

A History of the Modernist Novel

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A History of the Modernist Novel *A History of the Modernist Novel* reassesses the modernist canon and produces a wealth of new comparative analyses that radically revise the novel's history. Drawing on American, English, Irish, Russian, French, and German traditions, leading scholars challenge existing attitudes about realism and modernism and draw new attention to everyday life and everyday objects. In addition to its exploration of new forms such as the modernist genre novel and experimental historical novel, this book considers the novel in postcolonial, transnational, and cosmopolitan contexts. *A History of the Modernist Novel* also considers the novel's global reach while suggesting that the epoch of modernism is not yet finished. **Gregory Castle** is a professor of British and Irish literature at Arizona State University. He has published *Modernism and the Celtic Revival*, *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman*, and *The Literary Theory Handbook*. He has edited *Postcolonial Discourses*, volume one, of Wiley-Blackwell's *Encyclopedia of Literary and Cultural Theory*. He has written essays on Joyce, Yeats, Wilde, Stoker, and other modernist and postcolonial writers, and he is working on a monograph entitled *Modernism and the Temporalities of Irish Revival*.

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Acknowledgments When I was first approached by Ray Ryan at Cambridge University Press to edit *A History of the Modernist Novel*, I was wary: How could it be done? I considered an emphasis on individual authors (the Great Personality theory of literary history) or on movements and "-isms" (the Great Event theory) but rejected both in favor of an approach that looked at ideas, problems, and themes as they were articulated at various points (temporal and geographic) and in various constellations of social and cultural significance. I wanted to examine the destiny of the

novel ca. 1890–1950, an epoch that witnessed great technological development alongside the most extraordinary savagery; an epoch in which literary and artistic innovations were often coupled with reactionary political positions; an epoch that witnessed the highest forms of spiritualism alongside the brute realities of lived experience. One could say the passage of literature through this epoch enacts something akin to Adorno and Horkheimer’s “dialectics of enlightenment,” in which rationality reveals its dangerous mythic side. One could say of modernism, as Habermas says of modernity at large, that it is an “unfinished project” precisely because this dialectic continues to propel certain trends in contemporary literary production. *A History of the Modernist Novel* is founded on the idea that at any given point new interventions will change the contours of this history (of any literary history), so it is *unfinished* in the sense that it puts into play a series of original investigations into the historical “placement” of the novel in the modernist epoch. It is our hope that these essays will spark conversations about the direction of modernism, the destiny of the novel form, the nature of literary history and literary canons, and the authors who might have been included or those who might have been discussed differently. I have been tutored in modernism and the novel by a great many people. For longer than I can recollect, there’s been John Paul Riquelme, who taught me much about modernism and about editing. I can still recall the clarity and rigor of Michael North’s instruction, which is echoed in every one of his books, and Cal Bedient’s insistence on a modernism that doesn’t sit still. I couldn’t begin to do justice to the multitude of critics and theorists on the novel from whom I have learned since college. My colleagues in Irish studies – people such as Nicholas Allen, Margot Backus, Patrick Bixby, Kevin Dettmar, Sean Duffy, Seán Kennedy, David Lloyd, Vicki Mahaffey, Margot Norris, Jean-Michel Rabaté, and Joseph Valente – have taught me how powerfully Irish writers have influenced the general development of modernist fiction. All of the contributors to this volume are people I have read, admired, quoted, and grappled with over the years, and I am grateful that each and every one participated in the project. Their timeliness and professionalism would be the envy of any editor. As would be the work of the project manager, Sathish Kumar, and his team at Cambridge University Press, and my graduate intern, Christopher Hall, who provided the index. I am happy to have completed another project under Ray Ryan’s direction, an editor who has shaped the Cambridge University Press list on modernism in new and exciting ways. The Cambridge series on literary history, of which this volume is a part, is an invaluable contribution to literary and cultural study, and I am proud to be part of it. Much of my work on this volume was produced in Dublin in the summer of 2014, while being nurtured by such arguments in sound as those produced by Benoît Pioulard, Brian Eno, Stars of the Lid, Labradford, and the master, Miles Davis. I am grateful for their company. As for the history of love? I continue to learn that from Camille Angeles-Castle, a conqueror of time. **Introduction** Matter in Motion in the Modernist Novel

Gregory Castle

Modernism and the Problem of the Real In 1933, Virginia Woolf wrote in her diary of her frustration with the novel. “The thing is to be venturous, bold, to take every possible fence. One might introduce plays, poems, letters, dialogues: must get the round, not only the flat. Not the theory only. And conversation; argument.”¹ *A History of the Modernist Novel* attempts to fill in this tantalizing and elliptical description of the novel, made at a time when experimentalism in the form was at its height. It confirms in sometimes surprising ways that the modernist novel has always been “venturous and bold,” from the era of the sensational aesthetic novel of Beauty to the late modernist tales of beautiful failures. It charts the myriad temporalities, lines of development, subgenres and styles that flourished in the modernist epoch (ca. 1880–1950).² A multivoiced approach to literary history suits well a genre characterized by pluralism and a degree of aesthetic experimentation that frequently entailed collaboration, interdisciplinary borrowings, and hybrid literary forms. Its generic richness – which includes naturalist, aesthetic, fantasy, adventure, Gothic, comic, impressionistic, didactic and parodic styles and modes – is the result of a singular openness to the reality it strives to include. M. M. Bakhtin recognized this in the 1930s, in his examination of the novel as a dynamic and dialogic form. The novel, he wrote, is “the sole genre that continues to develop, that is as yet uncompleted,” the sole genre to occupy a zone of “maximally close contact between the represented object and contemporary reality in all its

inconclusiveness.”³ Literary history of the modernist epoch, as Chris Baldick points out, remains “strongly marked” by an emphasis on “radical breaks and unprecedented innovations.”⁴ Speaking of Woolf’s and D. H. Lawrence’s critical reflections on the novel, Baldick writes, that “[b]oth signal an important sceptical departure from habit and convention, a spasm of rebellion that is felt in the experimental construction not just of their own novels in the 1920s but of many other attempts to escape the imaginary tyrant of novelistic custom.”⁵ This “novelistic custom” relied on realism, particularly its tendency to confirm the middle-class, liberal-democratic ideology of the society it represented. Baldick shows that modernism produced a variety of realisms (environmental, psychological, socialist, provincial, artistic) and argues forcefully that “there are oversights and distortions involved in [a] partition of prose fiction into two distinct continents marked on our map as ‘realism’ and ‘modernism.’”⁶ However, contemporary reassessments of realism do not always escape the chronology that would place modernism *after* realism, which means that the classic “antinomy” remains at the center of the discussion.⁷ Many of the essays in this volume resist the dominant narratives in modernist studies, not the least those that modernists themselves constructed. Woolf’s widely influential essays on fiction, particularly her critical assessment of Edwardian realists such as John Galsworthy, Arnold Bennett, and H. G. Wells, established a powerful story of how the modern novel transcended the empirical niceties of early twentieth-century realism by exploring the spiritual dimensions of the “dark places of psychology.”⁸ As David Bradshaw and Anne Fernihough show in this volume, Woolf not only misjudged these novelists but misrecognized the value of materialism and the narrative attention to everyday life – a value she saw quite differently, when she wondered, in 1933, if it was possible to “give ordinary waking Arnold Bennett life the form of art.”⁹ *A History of the Modernist Novel* returns to key debates like this to reassess the importance of everyday life and the technical means by which the novel tried to register and represent it.¹⁰ It places canonical figures in new constellations, explores global connections and describes new hybrid forms, like the “modernist genre novel” and experimental historical fiction. On the evidence it provides, we can say confidently that the modernist novel was *always in an experimental mode* and it was *always engaged with realism*, and in this double-barreled way it sought narrative access to the Real (i.e., to the irreducible materiality of lived experience) and to the temporal and geographic coordinates of our experience of it.¹¹ The modernist frame of reference in this *History* includes language, narrative form, popular media networks, new and diverse audiences, transnational influences and pressures, the idea of cosmopolitanism as a *Weltanschauung*, and the materiality of everyday life. English-language traditions, together with some of the main lines of continental European development (Russian, German, French) are covered in some detail, as well as new modes of writing, publishing, distributing, and reading modernist fiction. While this *History* is concerned primarily with work in the period before the Second World War,

[Parts IV](#) and

[V](#) offer reflections on how modernism in the novel reorients itself in the 1940s and early 1950s. This raises the question of belatedness: is it possible that late modernists arrived after the feast of innovation? Is it because they come late that we find such a pervasive aura of failure in their work? Failure is a keynote throughout the modernist epoch, but the relation of failure (and *failing*) to innovation changes as modernist writers learn to rethink the underlying humanist values that shape their sense of success and failure in creative, ethical, and practical life. In late modernism, a trend that has coursed through the epoch comes into its own as a defining trait: the transvaluation of *failure* (defined as part of a rigid, technocratic binary with *success*) into *failing*, which Theodor Adorno associated with the most experimental of modernist works – works that “push contradiction to the extreme, and realize themselves in their resultant downfall.”¹² *Coming late*, therefore, does not reduce artistic expression to second-degree intensities or derivations, or to sterile, differential repetitions. Late modernism is conditioned by temporal openness and freedom, by geographical extension and cosmopolitan belonging, but also by the limits of locality and the failures of freedom and belonging. It throws open to the reader the spectacle of a world split in two: radical solipsism of the sort we find in Samuel Beckett is matched with a vertiginous sense of time and space in which multiple voices create the din of a community – a confused sense of

belonging (“a statement to be made, by them, by me, some slight obscurity here”¹³) that, for all its failings, constitutes a new narrative dynamic for character development and the consideration of human action. One way to approach writing a history of such a complex genre – one with multiple temporalities and modalities of innovation, that resists totalization even as it experiments with unifying visions – is to formulate it as a *negative* dialectical art form that aspires to hold in creative tension two different worlds: the *expressed* world, the diegetic level of fiction that constitutes the “world” of the artwork, and the *represented* world, the non-diegetic level of lived experience that mimetic art seeks to imitate and emulate through faithful resemblance.¹⁴ The represented world, which in fictional forms is manifested most effectively in realist styles, plays a decisive role in the development of the modernist novel, even though it is “inevitably and voluntarily mutilated” in the process,¹⁵ for it is through this mutilation that the expressed world of the fiction emerges out of the world of objects and lived experience. If realist styles and techniques of notation are used, they serve primarily to augment an anti-mimetic world that does not strive to reflect or resemble the “given” state of things.¹⁶ In its tactical, *notational* use of realism, the modernist novel augments an expressed world of anti-mimetic richness by providing narrative points of purchase for reflection and action: the objects that are so prominent in modernist anti-mimetic art. Realism is at once an inheritance and an opportunity, a practice to be appropriated in the service of an aesthetic agenda that is inimical to its underlying mimetic impulse, which is to create resemblances to the observable world in art works. Appropriations of realism by modernist and avant-garde writers can thus have the effect of *derealizing* narrative, a tactic found in the sensational novels of Ouida, in Andrei Belyi’s *Petersburg* (1913–14), and in Oscar Wilde’s *Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890–91), in which the realism of the story is rendered *unreal, umheimlich*, by the introduction of sensational, Gothic, and melodramatic narrative styles; realist notation, when it is used, jars with the aesthetic fantasy that contains it. Hybrid styles that feature realism tend to accomplish de-realization by virtue of rhetorical elaborations, descriptive exaggerations, or abstractions that serve both to undermine and reaffirm the realist “base” style. To de-realize realism is to make it *more real* as a style, an anti-mimetic style that resists vulgar and conventional “novelistic custom.” The highest virtue of the nineteenth-century realist novel, especially in France and England, was not its verisimilitude but its generative power, for it was able to create vast and detailed represented worlds, to which their narrators’ ardent aspirations lent an affective dimension and human shape. The represented world in such fictions was as much a reflection of hope as it was of current social conditions.¹⁷ This generative power is not easily refuted. There is a clear trajectory in the history of the modernist novel, a movement forward that entwines realist narration first with aestheticism, then the avant-garde realism of D. H. Lawrence and E. M. Forster, then the protean-styled or “Daedalean” experimentalism of the high modernists (Joyce, Woolf, Proust, Gertrude Stein, Belyi, Thomas Mann, Robert Musil, Flann O’Brien), the highly refined neo-realism of Ernest Hemingway, early William Faulkner, Elizabeth Bowen, and Kate O’Brien, and the ruthless subtractions from representation that we find in Beckett. What sets the modernist apart from the nineteenth-century realist novelist, for whom the world of the novel maps nearly seamlessly with the world of representation, is that realism becomes a tactic or a technique, a style among others, rather than the literary index of a *Weltanschauung*, in which mimesis both mirrors a specific social order and legitimizes the ideology behind it. What most critics mean by “conventional” or Victorian realism is a form of narrative that assumes a stable and faithful representation of the lived experience of the world as it is *given to* representation. This is the mimetic trick of resemblance. Mimesis calls for a close resemblance to the given world of lived experience in representation (the givenness of reality is *presented again*). The realist novel, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, sought to reconcile lived experience with representation, the latter mobilized in such a way as to be the transparent medium of the life narrated.¹⁸ In line with nineteenth-century psychology and social science, the realist novel developed styles of empirical description and dialogue that helped to create a normative discourse of everyday life. It served both an aesthetic function (by giving a “reality effect” to representation) and an ideological function (by redistributing social position and class, at the level of plot and incident, and by relying on omniscient third person and first person narrators).¹⁹ If the nineteenth-century realists sought to reconcile language and the world in a

style that veiled the struggle for reconciliation (in the sense of an achieved social totality), then modernists, by virtue of their tactical reuse of realist techniques and methods, aspired toward a reconciliation that was no less utopian but freed from the necessity to achieve a totality or to devalue the struggle that substitutes for that achievement. They put more creative and critical pressure on the negative, and struggled to resist dialectical closure.²⁰ If nineteenth-century realism dialectically integrates art and life, narrative and social experience, then modernist realism seeks to scuttle this integration through tactics of defamiliarization and misrecognition that accentuate the struggle against totality and open the novel to a more inclusive view of everyday life. The discipline of resemblance that characterizes conventional realist fiction thrives in modernism precisely because resemblance itself can be mobilized in a hybrid or pastiche narrative as a style among other styles; for example, in Joyce's *Ulysses*, an "initial style" of stream of consciousness uses the mimetic principle of resemblance to show how language differs from the world. "Joyce had created a new realism," writes Arthur Powers, "in an atmosphere that was at the same time half-factual and half-dream."²¹ Joyce's modernism requires the notational function of realism in order to stipulate the resemblance it then perpetually disavows. Novelists such as Woolf, Stein, and Beckett routinely use resemblance (echo, repetition, parallel) to dissemble reality; their language strives to resemble (or re-assemble) lived experience, its tempo and temporalities, and does so in part by estranging itself from the conventions of mimesis. Throughout the modernist epoch, the novel achieves one of the classical goals of art, as articulated by Sir Philip Sidney, who wrote that "[Nature's] world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden."²² The more radical the stylistic innovations are, the more tenuous the hold on a borrowed embodiment of narrative time and the more "golden" its aspect in the aesthetic autonomy it creates for itself. The modernist novel develops its own world; like all narrative art, it offers its own time to the reader even as it acknowledges conventional temporal markers such as chronology or sequence and the time of world history (as Woolf does in *Mrs. Dalloway* with periodic references to Big Ben). There are levels of "represented reality" in even the most resolutely anti-mimetic novel. "And to think I try my best not to talk about myself," notes the title character in Beckett's *Molloy*. "In a moment I shall talk about the cows, about the sky, if I can."²³ Experimental modernists, who explore the creative and critical potential of anti-mimetic literature, do not abandon realism so much as transform the field of what is representable in a realist style so that it draws attention to the objects (cows, sky) that are merely background in the realist novel and to the subject's inwardness, his reflections and affections ("If I can"), which are the stuff of the modernist novel. The point is not to achieve resemblance but rather to register in language and literary form the lived experience of the present in a flash of being that resembles nothing, save the flight-pattern of its own emergence.

On the Theory and History of the Novel The theory of the novel emerged within modernism itself. The prefaces and essays written by the likes of Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and Virginia Woolf have had a profound impact on our conception of the modernist novel as an enterprise that registers the fine gradations of consciousness, that attends to the inner life and memories of one's protagonists, that creates from experience of the world a "magical suggestiveness" (in Conrad's vivid phrase) that grants to prose narrative some of the qualities of musical sound. For these modernists, the novel was a forum for expressing what could be known about the world, for offering intimations of the quicksilver contact we make with objects, for conveying the "triumph and the jingle and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead" that overwhelms Mrs. Dalloway in "this moment of June."²⁴ For all of the commentary these novelists made on the *form* of the novel, a strictly formalist theory of the novel did not emerge until much later.²⁵ Wayne Booth's *Rhetoric of Fiction* (1966) ushered in a brand of formal analysis that concentrated on point of view, narrative disposition (reliable and unreliable), and the question of narrative *voice*, though his rhetorical approach was eclipsed by the structural narratology of Gerard Genette and Roland Barthes. In the meantime, the dialectical materialism of Georg Lukács's *Theory of the Novel* (1920) offered a critical perspective on modernist experimentalism. Ideally, "the novel establishes a fluctuating yet firm balance between becoming and being; as the idea of becoming, it becomes a state. Thus the novel, by transforming itself into a normative being of becoming, surmounts itself."²⁶ From a dialectical perspective, realism both represents the "real world" (for analysis and

reform) and constitutes what is real through representation. The nineteenth-century realist novel, for Lukács, was a great bourgeois invention, powered by “the old genuine dialectic” that, by the 1940s, had been “consigned to oblivion.”²⁷ The greatness of this conventional form did not rest on its having *actually* achieved dialectical closure (seamless integration of narrative and experience), but on its ardent aspiration toward that achievement. The failures of the modernist novel were, for Lukács, the failures of a genre to grasp its historical moment and to express, through formal means, a remedy for it. What Lukács inaugurated subsequent theorists developed further, from Bakhtin who had argued, beginning in the late 1920s, that the novel was dialogic, parodic, carnivalesque, and constantly changing,²⁸ to postwar touchstones such as Erich Auerbach, whose *Mimesis* (1946) remains an important account of how novelistic realism developed out of a long tradition of mimetic representation, and Ian Watt, whose *Rise of the Novel* (1957) inaugurated a mode of literary history that charts the English novel’s emergence and rise as a function of political and cultural modernization. Something of this approach is discerned in the historicist critics of the novel, such as Walter Benn Michaels, for whom the novel’s legibility was tied strongly to our understanding of social conditions (e.g., the relationship between the “gold standard” and narrative technique).²⁹ These materialist approaches, and those driven by phenomenology to explore the horizon of the novel’s fictive worlds,³⁰ have led novel theory toward what has remained its central questions: What is the relationship between form and reality? Can the novel do more than shape life into representations? Can it “express” the “qualia” of everyday life, the immediate experience of sensation? In the last half century, there have been many attempts to retell the history of the novel in terms of its relation to the lived experience of everyday life, a relation that Raymond Williams has described in terms of “structures of feeling,” “the culture of a period ... the particular living result of all the elements in the general organization,” which often “corresponds to the dominant social character.”³¹ Materialist and feminist revisionism has challenged orthodox attitudes toward everyday life, especially the structures of feeling governing domestic life and the life of women. Works such as Nancy Armstrong’s *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (1987) and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s *Madwoman in the Attic* (2000), tell the story of women novelists in a way that reorients our understanding of the genre, preeminently by widening the scope of objects and events, characters and themes that were available for representation.³² In the wake of Homi Bhabha’s seminal work on “narrative and nation,”³³ many studies have considered the impact of empire and colonialism on the shape of the modernist novel. Some of these retain an interest in the nation and nationalism, as in John Kucich’s study of British fiction and the fantasies of empire, while others consider alternatives to national identification and belonging, as in Jessica Berman’s study of “cosmopolitan communities” in modernist fiction.³⁴ Some studies focus primarily on the modernist novel and its investments in the imperial project, though in others, such as Simon Gikandi’s *Writing in Limbo: Modernism and Caribbean Literature* (1992), postcolonial literatures are pitted against canonical modernism. This viewpoint has been challenged in recent years, most notably by Neil Lazarus, and we are now more inclined to see a modernist moment entwined with a postcolonial one.³⁵ Michael Valdez Moses argues that the novel is fundamental to our understanding of global culture: “the very process of global modernization that has made a world literature possible has itself become a principle subject of that literature.”³⁶ The upsurge of interest in globalization and cosmopolitanism, together with a resurgence of interest in Immanuel Wallerstein’s “world-systems” theory, has created a new context for understanding the modernist novel as a development within a larger global network of literary production and circulation.³⁷ One of the most ambitious projects is Franco Moretti’s five-volume *Collana Romanzo* (2001–03). The two-volume English-language edition (*The Novel*, 2006) is just shy of 2,000 pages and maps the complexity of the literary field with an analytical method that re-conceives *genre as a global system* in which analysis cuts across geopolitical boundaries. But it also shows the novel’s continuing efforts to narrate the ambivalent space of the nation: at once a location and a *dislocation*; an ancestral land, language and way of life, but also a global terrain in which national distinctions are configured in terms of a vast and expanding global network. In a quite different vein, Pascale Casanova’s *The World Republic of Letters* has been widely influential in reading global literature as

an extension of national traditions and languages. Casanova is interested in systems mapping; but unlike Moretti, she calls a halt to the critical tendency to disavow or undervalue national literary traditions precisely by linking them to the global systems of which they are, at bottom, mirror images. Her approach hinges on the difference between *national* and *international* writers: "The internal configuration of each national space precisely mirrors the structure of the international literary world as a whole." She speaks of a "rivalry" between "'national' writers (who embody a national or popular definition of literature) and 'international' writers (who uphold an autonomous conception of literature)." The "world literary space" is created by "a composite of the various national literary spaces, which are themselves bipolar and differentially situated in the world structure" with respect to "national and international poles."³⁸ In Casanova's analysis of the global impact of representation, "bipolarity" appears to operate in something like a dialectical fashion. Thus Paris is the "capital of the literary world ... the gateway to the 'world market of intellectual goods,' as Goethe put it, the chief place of consecration in the world of literature."³⁹ The overtones of a spiritualized sublation are clear, as is the recourse to Goethe, whose conception of aesthetico-spiritual *Bildung* is a spectral presence in Pascale's (and Moretti's) global literary system. The last quarter century has seen much in the way of histories of the novel,⁴⁰ and there are plenty of literary studies of the modernist epoch (1890–1950) that have been invaluable to me and to the contributors in this volume. Yet none of these studies attempts to do what we are doing here, which is to tell *a* history by telling *many* histories. This is accomplished through the editorial gambit that brings the many together into a collection (which still resists being a singularity), that makes visible the multiple, recursive temporalities within the (nevertheless) forward-moving development of the modernist novel.

Outline of a History *A History of the Modernist Novel* seeks to understand the main lines of development of a form that emerged in multiple times and places. This requires an arrangement of chapters that allows for forward motion as well as lateral extension and thick description. Each part of the volume seeks to capture a moment in modernism – the 1890s, impressionism and early experimentation; a transitional period of reevaluation and experimentation with realism; a general embrace at modernism's maturity of the materiality of everyday life; also in that maturity, the rise of new genres and new means of publication and distribution; the interwar and postwar moments of globalization and late modernist reconsolidations. A method of braiding multiple reflections on different historical moments in order to describe a longer and more encompassing temporal passage is meant to capture the history of a literary field that is at once strongly localized and global in reach and extension. The range of themes and richness of stories, the complex intersections of global, national, and regional literatures, of linguistic and ideological difference – all of this demands that we avoid creating a chronology and focus on moments or constellations in the novel's development, wherein we may see both the progression through time and the spatial extension of simultaneous events within its flow.

Part I: Modernism and the Challenge to the Real Bliss Perry, at the turn of the twentieth century, recognized how important realism was to readers and also how *modern* it was: "In exact correspondence with that marvelous technical power exhibited in modern French pictures of the realistic school, there has been developed in realistic fiction a fidelity, a life-likeness, a vividness, a touch, which are extraordinary and new."⁴¹ Early modernists rejected not this, but what for them was an inartistic tendency merely to copy. "I hate vulgar realism in literature," Lord Henry tells his friends in Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*. "The man who could call a spade a spade should be compelled to use one. It is the only thing he is fit for."⁴² The aesthetes, like the Gothic novelists, were avowedly anti-mimetic, but they used realist notation to convey the *unreal* pleasures (and horrors) of excess and exaggeration, as in *Dorian Gray*, Joris-Karl Huysmans's *À Rebours* (1884), and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). The chapters in

[Part I](#) challenge key assumptions held by readers and critics alike, principally, the assumption that modernism rejected not only the realist novel but also its underlying premise of mimesis, the production of resemblances of the *real world* (the object world of our everyday lived experience). Many other assumptions – about character, plot, theme, and of course narrative point of view – follow from this one. In early modernist novels, realism retains some of its conventional force,

particularly in plot development and description of setting, character, and action; but the same novels might also deploy a realist style tactically to undermine normative genre functions (e.g., faithful mimetic depiction of social milieu, gender and sexual roles, chronology) in the service of non-mimetic aesthetic moods, psychological states, abstract ideas, and concepts. A good example of this is the aesthetic novel, which, as Joseph Bristow points out, emerges from the sensation fiction of Ouida, in the late nineteenth century, and is refined in "Pater's superbly studied prose before turning to the innovations that Wilde made when pursuing the idea that the purpose of art lay in the finest experience of beauty." The aesthetic novel combined stylistic bravura with a tendency toward candid treatment of taboo subjects. If the "sensations and ideas" that motivate the protagonist in Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* do not form part of a "morally purposeful plot," they more than compensate by heightening the "responsiveness to beauty." The ethics of pleasure, "modern Cyrenaicism," motivates the aesthetic novel, whether in the Gothic and supernatural form of *Dorian Gray* or in the "campy poetics" of Richard Firbank, whose aestheticism is the "perverse apogee" of a style of dissident desire that characterizes the aesthetic novel at large. Literary impressionism also sought to redefine the role of perception in literature, but focused less on sensationalism and excess than on the refinement of language in the pursuit of capturing the "fleeting impression," as Walter Pater described it.⁴³ Paul Armstrong shows that "the impressionist project began with a desire to radicalize the aesthetic of realism by exposing and thematizing its epistemological conditions of possibility." Like Anne Fernihough and Enda Duffy in this volume, Armstrong draws on William James, a key theorist behind modernist conceptions of consciousness and self-consciousness, to argue that the doubleness of the impressionist viewpoint conjoins two ways of *being*: immersion in another's consciousness and a simultaneous awareness of "the disjunctions between its hold on the world and other points of view that would construe things differently." Cognitive pattern making, or "consistency building," is "a temporal process of projecting expectations about pattern that are then modified, refined, or overturned." As James liked to remark, "we live forwards, ... but we understand backwards."⁴⁴ Aestheticism and impressionism developed innovative ways of using *sensation* to convey the empirical dimensions of the represented world (Andrei Belyi's *Petersburg* [1913–14] is a good example of this). Styles preeminent in conveying interiority and consciousness – impressionism, stream of consciousness, free-indirect discourse – helped to give shape and form to the ironic conjunctions and surprising dislocations of literary decorum that are the staples of anti-mimetic fiction. Early French and Russian modernists took the Real to be the central problem. Jean-Michel Rabaté unpacks an obscure observation that Proust made early in his career: "We stand in front of the novelist as slaves in front the Emperor: with one word, he can set us free (*il peut nous affranchir*)."⁴⁵ Rabaté argues that the "fictional universes" of writers such as Édouard Dujardin permitted the novelist the freedom to "become someone else: a general, a weaver, a singer, a peasant." Here again we see an emphasis on everyday life – *Le quotidien si précieux à saisi* – that enables a shift from post-symbolist experimentation to an "ethical modernism" in which "daring experimentation with values dominated." André Gide, Guillaume Apollinaire, and Jules Romains feature in this tradition of modernism in which the author is a liberating force. By the time Proust starts writing the *Recherche*, the novel has become a "layered space of writing" in which all subjects are set free from their usual positions. The "confusion of self and book" that Rabaté finds in the *Recherche* embodies the freedom of the modernist novel, in which "we experience other lives by proxy" and "leave our cares and selves behind in a giddy superabundance of freedom." Leonid Livak's chapter reminds us that experimental approaches to the Real do not always align themselves with a modernist ethos. In the USSR, "modernism" was a term of abuse and a catchall concept that functioned as Soviet culture's foil. Livak evades this pejorative sense of the modern and offers a fresh view of the role Russian novels played in advancing the techniques and values of modernist fiction. At the heart of Russian experimentalism is a "new sensibility" "predicated on uncertainty and instability." This sensibility arises from an "apocalyptic sense of decline and concomitant quest for transcendence" and a desire through experiment to move "*a realibus ad realiora*, from the real to the more real." Belyi's *Petersburg* exerted a tremendous "modernizing" influence by using language as "reality-generating medium." His use of surrealism together with the more realist style of the

roman à clef produced a hybrid form that was grounded in the traditions of Russian fiction, yet responded to the call of the avant-garde. His work was especially important for young émigré writers such as Vladimir Nabokov, who drew on a number of literary models and molded a modernist style out of experimentalism with the “new sensibility” itself. This self-reflexive turn is a general tendency in modernist novels that reject mimesis and resemblance as foundational principles – and that draw from language new forms of resemblance for a new sensorium.

Part II: Realism in Transition Aesthetic and literary movements in early modernism are founded on transition, often violent, abrupt, oppositional, and critical transition. The transition from the heyday of nineteenth-century realist fiction to the bold innovations of the early modernist novel has been a cornerstone in our understanding of the emergence of modernism. As we have seen in [Part I](#), early modernism was a time of widespread reassessment of what actually constituted the “real” and “reality” and how this reassessment was expressed in novelistic terms.

[Part II](#) continues this exploration, with an emphasis on the reassessment of realism itself, which is perhaps the most important feature of transition in early modernism. William Dean Howells articulates the case for realism plainly: “realism is nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material,” he writes, a means “to depict things as they are, life as it is.”⁴⁶ Howells’s call is the logical and aesthetic limit of nineteenth-century novelistic realism, diametrically opposed to the early modernists who did not believe that a call for the “truthful treatment of material” and the depiction of “life as it is” could remain credible so long as there was radical disagreement over what constituted the novelist’s “material.” Virginia Woolf declared that realists were concerned only with the accurate description of material life, while the “spiritualists” were concerned with life “as it really is” – “a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from beginning of consciousness to the end.”⁴⁷ Bradshaw reconsiders the debate between Woolf and the Edwardian realists, especially Arnold Bennett and H. G. Wells, and begins by establishing that the debate was not between opposing sides (conventional realism vs. experimental modernism) but between peers in a tumultuous and rapidly changing literary *habitus*. Woolf and the Edwardians were equally opposed to a “repressive literary culture,” and if we think of modernism in terms of resistance to such a culture, then Wells’s *Ann Veronica* (1909) should be read as a modernist text “because of its ground-breaking candor” about sexuality and gender – a quality that aligns it with Joyce’s *Dubliners*. Though Woolf pits modernist “spiritualists” against Edwardian materialists in her hugely influential essay “Modern Fiction” (1921), she was much closer to being a “materialist” than she thought. “Deftly and discreetly,” Bradshaw concludes, “yet no less ardently than her Edwardian old guard, Woolf was intent on making her reader reflect on ‘real things beneath the show.’” Howard Booth illustrates another dimension to the Edwardian/modernist debate, one that seems to have provoked developments in the fiction of D. H. Lawrence and E. M. Forster. Booth links the need to experiment with representations of reality within a tradition of radical thought. “Their texts look for alternatives to modernity,” Booth writes, and these alternatives were “often figured in terms of the organic, and a full connection to the surrounding world – a life, in short, beyond alienation.” Forster’s *Maurice* and Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, in very different ways employ outlawed forms of sexual desire and sexual identity in an attempt to offer new modes of development and community. The “good style” of French aestheticism was rejected by Lawrence and Forster, Booth argues; they rejected “compensatory structures of art” in favor of “reparative” forms and styles that could stand as alternatives to an oppressive canon of literary forms. This reparative spirit runs through American fiction, as Janet Casey and Deborah Clarke show in chapters that argue for the political potential behind what Alain Locke, theorist of the Harlem Renaissance, calls “enlightened realism” and the transformative potential of the everyday, particularly as it is expressed in domestic contexts. In Willa Cather’s work, Casey argues, realism is an undercurrent – “more accurately, perhaps, a persistent *overcurrent* – that unites superficially disparate schools of modernist fiction, especially on the American scene.” The “middlebrow novel,” African-American fiction, and Depression-era socialist fiction all employ realism tactically to overcome the limits of the dominant “reality.” The revolutionary character of these texts stems from their refusal to legitimize the dominant social world. If they used realist styles, it was “a conscious, meaningful social-aesthetic choice within the context of modernism.” Clarke’s analysis of

the domestic in Edith Wharton, Willa Cather, and Nella Larsen takes a similarly broad view of American writing in a chapter that reassesses the importance of the everyday world – particularly that which has been gendered feminine under the category “domestic” – and the way this reactivates realism for modernism. “Wharton’s exploration of a modernist domesticity,” Clarke writes, “not only reflects ... the emptiness of modern life but also illustrates that the ‘ordinary’ domestic enterprise provides not a refuge but an intensification of that emptiness.” Modernism is domestic, we might say, and this point is especially powerful in the “heterodox modernism” of Nella Larsen, who imbricates consumerism with race and identity, thereby resignifying modernist domesticity as “a space for women to participate in modernity – or to underscore their exclusion from it – and to establish that modernity and domesticity are mutually dependent, not mutually exclusive.”

Part III: The Matter of Modernism Impressionism, aestheticism, early forms of free indirect style, stream of consciousness – these approaches to the new sensorium of late modernity made possible forms of realism more sensitive to the object world and to lived experience. Ironically, it is very often the case that an appeal to just such quantities – objects, things, bodies – in the modernist novel enables a canny misrecognition, the deliberate refusal to default to known *cognitions* of the object world around us. This refusal in turn calls into question the terms of *re-cognition* (of truth, of authenticity) that govern our experience of material existence. Enda Duffy explores how we process this world from a scientific perspective and sees a general movement from muscle to nerves. An “altered model of the subject” emerges that resists state-sponsored fantasies of authentic being. He claims that “modernism’s radical move is to lose interest in conventional trajectories of subjective feeling, to attend instead to human energy and its expenditure. ‘Deep feeling’ is replaced by the ideal of a life lived intensely. Why did this change occur?” The answer, put simply, is that we became more aware of new sensory experiences. William James again emerges as a crucial theorist of modernism who refuses to salvage emotion in humanist terms. Duffy argues that modernists such as Joyce and Woolf dwell “on energy expenditure rather than accounts of how emotions were developed, altered, matured.” The radical recasting of emotion that we see in these “stress texts” raises big questions: “Do they teach the reader how to manage ‘stress’?” Or do they challenge “the very presumptions about the relation of organism to environment upon which the category of ‘stress’ was conceived?” These questions are raised with understandable urgency by novelists who focus on the body, particularly the body’s traumatic reaction to war. Anne Fernihough examines novels by Woolf, H.D., and Rebecca West, who responded to war from “indirect” (or “civilian”) perspectives and forged “a version of the modernist novel that incorporates elements of materialism rather than repudiating it completely.” In Woolf’s criticism as in West’s *Return of the Soldier*, materialism is used against itself “in order to counter what [Woolf and West] think of as a specifically masculine worldview.” In West’s novel, Chris, the shell-shocked protagonist, fails to read the “material signs” that his wife so astutely understands, and for this reason emerges as a “modernist in the making.” Woolf, H.D., and especially West are caught up in the dialectical engagement of convention and innovation, which enables them to move beyond the limited materialism of the Edwardians and to reflect on the impact of war on women’s daily life, on the “continuity between civilian and military experience, showing how war, far from protecting the domestic sphere, turns it into a war zone in its own right.” The questions raised by Duffy and Fernihough, which echo questions raised throughout this volume, concern how the novel manages our increased sensitivity to the material world, how it selects and organizes from among so many new objects of our attention. Serial and magazine publication and translation, though not modernist innovations, became the site of innovations that involved the very materiality of the novel itself. In modernism, the materiality of text and textual production, marketing, and consumption freely and intimately enter into the writing *and reading* experience in unprecedented ways.⁴⁸ This contextual intimacy reproduces the lived experience of the novel, reconfiguring the limits of its engagement with the literary marketplace. The rise of an increasingly sophisticated print culture, which came on the heels of the New Journalism and the technological and editorial transformations of the 1880s, had a profound effect on how novels were read (through serialization) and written (through the incorporation of journalistic styles). As

David Earle argues in

[Part IV](#), modernists couldn't help being influenced by a popular marketplace that they often disparaged. This is because, as Sean Latham argues, "magazines run through the very DNA of modernism." The literary marketplace in the modernist epoch was a complex network of exchange and circulation that linked modernist writers with global audiences. Faulkner and Joyce were fascinated by the temporal possibilities of serial publication and by the focus on everyday life that magazines promoted and sustained. The spatial form of the magazine exemplified a "modernist aesthetics of juxtaposition, recombination, and montage." And these "are not merely aesthetic effects," Latham writes. "They are instead essential to the medium of the periodicals." Seriality is a continuous material transition, the matter of one text bearing on and becoming the matter of another. Translation is another modality of this *bearing on another* that, in modernism, takes on a truly collaborative, sometimes conflictual or resistant, character. Translation raises tough questions about that other sort of *matter* – the *subject matter* of a text – that may or may not get "lost." Emily Wittman's meditation on modernist translations and translators emphasizes the material texture of language and the struggle to translate one language into another. She argues that "the modernist novel with its exploration of internal landscapes" owes much to Constant Garnett's translations of Russian fiction and to James Strachey's translations of Freud. Strachey's style of "literal" or "quasi-scriptural" translations "expanded the English language, broadened the thematic scope of the modernist novel to include new and often scandalous topics, and offered readers and critics of these novels compelling new interpretive tools." Beckett more than any other modernist expresses the ambivalence and frustration of translation, which he found "subjectively impossible" and "likened to the experience of constipation." He speaks of translation in ways that suggest the materiality not so much of the text as of the process. Language takes on a fungible, object quality in translation, so that his French original becomes "decantable" into English. In translation, Beckett confronts the unforgiving limits of language as an artistic medium.

Part IV: Modernism, Genre, and Form Modernism's maturity is often associated with great modernist styles, the inimitable linguistic achievements of the cultural elite – which Fredric Jameson describes as "[t]hose formerly subversive and embattled styles."⁴⁹ "Subversive" and "embattled" describe well a group of writers in the 1920s and 1930s – from Joyce to Woolf, from Proust to Stein, from Lawrence to Forster, from Bowen to Hemingway, from Kafka to H.D. – who, according to Baldick, sought to escape "the imaginary tyrant of novelistic custom."⁵⁰ Baldick suggests not so much an animus against realism as against the realist novel that tended to affirm, often without reflection, dominant social norms and political values. The "inward turn" that characterizes so much "high" modernism is less about cultivating inner life as it is about building a bulwark to protect that life from hostile social conditions. The tyranny of conventional realist "custom" tended to duplicate these conditions in imaginative forms; the modernists resisted these conditions and celebrated, with Stephen Dedalus, the "mild proud sovereignty" of an "inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose."⁵¹ The "inward turn," as Ritchie Robertson shows in his chapter, does not do away with the *reality* of social conditions, but refocuses artistic attention on them; inner culture is increasingly ironic, self-aware, mercurial, tied more to the senses and their enjoyment of them than to any ideal sense of achieved *Bildung*. The early modernist narratives of Arthur Schnitzler, for example, follow in a line of development from Ernst Mach and Nietzsche that emphasizes the interrelation of sensations and consciousness. Schnitzler, in a manner similar to Kafka and Hermann Hesse, breaks decisively "with fictional realism by letting their protagonists experience a 'reality' whose relation to the everyday world is an insoluble problem. Thus the relation between 'inner' and 'outer' becomes an enigma." Schnitzler's stream-of-consciousness style and the "strange mixture of realism and exotic fantasy" depend on the logic of pastiche to create new contexts for shaping mythic intensities. Thomas Mann is especially important for our understanding of how such intensities can be conveyed in sophisticated pastiche styles. As Todd Kontje shows, the modernism of Mann's *Doctor Faustus* and *Magic Mountain* is strongly determined by Nietzsche's response to Richard Wagner and his formulation of the Apollo/Dionysius dialectic. Techniques such as "essayism" and montage serve a deflationary or ironic function in narratives that give free reign to "the speculative bubble

of abstract discussions and pseudo-philosophical debates” that are punctured by rectifying returns to realism. Like the “new sensibility” of Russian modernist fiction, they created “reality effects” that layered tradition and innovation. Thus Mann “spackles a layer of realistic stucco over the bricks of his modernist montage.” The return to myth in *Doctor Faustus* similarly creates “the structuring framework of a story” that makes use of realist notation to supply “plausible detail.” The politics of Mann’s tactical application of realism have to do with a refusal to allow narrative to serve a representational function in support of totalitarian thought. Modernists rejected the realist novel on just these grounds — that is, it legitimized the liberal democratic principles that created a commodified consumer culture. Yet, as Sam Alexander shows, the realist novel very often fought against the worst tendencies of liberal democracy and the laissez faire marketplace, and modernists had much to learn from the solutions offered by their Victorian forebears. His chapter illustrates this struggle by exploring character selection and sense of proportion (i.e., the relative weight given to protagonists and “minor” characters) in Joyce and John Dos Passos in light of their indebtedness to Charles Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray. The “Wandering Rocks” episode of *Ulysses* is thus “a continuation of the realist effort to contrast antidemocratic institutions with democratic form,” and *U.S.A.*, a compendium of styles that exploits “the notational capacity of realism to overturn the imperative toward selection at the heart of realist representation.” The “democratic ethos” of the modernist novel recovers something of the radical intent of nineteenth-century realists. When Jameson speaks of the “unique, unmistakable style” of the “high” modernists, he links it to “a unique vision of the world.” He speaks of a modernist style and vision as one’s possession, “as incomparable as [one’s] own body.”⁵² Recent scholarship on the modernist novel has expanded what counts as a “unique vision” and has come to recognize more fully the wealth of styles and generic permutations that effectively democratize the “mild proud sovereignty” of the subject. Indeed, Joyce himself helped effect this shift in *Ulysses*, as Alexander points out. Joyce’s shrewdness when it came to the literary marketplace was shared by many of his contemporaries. The genre novel, the pulp novel, the society novel, the novel in serial offered new standpoints for understanding reality; innovation could now depend on how reality was stylized in the logic of new media and new modes of distribution. As we see in the early modernist novel in Russia, the stylization of reality comes to serve the aim of simulating the Real. The modernist genre novel exploited the generative potential of the mass media marketplace to create forms that combined innovative style and narrative arrangement with popular and formulaic fictional modes (westerns, romance, adventure, crime, and so on). In the modernist genre novel, David Earle argues, experimentalism inhabits popular media in self-referential ways that not only critique the high/low distinction in the culture industry but enable a reflection on the author’s own commerciality. Faulkner and Hemingway, Earle writes, “relied heavily upon popular forms yet have unquestionably been canonized as modernists.” Their genre novels, like the pulp avant-garde, are part of “a shadow history of modernism,” rooted in a “complex relationship to popular culture and mass audience.” A “shadow history” is precisely what H.D.’s experimental historical fictions offer. Lara Vetter lays much needed emphasis on the historical novel in modernism and shows that H.D. resists “a certain vision of modernism as ahistorical.” H.D. uses historical narrative to articulate the experience of trauma at wartime. The early “Hipparchia” (published in 1926) and her later novel *The Sword Went Out to Sea: (Synthesis of a Dream)* by Delia Alton (completed in 1947) constitute a form of historical fiction that explores “how personal trauma is embedded in larger nationalist and imperialist narratives.” The “experimental, highly fractured style” of *Sword* “situates the present and the past as equal parts of a static equation.” In the historical imbrications of “Hipparchia” and in the “deconstruction of the self/other binary” that structures *Sword*, Vetter identifies a form of modernist historicism that weaves the “mild proud sovereignty” of the self into existing historical narratives.⁵³ The history of the other becomes the history of oneself.

Part V: Modernism in Transit The history of the modernist novel is the history of a fountain, an upsurge of formal innovations and hybrid formations, generic permutations and offshoots, pastiche and performative styles – all of which illustrate nothing less than modernism in motion, in transit across periods, canons, cultural traditions, and geographical borders and spaces. Modernism is “joy in motion,” as Calvin Bedient has declared.⁵⁴ It is filled with a Nietzschean

sense of affirmation, an acceptance of the world as “the eternally self-creating, the eternally self-destroying ... joy of the circle.”⁵⁵ Motion implicates modernism and the modernist novel in ever expanding and deepening global literary traditions; at the same time, it opens narrative to the matter of everyday life, modes of travel, of *being* in transit. The modernist novel in its maturity rejects an instrumentalist notion of temporality (e.g., time as a framework for narrative and plot, for *Bildung*) and embraces impressionistic and subjectivist alternatives that do not abolish time so much as draw upon it as the raw material for new orientations toward “what is past, or passing, or to come.”⁵⁶ On this view, the celebration of present experience – what is “passing,” Benjamin’s “now-time” (*Jetztzeit*) – acknowledges that what matters in time is memory, reflection, digression, pause, reversal, lag, and other temporal permutations. In her chapter, Pamela Caughie explores the links between new sensory experiences and the “time-sense” of the twentieth century, which is best exemplified in the experimental fictions of Gertrude Stein and Nella Larsen. “The drag upon the senses produced by old habits of seeing” she writes, “that lag between what one is capable of seeing, or sensing, and what is ‘being seen’ or felt is the substance of the modernist novel.” Larsen’s *Passing*, like Stein’s “Melanctha,” models a constellational temporality, the “endless repetition of the average” that Stein likened to the “continual or continuous present.” Like Deborah Clarke, Caughie registers Larsen’s challenge to racism and how it shapes consumerism and her protagonist’s desire. She also registers the fundamental importance of “everyday structures” in any attempt to break “old habits of seeing.” As the contributors to [Part V](#) show, the “experience of being modern” that Caughie sees as a shaping force in modernist literature is a *global* phenomenon. Postcolonial, transnational, and global conceptions of novel form and development have had a profound impact on how we write literary history and how we assess national literary traditions.⁵⁷ Jessica Berman shows how modernist writers “use their narratives to create ‘cosmopolitan communities’ ... not bounded by the limits of national belonging.” In a similar way, Winkiel looks at how world-systems theory “integrates different kinds of institutions and material practices across times and spaces without eliminating their specificities, hierarchies, or the possibilities of change.” Her comparison of Joyce and the South African novelist Solomon Plaatje illustrates how the specificities of location encourage rather than inhibit a global connection with other modernists. The Cape Colony, depicted in a complex double temporality (in 1830 and 1910) in Plaatje’s *Mhudi*, is very different from Dublin, circa 1900, Winkiel notes, but both writers exhibit “a similar disjunction between realist detail and generic disruption.” For Berman and Winkiel, locality is freed from the idealist stranglehold of the nation and liberated into the more open horizon of a global context. A modernist aesthetics, Winkiel writes, allows us to see the everyday, the quotidian as a global condition “produced by forces and materials both near and far.” The modernist cosmopolitanism that Berman advocates, which redefines transnationalism as a familiar and disjunctive geography, in a similar way assumes a global frame of reference and a sense of history that is dislocated from imperialist geopolitics. “Henry James’s cosmopolitanism,” Berman writes, is emblematic of a modernist aspiration to get beyond “the dichotomies of home and world, nation and globe,” to create “new models of transnational belonging at once rooted and dislocated.” The Indian novelist Mulk Raj Anand learned the same attitude toward the world through his experience of “the constraints and injustices of British imperialism,” which gave him “a nuanced appreciation of the value of the cosmopolitan argument for anticolonial work.” His *Coolie* uses a defamiliarizing style to show how the protagonist’s inner life is bound up with a response to the “conditions of the impoverished and disenfranchised in late-colonial India.” The materialist emphasis in Anand reflects a larger global trend that links the modernist novel to postcolonial and transnational fictions. The aspiration toward global inclusion takes a different form in Ireland. As Terry Eagleton has observed, Ireland’s place in the imperial world was characterized by uneven development, with “an archaic moral superstructure” (the Gaelo-Catholic) alongside “an increasingly modern base” (the Anglo-Irish Protestants) This “modern base” performed the functions of a ruling class, but did so badly – Eagleton calls the Anglo-Irish an “atavistic throwback to an earlier phase of the English gentry.”⁵⁸ Yet for all that they provided a link to a larger world and helped to develop a transnational Irish novel that is, to use Berman’s phrase, at once rooted and dislocated. From the time of Somerville and Ross in the 1890s, the Anglo-Irish Big House novel

has dramatized the central contradiction of modernism, particularly in Ireland, for it features a social class at once rooted, chthonic, but also mobile, transitory. The house itself manages to convey both safety and menace at the same time, as if these structures, besieged by revolutionary nationalist forces and the depredations of time, asserted themselves against the “filthy modern tide” merely by virtue of a unifying design.⁵⁹ Nicholas Allen points out that this tradition is rooted in imperialism, but that studies of Irish modernism neglect the importance of the Big House as a pivot point in the history of Ireland and Irish culture. “The greater idea of empire,” Allen writes, “was the decoration of the world within the home space.” The “miscellaneous world” that these aristocratic homes organize, as a bulwark against historical chaos, constitutes a conflict zone. Novels as different as Elizabeth Bowen’s *The Last September* and Beckett’s *Watt* use a stripped-down notational style to convey with often cruel clarity the ambiguous social and cultural milieu of the Big House, where “the present is a bleached out moment in which the traces of the past are still visible.” Danielstown, the Big House in Bowen’s novel, embodies the colonial system that it simultaneously undermines through an ironic recasting of its function. That we find definite traces of this aesthetic in Beckett’s *Watt* testifies to the resilience of the Big House and the colonial system that serves as both context and whetstone for Irish identity. For Allen, Knott’s house in *Watt*, like Danielstown, is “a local phase of global transition.” He argues that both houses “are sites of evacuation. Each holds fragmentary signs of the presence of a world order whose points of contact with local history have moved on after their dislocation.” Reading these fragmentary signs is the specialty of a literature governed by a politics of failure. This is Patrick Bixby’s main point about the late modernist fiction of Flann O’Brien and Beckett, that they demarcate a “late modernist disposition ... a complex admixture of diffidence and derision.” The seeming failure of the late modernist in terms of the modernist project is signaled in parodic responses to Joyce that call into question “the notion of a unique modernist style (and the attendant notion of a coherent individual subject)” and “the styles in which Ireland has been imagined.” The challenge to artistic and political authority in Beckett’s *Watt* and O’Brien’s *The Third Policeman* succeeds because they are able to register flickering realities or states of being, the queer temporalities at play across “unstable ontological boundaries.” Beckett’s *Watt*, composed in the mid-1940s while the author wiled away his time resisting the Nazis, is an exemplary late modernist text. It gives narrative form to the temporalities of belatedness: not the “coming too late” sense of being deprived of something, not the negation of what came before that results from this late arrival, but a condition in which one is never on time within a modernist moment, a condition made possible by the kinds of temporal overlap, recursivity and prolepsis that are hallmarks of modernist narrative from the start. My own meditation on the “destinies of *Bildung*,” is an alternative reading of how time determines character formation, one that uncovers a progressively more experimental rescue operation aimed at redefining *Bildung* in terms of an aspiration – achieved in each moment – that drives the subject rather than an ideal or model that only belatedly and inadequately makes sense of experience in terms of a completed achievement. From the 1880s, when Olive Schreiner published *The Story of an African Farm*, to the time of Beckett’s *Three Novels*, this aspiration redefines *failing* as an opportunity to thrive and belatedness as a “befitting emblem of adversity.”⁶⁰ In modernism, for perhaps the first time, belatedness – experience coming after and obeying a model; an ideal that promises to crown experience at a later time – is recognized as the authentic condition of *Bildung*. The palpable “darkening” of Europe that nearly surmounted reason in late modernity – the “sabboth night of falling angles somewhere in Erió”⁶¹ – defined the historical conditions of late modernism. It is not surprising that the nadir of realist fiction occurs precisely at this time, the late 1930s through the early 1950s, when the very notion of the Real and what constitutes normative experience of reality was under attack. “Never in all its history,” Lukács wrote in 1948, “did mankind so urgently require a realist literature as it does to-day. And perhaps never before have the traditions of great realism been so deeply buried under a rubble of social and artistic prejudice.”⁶² Even when buried alive realism remains part and parcel of modernist developments, though in the late phase, we see a resurgence of techniques and temporalities (e.g., multiple narrators, cubist arrangement, nonlinear and intersecting loops, recursive patterns, memorial zones, self-reflection, prolepsis and metalepsis, metafiction) associated with

anti-mimetic art. As Tyrus Miller suggests, to speak of late modernism, “we would have to speak of a *failure* to repress, a failure of the forms to contain the turbulent historical energies that sweep through late modernist works. These works are perforated and torn by their relation to history.”⁶³ Indeed, Bixby and I say flat out that failure and failing need to be reevaluated as engines of narrative development that lie outside the dialectics of achieved selfhood and social success. The modernist novel in transit challenges conventions of narrative at the same time that it defies national, ethnic, linguistic, temporal, and geographical boundaries; it challenges conventional aesthetic values and techniques, but freely appropriates them as part of the challenge. Late modernism amplifies this sense of permanent transition, of never-ending experimental fervor. The lacerating minimalism of Beckett’s prose (which is, nevertheless, full to brimming with lyrical voices) weaves along and beside the carnivalesque lunacy of Flann O’Brien (which is no less lacerating), while grand myth making lies side by side with pedantic “essayism” in Thomas Mann. We see the subtle formal and stylistic ironies of Bowen and Kate O’Brien as well as the blunt-edged vamping that takes Faulkner’s genre novels into the age of mechanical reproduction. And we see generally a return to realism and the matter of the world of representation in ways that echo the practices of early modernists who sought to overcome a false divide between modernism and realism, between the world of artistic expression and the world of representation, between ideal beauty and its downfall. *A History of the Modernist Novel* shows how innovation emerges continuously on both sides of a divide that is not really a divide at all, but the banks of one stream – *modernism in motion*. **Notes**

- 1. Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell, assisted by Andrew McNeillie, vol. 2, 1920–24 (London: Hogarth Press, 1980), 161. Qtd. in David Bradshaw’s chapter.**
- 2. On the website of *Modernism/Modernity*, the flagship journal of the new modernist studies, the editors note that journal concentrates on the period extending roughly from 1860 to the mid-twentieth century. For the purposes of this *History*, which concerns a single genre, rather than a cultural movement (modernism), the 1880s strike me as a reasonable starting point and the early 1950s a good place to stop. It would take another volume to explore the global modernist novel in the late twentieth century.**
- 3. M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, TX: University of Austin Press, 1981), 3, 31.**
- 4. Chris Baldick, *The Modern Movement: 1910–1940*, vol. 10 of *The Oxford English Literary History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 5.**
- 5. *Ibid.*, 160.**
- 6. *Ibid.*, 196. On the various kinds of realism, see *ibid.*, chapters 7 and 391–401.**
- 7. See, e.g., Fredric Jameson, who speaks of modernism and postmodernism as two chronological sequels to the moment of realism in *The Antinomies of Realism* (London: Verso, 2013), 11.**
- 8. Virginia Woolf, *A Writer’s Diary*, ed. Leonard Woolf (New York: New American Library, 1968), 65–6.**
- 9. Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 2, 161.**
- 10. On the importance of “everyday life” and the object matter encountered in lived experience see Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, 2 vols, trans. John Moore (London and New York: Verso, 1991), and Ben Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002).**
- 11. The Real, in Jacques Lacan’s sense, designates that which lies beyond our imaginary and symbolic ways of knowing the world. Within modernist aesthetics, the Real serves as an alternative to “reality,” to the “real world,” and to the “reality effects” that realist fiction offer up as resemblance. On the Real, see Buch, *The Pathos of the Real* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 8–15, and Slavoj Žižek, “Psychoanalysis and the Lacanian Real: Strange Shapes of the Unwarped Primal World,” in *A Concise Companion to Realism*, ed. Matthew Beaumont (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 225–41.**

- 12.** Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (1951; repr. London: Verso, 2005), 227. Jean-François Lyotard defines "innovation" as a condition of efficiency within modern technical knowledge systems, part of a "command system bent on efficiency," and offers an alternative in *paralogy*, "a move" played in the pragmatics of knowledge. (The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984], 60–1). I use "innovation" in the sense of a movement into the new, an impulse to trump the known thing, which is suggested by its derivation from *Latin innovatus*, past participle of *innovare* "to renew, restore; to change." The middle French, *renovacyoun* "spiritual rebirth," also "rebuilding, reconstruction," lingers in the sense of an artistic or critical practice that aims for spiritual and cultural rebirth (as in Irish Revival) or national self-renewal (which is a dominant strand in Irish, German, and Russian modernist fiction). (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=innovate&allowed_in_frame=0) (accessed July 17, 2014).
- 13.** Samuel Beckett, *Three Novels: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*, trans. Paul Bowles and Samuel Beckett (New York: Grove Press, 2009), 347.
- 14.** On the *expressed* and *represented worlds*, see Mikel Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, trans. E. S. Casey et al. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1966), 166–98.
- 15.** *Ibid.*, 175.
- 16.** For Jean-Luc Marion, an object ("phenomenon") reveals itself "unconditionally" in its givenness, in a "pure initiative of appearing"; see Jean-Luc Marion, *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 174–5. See also Arne Melberg, *Theories of Mimesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); the essays in *A Concise Companion to Realism*, ed. Matthew Beaumont (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); and the special issue on peripheral realisms of *Modern Language Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (September 2012).
- 17.** For Dufrenne, the aesthetic object, through the sensuousness of style, displays its truth in the Real. In addition to this self-evident truth, the aesthetic object is true because it "takes on the original *function* of truth, which is to precede the real in order to illuminate it, not to repeat it" (528; my emphasis). On the narrative contract and the broader political context of social-contract theory, see Carnell, *Partisan Politics*.
- 18.** See D. A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), and Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).
- 19.** On narrative point of view in the realist novel, see Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. (1966; repr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).
- 20.** On "modernist realism," see Jameson, *The Antinomies of Realism*, 3–20. See also Alexander's discussion in the present volume of the realist inheritance in Joyce and Dos Passos.
- 21.** Arthur Power, *Conversations with James Joyce*, ed. Clive Hart (London: Millington, 1974), 32.
- 22.** Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defense of Poesy*, ed. R. W. Maslen, 3rd ed. (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2002), 85.
- 23.** Beckett, *Three Novels* 9.
- 24.** Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, ed. Mark Hussey (New York: Harcourt, 2005), 4.
- 25.** Viktor Shklovskii's theories of defamiliarization and the "device of style" and Vladimir Propp's understanding of how character, action, and theme interact in folklore, set the stage for later structuralist theories of narrative; see Shklovskii, *Theory of Prose*, trans. Benjamin Sher (1925; repr. Elmwood Park, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1990),

- and Propp, *Morphology of the Fairy Tale*, ed. Louis A. Wagner, trans. Laurence Scott, 2nd rev. ed. (1928; repr. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968). Narrative theorists such as Gérard Genette have much to say about the novel from a structuralist perspective. Wayne Booth's *Rhetoric of Fiction*, though concerned with formal elements, is at bottom interested in the rhetorical and ethical structures of narrative acts. For an overview, see Gregory Castle and Matthew Dubord, "Narrative Theory and Theory of the Novel," in *The Encyclopedia of Literary and Cultural Theory, vol. 1, 1900–1966*, ed. Gregory Castle (Oxford: Blackwell, 2011), 346–56.
- 26.** Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, trans. Anna Bostock (1920; repr. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1971), 73.
- 27.** Georg Lukács, *Studies in European Realism* (1948; repr. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964), 4.
- 28.** Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984]) was first published in 1929. The essays in *Bakhtin's Dialogic Imagination* (ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist [Austin, TX: University of Austin Press, 1981]) were written in the late 1930s and 1940s.
- 29.** Walter Benn Michaels, *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism: American Literature at the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).
- 30.** See Paul Armstrong, in this volume, on the concept "qualia." On the phenomenological approach to the modernist novel, see J. Hillis Miller, *Fiction and Repetition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), and Paul Armstrong, *The Phenomenology of Henry James* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), and *The Challenge of Bewilderment: Understanding and Representation in James, Conrad, and Ford* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987).
- 31.** Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press; London: Chatto & Windus, 1961), 48, 63.
- 32.** Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1979, 2000); Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).
- 33.** See Homi Bhabha, ed., *Narrative and Nation* (London: Routledge, 1990), and "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation," in *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 199–244.
- 34.** John Kucich, *Imperial Masochism: British Fiction, Fantasy, and Social Class* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), and Jessica Berman, *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism and the Politics of Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
- 35.** Simon Gikandi, *Writing in Limbo: Modernism and Caribbean Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992); Neil Lazarus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 30–1. On the general question of a postcolonial modernism, see *Modernism and Colonialism: British and Irish Literature, 1899–1939*, eds. Richard Begam and Michael Valdez Moses (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).
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A *History of the Modernist Novel* reassesses the modernist canon and produces a wealth of new comparative analyses that radically revise the novel's history. Drawing on American, English, Irish, Russian, French and German traditions, leading scholars challenge existing attitudes about realism and modernism and draw new attention to everyday life and everyday objects. In addition to its exploration of new forms such as the modernist genre novel and experimental historical novel, this book considers the

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