

WHICH ARE MODERN?

1. Whirl up, sea—
whirl your pointed pines,
splash your great pines
on our rocks,
hurl your green over us,
cover us with your pools of fir.

2. If we must die, let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die, O let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!
O kinsmen! we must meet the common foe!
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one death-blow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

3. There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound

And frogs in the pools singing at night,
And wild plum-trees in tremulous white;

Robins will wear their feathery fire
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;

And not one will know of the war, not one
Will care at last when it is done.

Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree
If mankind perished utterly;

And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn,
Would scarcely know that we were gone.

4. Often beneath the wave, wide from this ledge
The dice of drowned men's bones he saw bequeath
An embassy. Their numbers as he watched,
Beat on the dusty shore and were obscured.

And wrecks passed without sound of bells,
The calyx of death's bounty giving back
A scattered chapter, livid hieroglyph,
The portent wound in corridors of shells.

Then in the circuit calm of one vast coil,
Its lashings charmed and malice reconciled,
Frosted eyes there were that lifted altars;
And silent answers crept across the stars.

Compass, quadrant and sextant contrive
No farther tides... High in the azure steeps
Monody shall not wake the mariner.
This fabulous shadow only the sea keeps.

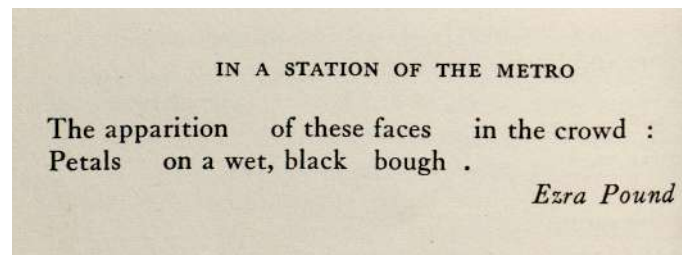
5. A rat had run across the thin boards of the ceiling. Kabnis thrusts his head out from the covers. Through the cracks, a powdery faded red dust sprays down on him. Dust of slavefields, dried, scattered... No use to read.

6. It was getting much darker. The sun no longer gave much light, for there was no atmosphere to diffuse it. It was a great blinding ball of fire near my feet now, and the planets were traveling about it swiftly. I could see the light reflected on one side, dark on the other, on each planet. The sun could be seen to move perceptibly too, though very slightly. As my feet grew larger, threatening to touch it, I hastily drew them up with ease and hung suspending in the sky in a half-sitting position as I grew.

7. At last the day arrived. Guálinto dressed in his blue serge suit that had cost fourteen dollars and hurried out to catch a *camión* that would take him to the school grounds, where those people with cars would pick up those without them. On Fourteenth Street he hailed a *camión* and climbed in, his throat throbbing with excitement. Tonight he would dance with María Elena. He would hold her close in his arms and look into her eyes. He would have her to himself the whole night, and the thought made his stomach flutter.

8. The "death car" as the newspapers called it, didn't stop; it came out of the gathering darkness, wavered tragically for a moment, and then disappeared around the next bend. Michaelis wasn't even sure of its color—he told the first policeman that it was light green. The other car, the one going toward New York, came to rest a hundred yards beyond, and its driver hurried back to where Myrtle Wilson, her life violently extinguished, knelt in the road and mingled her thick dark blood with the dust.

1. H.D., "Oread" (1914), in *Collected Poems 1912–1944*, ed. Louis L. Martz (New York: New Directions, 1983), 55.
2. Claude McKay, "If We Must Die...", in *Harlem Shadows* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922; Internet Archive, 2010), 53.
3. Sara Teasdale, "'There Will Come Soft Rains' (War Time)," in *Flame and Shadow* (New York: Macmillan, 1920; Internet Archive, 2008), 89–90.
4. Hart Crane, "At Melville's Tomb" (1926), in *Complete Poems & Selected Letters*, ed. Langdon Hammer (New York: Library of America, 2006), 24.
5. Jean Toomer, "Kabnis," in *Cane* (1923; New York: Liveright, 2011), 112.
6. G. Peyton Wertenbaker, "The Man From the Atom," pt. 1, *Amazing Stories* 1, no. 1 (April 1926): 62–66.
7. Américo Paredes, *George Washington Gómez* (unpub., 1940; Houston: Arte Publico, 1990), 165.
8. F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (New York: Scribner, 1925), 137.



"Contemporania," *Poetry* 2, no. 1 (April 1913): 12, Modernist Journals Project.

BUTTONS

I HAVE been watching the war map slammed up for
advertising in front of the newspaper office.
Buttons—red and yellow buttons—blue and black but-
tons—are shoved back and forth across the map.

A laughing young man, sunny with freckles,
Climbs a ladder, yells a joke to somebody in the crowd,
And then fixes a yellow button one inch west
And follows the yellow button with a black button one
inch west.

(Ten thousand men and boys twist on their bodies in
a red soak along a river edge,
Gasping of wounds, calling for water, some rattling
death in their throats.)
Who by Christ would guess what it cost to move two
buttons one inch on the war map here in front of
the newspaper office where the freckle-faced young
man is laughing to us?

CARL SANDBURG.

Masses 6, no. 5 (February 1915): 10, Modernist Journals Project.

ANECDOTE OF THE JAR

I placed a jar in Tennessee,
And round it was, upon a hill.
It made the slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,
And sprawled around, no longer wild.
The jar was round upon the ground
And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion everywhere.
The jar was gray and bare.
It did not give of bird or bush,
Like nothing else in Tennessee.

Wallace Stevens, "Pecksniffiana," *Poetry* 15, no. 1 (October 1919): 8, Modernist Journals Project.

DEFINING MODERNISM

WILSON, 1931

Naturalism...was put into practice by novelists like Zola, who believed that composing a novel was like performing a laboratory experiment: you had only to supply your characters with a specific environment and heredity and then watch their automatic reactions....

Symbolism may be defined as an attempt by carefully studied means—a complicated association of ideas represented by a medley of metaphors—to communicate unique personal feelings....

The literary history of our time is to a great extent that of the development of Symbolism and of its fusion or conflict with Naturalism.

Wilson, Edmund. *Axel's Castle: A Study of the Imaginative Literature of 1870–1930*. (1931; New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004), 7, 19, 21.

ADORNO, 1970

The modern, however, in the latter sense [as “historicophilosophical category”] is not a chronological concept but the Rimbaudian postulate of an art of the most advanced consciousness, an art in which the most progressive and differentiated technical procedures are saturated with the most progressive and differentiated experiences. But these experiences, being social, are critical...Art is modern when, by its mode of experience and as the expression of the crisis of experience, it absorbs what industrialization has developed under the given relations of production. This involves a negative canon, a set of prohibitions against what the modern has disavowed in experience and technique; and such determinate negation is virtually the canon of what is to be done.

Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno, Rolf Tiedemann and Robert Hullot-Kentor, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: UP of Minnesota, 1997), 33–34.

BEEBE, 1972

First, Modernist literature is distinguished by its formalism. It insists on the importance of structure and design—the esthetic autonomy and independent whatness of the work of art—almost to that degree summarized by the famous dictum that “a poem should not mean but be.” Secondly, Modernism is characterized by an attitude of detachment and non-commitment which I would put under the general heading of “irony” in the sense of that term as used by the New Critics. Third, Modernist literature makes use of myth not in the way myth was used earlier, as a discipline for belief or a subject of interpretation, but as an arbitrary means of ordering art. And, finally, I would date the Age of Modernism from the time of the Impressionists because I think there is a clear line of development from Impressionism to reflexivism. Modernist art turns back upon itself and is largely concerned with its own creation and composition. The Impressionists’ insistence that the viewer is more important than the subject viewed leads ultimately to the solipsistic worlds-within-worlds of Modernist art and literature.

Maurice Beebe, “*Ulysses* and the Age of Modernism.” *James Joyce Quarterly* 10 (Fall 1972): 175.

BRADBURY AND MCFARLANE, 1976

Modernism is our art; it is the one art that responds to the scenario of our chaos....Modernism is, clearly, more than an aesthetic event, and some of the conditions that lie behind it are discernible and clear. Yet it contains a highly aesthetic response, one which turns on the assumption that the registering of modern consciousness or experience was not a problem in representation but a profound cultural and aesthetic crux...a problem in the making of structures, the employment of language, the uniting of form, finally in the social meaning of the artist himself.

Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, "The Name and Nature of Modernism," in Bradbury and McFarlane, eds., *Modernism 1890-1930* (1976; London: Penguin, 1991), 27-29. The second ellipsis is in the original.

WILLIAMS, 1985

What then stands out as new, and is in this defining sense 'modern', is the series (including the competitive sequence) of breaks in form. Yet if we say only this we are carried back inside the ideology, ignoring the continuity of themes from the nineteenth century and isolating the breaks of form, or worse, as often in subsequent pseudo-histories, relating the formal breaks to the themes as if both were comparatively innovative. For it is not the general themes of response to the city and its modernity which compose anything that can be properly called Modernism. It is rather the new and specific location of the artists and intellectuals of this movement within the changing cultural milieu of the metropolis....

The key cultural factor of the modernist shift is the character of the metropolis....Liberated or breaking from their national or provincial cultures, placed in quite new relations to those other native languages or native visual traditions, encountering meanwhile a novel and dynamic common environment from which many of the older forms were obviously distant, the artists and writers and thinkers of this phase found the only community available to them: a community of the medium; of their own practices.

Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*, ed. Tony Pinkney (London: Verso, 1989), 44-45.

JAMESON, 2002

What we call artistic or aesthetic 'modernism' essentially corresponds to a situation of incomplete modernization.

The ideology of modernism...is first and foremost that which posits the autonomy of the aesthetic.

I suggest that late modernism was an American phenomenon (or more properly a US one), I have in mind the theory of art, the ideology of modernism, which it was the very role of abstract expressionism pre-eminently to have generated.

Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present* (London: Verso, 2002), 141, 161, 168.

FRIEDMAN, 2010

I am suggesting we treat modernism as the domain of creative expressivity *within* modernity's dynamic of rapid change, a domain that interacts with the other arenas of rupture such as technology, trade, migration, state formation, societal institutions, and so forth.

Susan Stanford Friedman, "Planetary: Musing Modernist Studies," *Modernism/modernity* 17, no. 3 (September 2010): 475. doi:10.1353/mod.2010.0003. Rpt. in Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity Across Time* (New York: Columbia UP, 2015), 52.

HAYOT, 2016

Periods instantiate more or less untheorized and inherited notions of totality. Insofar as periods are definitions, they conceptualize themselves as the product of a set of central characteristics and deviations. In general, no matter how extensive the deviations are, the central concept or inner essence governing the period remains firmly in place. The ongoing dominance of a core version of modernism, relentlessly unmodified by the arrival of previously noncanonical authors from a variety of national and social locations, offers us a fairly clear example of how that process works in practice—even when most scholars agree that these new noncanonical authors *should* alter the core meaning of modernism!

Eric Hayot, "Against Periodization; or, On Institutional Time," *NLH* 42, no. 4 (Autumn 2011): 744, doi:10.1353/nlh.2011.0039.

SOME RANDO ON THE INTERNET, 2018

Yet to say that the most popular author-subjects change slowly may appear to miss the point, since it allows us only to see what scholars are writing *about* and not *how* they are writing about it or what arguments they are finally making: an essay on Joyce from the *Journal of Modern Literature* in 1970 is very different from one from *Modernism/modernity* in 2015—but both exist. The stability of the lists of highly-ranked figures shows the functional significance of a canon. But it also signals that "modernism" is not an empty container into which any meaning at all can be poured. Rather, new approaches still tend to prove themselves by addressing already-valued authors. Paul Saint-Amour's recent *Tense Future* may advocate for a "weak modernism" in which strong judgments about the nature of modernism are suspended in order to address other historical, cultural, and aesthetic questions, but the book still devotes considerable attention to *Ulysses* and *Mrs. Dalloway*.... Without deliberately ruling anything out, the practice raises the barriers to entry for new subject matter that does not come with a familiar authorial brand name.

Andrew Goldstone, "Modernist Studies without Modernism," 2021, unpublished manuscript, osf.io/wrhj2/.

DEFINING MODERNITY

Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party" (1848; 1888), in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978), 476.

The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the "disenchantment of the world."

Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation" (1919), in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. and trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford UP, 1946), 155.

Social theorists and others have been looking in the wrong place for the signs of systematic cultural change. They have tried to detect broad changes in values and beliefs, in attitudes and orientations....Such changes, in so far as they have occurred, are certainly interesting and important; but they are also, by their very nature, elusive, varied, and extremely complex....The argument I shall develop in this chapter is that, by shifting the focus of attention, we can discern a broad transformation in the cultural domain which is both more systematic and more clear-cut. If we focus in the first instance not on values, attitudes and beliefs, but rather on symbolic forms and their modes of production and circulation in the social world, then we shall see that, with the advent of modern societies in the late medieval and early modern periods, a systematic cultural transformation began to take hold. By virtue of a series of technical innovations associated with printing and, subsequently, with the electrical codification of information, symbolic forms were produced, reproduced and circulated on a scale that was unprecedented. Patterns of communication and interaction began to change in profound and irreversible ways. These changes, which comprise what can loosely be called the 'mediatization of culture', had a clear institutional basis: namely, the development of media organizations, which first appeared in the second half of the fifteenth century and have expanded their activities ever since.

John B. Thompson, *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1995), 45–46.

type	examples	symbolic capital	specialization	circulation	economic model
avant-garde little magazines	<i>Little Review, Poetry, Dial, (New) Masses</i>	high	high (audience)	restricted (subscription)	patronage
advanced book publishers	Knopf, Liveright, Random House, Harcourt	rising to high	low	moderate	low capital enterprise
established genteel book publishers	Harper, Scribner, Houghton Mifflin	moderately high	low	moderate	family firm
commercial book publishers	Doubleday, Simon & Schuster	moderate	low	high (with bestsellers)	family firm + acquisitions
genteel magazines	<i>Harper's, Scribner's, Atlantic</i>	declining from high	low	moderate (subs.)	expensive subscription
book clubs	Book of the Month Club, Literary Guild	moderately low	low	high (by book standards)	middle-class consumption
6 yellow newspapers	<i>New York Journal</i> (Hearst), <i>New York World</i> (Pulitzer)	low	low	highest	newsstand circulation, ads
ethnic/working-class papers	<i>Chicago Defender, La Opinión, Daily Forward, New York Call</i>	low	high (audience)	low to moderate	newsstand sales
"big slicks"	<i>Ladies' Home Journal Cosmopolitan</i> (Hearst)	low	low	highest	advertising
pulps	<i>True Story, Detective Story, Love Story, Weird Tales, Black Mask</i>	lowest	high (genre)	high (total), low (most individual titles)	newsstand sales, fandom

A sketch of US literary print media in the interwar period; non-authoritative characterizations are based on AG's work in progress and vibes.

	author	title	periodicals	book publication	other significant publications
1898	Crane	"The Open Boat"	<i>Scribner's</i> , 1897	Doubleday, McClure	<i>New York Press</i> , 1897
1903	James	<i>The Ambassadors</i>	<i>North American Review</i>	London: Methuen; Harper	Scribner, 1909 (New York Edition)
1909	Stein	"Melanctha"		<i>Three Lives</i> , Grafton	New York: Modern Library, 1933
1920	Du Bois	"The Comet"		<i>Darkwater</i> , Harcourt	
1922	Eliot	<i>The Waste Land</i>	<i>Dial</i> , <i>Criterion</i>	Boni & Liveright	
1923	Stevens	<i>Harmonium</i>	<i>Poetry</i> , <i>Others</i> , etc., 1916ff.	Knopf	
1923	Williams	<i>Spring and All</i>		Paris: Contact	
1923	Daly	"Knights of the Open Palm"	<i>Black Mask</i>		
1925	Moore	<i>Observations</i>	<i>Poetry</i> , <i>Dial</i> , etc.	Dial Press	<i>Poems</i> , London: Egoist Press, 1921
1925	Hemingway	<i>In Our Time</i>	Kansas City <i>Star</i> (some)	Scribner	three mountains, 1924
1925	Locke, ed.	<i>The New Negro</i>	<i>Survey Graphic</i>	Boni	
1925	Loos	<i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes</i>	<i>Harper's Bazar</i> , 1924	Liveright	
1927	Hammett	"The Main Death"	<i>Black Mask</i>		
1928	Lovecraft	"Call of Cthulhu"	<i>Weird Tales</i>		
1929	Faulkner	<i>The Sound and the Fury</i>		Cape & Smith	<i>Portable Faulkner</i> , Viking, 1946
1930	Porter	"Flowering Judas"	<i>Hound & Horn</i>	Harcourt	
1931	Hughes	"Advertisement for the Waldorf-Astoria"	<i>New Masses</i>		(not collected)
1933	Moore	"Shamblau"	<i>Weird Tales</i>		
1934	Porter	"Hacienda"	<i>VQR</i> , 1932	Harrison of Paris	Harcourt, 1935
1934	Le Sueur	"I Was Marching"	<i>New Masses</i>		<i>Ripening</i> , Feminist Press, 1982
1934	Nebel	"Too Hot to Handle"	<i>Dime Detective</i>		
1936	Hughes	"Let America Be America Again"	<i>Esquire</i>	<i>A New Song</i> , International Workers Order, 1938	
1936	Barnes	<i>Nightwood</i>	London: Faber; Harcourt, 1937		
1937	Hurston	<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>		Phila.: Lippincott	