

A Concise Companion to Modernism

Edited by David Bradshaw

A Concise Companion to Modernism

Blackwell Concise Companions to Literature and Culture

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Chronology

Death of Flaubert. Death of George Eliot. Birth of Lytton Strachey. Birth of Apollinaire. Gladstone becomes Prime Minister for the second time (–1885).
First Anglo-Boer War (–1881).

Death of Disraeli. Death of Carlyle. Death of Dostoevsky. Birth of Picasso. Birth of Bartók.

Death of Darwin. Death of Emerson. Death of D. G.

1880 Gilbert and Sullivan, *The Pirates of Penzance*.
Meredith, *The Tragic Comedians*.
Gissing, *Workers in the Dawn*.
Hardy, *The Trumpet-Major*.
Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*.

1881 Gilbert and Sullivan, *Patience*.
James, *The Portrait of a Lady; Washington Square*.
Christina Rossetti, *A Pageant and other Poems*.
D. G. Rossetti, *Ballads and Sonnets*.
Shaw, *Love Among the Artists*.
E. B. Tylor, *Anthropology*.
Wilde, *Poems*.
Ibsen, *Ghosts*.

1882 Froude, *History of the First Forty Years of Carlyle's Life*.

Chronology

- Rossetti. Death of Trollope.
Death of James Thomson.
Birth of Virginia Woolf.
Birth of James Joyce. Birth
of Stravinsky. Society for
Psychical Research founded.
Second Married Women's
Property Act.
- Death of Wagner. Death of **1883** Carpenter, *Towards*
Marx. Birth of W. C. *Democracy*.
Williams. Birth of Mussolini. Shaw, *An Unsocial Socialist*.
Schreiner, *The Story of an*
African Farm.
- Birth of Sean O'Casey. *Oxford* **1884** *The Century Guild Hobby*
English Dictionary begins to appear Horse (1884–92).
(–1928) Gilbert and Sullivan,
Princess Ida.
Gissing, *The Unclassed*.
Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*.
Ruskin, *The Storm-Cloud of the*
Nineteenth Century.
Huysmans, *A Rebours*.
- Death of Hugo. Birth of Pound. **1885** Jefferies, *After London*.
Birth of D. H. Lawrence. Gilbert and Sullivan, *The*
Radio waves discovered. *Mikado*.
Internal combustion Meredith, *Diana of the*
engine invented. *Crossways*.
Pater, *Marius the Epicurean*.
Ruskin, *Praeterita* (1885–9).
Zola, *Germinal*.
- Defeat of Gladstone's first **1886** Gissing, *Demos*.
Irish Home Rule Bill. Rider Haggard, *King*
Solomon's Mines.
James, *The Bostonians*, *The*
Princess Casamassima.

- Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.
- 1887
- Stevenson, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde, Kidnapped.*
Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge.*
- Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet.*
Frazer, *Totemism.*
Gilbert and Sullivan, *Ruddigore.*
Rider Haggard, *Allan Quartermain, She.*
Hardy, *The Woodlanders.*
Pater, *Imaginary Portraits.*
"Mark Rutherford," *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane.*
Stevenson, *Underwoods.*
Verdi, *Otello.*
- Death of Matthew Arnold.
Birth of T. S. Eliot.
- 1888
- Arnold, *Essays in Criticism (Second Series).*
Kipling, *Plain Tales from the Hills.*
Gilbert and Sullivan, *The Yeomen of the Guard.*
Moore, *Confessions of a Young Man.*
Morris, *Signs of Change, A Dream of John Ball.*
Mrs. Humphry Ward, *Robert Elsmere.*
- Death of Robert Browning.
Death of Wilkie Collins.
Death of Gerard Manley Hopkins.
Birth of Hitler.
- 1889
- Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London (17 vols., -1903).*
Gilbert and Sullivan, *The Gondoliers.*
Gissing, *The Nether World.*
Pater, *Appreciations.*

- Death of Newman.
Death of van Gogh.
Fall of Parnell.
- Death of Rimbaud.
Death of Melville.
Birth of Prokofiev.
- Death of Tennyson.
Birth of Ivy Compton-Burnett.
Birth of Vita Sackville-West.
- Death of Maupassant.
Second Irish Home Rule Bill rejected.
Formation of the Independent Labour Party (ILP).
- Death of Stevenson.
Death of Pater.
Death of Christina Rossetti.
Birth of Aldous Huxley.
Trial and conviction of Dreyfus.
- “Mark Rutherford,” *Catherine Furze*.
Stevenson, *The Master of Ballantrae*.
Yeats, *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems*.
- 1890** Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (12 vols., 1890–1915).
Morris, *News from Nowhere*.
Booth, *In Darkest England*.
Ibsen, *Hedda Gabler*.
- 1891** Gissing, *New Grub Street*.
Hardy, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*.
Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.
- 1892** First English translation of Ibsen, *Peer Gynt*.
First English translation of Zola’s works.
Gissing, *Born in Exile*.
Kipling, *Barrack-Room Ballads*.
Yeats, *The Countess Cathleen*.
- 1893** Pinero, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*.
Shaw, *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*.
- 1894** The *Yellow Book* (–1897).
Moore, *Esther Waters*.
Shaw, *Arms and the Man*.
Debussy, *L’après-midi d’un faune*.

- Death of T. H. Huxley.
Trials and conviction of Oscar Wilde.
Röntgen's discovery of X-rays.
Marconi invents wireless telegraphy.
Invention of the cinematograph.
- Death of William Morris.
Death of Verlaine.
Birth of F. Scott Fitzgerald.
- Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.
- Death of Mallarmé.
Death of Gladstone.
Death of "Lewis Carroll".
Birth of Hemingway.
The Curies discover radium and plutonium.
- Birth of Nabokov.
Second Anglo-Boer War (–1902).
- Death of Nietzsche.
Death of Wilde.
Death of Ruskin.
Boxer Rebellion (–1901).
Relief of Mafeking.
- 1895** Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*.
Wells, *The Time Machine*.
Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*.
Chekhov, *The Seagull*.
Conrad, *Almayer's Folly*.
- 1896** Housman, *A Shropshire Lad*.
Daily Mail founded.
Puccini, *La Bohème*.
Wells, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*.
- 1897** Conrad, *Tales of Unrest*.
Stoker, *Dracula*.
James, *What Maisie Knew*.
Shaw, *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant*.
Wells, *The Invisible Man*.
- 1898** Hardy, *Wessex Poems*.
Wells, *The War of the Worlds*.
Wilde, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*.
- 1899** Yeats, *The Wind among the Reeds*.
Tolstoy, *Resurrection*.
- 1900** *Daily Express* founded.
Conrad, *Lord Jim*.
Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

Chronology

Death of Queen Victoria;
accession of Edward VII.

Death of Zola.

Death of Whistler.
Death of Gauguin.
Death of Gissing.
Death of Herbert Spencer.
Birth of "George Orwell".
Birth of Waugh.
First aeroplane flight.
Women's Social and Political
Union (WSPU) founded by
Emmeline Pankhurst.

Death of Chekhov.
Death of Leslie Stephen.
Franco-British Entente.
Russo-Japanese War (–1905).

Birth of Sartre.
Special Theory of Relativity.
Sinn Fein founded in Dublin.

Death of Ibsen.

1901 Mann, *Buddenbrooks*.
Strindberg, *Dance of Death*.
Kipling, *Kim*.

1902 Bennett, *Anna of the Five
Towns*.
Gide, *The Immoralist*.
Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*.
Hobson, *Imperialism*.
James, *The Wings of the Dove*.
William James, *Varieties of
Religious Experience*.
Times Literary Supplement
(*TLS*) founded.

1903 Butler, *The Way of All Flesh*.
Childers, *The Riddle of the
Sands*.
James, *The Ambassadors*.
Shaw, *Man and Superman*.
Moore, *Principia Ethica*.
Daily Mirror founded.

1904 Synge, *Riders to the Sea*.
Chekhov, *The Cherry Orchard*.
James, *The Golden Bowl*.
Conrad, *Nostromo*.
Hardy, *The Dynasts* (–1908).
Puccini, *Madame Butterfly*.

1905 Richard Strauss, *Salomé*.
Wilde, *De Profundis*.
Wharton, *The House of Mirth*.
Forster, *Where Angels Fear to
Tread*.

1906 Galsworthy, *The Man of*

- Death of Cézanne.
 Birth of Beckett.
 Liberal Government elected.
- Death of Huysmans.
 Birth of Auden.
 Cubist exhibition, Paris.
- Old Age Pensions Act.
- Death of Meredith.
 Death of Swinburne.
 Blériot flies across English Channel.
 Freud lectures on psychoanalysis in the USA.
- Death of Edward VII; accession of George V.
 Death of Twain.
 Death of Tolstoy.
 Death of Florence Nightingale.
 First Post-Impressionist Exhibition, London.
- Property.*
 Kipling, *Puck of Pook's Hill.*
 Sinclair, *The Jungle.*
 "Everyman's Library" begun.
- 1907** Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. Version O)*.
 Conrad, *The Secret Agent.*
 Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World.*
 Forster, *The Longest Journey.*
 Bergson, *L'Evolution créatrice.*
- 1908** Stein, *Three Lives.*
 Bennett, *The Old Wives' Tale.*
 Forster, *A Room with a View.*
 Pound, *A Lume Spento.*
 Sorel, *Reflections on Violence.*
 Elgar, *First Symphony.*
 Bartók, *First String Quartet.*
- 1909** Marinetti, *Futurist Manifesto.*
 Mahler, *Ninth Symphony.*
 Matisse, *The Dance.*
 Frank Lloyd Wright, *Robie House.*
 Pound, *Personae.*
 Schoenberg, *Five Orchestral Pieces.*
 Wells, *Tono-Bungay.*
- 1910** Stravinsky, *The Firebird.*
 Forster, *Howards End.*
 Wells, *The History of Mr. Polly.*
 Russell and Whitehead, *Principia Mathematica* (–1913).

Chronology

- Death of Galton.
Death of Gilbert.
Death of Mahler.
National Insurance Act.
Suffragette agitation.
- 1911** Beerbohm, *Zuleika Dobson*.
Bennett, *Hilda Lessways*.
Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*.
Douglas, *Siren Land*.
Lawrence, *The White Peacock*.
"Mansfield", *In a German Pension*.
Pound, *Canzoni*.
Wells, *The New Machiavelli*.
Wharton, *Ethan Frome*.
- Death of Scott of the Antarctic.
Birth of Pollock.
Second Post-Impressionist
Exhibition, London.
National Dock Strike.
Sinking of the *Titanic*.
- 1912** Pound, *Ripostes*.
Daily Herald founded.
Mann, *Death in Venice*.
Marcel Duchamp, *Nude Descending a Staircase*.
Shaw, *Pygmalion*.
Schoenberg, *Pierrot Lunaire*.
- Second Rejection of Irish
Home Rule Bill by Lords.
Suffragette demonstrations,
London.
- 1913** *New Statesman* founded.
Cather, *O Pioneers!*
Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*.
Frost, *A Boy's Will*.
Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu* (–1927).
Stravinsky, *Le Sacre du printemps*.
Husserl, *Phenomenology*.
- Birth of Dylan Thomas.
Irish Home Rule Bill passed
by Parliament.
Outbreak of World War I.
- 1914** Joyce, *Dubliners*.
Conrad, *Chance*.
Bell, *Art*.
Frost, *North of Boston*.
Founding of BLAST.
- Sinking of *SS Lusitania*.
General Theory of Relativity.
Air attacks on London.
- 1915** Woolf, *The Voyage Out*.
Lawrence, *The Rainbow*.
Maugham, *Of Human Bondage*.
Pound, *Cathay*.
Ford, *The Good Soldier*.

- Death of Henry James.
 First Battle of the Somme
 (July–November).
 Easter Rising in Dublin.
 Gallipoli.
 Lloyd George Prime Minister.
 Dada.
- 1916 Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist
 as a Young Man*.
 Pound, *Lustra*.
- Passchendaele (July–
 November).
 USA enters War.
 Balfour Declaration.
 Russian Revolution.
- 1917 Eliot, *Prufrock and Other
 Observations*.
 Valéry, *La Jeune Parque*.
 Lowell, *Tendencies in Modern
 American Poetry*.
 Jung, *The Unconscious*.
 Yeats, *The Wild Swans at
 Coole*.
- Death of Owen.
 Armistice (11 Nov.).
 Influenza pandemic (–1919).
 Votes for women aged thirty
 and over in Britain.
- 1918 Joyce, *Exiles*.
 Lewis, *Tarr*.
 Strachey, *Eminent Victorians*.
 West, *The Return of the
 Soldier*.
 Hopkins, *Poems*.
 Paul Klee, *Gartenplan*.
- Bauhaus founded at Weimar
 by Walter Gropius.
 Treaty of Versailles.
 Atlantic flown by Alcock and
 Brown.
 Relativity scientifically proved.
 First woman MP elected
 (Nancy Astor).
- 1919 Picasso, *Pierrot and Harlequin*.
 Hardy, *Collected Poems*.
 Sinclair, *Mary Olivier*.
 Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*.
 Keynes, *The Economic
 Consequences of the Peace*.
 Mencken, *The American
 Language*.
 Woolf, *Night and Day*.
- League of Nations established. 1920 Lawrence, *Women in Love*.

Chronology

American women achieve the vote.

Eliot, *The Sacred Wood*.
Shaw, *Heartbreak House*.
Wharton, *The Age of Innocence*.
Pound, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*.
"Mansfield", *Bliss and Other Stories*.
Lewis, *Main Street*.
O'Neill, *The Emperor Jones*.
Fry, *Vision and Design*.
Matisse, *L'Odalisque*.

Irish Free State established.

1921

Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*.
Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*.
Huxley, *Crome Yellow*.
Picasso, *Three Musicians*.
Munch, *The Kiss*.

Death of Proust.
Birth of Larkin.
Fascists in power in Italy.
Founding of the British Broadcasting Company (BBC).

1922

Eliot, *The Waste Land*.
Joyce, *Ulysses*.
Woolf, *Jacob's Room*.
Lewis, *Babbitt*.
Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.
Fritz Lang, *Dr. Mabuse*.
Friedrich Murnau, *Nosferatu*.
Criterion founded.

Death of "Mansfield".
BBC radio begins transmission.
President Coolidge elected.

1923

Huxley, *Antic Hay*.
Lawrence, *Kangaroo*.
Macaulay, *Told by an Idiot*.
Stevens, *Harmonium*.

Death of Lenin.
Death of Kafka.
Death of Conrad.
First Labour Government.
Surrealist Manifesto.

1924

Forster, *A Passage to India*.
Mann, *The Magic Mountain*.
O'Casey, *Juno and the Paycock*.
Ford, *Some Do Not*.
Cecil B. de Mille, *The Ten Commandments*.

- 1925** Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*.
 Stein, *The Making of Americans*.
 Huxley, *Those Barren Leaves*.
 Ford, *No More Parades*.
 Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*.
 Dreiser, *An American Tragedy*.
 Hemingway, *In Our Time*.
 Kafka, *The Trial*.
 Eisenstein, *Battleship Potemkin*.
 Chaplin, *The Gold Rush*.
 Picasso, *Three Dancers*.
 Whitehead, *Science and the
 Modern World*.
 Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (–1926).
- Death of Rilke.
 General Strike (Britain, May
 3–12).
- 1926** Hemingway, *The Sun Also
 Rises* (*Fiesta in England*,
 1927).
 T. E. Lawrence, *The Seven
 Pillars of Wisdom*.
 D. H. Lawrence, *The Plumed
 Serpent*.
 Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up*.
 Faulkner, *Soldier's Pay*.
 Tawney, *Religion and the Rise
 of Capitalism*.
 Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*.
 Jean Renoir, *Nana*.
 Moore, *Draped Reclining
 Figure*.
- Lindbergh flies Atlantic solo.
 First "talkies".
- 1927** Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*.
 Hemingway, *Men without
 Women*.
 Epstein, *Madonna and Child*.
 Heidegger, *Being and Time*.
 Wilder, *The Bridge at San Luis
 Rey*.
- Death of Hardy.
- 1928** Yeats, *The Tower*.

Chronology

Women's suffrage extended to women over 21 in Britain.

Bell, *Civilization*.
Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.
Huxley, *Point Counter Point*.
Waugh, *Decline and Fall*.
Woolf, *Orlando*.
Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*.
Eisenstein, *October*.

Second Surrealist Manifesto.
Opening of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Wall Street Crash.

1929

Aldington, *Death of a Hero*.
Bridges, *The Testament of Beauty*.
Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*.
Graves, *Goodbye to All That*.
Hitchcock, *Blackmail*.
Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*.

Death of Lawrence.
Death of Conan Doyle.
Global Depression.
Television begins in USA.
Photo flashbulb invented.

1930

Auden, *Poems*.
Eliot, *Ash Wednesday*.
Crane, *The Bridge*.
Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*.
Lewis, *Apes of God*.
Waugh, *Vile Bodies*.
Leavis, *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture*.
Freud, *Civilisation and its Discontents*.

National Government formed (UK).
Abandonment of Gold Standard (UK).

1931

O'Neill, *Mourning Becomes Electra*.
Matisse, *The Dance*.
Fritz Lang, *M*.
Charlie Chaplin, *City Lights*.
Woolf, *The Waves*.

President Roosevelt elected.

1932

Scrutiny started.
Brecht, *The Mother*.
Céline, *Voyage au bout de la nuit*.

- Auden, *The Orators*.
Huxley, *Brave New World*.
- Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany. **1933** Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*.
Malraux, *La Condition humaine*.
Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*.
Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*.
Wells, *The Shape of Things to Come*.
Yeats, *Collected Poems*.
- Radioactivity discovered. **1934** Beckett, *More Pricks Than Kicks*.
Eliot, *The Rock, After Strange Gods*.
Fitzgerald, *Tender is the Night*.
Pound, *ABC of Reading*.
Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*.
Miller, *Tropic of Cancer*.
- Italian Invasion of Abyssinia (Nov). **1935** Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*.
Auden and Isherwood, *The Dog Beneath the Skin*.
Isherwood, *Mr. Norris Changes Trains*.
Gershwin, *Porgy and Bess*.
Dali, *Giraffe on Fire*.
Shostakovich, *First Symphony*.
Odets, *Waiting for Lefty*.
- Death of George V; accession of Edward VIII; abdication crisis; accession of George VI.
Death of Chesterton.
Death of Housman. **1936** Auden, *Look, Stranger!*
Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*
Thomas, *Twenty-five Poems*.
Smith, *Novel on Yellow Paper*.
Mondrian, *Composition in Red and Blue*.

Chronology

Death of Kipling.
Spanish Civil War (–1939).
Moscow Show Trials.
BBC Television begins
(Nov).

Death of Barrie.
Death of Wharton.
Chamberlain Prime Minister.
Destruction of Guernica,
Spain.

Munich agreement
(Sept 30).
First jet engine.

Death of Freud.
Death of Yeats.
Death of Ford.
Russo-German Pact.
Beginning of World War II
(Sept 3).

Huxley, *Eyeless in Gaza*.
Orwell, *Keep the Aspidistra
Flying*.
Chaplin, *Modern Times*.
Ayer, *Language, Truth and
Logic*.
Keynes, *General Theory of
Employment, Interest and
Money*.

1937

Jones, *In Parenthesis*.
Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*.
Woolf, *The Years*.
Tolkien, *The Hobbit*.
Picasso, *Guernica*.
Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men*.

1938

Beckett, *Murphy*.
Bowen, *The Death of the Heart*.
Green, *Brighton Rock*.
Mumford, *The Culture of Cities*.
Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*.
Dos Passos, *U.S.A.*
Picasso, *Woman in Easy Chair*.
Bartók, *Violin Concerto*.
Yeats, *New Poems*.
Picture Post begins.

1939

Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*.
MacNeice, *Autumn Journal*.
Orwell, *Coming Up for Air*.
Steinbeck, *The Grapes of
Wrath*.
Eliot, *The Family Reunion*.
Isherwood, *Goodbye to Berlin*.
Picasso, *Night Fishing at
Antibes*.
Jean Renoir, *The Rules of the
Game*.
Yeats, *Last Poems and Two
Plays*.

Introduction

David Bradshaw

This innovative collection of specially commissioned essays is essential reading for anyone wishing to come to terms with the intellectual matrix of Anglo-American literary modernism. In making available to non-specialist readers twelve expert overviews of some of the most significant fields and phenomena – such as physics, anthropology, psychoanalysis, and Nietzscheanism – which impacted on the “revolution of the word” between (roughly) 1880 and 1939, the companion provides both a range of contexts for modernist literature and a series of essays which are accessible and authoritative in their own right. Together they comprise the story of an age.

For the first time, material condensed from a formidable array of technical books and learned articles has been brought together in a single volume, and while the companion’s main target reader is the literary student, it is anticipated that its scope and reach will also appeal to specialists in a number of other disciplines and, indeed, to any general reader with an interest in discovering more about the remarkable intellectual milieu of an extraordinary cultural epoch.

An enhanced awareness of the efflorescence of ideas which occurred in twelve major fields in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can only intensify the reader’s appreciation of the radical and iconoclastic environment in which literary modernism emerged and flourished. Most of the essays foreground individual modernist writers who registered the contiguous upheavals in science, philosophy, and language with particular vividness and relish, and in all the chapters the stress falls on the effects which specific breakthroughs, concepts, and paradigm shifts had on the

wider intellectual community rather than on a more narrow and insular account of the specialist topic in question.

If contextual knowledge can release textual meanings, none of the authors of this compilation would wish to claim that the relationship between imaginative writing and the ideas it embodies, shadows, or kicks against is anything but complex, multiplex, and sensitive. However, there are so many instances of modernist writers appropriating aspects of and even whole areas of specialist knowledge which in turn transformed the shape and tenor of their work – Yeats and eugenics, H. D. and psychoanalysis, Graves and myth, are obvious examples – that this collection needs no more justification, perhaps, than that it will undoubtedly further an understanding of such modernist bending, borrowing, and bricolage. Among other things, these essays will reinvigorate the reader's thinking about such core issues as the Nietzschean inflection of modernism, the advent and appeal of Bergsonism, the modernist state, publishing and the modernist reader, the interface between technology and modernism, eugenics and the life sciences, the institutions and market conditions of modernism, and that more precise revolution of the word instigated by Saussure, Bloomfield, and their fellow-linguists.

It is now universally accepted that the Anglo-American modernist movement comprised much more than a largely white, male avant-garde conscientiously detached from and contemptuous of both the literary mainstream and modernity at large. We also know that human character did not change in 1910 (despite Virginia Woolf's claim that it did), just as a decade earlier (despite the death of Nietzsche) the new century had dawned without incident, culturally speaking, apart from the appearance (in German) of Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*. Indeed, critical speculation about when, precisely, modernism burst forth and when it petered out looks more and more futile as time goes on: no period of cultural activity is airtight and all watersheds form part of more extensive upland systems that are fed by rain carried from far away. This volume's attempt to isolate and elucidate the major intellectual developments which assumed importance for modernist writers has been made with an acute awareness that the temper of a historical period is always and inevitably continuous with the past as well as being fissiparous, contradictory, manifold, and fugitive. Preoccupations which appear to have colonized the mind of one writer show no sign of having had any influence at all on the vast majority of his or her contemporaries, making any attempt to capture an era's "turn of mind" or "climate of opinion" all the more fraught with conceptual, procedural, and terminological difficulty. Like Patricia Waugh, the authors of

these essays would forcefully reject “the notion of *Zeitgeist* as a seamless and overarching historical unity binding literature to philosophy and scientific discovery in a straightforward reflectionist chain” (Waugh 1997: 6). But, to a greater or lesser extent, they all share a conviction that it can only benefit students of the period in general, and students of its literature in particular, to become more familiar with specialist fields of knowledge which are patently in play, one way or another, in the diverse writings of the modernist age, a remarkably distinct, though far from stand-alone cultural era.

If each of these essays is concerned to facilitate the reading of modernist texts by bringing on the reader’s receptivity to what they may enclose, an even greater aspiration of the volume is to be dependable without being reductive. Background or contextual knowledge may amplify our understanding of a text by indicating new possibilities of interpretation, but contexts must never be configured as cordons beyond which contextually “unauthorized” readings are barred from progressing. This companion is conceived as a guidebook, not a code book, and its chief aim is to provide a free-standing, probing, and reliable supplement to modernism which avoids the pitfalls of superficiality, over-prescriptiveness, and oversimplification.

Neither the editor nor any of the contributors would wish to argue that the twelve topics covered by the essays are the *only* modernist preoccupations which the reader should consider. Another, longer book might have contained additional essays on, among other things, the occult, social credit, aviation, race, historiography, skyscrapers, dance, censorship, Russia, America, rejuvenation, cinematography, telephony, music hall, and ecology, yet even so it would have been hardly less selective for all its extra bulk. Taken together, these twelve new essays explore what are probably the most significant of the ideas which were “in the air” (to borrow a phrase of Grant Allen’s quoted in Angelique Richardson’s chapter) during the modernist epoch. However, the mentality of modernism was so thick with novelty and discovery that it would be unwise to be too categorical about this. Moreover, there have already been numerous studies of the great structural issues which spanned the period, such as feminism, imperialism, and war, and this is the only reason why chapters have not been dedicated to those key concerns in this volume.

One of the most interesting aspects of the book, perhaps, is the way it will help promote an understanding of the cross-fertilization of ideas in the period. The eugenicist R. A. Fisher, for example, “one of the most important and productive thinkers in statistics of [the twentieth] century”

(Mazumdar 1991: 96), was also deeply read in Nietzsche. "An interest in Nietzsche," indeed:

was not uncommon among the eugenisists. Maximilian Mügge . . . who occasionally lectured for the Eugenics Education Society, wrote in 1909 in the first volume of the *Eugenics Review* that Galton had founded a racial religion: the ideal of the super-man would supply the religious feeling of responsibility which would give the science its popular support. Havelock Ellis, another founding member of the [Eugenics Education] Society, was also one of Nietzsche's most prolific exponents in English . . . The commentators at this time generally saw Nietzsche as the philosopher of Darwinism and evolution whose *Übermensch* was the forerunner of a new human race, a master race. (Mazumdar 1991: 104)

Similarly, Oscar Levy, the man responsible for the first complete and authorized translation of the works of Nietzsche into English, was also a degenerationist and dedicated eugenisist, as was his fellow Nietzschean, the anti-democrat and misogynist Anthony Ludovici (for more on both of them see Michael Bell's chapter on Nietzscheanism). The reader of the first three chapters of this collection, therefore, will have been introduced to the mindset of a common intellectual type in the modernist period, the post-Darwinian, Nietzschean, eugenisist and elitist, and it is hoped that other chapter clusters will offer similar insights. Equally valuable is the way in which the essays will encourage the reader to look at the same text from a number of perspectives: for example, *The Waste Land* as seen through the eyes of Jeremy MacClancy, Mary Ann Gillies, Stephen Frosh, and myself.

"Literature undeniably reflects in some sense the life and thought of its time," Michael Bell began his Introduction to the 1900–1930 volume of "The Context of English Literature" series in 1980, "but to determine how it does so is the delicate and continuing function of criticism." He continued:

It may address itself to "life" in a greater or lesser degree but its value as literature is not in any simple sense contingent on such a criterion. The vitality or meaningfulness of literature hinges on its internal intensity rather than the quantity of historical information in a factual sense that it may include. It is a delicate matter, therefore, to mediate pertinently between literary experience and its putative contexts; to discuss "influences" and pre-occupations without collapsing the tension of this vital heterogeneity. (1980: 1)

These cautionary words are as relevant today as they were when Michael