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Late Modernism: British Literature at Midcentury

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Abstract

This essay examines the relatively new field of late modernist studies. It gives an overview of the development of late modernism as a literary historical category during the debates over postmodernism in the late 1980s and early 1990s. From there, the essay surveys recent efforts in modernist studies to conceptualize and historicize late modernism with greater precision. Attention then shifts to a range of modernist activity in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Each of these sections serves a double function: first, they offer close readings of late modernist texts that detail how modernism endured and transformed in relation to historical pressures; second, they plot these readings alongside recent critical work that is reshaping how we understand the political and aesthetic dimensions of late modernist writing. The conclusion addresses the promises and risks of the study of late modernism.

Literary modernism has never suffered from neglect, but critical interest often drifts towards its origins or its dazzling high points in the teens and twenties.[1] In the last decade, scholars have reversed course and turned their attention to modernism's later years. From this vantage point, modernism did not conclude so neatly and unceremoniously in 1930, 1940, or even 1950. Indeed, many established modernists continued their experimentation with narrative and poetic form long after the 1920s. James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* appeared in 1939 while Virginia Woolf published *The Waves, The Years, Three Guineas* and, posthumously, *Between the Acts* between 1931 and 1941.[2] T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* and H. D.'s *The Walls Do Not Fall* explored the long poem to grapple with the pressures of World War II. Another generation of writers emerged on the heels of these earlier modernists, all of them laboring self-consciously in the long shadow of their predecessors. Samuel Beckett, Malcolm Lowry, Elizabeth Bowen, and Lawrence Durrell continued to stretch and disfigure the fundamentals of narrative prose; in verse, Dylan Thomas, David Gascoyne, and the New Apocalypse poets channeled the international avant-garde while Hugh MacDiarmid incorporated more regional influences. The years after World War II witnessed a surge of migrant writers like Samuel Selvon, George Lamming, V. S. Naipaul, and Doris Lessing, all of whom marshaled modernist techniques (and patronage) to render their experiences of exile, urban alienation, and disenchantment. This brief inventory suggests that modernism continued to evolve stylistically and it did so in response to the unique historical conditions facing Britain during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. In what follows, I'll first trace out some of the ways critics have formulated late modernism to account for a longer and more diverse history of modernist activity. After establishing an elastic notion of late modernism, I'll examine how modernist aesthetics endured and changed in each of those decades. What will become clear is that a robustly conceptualized late modernism affords us two things: first, it enables the recovery of fugitive writers, movements, and artworks, enhancing the scope and depth of literary innovation in midcentury Britain; second, it allows us to retell with greater preci-

sion the story of modernism's rise, mutation, and dogged persistence over the course of the long 20th century.

Late modernism first took shape as a literary historical category during the debates over postmodernism in the 1980s and early 1990s.[3] As critics drew distinctions between modernism and postmodernism, they uncovered a range of phenomena that did not comply with the periodizing, conceptual, or stylistic norms of modernism or postmodernism (however broadly conceived). The works of Christopher Isherwood, Ivy Compton-Burnett, and Jean Rhys ultimately led Alan Wilde to define late modernism as a "a reaction against modernism by writers who retain a good many modernist presuppositions and strategies and who, in a variety of ways, differ from one another as much as they do from the early modernists" (108). Brian McHale also points to unruly texts such as Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire* and Samuel Beckett's *Malone Dies* as examples of "limit-modernism" (19), works in which modernist and postmodernist features coexist.[4] In *Postmodernism* and, more recently, *A Singular Modernity*, Fredric Jameson advances late modernism as the proper term for Nabokov, Beckett, and other Cold War writers who "who had the misfortune to span two eras" (*PM* 305). In these formulations, late modernism functions as a transitional category where all sorts of disparate, innovative works might comfortably reside. These early gestures towards late modernism are developed more substantially in Tyrus Miller's *Late Modernism: Politics, Fiction, and the Arts between the World Wars*.[5] Like his predecessors, Miller uncovers an "apparent admixture of decadent and forward-looking elements" (7) in late modernist writing that makes it difficult to categorize. Miller's late modernism, though, is not simply an index of anomalous texts caught between modernism and postmodernism. Through readings of Djuna Barnes, Wyndham Lewis, Samuel Beckett, and Mina Loy, he argues that "late modernist writing thus coheres as a distinctive literary "type" within the historical development of modernist literature, serving as an index of a new dispensation, a growing skepticism about modernist sensibility and craft as a means of managing the turbulent forces of the day" (Miller 20). These varied reactions all share a set of "family resemblances" (Miller 22) at the level of style.

One of Miller's most valuable contributions, then, is the typology he develops from particular writers; his version of late modernism describes a multifaceted but relatively coherent response to earlier modernism. He also reminds us that late modernism isn't just a reaction to previous writers or aesthetic theories, but a response to the historical pressures of the interwar years. Taking their cue from Miller's work, Jed Esty and Marina Mackay argue more aggressively that late modernism gains legibility only against the backdrop of historical processes and events. In his influential study *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England*, Esty figures late modernism as the appropriate style for Britain's loss of imperial power. As Britain gradually declined from atop the world-system, modernism, he argues, withdraws from its metropolitan and international orientation and reinvests itself in English national culture. Esty's close readings of the late works of high modernists such as T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and E. M. Forster show how this affinity for an insular national culture, which he dubs the "anthropological turn," underwrites poetic and narrative form. More provocatively, Esty aligns these aging modernists with both the younger migrant writers arriving on English shores after World War II and the rise of Birmingham Cultural Studies; in this way, Esty supplies a historical and stylistic link between modernism and early postcolonial writing. Because he focuses on the long autumnal phase of the British Empire more than any particular event, Esty's account refers only glancingly to World War II. This event takes center stage in Mackay's *Modernism and World War II*. "Late modernism," she writes "gives the critical and affective content to the story of England's cultural remaking" (4–5) during

and immediately after World War II. Like Miller and Esty, Mackay's argument relies on the recovery of the less read works of high modernists such as Woolf and Eliot, but it also gives pride of place to younger writers such as Henry Green and Evelyn Waugh. Mackay also thinks that national consciousness is absolutely central to late modernism; however, to take full measure of the changing preoccupations of late modernism, she suggests we look more closely at the dramatic changes the war brought to the relationship between the state and public life. Differences in context and method aside, Esty and Mackay both contend that late modernism is, in Miller's words, "a distinctive literary type" (Miller 20), but those distinctions only appear when late modernism is properly historicized.

From its initial appearances to these more contemporary elaborations, late modernist scholarship addresses two overarching issues: the transformation and persistence of modernism and the function of modernist aesthetics in different historical situations. In the remaining sections of this essay I will move through specific configurations of modernist form and history from the 1930s to the 1950s, isolating issues and tensions that remain central to current work in the field.

1930s: The Outward Turn

The problems of style and history underwriting contemporary work on late modernism weighed heavily on late modernists themselves. Samuel Hynes's *The Auden Generation* and Valentine Cunningham's *British Writers of the Thirties* show how the literary upstarts in the 1930s already recognized Woolf, Eliot, Conrad, Lawrence, and Joyce as modern masters.[6] These new writers were left to discern what, if any, role remained for modernism in a world suffering under severe economic strain, fascist dictatorships, and the increasing likelihood of another total war. Were modernism's aesthetic innovations going out of season? In his memoir *Christopher and His Kind*, Isherwood recalls one instance when the realities of class and economic inequality tarnished modernism's luster. "After he and Stephen had been to see *Kameradschaft*, Pabst's film about the coal miners, in 1931, Christopher told Stephen that, when the tunnel caved in and the miners were trapped, he had thought: "That makes Virginia Woolf look pretty silly." Stephen replied that he had been thinking something similar, though not specifically about Virginia" (113–4). Four years later, Spender sharpens these misgivings in *The Destructive Element*. Spender argues that "at times it seems that the political movements of the time have a much greater moral significance than the life of the individual" (204–5). The proper literary response should be "to turn the reader's and writer's attention outwards from himself to the world" (205). The outward turn Spender desires directly contests earlier modernism's focus on what Virginia Woolf called "an ordinary mind on an ordinary day" ("MF" 150). Woolf, Joyce, Conrad, and other high modernists employed free indirect discourse, interior monolog, and stream-of-consciousness to probe the multiple ways individuals register experience at conscious and unconscious levels. For Woolf, exploring the thick subjective life of characters had to be fiction's top priority if it wanted to grasp "life itself" ("MF" 107). These so-called "introverted novels" gave far more attention to the textures and modes of subjective experience than the events that occasioned them.[7] For Isherwood and his contemporaries, the task was to plot modernism more firmly in the social and political sphere.

Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin* bears several traits of modernist fiction: attenuated plots, formal fragmentation, and the emphasis on non-events are all here. In direct contrast to Woolf and other high modernists, Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin* trains its eye on the

external world. From the window of a slum apartment, the narrator surveys balconies, frontages, and exteriors of the surrounding buildings; he listens to the rumblings of the city, the whistles and calls from passers-by. Isherwood famously likens his mode of narration to a camera: ''I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking. Recording the man shaving at the window opposite and the woman in the kimono washing her hair. Someday, all this will have to be developed, carefully printed, fixed'' (Isherwood 1). To be sure, Isherwood doesn't simply believe that reality can, or should, be mimetically represented in narrative; he makes it rather clear that the writer still must assemble and form raw material into something meaningful. For Isherwood, scrupulous attention to the details of everyday life reveals the fate of Weimar Germany. This helps explain his mode of characterization. We see very little of the psychic life of his Berliners; the few occasions when the narrator expresses any emotion or judgment are all the more striking for their rarity. The physical appearance of characters becomes much more illuminating. After an 8-month absence, Christopher, the narrator, visits his Jewish friend Bernhard and finds a degenerated, aged man:

> I thought I had never seen Bernhard looking so ill. His face was pale and drawn; the weariness did not lift from it even when he smiled. There were deep sallow half-moons under his eyes. His hair seemed thinner. He might have added ten years to his age. (*GTB* 178)

Bobby, a former cabaret bartender, suffers a similar fate as Bernhard. By the winter of 1932–1933, the Nazis have hounded Bobby and the Berlin *demimonde* from their once safe bars and cafes. ''People like Bobby *are* their jobs—take the job away and they partially cease to exist'' (*GTB* 188). Within a year Bobby's ''hair is thinner, his clothes are shabbier, his cheekiness has become defiant and rather pathetic'' (*GTB* 188). These withering bodies encode the decay of Germany's liberal republic and offer a grim forecast of its near future.

Isherwood's camera eye narration exemplifies a much wider trend in late modernism. One highly influential factor of late modernism's outward turn was the new documentary aesthetic that took hold of British culture in the 1930s. Filmmaker John Grierson coined the word ''documentary'' to describe actuality films in the late 1920s. Throughout his tenure at the Empire Marketing Board (1930–1933) and the General Post Office (1933–1937) Grierson attempted to combine the avant-garde aesthetics he admired in European film with a state sponsored cinema aimed at educating the citizenry. In a number of essays, Grierson conceptualized documentary as ''the creative treatment of actuality'' (''DP'' 8). For Grierson, everyday life held a trove of untold stories that needed to be told and avant-garde techniques like montage were best suited to telling them. The sponsorship of the Empire Marketing Board and the General Post Office gave Grierson the space and resources to cultivate the talents of young auteurs like Basil Wright, Henry Watt, Len Lye, and, the ''only real poet British cinema produced,'' (Anderson 53), Humphrey Jennings. W. H. Auden, E. M. Forster, and Benjamin Britten would also go on to contribute to documentary films. Echoes of the documentary aesthetic, explored recently by both Laura Marcus and Tyrus Miller, resounded in the literary world as well.[8] The proliferation of unconventional, multi-genre travelogues (Auden's *Letters from Iceland* with MacNeice and his *Journey to a War* with Isherwood, and Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*), peculiar auto-ethnographies (J. B. Priestley's *English Journey* and George Orwell's *Road to Wigan Pier*), a hybrid journal and long poem (Louis MacNeice's *Autumn Journal)* and the resurgence of the historical novel (Woolf's *The Years*) all attest to a collective interest in actuality.[9] But no late modernist writer or group fused avant-garde and documentary tendencies like Mass-Observation.

In 1937 a curious mélange of poets (Charles Madge, William Empson, and Kathleen Raine), documentary filmmakers (Humphrey Jennings and Stuart Legg) and surrealists (David Gascoyne, Sheila Legg, and Jennings) created what Raine later recalled as a "strange half-poetic half-sociological expression of the prewar years" (81). They wanted an anthropology of the English, an observation of the nation's habits, pastimes, desires, fears, and much more. In an early experiment called the "Oxford Collective Poem" Madge and Jennings instructed students to collect images "indicated by external rather than internal evidence" ("Oxford" 17). Six recurring images were selected and each participant wrote a pentameter line for each image. All lines were "printed in block capitals to ensure anonymity" ("Oxford" 17). Selecting from these lines, the group assembled a single poem that was later submitted to the collective for a series of anonymous "corrections." In Madge's judgment, the poem managed to convey some sense of a collective and perhaps unconscious experience of everyday life, but it "proved insufficiently radical" ("Oxford" 18). Their future projects would try to correct this shortcoming.

More than anything else the group would produce, their 1937 book *May the Twelfth* marshaled an array of modernist techniques to capture multiple facets of daily life. The book incorporates montage, cross-cutting, and spatial form to register the simultaneity and multiplicity of English life during a single day. Focusing on the day of King George VI's coronation, this hefty tome splices together all sorts of material: it juxtaposes newspaper reports, overheard conversations, speeches from politicians, accounts from lower and middle class citizens, and observations from the Mass-Observers. James Buzard thinks its moments of simultaneity and radical juxtaposition place it alongside "those great modernist day-books like *Ulysses, Mrs. Dalloway, The Waves,* and *Under the Volcano*" (111).[10] Ben Highmore and Jeremy MacClancy note that the book's formal dynamism surely owes much to Madge and Jennings' early flirtations with surrealism.[11] Like Grierson and Isherwood, Mass-Observation joins modernism's unique powers of aesthetic disclosure with close attention to the minute details of everyday life.

1940s: Form and War

Most histories of modernism underscore the overwhelming impact of World War I. However, we know far less about the development of late modernism and World War II. This war produced no poets along the lines of Wilfred Owen or Siegfried Sassoon. Yet, Sebastian Knowles, Phyllis Lassner, and Mark Rawlinson all make the case that World War II very much created and sustained its own sort of literary culture.[12] Mackay's *Modernism and World War II* examines the relationship between late modernist form and the political climate of 1939–1945. On her reading, wartime writing bears the marks of a lengthy war that exacted a great toll on civilians and civilian areas. To Mackay's list of impressive works like T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts,* and Henry Green's fiction, we might add Dylan Thomas' Blitz elegies, H. D.'s *Trilogy* and the short fiction of Elizabeth Bowen as works that formally register the experience of living in a bombed city.

Rawlinson states that the majority of writing and art from World War II gravitates towards "buildings, not bodies" (71); unlike the writing of World War I, corpses and disfigured bodies are conspicuously absent from the literature. Rawlinson is at least partially right; the ruined cityscapes of London bewitched even those who found themselves nervously huddled in air raid shelters on a nightly basis. Photographer Bill Brandt remembered how "the bombed ruins made strangely shaped silhouettes" (qtd. in Warburton 92). In a 1941 piece for *The Listener*, Rose Macaulay remarked "If you do wake alive,

you may enjoy – when you go out – observing the fresh ruins, if any, and if ruins are to your taste'' (75). Though spellbound by the rapidly changing cityscape, late modernists also registered the imminent threat of injury and death. Elizabeth Bowen's 1940 story ''Oh, Madam…'' examines the psychological effects of the bombings on London's residents. On the surface, ''Oh Madam…'' is a conversation between a live-in servant and the owner of a home that has suffered severely from the previous night's raid. In this story, though, we only hear the servant's disjointed, perhaps panicked, monolog. We receive a partial inventory of damages from the servant: ''our beautiful fanlight gone'' (*CS* 579), ''the windows gone'' (*CS* 579), and ''the ceiling in there gone'' (*CS* 579). Walking through the debris, the owner indicates that she will shutter the house and, presumably, ride out the rest of the war far away from the city. Yet, like much of the house, the owner too is gone. She never appears or speaks in the text; her presence, if it can be so called that, is designated textually by ellipses that mark where ''Madam'' would speak or react. The only quotation marks that properly announce dialog are embedded within the stories the servant tells her phantom interlocutor; there is nothing at the level of syntax or narrative discourse to confirm Madam's actual embodied presence:

> You won't take *anything*, madam? … You'll need your fur coat, excuse me, madam, you will. There's the draught right through the house. You don't want to catch cold, not on top of everything …. No, it's useless; you *can't* move that dining-room door …. But the house has been wonderful, madam, really—you really have cause to be proud of it. (Bowen *CS* 579)

Ellipsis signifies absence, a missing piece (or person), and we might take its significance here rather literally. Is Madam present? Is the discourse actually interior monologue? Is

Fig. 1. ''Woman Seated Against Bomb-Scarred Wall.'' Henry Moore's *Shelter Sketchbook*. © 2011 The Henry Moore Foundation. All Rights Reserved. / ARS, New York / DACS, London © Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 2. ''Head Made Up of Devastated House.'' Henry Moore, *Shelter Sketchbook*. © 2011 The Henry Moore Foundation. All Rights Reserved. / ARS, New York / DACS, London © Trustees of the British Museum.

our speaker a traumatized servant rambling to no one at all? Bowen's story leaves these questions open. In the end, ''Oh Madam …,'' pockmarked and fragmented by the scattered ellipses, transfers the damage of the house to the actual text.

Other works like Henry Moore's famous sketches of the Tube shelters and H. D.'s *Trilogy* blur the distinction between architectural damage and bodily harm. In ''Woman Seated Against Bomb-Scarred Wall'' (Fig. 1), Moore's exhausted figure reclines against a bomb damaged wall; pink, flesh colored bricks surround the woman's head and her face and body take on the bluish-gray tones of the wall behind her. If this juxtaposition of building and person invites us to consider the frail, defenseless body, the second image, ''Head Made Up of Devastated House'' (Fig. 2), merges architectural and bodily injury more tightly into a single figure. The ''bomb scar'' from the first image returns on the visage of Moore's figure; other structural remains – a yellow brick wall, a fallen girder – appear in place of a human face. Lacking distinction between ruined buildings and wounded bodies, Moore's image construes ''casualty'' simultaneously in both registers.

This indistinction between bodies and buildings returns as a powerful trope in the opening poem of H. D.'s *The Walls Do Not Fall*:

> the bone-frame was made for
> no such shock knit within terror,
> yet the skeleton stood up to it:
> the flesh? It was melted away,
> the heart burnt out, dead ember,
> tendons, muscles shattered, outer husk dismembered,
> yet the frame held:

we passed the flame: we wonder
what saved us? what for?
(45–51)

''Bone-frame,'' ''skeleton,'' ''flesh,'' ''heart burnt out,'' ''tendons, muscles shattered'': H. D.'s lexical compilation construes the ruins as bodily injury. In another way, though, the onlookers in the poem may very well be projecting onto the charred building their own horrific fantasies of dying in an air raid. Skeletal architectural remains showcase the sheer force of the bombs to the onlookers and mirror to them their own vulnerability.

The bewildering experience of living in a city under attack generated other forms of response. Mandatory blackouts, travel restrictions, food rationing, and the participation of civilians in the war effort radically altered the conditions of daily life. Mackay's sensitive readings of late modernist fiction reveal how these circumstances contracted modernism's horizons during the war years; ''compelled communality, diminished privilege, and obligatory stasis'' (''Going Nowhere'' 1600) preoccupy much of the literature of this period. Henry Green's ne'er do wells in *Party Going* sit trapped in a train station while James Hanley's *No Directions* depicts characters confined in a basement during a nighttime air raid. Although these responses share nothing of the anger and disillusionment of literature from World War I, they suggest that modernism not only survived during World War II, but flourished.

1950s and Beyond: Modernism after Empire

The years after 1945 are best remembered for groups like the Angry Young Men whose bare language and masculine aesthetic took direct aim at the Bloomsbury Group and earlier forms of modernism. However, the mass migrations from the West Indies to England also made this period an especially fertile one for experimental writing. Unlike the Angry Young Men, Caribbean writers reanimated features of modernism in order to render the yearnings, disappointments, and struggles of migrant life in England. Simon Gikandi, Jed Esty, J. Dillon Brown and Peter Kalliney argue that writers like George Lamming, Samuel Selvon, V. S. Naipaul, and Derek Walcott belong as much in conversations about modernist and metropolitan literature as they do in ones about nationalism and postcoloniality. Many of these Caribbean writers were quickly heralded by their more esteemed peers as the next avant-garde. Louis MacNeice, T. S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, and Stephen Spender all praised and promoted these writers to a metropolitan audience eager for fresh talent. They hoped these Caribbean writers might ''preserve the tattered remnants of modernist culture in the face of national and imperial decline'' (Kalliney 91).

The experimental qualities of works such as Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* and Lamming's *The Emigrants* immediately installed these writers at the fore of a renewed modernism. In his survey of the early reception of Lamming's *The Emigrants,* Brown shows the frequency with which Lamming elicited comparisons to Joyce and Faulkner (even if those comparisons were meant to denigrate and not praise). Lamming's narrative meanders through the lives of many characters, proceeds episodically, and shifts into other narrative modes, including dramatic dialog and rugged juxtapositions of first and third person narrative voices. To render the disorientation his characters feel on their first train ride in England, Lamming juxtaposes Caribbean dialect and ''standard'' English and abruptly changes the typography. A typical passage from this scene looks like this:

WILL PASSENGERS KEEP THEIR HEADS WITHIN THE TRAIN

What him get drunk on so?
The limeys know how to get drunk on
bitter. They make up they min' before they
take a sip. Doan' pay him no mind.
Him turn real stupid but me no say for
Certain him ain't better man than the one
me see back down yonder who let coal pot
in he mouth make dumb man outta him. (118)

The pairing of dialect and the train conductor's command conjures up a similar technique from the famous bar scene from "A Game of Chess" in Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Here, though, Lamming seems intent on amplifying the strangeness of English daily life – its customs (milk and sugar in tea, drinking bitter), sounds, and sights – to these new arrivals.

Though rarely accused of density or willful difficulty like Lamming, Selvon's 1956 novel *The Lonely Londoners* bears more than a passing resemblance to modernist fiction: this postcolonial *Künstlerroman* employs episodic narration and stream-of- consciousness to depict the daily lives of Selvon's down and out immigrants. His stylized snapshot of London in the novel's opening pages reveals Selvon's debts to his predecessors:

> One grim winter evening, when it had a kind of unrealness about London, with a fog sleeping restlessly over the city and the lights showing in the blur as if is not London at all but some strange place on another planet, Moses Aloetta hop on a number 46 bus at the corner of Chepstow Road and Westbourne Grove to go to Waterloo to meet a fellar who was coming from Trinidad on a boat-train. (23)

This first page from *The Lonely Londoners* draws on two of the most renowned literary depictions of London. Selvon's post-World War II capital retains the "unrealness" of T. S. Eliot's "unreal city" from *The Waste Land*; the thick, pervasive fog also recalls the hazy atmospherics of Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*. The unreal, defamiliarized London amplifies the narrator's disorientation in this "strange place on another planet" (23); by the end of the sentence, he plots the narrative back into the city, reorienting us with specific details: the name of the protagonist, a particular bus at a particular street corner, and its ultimate destination. This passage, and indeed the entire novel, relies on the *frisson* between the foreign and the familiar, alienation and belonging. On the one hand, the novel's use of Caribbean dialect throughout and its attention to the conditions of everyday life gives voice to the very real struggles of this early generation of migrants; on the other hand, Selvon's borrowings from modernism suggest that those stories cannot be told in any direct way.

As a flexible and much needed literary historical category, late modernism holds the promise of new territory to explore and new questions to consider. Late modernism has emerged as a key category for studies in areas as varied as travel writing, the English regional novel, and food policy during World War II.[13] These ongoing investigations of literary culture after the 1920s show that late modernism isn't simply a generational battle between old and new writers nor is it simply about who had the fortune or misfortune to be published after 1929. Rather, late modernism names writers who still believed art was best engaged with its contemporary moment when it contested the forms, definitions, and functions of art. Yet, this expanded and more complicated history of modernism poses risks.[14] Does the expansion of modernism threaten to erode its definition and particularity? At what point do things stop being modernist? When does modernism end? Marjorie Perloff holds that it never did; it was only deferred. On this reading, the post-

WWII reaction to modernism, especially in American poetry, ''was less revolution than restoration'' (Perloff 2). In his study of late modernist painting, J. M. Bernstein also argues that modernism persists even in recent work by Cindy Sherman. Late modernism, then, might also be construed as modernism's late style, a long afterlife of modenrism's aesthetic and critical claims that scarcely obey the periodizing logic of literary history. Looking at modernism from its endpoint is less about writing a movement's proper epitaph. Instead, it reveals to us modernism's ''waning and remaining'' (Bernstein 1), its capacity to assert itself in unlikely places and in untimely ways.

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Short Biography

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Notes

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[1] Malcolm Bradbury and James MacFarlane's classic *Modernism 1890–1930* (NY: Penguin, 1976) is explicit in its periodization. Even recent work in the so-called new modernist studies gravitates around the earlier years. See, for example, Michael North's *Reading 1922*. NY: Oxford UP, 1999; Marc Manganaro's *Culture, 1922: The Emergence of a Concept*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2002; and Jean-Michel Rabaté's *1913: The Cradle of Modernism*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

[2] Joyce worked on *Finnegans Wake* (1939) for nearly 70 years and published pieces of it in the 1920s and 1930s in journals like Ford Maddox Ford's *Transatlantic Review* and Eugene Jolas' *transition*.

[3] It is important to note that Charles Jencks' idea ''late modernism'' in architecture served as a point of reference, especially for Jameson and Miller. See his ''Postmodern and Late Modern: The Essential Definitions.'' *Chicago Review* 35.4 (1987): 31–58.

[4] McHale tests late modernism as a transitional category more directly in *Constructing Postmodernism* (NY: Routledge, 1992). See especially Chapter 1 for his engagements with Alan Wilde and John Barth's notions of late modernism.

[5] Although it does not become a central preoccupation, late modernism plays an important role in a few important studies that precede Miller. See the chapters on Lawrence Durrell and Graham Greene in Alan Friedman's *Fictional Death and the Modernist Enterprise*. NY: Cambridge UP, 1995 and the analyses of Durrell and Doris Less in Joseph A. Boone's *Libidinal Currents: Sexuality and the Shaping of Modernism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

[6] See especially Cunnigham's *British Writers of the Thirties*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988.

[7] I take this phrase from John Fletcher and Malcolm Bradbury's ''The Introverted Novel'' in *Modernism 1890–1930*.

[8] See Miller's ''Documentary/Modernism: Convergence and Complementarity in the 1930s.'' *Modernism/Modernity* 9:2 (2002): 226–41and Marcus' '' 'The Creative Treatment of Actuality': John Grierson, Documentary Cinema, and 'Fact' in the 1930s'' in *Intermodernism: Literary Culture in Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain*. Ed. Kristin Bluemel. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2009.

[9] On the stylistic changes in Woolf's late work, see John Whittier-Ferguson's excellent article "Repetition, Remembering, Repetition: Virginia Woolf's Late Fiction and the Return of War." *Modern Fiction Studies* 57.2 (2011): 230–53.

[10] Hynes likens it to the "Wandering Rocks" episode of *Ulysses* (1922). Also see Laura Marcus' essay on the day-book in "The Legacies of Modernism." *The Cambridge Companion to the Modernist Novel*. Ed. Morag Schiach. NY: Cambridge UP, 2007. 82–98.

[11] MacClancy offers a compelling account of Mass-Observation's understanding and use of surrealism. See his "Brief Encounter: The Meeting, in Mass-Observation, of British Surrealism and Popular Anthropology." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological* Institute 1.3 (1995). Chapter 6 of Highmore's *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction*. NY: Routledge, 2002 makes a strong case for Mass-Observation's avant-gardism. For a wide range of perspectives, see *New Formations* 44 (2001), a special issue on Mass-Observation.

[12] See also the helpful essays and bibliography *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of World War II*. Ed. Marina Mackay. NY: Cambridge UP, 2009.

[13] See David G. Farley's *Modernist Travel Writing: Intellectual Abroad*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2010; David James' "Localizing Late Modernism: Interwar Regionalism and the Gensis of the 'Micro Novel'." *Journal of Modern Literature* 32.4 (2009): 43–64; and Allison Carruth's "War Rations and the Food Politics of Late Modernism." *Modernism/Modernity* 16.4 (2009): 767–95.

[14] Kristin Bluemel also advocates for an expanded view of modernist culture, but prefers the term "intermodernism" instead of late modernism for works between the Great Depression and World War II that rarely find their way into discussions of modernism. Bluemel's term aims primarily to recover "middlebrow" writers and those with explicit political commitments who have fallen from the view of modernist studies. Although these efforts complement the study of late modernism in so far as they challenge the dominance of "modernism" and "postmodernism," late modernism's renovation and continuation of modernist aesthetics ultimately refers to a different phenomenon. See her *George Orwell and the Radical Eccentrics: Intermodernism in Literary London*. NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004 and her edited collection *Intermodernism: Literary Culture in Mid-Twentieth Century Britain*.

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