

July 2008

by Tania Carvalhal on the Brazilian side and by Assumpta Camps on the Spanish. One chapter came from the Argentine context, another from Mexico, and even among the Spanish articles we have major differences in topics and cultures. There are Galician, Catalanian, and Mallorquin examples and even Spanish scholars of French, English, or Indian literature. All this variety has the merit of further enriching translation and literary studies, because such wide-ranging dialogue stands at the heart of the topic. In a world after Babel, all roads lead to translation.

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CHLÉL XXI

Astradur Eysteinnsson and Vivian Liska, eds. *Modernism*. 2 vols. *Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages 21*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2007. xii + 1043 pp. 978-9027234544.

Although these two volumes are published under the aegis of the ICLA's Coordinating Committee for a Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages, the editors proclaim in their afterword that "the present volumes do not contain the history of modernism or even *a* history of modernism (2:1009). Their bold disclaimer, however, represents contradictory intentions only if taken in a rigid and narrow sense.

It is certainly the case that these tomes are not a history in the traditional and positivistic way. They do not present a basically linear narrative accounting for the rise and subsequent demise of an abstractly and somewhat arbitrarily defined movement widely accepted as modernism. It is clear from the beginning that the methods and paradigms of the great nineteenth-century literary historians have not informed their procedures and conceptions to any substantial degree. Yet this study does many things that literary scholars have long expected histories to do but does them, rather, in a very nuanced and sophisticated way. Part of the reason they have been able to rise to a more comprehensive and highly developed standard is that from the beginning the recognition that literary history does not proceed in a neat and orderly fashion that can be presented in a relatively simple series of cause and effect relationships permeates the work. Boundaries can be seen and transitions can be observed, but they are typically tentative and always invite interrogation and multiple definitions. Developments of style and theme across time can be scrutinized, but they also encourage examination in terms of multifaceted and complex networks that emerge as a result of adjacency rather than sequentiality. Provisional conclusions can be reached that are of considerable intellectual value, but the questions that they imply may well prove to be of similar merit. The reservations and uncertainties lurking in their shadow may stimulate more thought and consequently even more comprehensive inferences. While eschewing on the one hand neat but overly simplistic explanation and on the other encyclopedic inclusiveness of relevant and detailed minutiae, these two volumes probe the boundaries of the concept and explore recent trends and orientations in studying the way in which modernism is widely configured and investigated today.

Volume One begins not so much with efforts to define modernism, but with four essays that examine parameters that are useful in delimiting the concept. Noting that the term appears in all European literatures, the first contribution engages this international scope by drawing on several generally well-known characteristics of the tradition and critically evaluating their contemporary relevance across several of its national manifestations. First used in a literary-critical sense in Germany in the 1880s and '90s and understood in terms of the then current thematic, stylistic, and social developments, its temporal range is viewed as extending from the late nineteenth century down to the 1950s and '60s. In Habermas's famous discussion of the term in "Modernity: An Unfinished Project," this period is distinguished as "a long lasting artistic epoch based on a dichotomy between new classicism and the avant-garde" (19). Departing from this description, the essay continues by identifying the "hybrid or specific integration of the classic/romantic tradition" (20) and proceeds to examine several widely attested features in various complementary ways. The second essay stresses contrasting characteristics of modernism rather than the inherent unity and argues for recognition of a variety of modernisms that reach beyond the narrow confines of canonical Western culture. In ways that enlarge upon and give slightly different emphases to the first essay, the third stresses the necessity of perceiving modernism in terms of internationalism and the more recent trends toward globalization. In marked contrast to other recent publications on the topic—Pericles Lewis's *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007) or Sabina Becker and Helmuth Kiesel's *Literarische Moderne: Begriff und Phänomen* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), for example—which seem to suggest a general coverage of the concept but nonetheless clearly focus primarily on the Anglo-American and German manifestations respectively, here an uncompromising insistence on transcending national borders is a fundamental precept. The final essay in this opening section takes a very different tack in examining the relationship of text to the reader, who is challenged to derive signification and meaning from the modernist discursive practices.

Critical engagements with the concept of modernism have up this time obviously elicited an expansive array of characterizations and evaluations. The second section of the study engages some of these prior critical forays in four well focused reassessments of the movement. The first explores contemporary critical theory's representation of modernism and investigates the role of irony in this context in texts of Robert Musil and Hermann Broch. The second works out of a Marxist context drawing initially on an early generation of critics (Lukács, Adorno, and Gramsci) for critical assessments and contrasts these with more recent post-Marxist constructivist views. Bakhtin's polyphonic conception of the novel is then evoked to examine the modernist role of the authorial subject in the third essay, and the concluding article again adduces the thinking of Adorno but this time in contrast to that of Lyotard in order to study the role and function of phenomena from the grotesque through the unconscious to the sublime.

The third section continues the efforts to situate modernism with regard to other literary constructs. The first essay reveals the constructedness of what is

typically taken as the canonical tradition of Western culture and assesses modernism's often ambivalent relationship to it. The second and third essays engage the avant-garde and expressionism, the first in terms of manifestos that seem to herald a break with the past and the second in terms of expressionism's untimeliness (*Unzeitgemässheit*) that propels its continuing and unabated interest into the present. The fourth article focuses at once on the breadth as well as the unity of Beckett's oeuvre that justifies his identification as a "trans-modernist" whose later work rather than departing from his early modernist tendencies is a symbolic and self-reflexive embodiment of those inclinations. The section's final essay takes up what is often recognized as the border separating modernism from postmodernism, which is ultimately identified as a false and misleading distinction, particularly in light of a reconceptualization of foundational modernist precepts in terms of postmodernist categories of judgment.

The next three sections of the volume are closely related in their parallel examination of pairs of foundational concepts from a modernist perspective: time and space, mind and body, and technology and science. The analysis of spatial structures is couched in terms of the freeing of space from its long-standing role as an inert setting or background against which a narrative plays itself out and its resulting elevation to field of autonomous aesthetic interest and in the following article in terms of the often-discussed modernist fascination with urban space. Temporal structures are studied with regard to the way modernist authors have configured childhood in relation to the conflict between the modern world's deprivation of stable points of orientation and the desire for the newly born. Attention is directed toward the presentation of childhood, childhood recollections, and the language of childhood as well as the way the figuration of childhood in terms of parthenogenic reproduction is a subversion of the pervasive power of patriarchy. The inextricable relationship of trauma and belatedness offers a point of departure for considering the particularly apt position of modernist poetry's portrayal of trauma in terms of temporality on the basis of the works of Baudelaire and Celan.

The rapport of mind and body is probed in relation to "poetics of process" and the distinctly modernist awareness of human consciousness, to the conception of self that emerges from a "contextual" as opposed to a formal reading of modernist authors, and finally to the techniques available to the modernist author for presenting the human face bounded on the one side by description and portraiture and on the other by fragmentation and dissociation. The presentation of the continuum from science to technology begins with a staging based on readings of Broch, Gide, and Rilke (*The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*) of the process of accounting and the expected resistance of modernists to the settling of accounts, which, though, by contrast is encompassed by a complex logic endeavoring to circumscribe and to a degree to control fragmentation and the resulting chaos. It continues with a succinct delimitation of the influence of Einstein's concept of relativity and a gesture toward the importance of the paradigms advanced by other earlier scientists. Similarly, the next chapter invites attention of the debt of modernist writers to pre-Freudian psychology that has all-too-hastily been overlooked. Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* is taken up in the next chapter,

which portrays how technology engaged the imagination of modernist writers in their attempt to navigate a technologically fragmented world. The section's final chapter discusses the way in which prominent scientific theories have elicited analogous aesthetic developments and concentrates on the way in which the symbolists, imagists, and futurists drew on widely circulating new scientific understandings of the process of perception.

Chapter seven, the final chapter of the first volume, is devoted to literature and the adjacent arts, an area of critical analysis that has long required wide-ranging critical expertise and heightened sensitivities to multiple forms of artistic expression, both of which the authors bring to bear on their essays in variety of ways. The first laments the relative lack of attention that has been accorded the complex and very rich relationship between the visual arts and modernist theory and eloquently begins to redress the imbalance. The following contribution explores the complementary concepts of dwelling in modernist literature—most notably in Proust, Joyce, Woolf, and Beckett—and modernist architecture as exemplified by Wright and Le Corbusier. Avoiding the all-too-common pitfall of understanding the relationship between film and literature primarily in terms of plot, the next essay examines the demands that early films made on spectators in relationship to the expectations placed on readers by modernist authors. As if a case study, the next essay uses the comparative juxtaposition of the literary oeuvre of Pierre Loti with the painting of Vincent Van Gogh, but the essay continues in exploring the profound effect that oriental art had on fundamental Western conceptions of the subject, perspective, and the visual surface. The relationship between music and literature is couched in terms of the way in which music destabilizes the conception of language as an established, readily accessible, and secure mode of communication and illustrates how some modernist writers have resorted to basically musical structural and organizational devices in contrast to the more typical agenda of mimetic representation. As a conclusion to the consideration of literature in relationship to the other arts, the final chapter in the volume argues that modernist theater cannot reasonably be engaged as fundamentally textual or simply the enactment of a written script, but must rather be understood as performance, i.e. a complex series of activities that go well beyond what can be realized on the printed page alone.

The second volume of the study consists of four sections: the first three—sections eight, nine, and ten—deal with broadly social, political, and ideological issues, and the fourth considers the widely varying contours of modernism in various parts of Europe and the Americas. The first contribution to section eight addresses the relationship of modernism to fascism, particularly the new concepts of the individual sense of subjectivity *vis-à-vis* the collective in the works of Marinetti and Jünger. The two subsequent essays both undertake an examination of the early twentieth-century concepts of empire: the first in terms of a highly original juxtaposition of Pessoa's reaction to the maintenance of the far-flung Portuguese empire with Hofmannsthal's late engagement with political issues painfully arising from the demise of the Austro-Hungarian empire and its aristocratic traditions as a result of World War I and the second in terms of an interrogation of Edward

Said's concept of orientalism and the heightened awareness of racial difference that was occasionally appropriated as a defining marker of modernist thought and values. The relatively new field of eco-criticism has not yet been widely applied to modernist fiction, but the last essay in the section clearly illustrates its significant heuristic value in revealing the possibility for new readings. In a detailed analysis of *To the Lighthouse* (specifically the section entitled "Time Passes"), Mrs. McNab and her coterie's departure from the house is not portrayed as a failure to create order and keep chaos at bay but rather as liberation of the non-human natural world from human domination. Though arrestingly at variance with traditional readings, it is indeed compelling.

The next section consists of four essays juxtaposing modernism with popular culture (drawing on Eliot and Joyce), with feminist theory in a way that suggests modernism embodied some previously unrecognized feminist themes, with secularized manifestations of the sacral in Monet, Woolf, Van Gogh, and Rilke, and with anthropology to the extent that it deals with artifacts of primitive cultures that can be linked to a concept of the collective unconscious.

The last of this set of three sections—section ten—begins with an essay that returns to the topic of the questionable transparency of language as a means of communication, particularly as it pertains to translation. In a way that well represents the central theme of Benjamin's justly famous essay "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers," translation is configured as ideally striving to be a parallel rewriting rather than a clear but necessarily secondary representation of a source text. Although the role of Chinese and Japanese cultures on the contours of modernism in general has been widely discussed, the second essay draws selectively and intelligently on studies of the haiku in Western languages and analyzes the significance of that briefest of literary forms for modernist poetics. The final two essays consider Pierre Loti's modernist construction of the colonial Other and scrutinize the impact on the one hand of voluntary exile (Beckett, Joyce, and Ungaretti) and on the other of a forced exile motivated by the need to escape persecution or oppression (the friends, Paul Celan and Nelly Sachs). Taken together, these socially engaged essays provide a penetrating view of the way modernism was used by, engaged with, and contravened dominant ideological positions from the late nineteenth well into the twentieth century.

The final section entitled "Location: Case Studies" looks most like what one might traditionally expect from a literary history, but it generously offers nonetheless many surprising and unanticipated conclusions. It consists of eighteen essays of varying lengths dealing with the unique ways modernism manifests itself either in a relatively small regions or across wide-ranging territories. The choice of areas for examination is highly selective, and no rationale for the specific choices is offered. Conspicuous by their absence, however, are examinations of Anglo-American and German modernism although one may well argue that they have been adequately covered as predominant manifestations of modernism in earlier essays. Some of the contributions treat vast areas encompassing several countries, e.g. "The Spanish-American Modernismo" and "The Spanish-American Novel and European Modernism," which are also closely allied with

“Approaching Spanish Modernism” and “Brazilian Modernism.” Another broad area surveyed in a single essay is discussed under the title “Central and Eastern European Symbolist Literature and Its Project” while another closely related area is examined in “Russian Modernism.” Other essays are more narrowly focused and consider one country—Australia, France, Italy, and Greece—or specific autonomous regions—Catalonia and the Faroe Islands, for example. It is particularly gratifying to see essays devoted to countries whose contemporary literary traditions are not generally well known in the international community of letters, e.g. Greece and The Netherlands (or more precisely Dutch literature that includes both that of The Netherlands and Flanders).

The Nordic countries intriguingly are singled out for rather special treatment by the Icelandic editor of these volumes Ástráður Eysteinnsson. He explains in his introduction to “Borders of Modernism in the Nordic World” that the “collage of short articles” comprising this chapter “are written by a group of seven scholars who in recent years have, along with other colleagues, organized a series of conferences focusing primarily on modernist links between the Nordic region and other parts of the world” (2:834). Two important books—*English and Nordic Modernisms* and *European and Nordic Modernisms*—have resulted from these conferences and well illustrate how work on the more comprehensive descriptions of a particular tradition can effectively stimulate new and more narrowly focused assessments and research. After the introductory explanation, follow short essays on Swedish literature in both Sweden and Finland (focusing prominently on Artur Lundkvist, who died in 1991 not 1961 as is once indicated), Finnish literature (i.e. exclusively in the Finnish language rather than Swedish or Sámi, the other two official languages of Finland), Danish modernism (which showed early traces of modernism but is seen as not coming into full bloom until the 1950s and ’60s in Klaus Rifbjerg, Inger Christensen, and Villy Sørensen), Norwegian modernism (which by contrast is viewed as having its origins in the late nineteenth century in Ibsen and Hamsun), Icelandic modernism (which gives just, particular, and highly insightful attention to Halldór Laxness), and finally to Faroese modernism (which is here understood as a late import to the Faroe Islands [population: 48,000] and thus not taking root until the 1960s although the works of the earlier and highly esteemed lyric poet C. Matras manifest traces of what was to come).

Among the features that stand out in the other case studies are the very sophisticated and nuanced presentation of insufficiently-recognized Catalonian modernism; the view of French literature that sees the application of the category of modernism to that national tradition as at best highly problematic; the portrayal of the importance of modernism for development and maturation of Brazilian letters and its implied critique of certain strains of the corresponding European tradition, both judiciously and gracefully based on the earlier work of Afranio Coutinho; and the wide and variegated portrayal of the complex relationship of the various strands of Peninsular and Latin American Hispanic literature. Also deserving mention is the clarity of the synthesizing challenge of presenting the often diverging departures of east central Europe from Enlightenment thinking toward differing modes of contemporary consciousness; the compelling case for the en-

gaging power of Russian modernism and its cultural importance even in comparison with far better known traditions; and the sensitive and insightful reading of the towering figures of Italian modernism, D'Annunzio, Montale, and Ungaretti.

In a study undertaking the examination of a phenomenon as complex, as resistant to stable and widely accepted definition, and as given to extreme variation from one place to another as is modernism, practically any reader can find points that, consistent with personal orientations or preferences, could have been treated more fully or left out altogether, issues that are considered in a one-sided way or are presented too abstractly without reference to particular literary manifestations, critical views that are not acknowledged or methods whose precepts are unduly belabored, or any of a number of other choices that might have been otherwise made. The process of editing such a study involves making choices—sometimes ones that one would rather not make—among a wide range of possibilities. The editors, though, here have plotted a highly engaging and luminous course through a vast array of facts, views, and interpretations that is notably flexible in its accommodation of a multiplicity of local practices and conventions yet firm enough to afford considerable guidance in understanding how modernism is being construed as a historical, thematic, and stylistic construct at this point in time. In working with what ultimately must be regarded as a period designation at a time when periodization as such has come under increasing scrutiny as a viable mode of literary historiography, they have productively taken into account many of the recent critiques and have constructed their conceptual framework so that it is in no danger of collapsing into newly identified and intellectually untenable sinkholes. They have done an admirable job in ordering and providing illuminating contours to contributions from nearly seventy collaborators who have not all worked on the basis of the same fundamental assumption about modernism and have, thus, represented divergent precepts that enrich the conceptual fabric of the whole rather than undermining its unity. There is no attempt at arbitrary closure or finality but rather further thought and investigation are not only allowed but also vigorously invited.

In a study of this magnitude, there are bound to be areas of uneven intellectual and critical depth. The part of these volumes in which a certain asymmetry was most notable is the case studies of modernism in different locales. Although each of the contributions is informative, well written, and rich in insights that readers will find valuable, as a whole it seems somewhat less critically sophisticated and intellectually challenging than the earlier chapters. It appears as if a number of the contributors to this section were working in relative isolation and had little awareness of the urbane and conceptually demanding analyses preceding their contributions. The weight of precedent may have proven difficult to evade in that occasionally essays seem to lapse into the model of the traditional portrayal of a literary period within the context of one nation's literary heritage with all of the critical deficits inherent therein. Nonetheless the section is a valuable contribution and especially reader-friendly.

The writing throughout the volume is lucid, precise, and generally in highly idiomatic English. The degree of precision is remarkable considering the number of non-native speakers of English involved—including the two editors. Occasionally

very minor inaccuracies arise, e.g. *conference* in English means a meeting, an assembly, or a gathering, not an address, a lecture, or a talk (German: *Rede*) as is the primary meaning of its cognates in French, Italian, and Spanish. Another, perhaps, more subtle case is the English word *actuality*, which means reality or existing facts in contrast to the French *actualité* and the German *Aktualität*, which mean up to the minute, relevance to the present, or topicality. A consistency throughout with regard to the capitalization of period designations and punctuation of book titles in particular would have enhanced the sense of unity of the volume.

An issue of somewhat greater concern, however, centers on the documentation provided at the end of each contribution and the selection of editions for citation. Considerable variation—perhaps inconsistency—characterizes the bibliographies, to a limited extent with regard to form per se, but more extensively in terms of providing readers with complete bibliographic details. Often editors, series names and numbers, or series editors are missing, a fact that certainly will not render the volume inaccessible, but does make the reference needlessly incomplete. Even more disturbing, however, is the rather widespread use of popular and mass market editions, which are entirely acceptable when better versions do not exist, but they are certainly not the best choice for scholarly citation when critical editions are available and could be used. Similarly when older editions have been superseded by more recent ones, the latter are obviously to be preferred. In a work that aspires to the high scholarly standards that characterize this series, such bibliographic details merit careful attention.

These minor reservations notwithstanding, *Modernism* is a formidable accomplishment. Although there are issues not broached and stones still unturned, it presents in eminently accessible form a vast amount of material, heuristic strategies offering a rich array of ways for conceiving of one of the most formidable revolutions in Western cultural history, and highly original paths for negotiating both the correspondences and the contradictions of that tradition. Its breadth of coverage, its depth of analysis, and its height of originality make it a volume that while implying a reader with some literary-critical acumen will nonetheless have something to offer almost anyone taking it to hand. It is certainly a highly distinguished addition to the series of literary histories in European languages that can proudly assume a place of honor among other distinguished tomes.

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