

Reading 1922

A Return to the Scene
of the Modern

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Preface

ANYONE WHO WRITES about or teaches modern literature spends a good deal of time in 1922. In fact, a very plausible account of modern literature in English can be based on the work of a very few months extending from the publication of *Ulysses* in February 1922 to the publications of *Cane*, *Harmonium*, and *Spring and All* in the fall of 1923. After offering such an account for a few years, I began to imagine myself in a bookstore of the time, browsing among tables containing both *The Waste Land* and Willa Cather's *One of Ours*, or *Babbitt* next to *Jacob's Room*. And though this would certainly have been possible at the time, it is now a little disorienting to think about, because our way of looking at modern literature so thoroughly insulates such works from one another. Modern British literature is generally taught and interpreted quite separately from modern American literature, which is itself subdivided so that possible connections between Eliot and Toomer or Eliot and Cather can hardly be imagined. Of course, this conjectural bookstore would also have had newspapers and magazines, not to mention popular novels like Zane Grey's *The Wanderer of the Wasteland*, which a reader could have taken home along with Eliot to get a different perspective on wandering in the desert. So far is most literary criticism from examining such materials that their very existence is usually an astonishment.

Dissatisfied with this situation, I decided to turn myself into the ideal reader of 1922, with an insomnia so ideal it would be adequate not just to *Ulysses* but to anything else published in the same year. I wanted to approach

the written materials of this single, important year without a priori distinctions and hierarchies, though I was well aware that I could hardly approach them without preconceptions. I did not, in other words, start with the two most prominent works of the year, *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*, and then read so as to reconstruct a context for them. I read everything I could get my hands on, assuming that sooner or later it would probably bring me back to those works, quite possibly from a new and unexpected direction.

In the end, I think the experiment was worth performing. In the course of it, I largely satisfied my desire for a more comprehensive understanding of how the masterworks of literary modernism fit into the discursive framework of their time. But I also said a good deal less about *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land* than about other works, some of them almost entirely unknown, and I think it only fair to warn readers of that at the outset. I have not tried to provide what I never intended to produce—another comprehensive reading of those two great works—confident that readers wanting such a thing will not have far to look. I comment, sometimes at length, on works quite well known outside literary studies, and I am well aware of the dangers of such intellectual poaching, though I know of no protection against it except exceptional care. I can only hope that in my case it has been enough. I also permit one major omission, or one that I am most aware of among the many, and that is any considerable analysis of the major African American works of 1922, Claude McKay's *Harlem Shadows* and James Weldon Johnson's *Book of American Negro Poetry*. The reason for this is simply that I have already written in a previous book what I would have written on those works had I considered them here. Perhaps readers interested in that material could simply annex chapters 4 and 5 of that book, *The Dialect of Modernism*, to this one to help repair my omission.

Inevitably, there are many other omissions less easy to repair. Pursuing certain aspects of my inquiry led me away from some works by major authors, such as Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* or Woolf's *Jacob's Room*, and toward other works less obviously situated in my year, such as *The Great Gatsby*, which is set in 1922, or *Mrs. Dalloway*, which was begun in that year. Sadly, I was never able to say anything very useful about certain works, chief among them Elizabeth von Arnim's *Enchanted April*, that made me feel from time to time as if 1922 were filled with unexpected literary riches. Nor was I finally able to comment in any satisfactory way on a great many works that convinced me this was a time of unparalleled linguistic futility. What is surprising to me now, however, looking back over the whole project, is not that I was forced to omit such a large number of the things I read but that I was finally able to include so many, and the sense of waste that comes over me as I recall so many hours spent with such little success is modified by the satisfaction of having read so many unexpected things I would never have discovered otherwise.

Astute readers will also notice a few instances in which I stretched the strict

limits of 1922 so as to include examples that might otherwise have been omitted. In particular, it has proven difficult not to pursue controversies, news stories, or literary careers into 1923, but there are other instances in which the desire to provide context or make a point has led me far away from my particular year. Of such lapses I can only say that a year is a peculiar unit of time to write about. The simultaneity it seems to offer is almost always specious, and there is far too much chronology within a year to ignore it altogether. The simple fact that very few literary works are conceived, written, and published in a single year makes it impossible to seal 1922 off from the years around it. In the end, I had to be guided by my original motives in attempting this study, which were to take 1922 as a limited test case in investigating the relationship between literary modernism and the public world of which it was a part. I did not have any very elaborate historiographical ambitions, but I did hope to learn something more about modern literature by considering at least a little of it in a dramatically enlarged context. If there are still so many omissions and biases even in an account of so short a period of time, as it is only inevitable there should be, these must be attributed to my desire to make a particular contribution to the study of modern literature, even if that left certain aspects of my chosen year unregarded.

I have had some bibliographical help in my work, for which I want to thank Louis Chude-Sokei and Alison Chin. I would also like to thank Erin Templeton for her help in compiling the index. In those times when the viability, if not in fact the sanity, of this project have seemed to me in doubt, I have been thankful to know two other scholars, Richard Stein and Tom Harrison, who have successfully completed similar projects. In the time in which I have been at work on this year, several other years have been given similar treatment, and, in a way, I have been pleased to see the method validated. I have also noticed, however, that no scholar who has mastered a single year has ever chosen to do another, and this seems to me both revealing and a little sobering.

Los Angeles, California
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M. N.

Introduction

ACCORDING TO EZRA POUND, the Christian era ended on October 30, 1921, when James Joyce wrote the final words of *Ulysses*. Actually, Pound had proclaimed the end of the Christian era at least once before, but this time he was serious enough also to propose a new calendar, in which 1922 became year 1 of a new era.¹ For better or for worse, the new calendar never saw much use outside the pages of the *Little Review*, in which it was first proposed; but Pound did succeed, nonetheless, in making people think of 1922 as a year in which something definitively new had happened. By helping to bring both *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land* into print, Pound had introduced to the public the two works that would constitute, in the words of Gilbert Seldes, “a complete expression of the spirit which will be ‘modern’ for the next generation.”² Ever since, the coincidental publication of these two works in 1922 has been taken as signifying a definitive break in literary history.³

This dramatic advent of a new literature was at least part of what Willa Cather had in mind when she complained, “The world broke in two in 1922 or thereabouts.” Although Cather won the Pulitzer Prize in 1922 and achieved her greatest financial success in that year, her work had been rendered obsolete by *Ulysses*, according to a harsh review published by Edmund Wilson in October, and the bewildered resentment she felt at this separation of the avant-garde from the “backward” was still fresh years later.⁴ But literary controversy was only part of the break that Cather felt in 1922. There was a larger, more general separation of the avant-garde from the backward, one that

younger observers sensed and celebrated just as strongly as Cather lamented it. Searching, in a retrospective essay, for the definitive moment of the Jazz Age, F. Scott Fitzgerald asked, “May one offer in exhibit the year 1922!” The year that seemed catastrophic to Cather was for Fitzgerald “the peak of the younger generation.”⁵

The two writers were looking from different sides of a generational divide at a collection of social changes that seemed to culminate in the year of *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*. When Fitzgerald set *The Great Gatsby* in the summer of 1922, he apparently intended to link it to these changes, some of which he symbolized by direct reference to Eliot’s poem. The geographical center of the novel, the site at which the plot lines quite literally collide, is Wilson’s garage, “a small block of yellow brick sitting on the edge of the waste land, a sort of compact Main Street ministering to it and contiguous to absolutely nothing.”⁶ *The Great Gatsby* is concentrated—geographically, temporally, and stylistically—on this spot, where *Main Street* meets *The Waste Land*, where the small-town lives of the Gatz family meet modernity head-on, where an older realist literature meets the new literary modernism. Though modernist works like *The Waste Land* may have presented a stylistic challenge to the realism of Sinclair Lewis and Willa Cather, it was not simply literary change that Fitzgerald tried to register, but rather a new social and cultural world of which the new works were merely a part.

When Cather and Fitzgerald looked back to 1922, each may have remembered it as a generational dividing line, because it was in fact a time of open generational conflict. A good deal of this conflict was merely rhetorical, stirred up by Harold Stearns in works like *America and the Young Intellectuals* and *Civilization in the United States*, a collection that was dedicated to proving its title an oxymoron. Stearns was determined to show that Main Street *was* the waste land, and his efforts were rewarded with a host of disapproving reviews and editorials, many of them with titles like “The ‘Young Intellectuals’ Versus American Civilization.”⁷ At the same time, generational conflict of a more mundane sort—involving jazz, gin, and late hours—became a staple of popular fiction. Next to Wilson’s disapproving review of her new novel in *Vanity Fair*, Cather might have found advertisements for Fitzgerald’s *Tales of the Jazz Age* and Stephen Vincent Benet’s *Young People’s Pride*, a novel that promised to answer the burning question of the day: are all our young people really “flappers and shifters”?⁸ Many works came forward in this year either to appease or to aggravate such anxieties, and some of them took the threat of drastic social change quite seriously indeed. The word “revolt” appears in book titles from old-fashioned liberals like Brander Matthews and from bitter nativists like Lothrop Stoddard.⁹ Perhaps only Daniel Chauncey Brewer would have answered in the affirmative the question posed by his book *The Peril of the Republic: Are We Facing Revolution in the United States?*, but the notion was not so outlandish as to prevent the book from receiving considerable attention in the reviews.¹⁰

In England a similar question was being asked. It was posed in a sensational way by novelists like “Sapper,” whose wildly popular hero Bulldog Drummond thwarts a revolutionary conspiracy of petty criminals, Jewish malcontents, disgruntled workers, and foreign agitators in this year.¹¹ In his best-seller *The Middle of the Road*, Phillip Gibbs seems to mock such alarmism, since those who are obsessed with the idea of a workers’ revolt are those who know the least about work or workers. In fact, the chief alarmist, the protagonist’s wealthy mother-in-law, travels around England giving lectures that connect “the revolutionary spirit which they found in the world around them” with “the tradition of Satan worship.” But the protagonist is not himself entirely free from such apocalyptic fears: “Other forces were at work, biological, evolutionary, and mysterious forces, which no man could understand or govern. There was a new restlessness in the soul of humanity. Some great change was happening, or about to happen. The old checks and balances had become unhinged, in the minds of men, in the spirit of peoples, in great races.”¹² The very title of the novel, in fact, symbolizes the position of England: indecisively poised between alternatives and balanced at a moment of historical crisis.

As the *Daily Mail* noted in its year-end wrap-up, 1922 was for England the first real postwar year, when “signs of, and restrictions connected with, the Great War were finally abolished,” a return to normalcy that seemed to be symbolized in the press by the wedding of Princess Mary.¹³ The definitive end of the war was marked in a more substantial way by the fall of Lloyd George and the election of a new Tory government under Bonar Law. And yet general reaction to the new world is probably best summarized by the blunt title of C. E. Montague’s *Disenchantment*, the first instance of what was to become a new genre, the postwar reassessment. A. G. Gardiner might have introduced all these books when he introduced George A. Greenwood’s *England To-Day* by saying, “‘England To-day’ is an England in an unprecedented moment of transition.”¹⁴ According to C. F. G. Masterman, the changes facing England in 1922 are greater than any seen since 1066: “Here, then, is a complete and startling transformation of values; not slowly changing from one to another, but suddenly and almost brutally forced upon the life of millions by causes altogether outside their own control.”¹⁵ Fear of revolution was, in other words, a displaced recognition of social changes that had already taken place, but so swiftly and completely that they baffled the understanding. The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, which had published its famous eleventh edition just before the war, issued a three-volume supplement in 1922 recognizing that its greatest and most comprehensive compilation of knowledge had already been rendered obsolete.

Though Great Britain and the United States shared the metaphor of revolution, the two countries applied it to somewhat different social changes. The deep pessimism evident in Montague, Greenwood, Masterman, and Gibbs reflects the very serious economic difficulties facing England after the war.¹⁶

The threat described by Brewer, Stoddard, and Matthews comes less from decline and more from complacency. Their polemic seeks to awaken an American public that is perhaps too secure and successful on the one hand and irresponsibly exuberant on the other. But these very different economic states did not prevent the two countries from being equally affected by what turned out to be the most ominous developments of 1922. The reparations bill dictated by the Versailles treaty had been finally computed and delivered to the German government on May 5, 1921, and international affairs in the following year were dominated by the diplomatic and economic consequences.¹⁷ Despite the efforts of John Maynard Keynes, who dedicated tremendous energy to a revision of the treaty,¹⁸ despite international controversy at Genoa and Rapallo, the ensuing conflicts were resolved only by another war.

Although the Christian era did not quite come to an end in 1922, a considerable number of observers besides Ezra Pound felt the world breaking in two in that year, and the changes they sensed seemed to go well beyond stylistic innovation in poetry and the novel. Of course, observers living at many different points in the twentieth century have felt the earth heaving beneath them, and historians have rarely proposed 1922 as being uniquely troubled or troubling. Virginia Woolf dated the definitive break in her century to 1910, though it is worth mentioning in this context that she first started writing about this break in 1922.¹⁹ And according to D. H. Lawrence, “It was in 1915 the old world ended”; but he also wrote this in 1922.²⁰ Even in the case of literary history, it might be argued, however, that 1922 is so late a date as to mark not the beginning but rather the end of a process, one that might be traced back into the 1880s or even beyond.²¹

Even if literary modernism is traced back, as it often is, to its first dim inklings in the poetry of Baudelaire, it arrived as a commonly accepted public fact, at least where English speakers are concerned, in 1922, and when it arrived it was surrounded by a social milieu full of conflict and change. To writers as different as Pound, Cather, and Fitzgerald, the new literature seemed part of that social milieu, and yet the connections between them are rarely explored. The “matrix of modernism,” to take the title of one very accomplished study, is generally constructed in temporal terms, as a genealogy, and is restricted to literature and perhaps philosophy.²² Such a study produces, as a necessary effect of its interpretive method, a modernism disconnected from all other varieties of historical crisis, a modernism that lives primarily in the deepest imaginings of its most radical perpetrators.²³ But what of modernism as a social fact, as part of the lived experience of a reader of *The Waste Land* or *Ulysses*, who also lived in the world of incipient revolt described by Gibbs and Brewer? What connections might have been made in the mind of such a reader between literary modernism and the other innovations of the same year?

As it turns out, 1922 might have been named as year one on any number of calendars besides the one Ezra Pound suggested in the *Little Review*. The diplo-

matic calendar included a number of important conferences, including the Washington Naval Conference, which, according to Charles Beard, ratified the end of the naval supremacy Great Britain had enjoyed since the Armada, with the United States taking its place.²⁴ Another important conference, at Genoa, saw the first diplomatic appearance of the Soviet Union on an international stage, an event that attracted a ravenous press corps, including the young Ernest Hemingway.²⁵ And while in Italy, Hemingway was able to examine more or less firsthand another new political phenomenon that drew a good deal of press attention: the Fascisti. By the time Mussolini's regime took power in November, the world had duly recognized and acknowledged the three forces that would determine global events until 1945.

Other political calendars began at the same time. This year marked the birth—after many years of disappointment and agitation—of the Irish Free State. By itself, as the first alteration in the boundaries of Great Britain since 1801, this event would have been significant enough, but coupled with the self-determination accorded to Egypt in the same year, it looks like the beginning of the postcolonial era. At the very least there was a decisive shift in the rationale behind the British Empire and a new need to enunciate its reasons for being, both of which are evident in Lord Lugard's *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*. Lugard, born in the year of the Indian Mutiny, had helped to establish both the Kenya Colony and Nigeria, and, on his retirement as governor-general of Nigeria in 1919, he set out to preserve by writing what he had established by force. *The Dual Mandate* became the “authoritative justification” for continued colonial administration at a time when radicals like Gandhi were calling for an end to the Empire.²⁶

Lugard was among those colonial officials who felt that their administration might benefit from the knowledge provided by fieldwork anthropology. Indeed, in his retirement he carried on a friendly correspondence with Bronislaw Malinowski, who had also published an influential book in 1922, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*.²⁷ Malinowski self-consciously and somewhat self-righteously promoted his book as the first instance of an entirely new anthropological method, one based on immersion in the language and culture of the people under study. His book coincided in 1922 with another, rather similar, work, *The Andaman Islanders* by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown. Between them, these two works make 1922 the annus mirabilis of modern anthropology, the year in which the fieldwork method decisively replaced all earlier modes of research.²⁸ The ascendancy of the new generation in this year is also marked by the death of W. H. R. Rivers, who had in fact inaugurated the fieldwork method with the Cambridge expedition to the Torres Straits in the 1890s.

The last book Rivers saw into publication before his death, *Essays on the Depopulation of Melanesia*, became itself a minor anthropological classic, and there were a number of posthumous publications as well that in their variety exemplified the range of Rivers' interests. One of these interests was linguistics, which had been the more particular study of a very unorthodox Cambridge

acquaintance of his named Ludwig Wittgenstein. In 1922, when Wittgenstein was teaching school in Austria, a number of other Cantabrigians collaborated to publish for him the first authoritative version of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, the book that is now held to have inaugurated the “linguistic turn” in modern philosophy.²⁹ The advent of this idea—that the dissolution, if not the solution, to philosophical problems is to be found in the study of language—coincides in space and time with the development of a new method of literary study pioneered by a young man who attained his first regular teaching post in 1922, I. A. Richards. In the same year, Richards published his first collaboration with C. K. Ogden, *The Foundations of Aesthetics*,³⁰ a book now very much forgotten, though it paved the way for the influential works the two writers were to produce in the next few years.

The method that Richards invented was, of course, to find its appropriate subject matter in the new literature introduced at the same time, in the form of *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*. But other new literatures were introduced the same year, among them a very ambitious one located in Harlem. The year of *The Waste Land* was also the year of Claude McKay’s *Harlem Shadows* and James Weldon Johnson’s *Book of American Negro Poetry*, which were commonly reviewed together as the first instances of a new African American spirit.³¹ That spirit was evident in other areas as well—in Carter Woodson’s *The Negro in Our History*, on stage in *Shuffle Along*, and in the visual arts with the establishment of Albert Barnes’ collection of African art—so that 1922 has also been called the *annus mirabilis* of the Harlem Renaissance.³² At the same time, 1922 marks the indictment of Marcus Garvey and thus the beginning of the collapse of his movement in Harlem. This, along with the proposal and ultimate defeat of the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill, might make 1922 look more like the end than the beginning of an African American renaissance.³³

The renaissance was, for better or for worse, a development in popular entertainment as well as literature, but it was not the only such development in 1922. A new meaning for the word “broadcast” had come into being the year before, along with a tremendous boom in amateur radio activity in England and the United States. In England at this time there was only one station capable of broadcasting music with any regularity, but this lack was addressed by the postmaster general, who instituted a “regular broadcasting service, consisting of eight stations controlled by a broadcasting company,” which was to become the BBC.³⁴ Though there was no such formal nationwide network, the United States was ahead of Great Britain in other ways, having already aired the first radio commercial.³⁵ To this “first” might be added other, equally dubious achievements, including the first movie biography and the first use of the term “public relations.”³⁶

As the list grows, it seems more eccentric and disparate, and yet there is a small number of important developments, coincidental with the publication of *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*, that clearly helped to establish a very different cultural and intellectual world from that existing before 1922. The connec-

tions among these developments and between them and literary modernism suggest that the “matrix of modernism” might be expanded and complicated in a number of significant ways. For example, the fact that both philosophy and anthropology date their current methodological regimes from this year does not seem a trivial coincidence, especially considering the fact that both Wittgenstein and Malinowski were passing their work of this year through the hands of C. K. Ogden, who was simultaneously collaborating with I. A. Richards on *The Meaning of Meaning*.³⁷ For Ogden, at any rate, the links between linguistics, literary study, philosophy, anthropology, psychology, and politics were all quite clear, or at least the strength of those links was obvious, if not their precise nature. Ogden represented these links in the eclectic publication list of the International Library of Psychology, Philosophy, and Scientific Method, which he founded in this year and in which he published works by Moore, Rivers, Russell, and many others besides Wittgenstein and himself.

The indirect and rather unexpected relationship between Wittgenstein and Malinowski might offer a model for relationships linking other seemingly distant disciplines and activities. What effect might it have on current belief in the resolutely anticommmercial bias of early modernism to know that Edward Bernays, founder of the discipline of public relations, perfected his techniques in association with Horace Liveright, “the principal publisher of modernism”?³⁸ How might it change current notions of a “great divide” between popular culture and modern literature to know more about the campaign on behalf of popular culture carried on by Gilbert Seldes, who first published *The Waste Land* in *The Dial*, or to see the long list of literary figures with whom Charlie Chaplin started or renewed acquaintance during the transatlantic tour he called *My Trip Abroad*? One of these acquaintances was Claude McKay, whose poem “The Tropics in New York” offers Chaplin a moment of escape from the pressures of celebrity and civilization. As it happens, this poem had first been published by C. K. Ogden in the *Cambridge Magazine*, which brings us back, somehow, to the intellectual birthplace of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*.³⁹ In fact, the difficulty in making such connections is getting them to stop somewhere—and it soon becomes clear, after concerted study of a very concentrated time span, that this is what conventional disciplinary boundaries are for. They filter out the noise, so that the seemingly irrelevant fact that Ogden was involved in a distant way with African American literature cannot trouble accounts of his dealings with Wittgenstein. In protecting us from such irrelevance, however, disciplinary boundaries also impoverish our sense of a period, and this seems to be an especially acute problem when it comes to relations between literary modernism and other aspects of modern culture.

This is not to say, of course, that such connections have never been considered. Hugh Kenner, the scholar who so influentially named the new post-Christian era after Ezra Pound himself, also linked the new literary work to a Poundian assemblage of cultural particulars. Certain pages of *The Pound Era* clearly aspire to the condition of *The Cantos*, juxtaposing, for example, Henry

James' trip to America, *The Great Train Robbery*, Poincaré's principle of relativity, and Teddy Roosevelt's meeting with Ernest Fenolosa, all of which converge on 1904, the year in which *Ulysses* is set.⁴⁰ Yet such a list is not truly exemplary of Kenner's method, which concentrates far more heavily on technology than on politics or popular culture.⁴¹ This interest in science and technology made it possible for Kenner to link modernist literature with other disciplines advanced by experiment, but at the same time made it relatively more difficult to consider other kinds of innovation, especially those in the popular arts. And this tendency accentuates the ignorance of African American literature and literature by Anglo-American women that Kenner shares with most of those who came to interpret modernism in the immediate post-war period.

The result—a canonized version of modernism that could not accommodate Claude McKay, Willa Cather, or even, under some circumstances, Virginia Woolf⁴²—was ripe for the repudiation it received from postmodernism, feminism, and African American literary studies. Since postmodernism defined itself in large part by its greater eclecticism and stylistic openness, it required as foil a modernism as exclusive as possible. Thus, the rivalry between postmodernism and modernism was read back into history, quite openly, as an antipathy between modernism and mass culture, one whose existence has always seemed more a matter of theoretical necessity than of empirical fact. The most widely influential formulation of this view, that of Andreas Huyssen, offers no specific discussion of conditions in the United States or Great Britain, and yet its conclusions are routinely repeated as if they were as applicable to Eliot as to Wagner.⁴³ Thus, modernism has been transformed in the general estimation from Hugh Kenner's brilliant young technocrat into a doddering old paranoiac possessed by "an anxiety of contamination by its other: an increasingly consuming and engulfing mass culture,"⁴⁴ a life history that seems to match that of Howard Hughes better than that of Eliot or Joyce.

At the same time, the repair work necessary to bring African American literature and literature by Anglo-American women back into the canon had to begin with the demolition of a certain view of modernism. Houston Baker insisted in *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* that "the very *histories* that are assumed in the chronologies of British, Anglo-American, and Irish modernism are radically opposed to any adequate and accurate account of Afro-American modernism."⁴⁵ It now seems that Baker's emphasis was very justly placed, for it was the histories of modernism that were so thoroughly insulated and not Anglo-American modernism itself, which, as a number of studies have shown, had a tense and complicated relationship with African American literature.⁴⁶ Similarly, the project of *No Man's Land*, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's multivolume study of women's writing in the twentieth century, had to begin by addressing a version of twentieth-century literature in which there were virtually no women. For them, this absence is the result

of the misogyny of the most influential male modernists, who made their reputations in part by offering other men an antidote to a popular literature increasingly written by and for women. In this view, which has been closely associated with that of Huysen, “a reaction formation against the rise of literary women became not just a theme in modernist writing but a motive for modernism.”⁴⁷ And though it seems from the work of scholars like Wayne Koestenbaum that the gender identity of even the most misogynist of male modernists may be as complicated as their racial identity,⁴⁸ the influence of feminist scholarship has helped to produce a modernism defined by its dichotomies. Though the prestige of Eliot and Pound, if not of Joyce, has been considerably diminished since the days in which the whole of the literature could be named after one man, what used to be called modernism has not been expanded or even changed very much; rather, it lives on, in a mummified state to provide a determinate negation for its successor.

In short, most of the scholarship that has challenged Kenner’s formulation of modernism as the Pound Era has not tried to change his view but rather has begun from it. The result has been the preservation of something called “modernism” in intellectual amber, something whose purported insulation from the cultural world into which it was introduced is now retrospectively accomplished by critical consensus. Modernism has so thoroughly come to mean that which rejects everything progressive and challenging in the early twentieth century that another term is needed, such as “avant-garde” or even “postmodern,” for those writers and artists friendly to change.⁴⁹ This simply locks the modern in a tautological box, where it is what it is by definition and not by demonstration.

A different view, one that keeps its distance from old orthodoxy and new, is promised in the posthumous collection of papers by Raymond Williams called *The Politics of Modernism*. Williams apparently hoped to provide a coherent analysis of modernism as a social formation, the key to which would have been geographical mobility: “It is a very striking feature of many Modernist and avant-garde movements that they were not only located in the great metropolitan centres but that so many of their members were immigrants into these centres, where in some new ways all were strangers.”⁵⁰

Williams’ analysis provides a useful way of looking at a wide variety of literary and cultural figures. Consider three “English writers” who covered significant distances in 1922: Chaplin, McKay, and Lawrence. D. H. Lawrence spent virtually his entire year in transit, leaving Italy at Mabel Dodge’s invitation to travel to New Mexico, which he did by going eastward via Ceylon and Australia. His novels of the year are set in Italy and Australia, and his chief critical work is *Studies in Classic American Literature*. Lawrence was clearly hoping to find somewhere a deep-seated reason not to return home at all, an organic community to which he might belong instead of simply existing in England. The odd assumption that one might go and find such a community and then simply elect to join it has its ironic outcome in the constant disappoint-

ment that drove him all the way around the world, so that the only place he finally belonged was in transit.

Claude McKay, a British subject born in Jamaica, is usually considered a part of the Harlem Renaissance even though he left New York in 1922 for a twelve-year trip that neatly spanned the time period in which the renaissance had its greatest influence. McKay originally left the United States to attend an international labor conference in the Soviet Union, and though he was widely lionized while there, his credentials were challenged by the American delegation.⁵¹ This might be considered the quintessential experience of McKay's life, for his credentials were always being questioned, and he spent a fair amount of the ensuing decade quite literally without a country, unwilling to live in England or Jamaica yet wary of returning to the United States on a British passport. When he did return, he was often homeless, and he died a pauper in the late 1940s.

Charlie Chaplin's account of his first trip home to England after a ten-year absence was entitled *My Trip Abroad*. Actually, Chaplin's British publisher, apparently embarrassed to use such an unfilial title, used *My Wonderful Trip* instead, but the difference itself is telling. When Chaplin arrived in England, he felt sadly estranged, having become very much an American, and at the same time unpleasantly at home, for his own movies had preceded him, changing the very places he wanted to revisit. On one hand, then, he is utterly deracinated; on the other hand, it is impossible for someone so universally known to go "abroad." He was known just as well, or just as little, in Berlin as in London or Hollywood. The only place he felt truly comfortable was in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean—three thousand miles from Hollywood, three thousand from Europe, belonging to neither.⁵²

What these three very different people have in common is obviously not British citizenship but, rather, a shared experience of restless travel so relentless that citizenship ceases to have any meaning, as does the difference between home and abroad. They offer three instances of the social formation Williams associates with modernism, but this kind of mobility was not limited to expatriate modernists, nor was it concentrated exclusively on the metropolitan centers that figure so largely in Williams' analysis. As James Clifford has recently argued, global migration is a much older and more widespread phenomenon than we tend to assume.⁵³ Evidence of this is abundant in the writing of 1922.

For example, *South Sea Reminiscences* by T. R. St.-Johnston, one of the dozens of memoirs by current and former colonial officials published in this year, describes a contingent of Tongan and Fijian stevedores that St.-Johnston accompanied to the front during the war: "What a motley crowd we found all round that district: Egyptians, Fijians, Chinese, Colonial troops, and—a few—Indians, while not many miles away were the 'Cape boys,' whose special job was wagon-driving. Altogether a most annoying reminder to the German (who frequently came over us to spy out the land) of the widespread influence of

the British Empire.” But the Empire does as much in this way to undermine British certainties as it does German ones. St.-Johnston chuckles over the difficulties anthropologists will have in sorting out a population formed by intermarriage among Chinese, Indian, Samoan, and Fijian laborers, and he describes how difficult it is to speak to such a group, in which there may be as many rival pidgins as native languages.⁵⁴ If accounts like this are taken seriously, then it seems that the social system in which “all were strangers” was already global and not exclusively metropolitan in 1922, and the linguistic effect on which Williams puts much emphasis, “the elements of strangeness and distance, indeed of alienation” imported into language, was not in any way limited to expatriate writers.⁵⁵

Even at this early date, global migration was a disparate social formation with a number of distinct parts. It included the movement of colonial subjects, present and former, into the imperial center, as in the cases of Eliot, Pound, and McKay. There was also a movement in the same direction on the part of Europeans, some of them, like Conrad and Malinowski, to take up work made possible by the Empire, others, like Wittgenstein, simply to follow certain intellectual currents. At the same time, British citizens left for the colonies or for other far-flung countries to study the strange and foreign. Some of Rivers’ works of this year came from such trips, as did Bertrand Russell’s *The Problem of China*. There was also immigration from Europe to the United States, which brought such different personalities as Chaplin and Bernays. There was as well American expatriation in postwar Europe, which became the subject of so much literature later in the 1920s, and emigration within the United States, principally that from south to north, which is the unspoken central subject of Jean Toomer’s *Cane*. One or the other of these movements can account for a great deal of what was distinctive in the literature of 1922.

The intellectual results of these social movements can be glimpsed even in the most obtuse examples. One of the most frightening documents of 1922 is the diary kept by Alfred Viscount Northcliffe on an extended Far Eastern tour that was meant to recruit his failing health. Though Northcliffe controlled a vast publishing empire that included the *Times* and the *Daily Mail*, he appears in his diary to have been a remarkably insular personality. For example, at one point during his tour of Australia he records this troubled observation: “I went to the hospital, which had mostly black patients. It is curious to see a lot of black people in bed.”⁵⁶ But Northcliffe is also capable of reflecting on such experiences and on the feelings they cause in him, and he is not always able to take these for granted. Though he has strong preconceptions about foreigners and foreign countries, he is capable of being genuinely surprised when these are not met. In fact, the idea that “things are always different from that which one expected” becomes almost a refrain.⁵⁷ Rather more significantly, Northcliffe becomes aware of the fact that he is himself an object of curiosity. “Orientals like looking,”⁵⁸ he complains at one point,

blithely unaware of the odd light this testiness sheds on his own project of foreign inspection. And yet, being looked at does enable him to turn the project of inspection at least partly around so that it focuses on himself: “It is good to see ourselves as others see us.”⁵⁹

Here Northcliffe shares in a common anthropological experience, one that Rivers recounts in a number of different works.⁶⁰ It is rendered humorously in the same year in a short story by Frank Worthington, secretary for Native Affairs in Rhodesia. In this story, a young colonial official, who may or may not bear a significant resemblance to Worthington himself, is aghast to find an African house decorated with a disjunct collection of European paraphernalia including a toilet seat, female underwear, a teakettle, and an egg cup. Challenged to explain herself, the woman of the house responds: “Do you not like the things my people use? For myself, I like the things the white people use. You put the black man’s things in your house. I put the white man’s things in my house. We are two friends who have the same thoughts.”⁶¹ Worthington’s protagonist is thus forced to look at his own house, which is filled with African artifacts, in a new light. It would be too much to suggest that he also looks at colonial administration in a new light, but even a slight shift of perspective is remarkable under these circumstances.

Worthington’s protagonist begins to see that a practice he had taken completely for granted, as if it required no explanation or justification, might, under other circumstances, seem nonsensical. Another collection of short stories from this year, also with a colonial theme, is entitled *As Others See Us*, and this title, which coincidentally echoes Northcliffe, might be applied to a significant segment of the colonial writing of this time, even that by the most committed servants of the Empire.⁶² As Simon Gikandi suggests, the meaning of world travel changes for English-speaking writers as the imperial hold over distant places begins to slip: “the imperial spaces can no longer be conceived—or represented—as spaces that secure English identity.”⁶³ The irony of Empire, in such cases, is that it exposes the British perspective as partial and local in the very act of asserting its universality. The same irony appears when the fieldwork anthropologist sets himself up like a human recording station in the midst of some unfamiliar society, only to find, as Malinowski did most notoriously, that he is himself the object of scrutiny.⁶⁴

The goal of philosophy, according to Wittgenstein, is to produce this self-reflexive experience without all the trouble of actual travel, to approach one’s own language games as if they were the practices of a strange and unfamiliar society.⁶⁵ For Wittgenstein, this was a fairly arduous practice, since it is so difficult not to take one’s own language for granted; but for Walter Lippmann, who published his most influential book in the same year as the *Tractatus*, this sort of displacement seemed all too easy to achieve. Since, as Lippmann put it, “our opinions cover a bigger space, a longer reach of time, a greater number of things, than we can directly observe,”⁶⁶ human beings in the twentieth century are in a state of perpetual travel, and their opinions are always a size

too small and a shade too parochial. Lippmann's work implies that one of Malinowski's dearest goals, to "bring anthropology home," was already being accomplished and that the result was not a greater objectivity but rather a self-consciousness about the power of point of view so great that it undermined the notion of objectivity itself. Thus Lippmann enunciates what has become one of the few certainties of twentieth-century thought: "The accepted types, the current patterns, the standard versions, intercept information on its way to consciousness."⁶⁷ On this, even a notorious stay-at-home like Wallace Stevens would agree. "Things seen," he says in the *Adagia*, "are things as seen."⁶⁸

One limitation of Williams' analysis of modernism may be, then, that it takes the idea of travel a bit too literally, missing the effects that global mobility had as they percolated throughout anthropology, philosophy, psychology, and political science. The multiplicity and incompatibility of human points of view were never more unavoidably obvious than in the early twentieth century, when the Great War focused for the first time nearly the whole of human consciousness on a single event,⁶⁹ an odious squabble the purpose of which almost no one could enunciate. The unity and the disunity of the modern world appear together, as effects of one another, for the parochialism of the particular point of view could never have appeared until it had been qualified by exposure to a more cosmopolitan experience. This relation, which is too tightly contradictory even to be called ironic, is one of the chief characteristics of the twentieth century, which feels itself to be too unified and too various at once, too rational and too darkly unconscious.

As Anthony Giddens has argued, "The local and the global . . . have become inextricably intertwined," but this is not simply because "even the smallest of neighborhood stores . . . probably obtains its goods from all over the world."⁷⁰ It is also because any point of view, any perception, can now seem simultaneously local and global, as individuals respond to the world around them and then note and contextualize their responses in relation to some other, putatively larger point of view. Since no such point of view is ever final, it is easy to confuse this situation with a relative subjectivity, but it might make just as much sense to see it as relentlessly objective, since any individual point of view is inevitably found to be partial. Modernity is, as Giddens has also said, fundamentally reflexive, and a major engine of this reflexivity is the oscillation between local and global points of view.

Another possible limitation of Williams' analysis appears when he asserts that the only community open to the polyglot expatriates of the modern metropolis was "a community of the medium: of their own practices."⁷¹ In this analysis, formalist experimentation becomes its own international language and the medium, of paint or of letters, an alternate homeland quite separate from any real country or community. But there was another international community just coming into existence along with the modernist works of 1922. When network broadcasting began, with the creation of the BBC, a new sort of community was established, one that linked different localities and



Radio broadcasting in 1922 (*Illustrated London News*, April 29, 1922).

even different countries with a simultaneity that made physical travel seem antediluvian by comparison.

There was almost nothing actually to listen to in 1922: the full program available to the family grouped around the gigantic speaker cone in the *Illustrated London News* for April 29 seems to have consisted of an afternoon concert from the Eiffel Tower, the Tuesday evening concert from the Marconi works at Chelmsford, Thursday evening concerts from the Hague, and the Sunday afternoon “Dutch concert.”⁷² To range this far afield was a necessity at the time, but it was also part of the romance of early radio, the possibilities of which were explored in a linked series of “wireless romances” published in this year by the mystery writer William Le Queux.⁷³ The power to speak and even to act at a distance, to be in two places at once, to defeat many of the seemingly eternal limitations of bodily materiality was extremely attractive to Le Queux, as it was to Northcliffe, who was amazed to see how easily American officials in Manila could communicate with Washington.⁷⁴

No one was quite so fulsome about these possibilities as Edward Van Zile, who declared rhapsodically, “The disappearance of the last frontier, the solving of Earth’s ancient mysteries, the coming of the wireless and the Esperanto of the Tongue and of the Eye seem to presage some new revelation to the soul of Man that shall remove forever from the entrance to the Garden of Eden that angel with the flaming sword.”⁷⁵ In this vision, the wireless, the Esperanto of the Tongue, joins the movies, Esperanto of the Eye, to reverse the Fall itself, removing all the boundaries of material existence by removing the boundaries between languages. Van Zile is extrapolating wildly from the con-

ditions of 1922, the year of *Nanook of the North*, in which travel films were so popular that entrepreneurs like Martin Johnson ended up flooding the market with them.⁷⁶ Many of these seemed to reopen the Garden of Eden almost literally, since they showed human beings still living in the state of nature. Such films seemed to conquer both time and space, to show humankind in its temporal and spatial entirety, and though this was obviously an illusion, it was a necessary illusion around which a real human totality, the mass audience, was constituted.

My Trip Abroad, Chaplin's unassuming little travelogue, is such an important document of this time because it registers some of the key ironies of this new human community. In the book, Chaplin offers his own worldwide popularity as a prime example of the freedom with which film could ignore international boundaries. Seeing a sign for a movie theater in a small Belgian town, he exclaims, "It is universal, this sign. Here is a movie in this tiny village. What a wonderful medium, to reach such an obscure town."⁷⁷ As Chaplin may have known, movies had reached towns even more remote from Hollywood. In 1922 there were about 100 movie theaters in China, 168 in India, and 250 in Java.⁷⁸ And though Chaplin himself may not have been visible in all these theaters, it was plausibly suggested at this time that because of the worldwide distribution of his movies he was the first human being to be truly world famous.⁷⁹

Chaplin is, in other words, foreign to no one, and yet *My Trip Abroad* is full of scenes in which he seems foreign to himself. He is impressed, on his return to England, by how American he has become, how alien he seems even to his cousin Aubrey and old friends in Lambeth. And yet, even though the very prose of his account distances the English, who are always "they," it cannot completely assimilate Chaplin to America: "They seem to talk from their souls. . . . I think of Americans and myself. Our speech is hard, monotonous, except where excitement makes it more noisy."⁸⁰ In the division between them and us, Chaplin seems strangely alone, apart from new countrymen as well as old. Pride in his worldwide fame is thus always undercut by this melancholy sense of isolation, for it is not really Chaplin himself who is famous but rather the Tramp. The difference between the two is at the heart of the strangely ambivalent adulation that Chaplin receives from crowds that seem to want with equal intensity to see the "real" Chaplin and at the same time to see the Tramp in person. The structural impossibility of satisfying such demands torments Chaplin and turns some of the audience's adulation into hostility.

Chaplin discovers on his trip, then, that the very process that makes him at home everywhere depends on a more fundamental alienation of the reproducible image from its unique source that makes him feel uncomfortably dissociated even at home. And yet this very dissociation seems to be part of his popularity. The same crowd that clamors for Chaplin to take a few turns as the Tramp responds to his refusal with the crushing truth that "they could see Charlie Chaplin at any time for a nickel."⁸¹ Thus the naiveté that demands a

look at the “real” Charlie Chaplin, as if he were a precious rarity, coexists quite easily with the ironic awareness that “Charlie Chaplin” is a manufactured image whose infinite reproducibility has made it intrinsically worthless.

If film and radio were making the world into one grand unity, then, it was by importing into the very heart of things an entirely new kind of estrangement. It was in part to decry this situation that Walter Lippmann wrote *Public Opinion*, one of the most enduringly influential books of 1922. Lippmann was terrified of a world in which the difference between Charlie Chaplin and the Charlie Chaplin one could have any time for a nickel would disappear. Lippmann was perhaps only the most visible of many discoverers of what G. K. Chesterton called, in an article on the fame of Einstein, a new and even more relative theory of relativity. Einstein was discussed, Chesterton complained, by people who hadn’t a prayer of understanding his theories because science was promoted in the public mind by the same processes that promoted soap. In this way, the theory of relativity, by becoming a mere shibboleth, illustrated another kind of relativity even more influential in the modern era, according to which even the validity of science was dependent upon the influence of cultural fashions over public opinion.⁸²

For Lippmann, as for many others at this time, there was a definite connection between the global mobility that displaced so many people and the new arts that were reorganizing them into audiences. It was not just that, in the United States at least, early film and radio were controlled by recent immigrants. As Lippmann put it, “We are all of us immigrants in the industrial world, and we have no authority to lean upon. . . . The evidence is everywhere: the amusements of the city; the jokes that pass for jokes; the blare that stands for beauty, the folklore of Broadway, the feeble and apologetic pulpits, the cruel standards of success, raucous purity.”⁸³ According to this, the new popular arts are expressions of the raw juvenility of the modern, a juvenility from which Lippmann fastidiously distances himself even as he seems to confess its ubiquity. It seems, however, that the real connection between migration and the media is that both contribute to a greater sophistication, even to cynicism. Though Lippmann and Chesterton are both violently disturbed by the capability they see in the new media for subterfuge, they are themselves evidence of the fact that newer and more powerful media simply make audiences more aware than ever of the fact of mediation. In so doing, they accomplish for a vast public what philosophy, anthropology, and psychology were accomplishing for an intellectual elite.

To rewrite Williams, then, the newly mobile populations of the modern period find their community in a new medium, one that does not counteract but rather reflects and exaggerates the effects of global travel. As Arjun Appadurai says, “Those who wish to move, those who have moved, those who wish to return, and those who choose to stay rarely formulate their plans outside the sphere of radio and television, cassettes and videos, newsprint and telephone. For migrants, both the politics of adaptation to new environments and

the stimulus to move or return are deeply affected by a mass-mediated imaginary that frequently transcends national space.”⁸⁴ But even the sedentary might be mobilized, because, as Appadurai says, “both viewers and images are in simultaneous circulation. Neither images nor viewers fit into circuits or audiences that are easily bound within local, national, or regional spaces.”⁸⁵ If worldwide globalization makes even the patron of the neighborhood store familiar with the concept of action-at-a-distance, if it puts even the most parochial experience in resonance with some slightly more global perspective and in so doing “disembeds” it, to use Giddens’ terminology, then mediation has become an ordinary, inescapable fact of existence. What we call “the media” formalizes a more general and more prevalent mediation of which it is in fact only a part.⁸⁶

According to Appadurai, “it is only in the past two decades or so that media and migration have become so massively globalized, that is to say, active across such large and irregular transnational terrains.”⁸⁷ But it is possible to trace these changes much further back, perhaps as far as the 1860s, when telegraph cable first linked Great Britain with North America and India. By 1924 King George V could send himself a telegram that circumnavigated the globe in eighty seconds.⁸⁸ Two years earlier, the first modern media network, the BBC, had been established, and that same year also witnessed what might be considered the first truly modern media event, which occurred the very month *The Waste Land* reached the bookstores. This event began on November 26, 1922, when Howard Carter first peered through the small opening he had made into what proved to be King Tutankhamen’s tomb. The troubled history of the ensuing excavation exemplifies the conjunction of migration and media and the changes this conjunction was to make in everything from literature to fashions in clothes.

The excavation was, on one level, an exercise in modern geopolitics. Forced to defend in advance the possible abstraction of so many foreign antiquities, Carter, the excavation’s leader, offered the same sort of justification proposed by Lugard for British imperialism in general. Carter translates from original papyrus an elaborate story about official grave robbing, the point of which is that Egyptians have never been trustworthy where their own treasures are concerned: “One moral we can draw from this episode, and we commend it to the critics who call us Vandals for taking objects from the tombs. By removing antiquities to museums we are really assuring their safety; left *in situ* they would inevitably, sooner or later, become the prey of thieves, and that, for all practical purposes, would be the end of them.”⁸⁹ British science, that is to say, must represent Egypt against itself, serving for a time as a sort of stand-in for the mature political entity that has yet to develop.

In this very familiar way, Great Britain interposes itself between modern Egypt and its own ancient history, offering itself as rightful heir and inheritor of all the glory of the past, no matter where it might have occurred. But the day is late, even in 1922, for this imposture, for almost at the very moment

of Carter's discovery, a nationalist government comes to power in Egypt that will eventually bar him from the very tomb he discovered. The first volume of Carter's account of the tomb is written in a very literal state of suspense, for he left the lid of the sarcophagus hanging in mid-air and refilled the mouth of the tomb with rubble until negotiations with the Egyptian government clarified his right to proceed. These developments, which stall Carter inches from his objective, are more than mere administrative changes. Between the time the tomb entrance was discovered and when the lid of the first sarcophagus was lifted, the idea behind archaeological and anthropological collection—that the world exists to be brought to unity within the mind of Europe—was called into question. Carter's utter inability to comprehend this change unnecessarily exacerbated his dispute with the new Egyptian government. He was unable to see that locking and barring the tomb against Egyptian visitors would seem a gratuitous insult because he was incapable of regarding modern Egyptians as anything other than potential grave robbers. As Thomas Hoving puts it, Carter and his colleagues "were locked into positions rooted in pre-World War I attitudes, based upon outmoded concepts of colonialism, elitism, and a misguided sense of scientific privilege."⁹⁰

If the oddly incomplete status of Carter's first volume represents this transitional moment in what has come to be called geopolitics, it also represents a shift in the organization of time, in the relationship between the old, the new, and the news. Carter himself provided the best account of the way that his discovery seemed to collapse the old and the new into one:

I suppose most excavators would confess to a feeling of awe—embarrassment almost—when they break into a chamber closed and sealed by pious hands so many centuries ago. For the moment, time as a factor in human life has lost its meaning. Three thousand, four thousand years maybe, have passed and gone since human feet last trod the floor on which you stand, and yet, as you note the signs of recent life around you—the half-filled bowl of mortar for the door, the blackened lamp, the finger-mark upon the freshly painted surface, the farewell garland dropped upon the threshold—you feel it might have been but yesterday. The very air you breathe, unchanged throughout the centuries, you share with those who laid the mummy to its rest. Time is annihilated by little intimate details such as these, and you feel an intruder.⁹¹

The shamefaced awe with which Carter confronts his own discovery must come at least in part from the realization that the new newness of the old is horribly temporary; that it will begin to age again, in physical actuality and in human perception, almost instantly; that these artifacts that seem so ancient and yet so fresh have not been preserved by discovery but instead have been made perishable by it.

Carter was aware that his discoveries were perishable in another, less physical, sense as well. As soon as he was certain of his find, he sent a quick report to the *Times*, whose story caused such intense international press interest that he had to take extraordinary measures to prevent its interference with

the excavation. Even so, every step was dogged by reporters and photographers: Carter noted that one perfectly unimportant piece of mummy cloth was photographed eight times as it was carried from the tomb to his field lab.⁹² Through the end of 1922, photographable evidence of this extraordinary find was so scarce that the *Illustrated London News* was forced to run baldly synthetic mockups of “What the Great ‘Find’ in Egypt May Bring,” using artifacts already in British museums.⁹³ The various ironies attending the “news” are already visible in these pathetic picture spreads, whose haste implies that another week or two of waiting, tacked on to the three or four thousand years the world has already lived without these treasures, is simply too much to endure. But the publishers of the *News* simply responded to the reality that, having become news, the Tut artifacts now ran the risk of becoming not just old but passé. To avoid this eventuality, the *News* compromises with its name in another way, by providing manufactured representations instead of information. The requirement that news be fresh and up-to-date seems, in this instance at least, very much at odds with the requirement that it be true.

One reason the *News* was forced to use such transparent expedients was that Lord Carnarvon, sponsor of the excavations, had signed an exclusive contract with the *Times*, whose attitude of proprietary ownership over news about the tomb became as dangerous an irritant as Carter’s similar attitude about the tomb itself. Once again, Carter utterly misunderstood the moment, assuming that transmitting news through the *Times* somehow certified it as scientific and noncommercial. What Carter failed to understand was that, for most of the world, news *was* the treasure and possession of it was just as contentious an issue as possession of the actual artifacts. He and Carnarvon were accused of having set up “Tutankhamun Ltd.” to rob the world of its information rights, just as they were robbing the Egyptians of their archeological rights. As Hoving points out, this misstep in public relations, though it had nothing actually to do with the discovery or the excavation itself, played just as strong a role as Egyptian politics in the disagreements that forced Carter out of the tomb he had discovered.⁹⁴

Carter simply did not realize that, along with the gold and jewels, he had discovered another treasure, insubstantial and yet even more valuable.⁹⁵ Unseemly though it may have been, the haste with which the *News* cobbled together its coverage of the discovery of Tut was barely sufficient to the Egyptomania that raged through Europe and America at the end of 1922. In part, the discovery had such a strong impact because it coincided with the crest of a preexisting fad for Egyptian things. Grauman’s Egyptian Theater opened in Hollywood in 1922, but it was simply continuing a fashion established by the Louxor in Paris the year before. Ernst Lubitsch’s *Das Weib des Pharaohs* was released in the United States in 1922, but it had been running in Europe for a year.⁹⁶ Thus, when Carter’s discovery was announced, the effect was a bit like adding gasoline to a fire. One day the *Times* representative remarked of a pair



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Pharoah Blouses (*New York Times*, February 25, 1923).

of royal sandals, “Probably we shall see our smartest ladies wearing footgear more or less resembling and absolutely inspired by these wonderful things,” and within days Carter received dozens of requests for the rights to such designs.⁹⁷ Edward Bernays was but one of a number of enterprising entrepreneurs who decided to base new fashions on motifs from the tomb: there were



Shoe Craftsmanship as Old as the Sandals of Tut-Ankh-Amen Himself. King Tut footwear (*New York Times*, February 25, 1923).

fabrics, sandals, blouses, and “the Luxora Frock.” There were even “King Tut Lemons.”⁹⁸ In fact, the rage for Tut was so intense that by the time Bernays’ designer returned from Egypt, it had burned itself out, and the public was so sick of Tut that the project was dropped.⁹⁹ But Bernays was not the only clever businessman to be caught in this way. William P. S. Earle’s film *Tutankhamen*, scheduled for release in 1923, had to be reworked and retitled *The Dancer of the Nile* because interest in Tut had collapsed so suddenly and so completely.¹⁰⁰

Still, the fad was strong enough to establish an identifiable style, Egyptian art deco, that influenced design throughout the 1920s, appearing in theaters,

steamship interiors, furniture, and ladies' fashions. A very particular kind of popular modernism, Egyptian art deco makes almost graphic the ironic convergence of migration and the media at this moment in time. The common use of Egyptian motifs for movie theaters suggested an association between a real and an imaginative imperialism, between travel in space and the aesthetic transposition of film. The ease with which the new media could bring ancient Egypt to Seattle or Los Angeles made everyone a potential world traveler in a world of manufactured representations. If space and time had both collapsed, they were succeeded by another kind of distance, a distance between reality and representation that Bernays or the *Illustrated London News* were unable and probably unwilling to close.

In one way, Egyptian sacred objects appealed to a contemporary Euro-American audience by supplying the aura progressively stripped from the art of Europe. The Tut treasures were ideal for this purpose, since they were quite literally untouched. But it is also obvious that the aura thus preserved to them was consumed in the very process of celebration, that the unique, the traditional, the sacred, the old very quickly became the new, the secular, and the manufactured—so quickly, in fact, that interest in them was almost immediately exhausted. At the same time, however, another kind of aura, a kind of prestige almost diametrically opposed to the one Benjamin defines, was produced in the process. The Egyptian handbag introduced at the end of 1922 was valuable primarily as a reference, an allusion. It marked its user as one who knew. And the Tut treasures themselves became valuable because they could be known, discussed, and reproduced, literally as well as figuratively. Thus, the ultimate auratic paradox governing the Tut phenomenon was that the new, the secret, the hermetic had to be hurriedly exploited before it became too common, and yet common knowledge of it was itself the value being mined.

What relationship might there be between this sort of popular modernism, exemplified in all its crassness by Bernays, and the literary modernism that arrived in bookstores just as Carter was opening Tut's tomb? There are some rather close practical connections, for Bernays had worked very closely with Horace Liveright in 1919 and 1920, so the strategies Boni and Liveright used to make *The Waste Land* the poetic equivalent of a best-seller were not so very different from those Bernays was using at the same time to exploit ancient Egypt.¹⁰¹ But there are intrinsic resemblances as well. Franco Moretti calls *The Waste Land* and *Ulysses* “world texts” because of “the supranational dimension of the represented space” in these works.¹⁰² This supranational dimension can hardly count as an aesthetic innovation if an ordinary consumer in a place like De Kalb, Illinois, could buy dry goods decorated with motifs from King Tut's tomb. The world text, with its crazy mixture of Greece, Germany, India, and Rome, exists within a world economy where the mixtures are, if anything, even more indiscriminate.

The world text also makes connections across time. This feature, the “continuously manipulated parallel” between the present and a mythological past,



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Contrasting silks and soutache braids, in all-over Egyptian motifs, with side-tie paletots.

Sports Modes
\$29.75 to \$150
Custom Types
\$34.75 to \$175

Spring Frocks

Egyptian motifs, Paisley, Renaissance designed silks in paneled patterns and all-over prints. Drapes entered from ornate Egyptian buckles in front.

\$25 to \$75

Trig Shirts

Delightfully fashioned of blocked and checked Camel's hair and rich Printed Crepes in knife-plaited types.

\$8.98 to \$18

New Sweaters

A smart adjunct to the Spring wardrobe. Fashioned of Silk, Fibre and Worsted in Slip-on and Gait Coat models.

\$5 to \$49.75

Sports Frocks of knitted Silks and Wools up to \$75



The Tut-ankh-Amen Influence in . . . Spring Apparel (*New York Times*, February 25, 1923).

is one of the most heavily advertised innovations of *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*. But it is also a banality of the time, something every moviegoer could experience in the local version of Grauman's Egyptian Theater. When Carter first opened Tut's tomb, many of the pieces he saw struck him as "extraordinarily modern-looking."¹⁰³ In this, he repeats and is probably influenced by the primitivism that had been a feature of "modern" art from the Pre-Raphaelites on. The furniture and artifacts deposited in the tomb looked modern because modern art had been mining the archaic for nearly seventy-five years. But they also looked modern for the far more banal reason that they *were* modern, since Carter's discovery took place in the midst of a vogue for Egyptiana that had already had an effect on modern architecture and decoration. And they would look even more modern as the months passed and Egyptian motifs came to define a certain kind of chic. In fact, within a year Le Corbusier would use this convergence to define modern design, manipulating within the pages of *Vers une architecture* a continuous parallel between ancient architecture and ordinary American consumer items.¹⁰⁴

In the traditional reading, Eliot's use of the past differs from that of Edward Bernays or Sid Grauman because it is self-consciously and ironically allusive. But surely the appeal of an Egyptian handbag depends on allusion just as much as *The Waste Land* does. The bag exists to advertise the wearer's knowing relationship with a prominent news event; like any fashionable item, it primarily signifies the possessor's awareness and compliments that of any observer chic enough to notice the reference. Clearly Bernays does not rush his designer off to Egypt because he is astonished by the intrinsic beauty of Egyptian designs, since these had been available quite literally for millennia. What he hopes to capture in fabric is the notoriety of the newly opened tomb, and once that notoriety wears off the fabric is of little value to him. Such a use of allusion is, if anything, vastly more self-conscious and ironic than Eliot's. In *The Waste Land* there is always some doubt about the actual relationship between the present and the past, but in the handbag it is plain that the past is nothing more than a magazine of references, useful only in that ironically infinitesimal moment when their past obscurity is perfectly balanced against their coming banality.

Aesthetic modernism may very well be, as Jeffrey Weiss has argued in regard to Picasso and Duchamp, an irony based on such ironies, a mockery and a mimicry of strategies of *publicité* and *réclame* perfected by modern salesmanship.¹⁰⁵ Such a possibility seems perfectly likely in the case of Joyce, who bases *Ulysses* on parallels between a Greek hero and a modern ad man, but not so likely in the case of Eliot, who has long been the personification of aesthetic modernism's resistance to modern commodification. An allusion to the Shakespearean Rag can, in such readings, only be dismissively distancing. But Eliot's reference is also archly self-referential, for Clive Bell had published in September 1921 an elaborate denunciation of jazz in which both Eliot and Joyce are accused of being "ragtime" artists. Thus Eliot had before him as he worked

on this part of *The Waste Land* the charge that he was “playing the devil with the instrument of Shakespeare and Milton” and that Joyce’s work “rags the literary instrument.”¹⁰⁶ When Eliot alludes to the Shakespearean Rag in the second section of *The Waste Land*, then, he is alluding to an actual popular song and to the common modern process it exemplifies of mining the past for current fashions as well as using a designation that had recently been applied to his own work. Even if he is not ragging the literary instrument himself, he is most certainly ragging Bell, playing his own level of private irony over the public irony of the Shakespearean Rag. In this way, he both mocks and confirms Bell, who would no doubt have been equally offended to learn that tourists in the Luxor hotels were at this very moment dancing to the Tutankhamen Rag.¹⁰⁷

The existence of something like the Tutankhamen Rag, with all that it implies about the convergence of colonialism and metropolitan fashion, modern science and modern marketing, shows how complex and how quickly changing was the modernity into which Joyce and Eliot introduced their works. The status of modernity itself had already been rendered ambiguous by the turn of modern European scientific and artistic attention outward in space and backward in time, so that every innovation in knowledge or art seemed to involve modernity more thoroughly with its opposite. When this involvement reaches the level of fashion, the whole notion of the new becomes ironic. That ancient Egyptian designs might become the latest fashion seems a contradiction in terms, and yet it is a contradiction that the twentieth century has staged over and over, as newness races to exceed the very familiarity it feeds on. The technical power of the twentieth century to record, transmit, and reproduce has meant that any present moment can be fixed and perpetuated, so we can quite literally seize the day; but this also means that each succeeding moment of the present is surrounded by a richer and more complex complement from the past so powerful in its presence that actual repetition of it seems not so much inevitable as unnecessary. Modernity creates for itself its own version of Tutankhamen’s tomb, mummifying itself on film and tape, so that Carter’s awed discovery of a perfectly preserved past that has somehow cheated death is, paradoxically, a quintessentially modern experience, and the fad that brings together ancient Egypt with movie theaters and ragtime expresses some fundamental association between modern media and the past.¹⁰⁸

Joyce suggests something like this in *Ulysses* when Leopold Bloom fondly imagines a graveyard fitted with recording machines so that the bereaved might hear the voices of their loved ones.¹⁰⁹ It seems an idiosyncratic fancy, but in 1922 the Darbycord company actually marketed its phonographs with this very purpose in mind. Advertisements in the *Illustrated London News* promised that an ordinary consumer might accumulate an Egyptian necropolis in wax: “By means of the ‘Darbycord’ the songs and sayings of the little ones, the precious gems of fleeting childhood, and the memories of the ‘Golden

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By means of the "Darbycord" the songs and sayings of the little ones, the precious gems of fleeting childhood, and the memories of the "Golden Age" can be preserved.

The Darbycord Studios,
71, New Bond Street,
LONDON, W.1.

"How I photograph your voice," a book by W. Sinkler Darby, explains the Darbycord method. Write for free copy now.



Let Darbycord Photograph Your Voice (*Illustrated London News*, April 29, 1922).

Age' can be preserved."¹¹⁰ At the climax of *Ulysses*, however, Stephen Dedalus is driven into a violent rage when he imagines that his mother's voice is coming from a pianola. When he raises his ashplant to smash that voice into silence, he is repudiating history, and with it the filial piety that is so strong a part of Bloom's personality, but he is also rejecting modernity, whose technical power to fix and reproduce the present has made it an ironic echo of the past.

Conventional separation of literary modernism from its popular analogues can thus be challenged on anecdotal grounds, because writers like Eliot and Joyce were so obviously linked to the world of the Tutankhamen Rag. Historical criticism has been able to show, especially for Joyce, that these writers lived in the same world of film, music, advertising, and promotion that is still around us, and that, like most denizens of the twentieth century, they had various and not entirely negative reactions to it.¹¹¹ But this separation can be challenged in a more fundamental way as well. For one thing, Eliot and Joyce, like many other modern writers, were clearly subject to the process of global migration that, as Giddens, Appadurai, and Williams have argued, has been an imaginative as well as a political fact of great importance to this century. The inevitable mediation of experience has also become inescapably obvious, so much so that self-consciousness about it has to be considered as a sociopolitical fact. Most human communities are now more thoroughly constituted by representations than by identity or mere contiguity in space, and this fact is also clear to those communities. The result, as Appadurai puts it, is that "many lives are now inextricably linked with representations."¹¹² What is in some ways the central pun of *Ulysses*, when Martha Clifford confuses "word" and "world," is not so much a bit of clever wordplay as it is a reflection of common experience: Appadurai says that the subject matter of cultural studies is to be "the relationship between the word and the world."¹¹³ That relationship was a slippery one for Joyce's characters in part because it was slippery for Joyce himself, first as an artist and second as a language teacher living in various polyglot communities of Europe, and in part because it was a slippery one for the public at large at a time when the world and the word were beginning to converge in disorienting ways.

The common dichotomies by which the literary modernism of 1922 is distinguished from the larger culture of the time cannot be maintained against the evidence that the very terms those dichotomies depend on were being redefined by literature and culture in concert. The modern itself is obviously an unstable category when the new, in literature and in fashion, comes into being in such close association with the ancient. In a cultural phenomenon like Egyptomania, for instance, the old and the new are not opposite but co-dependent. The similar distinction between convention and revolt is dissolved by such fashions—by fashion itself, in fact, which moves forward on a delicate balance of conformity and distinction. At the same time, the contrast between the private and the public, the particular and the common, was

being ironized by a form of publicity that fed on individual desires for distinction. These dichotomies cannot be used to divide modernism, for their ironic interdependence defines the modern, which displayed itself all across the scene of 1922, from an Egyptian-style handbag to the latest thing in literary innovation.

The purpose of the following chapters is to read the cultural works of that year, those of acknowledged importance like the *Tractatus* and those of apparent triviality like *My Trip Abroad*, including certain pictorial works that promised, by appealing directly to the sense of sight, to make reading unnecessary. By concentrating on the year in which *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land* were published, and not on the long years during which they were contemplated, planned, and executed, this study clearly intends to shift the analytical emphasis from the production to the reception of literary modernism, and very frequently in the following pages it will matter less what a particular author says than what particular readers felt about what he or she was thought to have said. In some ways, then, this is a study in reception theory, and it owes an obvious debt to Hans-Robert Jauss' notion of a "horizon of expectation" that would form a particular reader's reaction to a particular literary work. The "horizon of expectation" is, as Wlad Godzich paraphrases it, "the sum total of reactions, prejudgments, verbal and other behavior that greet a work on its appearance."¹⁴ But the focus of this work is also somewhat broader, since its purpose is not to reconstruct a contemporary reading of either *Ulysses* or *The Waste Land* but rather to reconstruct, insofar as it may be possible, the larger public world into which those works were introduced. To some extent, this means trying to recapture the period's own sense of its "reactions, prejudgments, verbal and other behavior;" and to some extent it means trying to interpret a historic moment in which the whole notion of "prejudgments" was making a considerable impact on various different disciplines in the human sciences. That every human being brings to every experience a "horizon of expectation" was, perhaps paradoxically, the unifying perception of the time. The ways in which the different media of the time alternately reinforced that sense and promised to reduce it will provide a good many of the examples to follow.