
- 6 Nil Santiáñez, “Great Masters of Spanish Modernism,” in David T. Gies (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Spanish Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 479–99.
- 7 Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (1967; repr. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), passim.
- 8 Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, ed. Simon Gatrell and Juliet Grindle (Oxford University Press, 2005), 140.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 George J.H. Northcroft, “The Ache of Modernism,” *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 120 (September 1897), 671–73.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 673 ff.
- 12 R.S. Scott-James, *Modernism and Romance* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1908), 234–35, in chap. 14, “The New Romance,” 214–35.

- 13 *Ibid.*, 33. One measure of the persistence of Hardy's phrase in Scott-James's understanding of modernism shows where it provides the title of one of the most cogent reviews of his book: in *Current Literature*, 45 (July 1908), 48.
- 14 "Modernism at the Albert Hall," *The Athenaeum*, 4474 (July 26, 1913), 92–93. This review is signed "X."
- 15 "The Cubist Collaborators who have Galvanized the Russian Ballet into New Life," *Current Opinion*, 63 (October 1917), 249.
- 16 William Carlos Williams, "Marianne Moore," *The Dial* (May 1925), 393. This discursive and sometimes promotional piece presents itself as a review of Moore's *Observations*, also published by the Dial Press.
- 17 See Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Coming (London: Verso, 1986).
- 18 Sheldon Cheney, "America Shakes Hands with the Modernists," *The Independent*, 116 (June 19, 1926), 717.
- 19 Elias Thornleif Arnesen, "Modernism and Literature," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Washington (1924).
- 20 Laura Riding and Robert Graves, *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (London: Heinemann, 1927), *passim*.
- 21 Hall relayed this account in a letter of July 28, 1987 to Wilson's recent biographer, Lewis M. Dabney, who recounts it in *Edmund Wilson: A Life in Literature* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 159.
- 22 I've reconstructed this context for the writing of *Axel's Castle* in *Modernism and the Reinvention of Decadence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 15–19.
- 23 Robert Spiller, "The Influence of Edmund Wilson: The Dual Tradition," *The Nation*, February 22, 1958, 164.
- 24 Harry Levin, "What Was Modernism?," in Levin, *Refractions: Essays in Comparative Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 16.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 286.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 292.
- 27 Irving Howe, *Decline of the New* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1970): "The Culture of Modernism," 3–33, esp. 5–8.
- 28 Georg Lukács, "The Ideology of Marxism," *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* (1957), trans. John Mander and Necke Mander (London: Merlin Press, 1963), 17–46.
- 29 Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982), 35–36. The conceptual agenda of the book is represented in its "Introduction," 15–36.
- 30 Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*, ed. Tony Pinckney (1989; repr. London: Verso, 2007); Pinckney engages forcefully with Berman's premises in his "Editor's Introduction: Modernism and Cultural Theory," 1–29, esp. 13–15.



- 31 Williams, “When Was Modernism?”, in *The Politics of Modernism*, 31–34.
- 32 Ibid., 34–35.
- 33 Peter Nicholls, *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
- 34 See, for example, Susan Stanford Friedman, “Periodizing Modernism: Post-colonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies,” *Modernism/Modernity*, 13/3 (2006), 425–43, and “Planetarity: Musing Modernist Studies,” *Modernism/Modernity*, 17/3 (2010), 471–99.

