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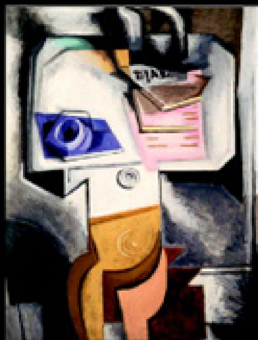

AMERICAN MODERNISM

Edited by Walter Kalaidjian

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The Cambridge Companion to American Modernism provides a comprehensive and authoritative overview of American literary modernism from 1890 to 1939. These original essays by twelve distinguished scholars of international reputation offer critical accounts of the major genres, literary culture, and social contexts that define the current state of modern American literature and cultural studies. Among the diverse topics covered are nationalism, race, gender, and the impact of music and visual arts on literary modernism, as well as surveys of the achievements of American modernism in fiction, poetry and drama. The book concludes with a chapter on modern American criticism. An essential reference guide to the field, the *Companion* gives readers a chronology of key events and publication dates, covering the first half of the twentieth century in the United States, and an up-to-date bibliography of further reading organized by chapter topics.

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO AMERICAN MODERNISM

EDITED BY
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CHRONOLOGY

1890	Battle of Wounded Knee Jane Addams founds Hull House Sarah Orne Jewett, *Tales of New England*
1891	First international copyright law Thomas Edison patents the "kinetoscope" Ambrose Bierce, *In the Midst of Life* Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, *A New England Nun and Other Stories*
1892	Homestead (Pennsylvania) steelworkers' strike Death of Whitman (b. 1819) Joel Chandler Harris, *Uncle Remus and his Friends* William Dean Howells, *The Quality of Mercy*
1893	Financial panic of 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition opens in Chicago Muckraking journal *McClure's Magazine* founded Paul Laurence Dunbar, *Oak and Ivy* Stephen Crane, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* Henry James, *The Real Thing and Other Tales*
1894	Coxey's Army of the unemployed marches on Washington George Washington Cable, *John March, Southerner* Kate Chopin, *Bayou Folk* Samuel Langhorne Clemens (Mark Twain), *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson and the Comedy of Those Extraordinary Twins*
1895	Invention of the motion picture Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage, The Black Riders and Other Lines* Alice Dunbar-Nelson, *Violets and Other Tales*

1896 Klondike Gold Rush begins
Supreme Court defines "separate but equal doctrine" in *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*
Abraham Cahan, *Yekl*
Paul Laurence Dunbar, *Lyrics of Lowly Life*
Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs*

1897 Edwin Arlington Robinson, *Children of the Night*
William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*
Kate Chopin, *A Night in Acadie*

1898 Spanish-American War
Stephen Crane, *The Open Boat and Other Stories*
Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*

1899 US intervenes in China's Boxer Rebellion
Charles W. Chesnutt, *The Conjure Woman*
Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*
Frank Norris, *McTeague*

1900 Founding of International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union
Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins, *Contending Forces: A Romance Illustrative of Negro Life North and South*
Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*

1901 President William McKinley is shot by Leon Czolgoz and dies on September 14; he is succeeded by Theodore Roosevelt
Founding of United Textile Workers of America
Charles W. Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition*
Frank Norris, *The Octopus*
Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery*

1902 United Mine Workers Strike
Charles Alexander Eastman, *Indian Boyhood*
Ellen Glasgow, *The Battle-Ground*
Henry James, *The Wings of the Dove*

1903 Wilbur and Orville Wright achieve first sustained heavier-than-air machine flight on December 17
W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*
Henry James, *The Ambassadors*
Jack London, *The Call of the Wild*
Gertrude Stein, *The Making of Americans*

1904 National Child Labor Committee formed
Charles Alexander Eastman, *Red Hunters and the Animal People*
Henry James, *The Golden Bowl*
Jack London, *The Sea-Wolf*

1905 Industrial Workers of the World union organized in Chicago
W. E. B. Du Bois initiates the "Niagra Movement"
Willa Cather, *The Troll Garden*
Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth*

1906 San Francisco earthquake
Atlanta race riots
Congress passes the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act
Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*

1907 Financial Panic of 1907
Presidential restriction of Japanese immigration
Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*
Henry James, *The American Scene*
Edith Wharton, *The Fruit of the Tree*

1908 Henry Ford produces first Model T Ford
Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, *The Shoulders of Atlas*
Jack London, *The Iron Heel*

1909 W. E. B. Du Bois founds National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
W. C. Handy composes "Memphis Blues"
Gertrude Stein, *Three Lives*
William Carlos Williams, *Poems*

1910 Mann Act ("White Slave Traffic Act") prohibits the transportation of women across state lines for "immoral purposes"
Great Migration of Southern African-Americans to urban North begins
William Dean Howells, *My Mark Twain*
Ezra Pound, *The Spirit of Romance*

1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory fire
Supreme Court dissolves Standard Oil Company for restraint of trade
Theodore Dreiser, *Jennie Gerhardt*
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Man-Made World*
Edith Wharton, *Ethan Frome*

1912 Titanic collides with an iceberg and sinks on its maiden voyage
Founding of *Poetry* magazine
Mary Antin, *The Promised Land*
Willa Cather, *Alexander's Bridge*
Sui-Sin Far (Edith Maude Eaton), *Mrs. Spring Fragrance*
James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*
Edith Wharton, *The Reef*

1913 The New York Armory Show
Willa Cather, *O Pioneers*!
Robert Frost, *A Boy's Will*
Ellen Glasgow, *Virginia*
Edith Wharton, *The Custom of the Country*

1914 Archduke Francis Ferdinand is assassinated in Sarajevo triggering World War I
Panama Canal completed
Ludlow Massacre at the Colorado Fuel and Iron Corporation
Carl Sandburg, *Chicago*
Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons*

1915 German submarine sinks the ocean liner *Lusitania*
Willa Cather, *The Song of the Lark*
Albert Einstein, *General Theory of Relativity*
T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
Robert Frost, *North of Boston*
D. W. Griffith films *The Birth of a Nation*

1916 Congress enacts Workman's Compensation
John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*
Hilda Doolittle, *Sea Garden*
Ring Lardner, *You Know Me Al*
Amy Lowell, *Men, Women, and Ghosts*
Carl Sandburg, *Chicago Poems*
Mark Twain, *The Mysterious Stranger*

1917 Russian Revolution
United States enters into World War I
Pulitzer Prize established
T. S. Eliot, *Prufrock and Other Observations*
Edna St. Vincent Millay, *Renascence and Other Poems*
Ezra Pound, *The Cantos*
Edith Wharton, *Summer*

1918 Influenza epidemic
Willa Cather, *My Ántonia*
Theodore Dreiser, *Free and Other Stories*
Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, *Edgewater People*
Georgia Douglas Johnson, *The Heart of a Woman and Other Poems*
Edith Wharton, *The Marne*

1919 Congress passes Prohibition Act
Founding of American Communist Party
Versailles Treaty
Sherwood Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*
Amy Lowell, *Pictures of the Floating World*
John Reed, *Ten Days that Shook the World*

1920 Nineteenth Amendment gives women the right to vote
F. Scott Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise*
Robert Frost, *Mountain Interval*
Sinclair Lewis, *Main Street*
Eugene O'Neill, *The Emperor Jones*
Ezra Pound, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberly*
Edith Wharton, *The Age of Innocence* and *In Morocco*

1921 Alice Paul founds National Woman's Party
Sherwood Anderson, *The Triumph of the Egg*
John Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*
F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Flappers and Philosophers*
Edith Wharton receives the Pulitzer Prize for *The Age of Innocence*
Anzia Yezierska, *Hungry Hearts*

1922 Supreme Court upholds 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote
Willa Cather, *One of Ours*
T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*
Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt*
Eugene O'Neill, *The Hairy Ape*
Edith Wharton, *The Glimpses of the Moon*
Anzia Yezierska, *Salome of the Tenements*

1923 Steelworkers negotiate an eight-hour workday
Willa Cather, *A Lost Lady*
Robert Frost, *New Hampshire*
Wallace Stevens, *Harmonium*
Jean Toomer, *Cane*
William Carlos Williams, *Spring and All*

1924 The Teapot Dome scandal
Restrictive immigration laws passed by Congress
Marianne Moore, *Observations*
Eugene O'Neill, *Desire under the Elms*
Edith Wharton, *Old New York*

1925 Scopes trial
The *New Yorker* magazine founded by Harold Ross
Willa Cather, *The Professor's House*
John Dos Passos, *Manhattan Transfer*
Theodore Dreiser, *An American Tragedy*
F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*
Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time*
Alain Locke, ed., *The New Negro*
Anzia Yezierska, *Bread Givers*

1926 US Marines invade Nicaragua
Hart Crane, *White Buildings*
William Faulkner, *Soldier's Pay*
Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*
Langston Hughes, *The Weary Blues*

1927 Charles Lindbergh pilots *The Spirit of St. Louis* in a solo flight from New York to Paris
Execution of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti
Willa Cather, *Death Comes for the Archbishop*
Countee Cullen, *Copper Sun*
Langston Hughes, *Fine Clothes to the Jew*

1928 William Mulholland's St. Francis Dam collapses
Djuna Barnes, *Ryder*
Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*
Eugene O'Neill, *Strange Interlude*

1929 St. Valentine's Day massacre
"Black Thursday" 24 October, stock market crash
Countee Cullen, *Black Christ and Other Poems*
William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*
Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*
Nella Larsen, *Passing*

1930 Television broadcasting begins
Hart Crane, *The Bridge*
William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*
Mike Gold, *Jews Without Money*
Katherine Anne Porter, *Flowering Judas and Other Stories*

1931 The "Scottsboro Boys" trial begins
Pearl S. Buck, *The Good Earth*
e. e. cummings, *Viva*
William Faulkner, *Sanctuary*

1932 Amelia Earhart becomes first woman to make a solo flight across the Atlantic
Benjamin Nathan Cardozo becomes first Hispanic judge appointed to the US Supreme Court
Sterling A. Brown, *Southern Road*
John Dos Passos, *U. S. A.*
Ernest Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon*
Langston Hughes, *The Dream Keeper*
Gertrude Stein, *Three Lives*

1933 Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Federal Emergency Relief Act, Public Works Administration, and Civilian Conservation Corps are created
Sherwood Anderson, *Death in the Woods*
Ernest Hemingway, *Winner Take Nothing*
James Weldon Johnson, *Along This Way*
Mourning Dove (Okanogan), *Coyote Stories*

1934 Founding of Federal Housing Administration
Drought and storms result in the Great Plains "Dust Bowl"
Kenneth Fearing, *1933*
Lillian Hellman, *The Children's Hour*
Zora Neale Hurston, *Jonah's Gourd Vine*
Edna St. Vincent Millay, *Wine from These Grapes*
Ezra Pound, *Make it New*
Henry Roth, *Call it Sleep*

1935 Rural Electrification Administration and Works Progress Administration created
Harlem riot
William Faulkner, *Pylon*
Ellen Glasgow, *Vein of Iron*
Ernest Hemingway, *Green Hills of Africa*
Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men*
Marianne Moore, *Selected Poems*

1936 Spanish Civil War begins
Akron rubber workers strike at the Goodyear tire company
Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood*

	John Dos Passos, *The Big Money*
	William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*
1937	William H. Hastie becomes first African-American federal judge
	"Memorial Day Massacre" at Republic Steel in Chicago
	Ernest Hemingway, *To Have and Have Not*
	Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
	Younghill Kang, *East Goes West*
	John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men*
	Wallace Stevens, *The Man with the Blue Guitar*
1938	House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) founded
	William Faulkner, *The Unvanquished*
	Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse*
	Thornton Wilder, *Our Town*
	Richard Wright, *Uncle Tom's Children*
1939	Germany signs non-aggression pact with Russia and invades Poland
	World War II begins
	William Faulkner, *The Wild Palms*
	Lillian Helman, *The Little Foxes*
	Zora Neale Hurston, *Moses: Man of the Mountain*
	Katherine Anne Porter, *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*
	John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

WALTER KALAIDJIAN

Introduction

Slightly ahead of his time, Walt Whitman welcomed the new energies of American modernism with his 1876 poem "To a Locomotive in Winter." In it, he hailed the steam engine as "type of the modern – emblem of motion and power – pulse of the continent."[1] Only seven years earlier at Promontory Summit, Utah, the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroads were linked by a golden spike driven into the final tie of the nation's first transcontinental rail network. Dynamic, transformative, and "unpent," modernism's new social, cultural, and technological economies of scale would rapidly remap space, time, and distance in ways that were heretofore unimaginable. Such accelerating velocities of change would increasingly define the quickened "pulse of the continent." Soon, American modernism would exceed the parochial limits of nation formation in the global reach of its imagined community. Such was the pace of modernization that by 1880 the steam locomotive would be eclipsed by Thomas Edison's demonstration of the electric train in Menlo Park, New Jersey. Two decades later, Harvard professor Henry Adams would be so awed by the giant electromagnetic dynamos on display at the Great Exposition of 1900 that he would "see only an absolute *fiat* in electricity" defining the modern age.[2] Reflecting on the major scientific advances of the 1890s such as Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen's discovery of X-rays, Edouard Branly's and Guglielmo Marconi's experiments with radio waves, Marie Curie's detection of radium in pitchblende, Adams "wrapped himself in vibrations and rays which were new, and he would have hugged Marconi and Branly had he met them, as he hugged the dynamo" (381). Extending Whitman's celebration of the "unpent" forces mobilized in modernism's newer technologies, Adams's fascination with the "supersensual world" of *fin de siécle* science described a modern world outlook defined by "Multiplicity, Diversity, Complexity, Anarchy, Chaos" (455).

As harbingers of change, such key terms increasingly characterized the new physics that would quickly leap ahead after 1905 in Einstein's special theory of relativity, Max Born's and Werner Heisenberg's quantum mechanics,

Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, Paul A. M. Dirac's prediction of antimatter, and so on. Not coincidentally, multiplicity, diversity, complexity, anarchy and chaos could just as easily be mapped as defining rubrics across the contemporaneous fields of culture, aesthetics, and politics of the modern American age; they aptly describe the social experience of the new masses coming together in the cosmopolitan urban centers of modern American big city life. Waves of immigration from around the globe through New York City's Ellis Island, coupled with the Great Migration of Southern African-Americans to the industrial North, dramatically transfigured the American scene in the early twentieth century. By the 1910s, New York City had a population of some five million city dwellers, 40 percent of whom were first-generation émigrés. Writing in *Our America* (1919), Waldo Frank exclaimed that "the rebels from the West met Europe in New York and made it theirs . . . What a godsend for the hungering New Yorker! What a leaven! Slowly, the ferments moved the lump of the Eastern seaboard. Slowly, New York became the nervous city."[3] It was the social diversity of the "nervous city" that the young, former Columbia College student and social critic Randolph Bourne praised in his landmark essay "Trans-National America" (1916). Adding to this ethnic mix, the urban centers of the Northern United States further received tens of thousands of transplanted working families during the so-called Great Migration of African-Americans from the South. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, African-American populations doubled in such major industrial centers as Chicago and Detroit. In contrast to the South – marked by crop failures, flooding, job scarcity and Jim Crow discrimination – the urban North offered an alternative vision of prosperity and racial uplift. Indeed, Howard University professor Alain Locke described a "new vision of opportunity" in Harlem, which he considered a cultural "laboratory of a great race-welding."[4] During these years, the campaign for a diverse, cosmopolitan, and progressive socialist culture was sustained by the literary network of little magazines like the *The Masses*, *New Masses*, *Craftsman*, *Crisis*, *Fire*, *Opportunity*, *The Messenger*, *Comrade*, *International Socialist Review*, *Coming Nation*, *Mother Earth*, *New York Call*, and many more.

By far the most popular of these venues, *The Masses* was originally launched as a muckraking publication by Piet Vlag in 1911 and later edited by Max Eastman. The term "muckraker" was coined by President Theodore Roosevelt in a 1906 speech to describe the wave of novelists, writers, and investigative journalists who waged a cultural campaign against abusive labor practices, corporate monopolies, and corrupt politicians at the turn of the century. Reflecting back on this time, Eastman wrote, "Our magazine provided for the first time in America a meeting ground for revolutionary

labor and the radical intelligentsia."[5] *The Masses* offered a lively forum for the era's political journalism, manifestos, cartoon art, poetry, fiction, and drama. But equally important, it fostered the kind of salon culture hosted in Greenwich Village parties by socialites, patrons, and cultural radicals such as Mabel Dodge, Alyse Gregory, and Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney. At these social get-togethers, Dodge wrote, one could come upon "Socialists, Trade-Unionists, Anarchists, Suffragists, Poets, Relations, Lawyers, Murderers, 'Old Friends,' Psychoanalysts, IWWs, Single Taxers, Birth Controlists, Newspapermen, Artists, Modern-Artists, Club Women, woman's-place-is-in-the-home Women, Clergymen, and just plain men."[6]

Multiplicity, diversity, complexity, anarchy and chaos not only described such modern American salons, but also characterized the aesthetic dimension of American modernism as witnessed in such historic exhibitions as the New York 1913 International Exhibition of Modern Art. Popularly known as the Armory Show, this famous venue featured some 1,250 works of painting, sculpture, and decorative art mounted at New York's 69th Regiment Armory on Lexington Avenue between 25th and 26th streets. Reflecting a rich and complex range of modernist aesthetics, the Armory Show exhibited European masters such as Paul Gaugin, Henri Matisse, Paul Cézanne, Marcel Duchamp, Pablo Picasso, Constantin Brancusi, Georges Seurat, Toulouse-Lautrec, Wassily Kandinsky, and Ernst Kirchner alongside such American modernists as George Bellows, Marsden Hartley, Walt Kuhn, Joseph Stella, Abraham Walkowitz, John Marin, John Sloan, Anne Goldthwaite, and Patrick Henry Bruce, among others. American modernist writers like William Carlos Williams were delighted by the shocking break with convention that the Armory Show inaugurated. "I laughed out loud," Williams would later write, "when I first saw it, happily, with relief."[7] Journalists, for the most part, were not as amused and like Kenyon Cox writing in the *New York Times*, found modernism's departure from "any representation of nature . . . any known or traditional form of decoration" to border on the "pathological." As far as Cox was concerned, the Armory Show was simply a way of "making insanity pay."[8]

Despite such dismissals, the formal innovations of American modernism would indeed make "insanity pay" and not just in the art world. Soon, the example of American modernism would quickly spread to the other arts, in poetry, fiction, experimental film, Hollywood cinema, the visual techniques of advertising, and in popular culture generally. Indeed, as Thomas Crow has written, the avant-garde in America served as "a kind of research and development arm of the culture industry."[9] As early as 1922, the year T. S. Eliot published *The Waste Land*, Matthew Josephson argued in the avant-garde journal *Broom* that the true innovation of American modernism lay

precisely in its fusion of experimentalism and popular culture. In his essay, entitled "The Great American Billposter," Josephson avowed that America, not Europe, was defining modernism not just through its commerce in advertising billposters, but through the lively spectacle of the American scene: "where athletes play upon the frenetic passions of baseball crowds, and skyscrapers rise lyrically to the exotic rhythms of jazz bands which upon waking up we find to be nothing but the drilling of pneumatic hammers on steel girders."[10] Thus the rubric of American modernism – as the contributors to this Cambridge Companion volume demonstrate – refers not just to an arts movement, a literary period term, or a particular cultural nationalism but, more broadly, signals the expansive paradigm shift emerging at the *fin de siécle*. It encompasses the global contexts of social change roughly between 1890 and 1939 in industry, commerce, technology, politics, and aesthetics of what came to be considered as a distinctively American public sphere.

Engaging the question of what constitutes the "American-ness" of modernism in literature, culture, and society, Mark Morrisson's opening chapter on "Nationalism and the modern American canon" explores competing models of what defined American national culture at the turn of the century. Negotiations over how national identity should be defined, as Morrisson demonstrates, did not produce a seamless consensus among America's various societal constituencies divided as they were along ethnic, racial, and class lines. On the one hand, nativist impulses – as in William Carlos Williams's call for a "rediscovery of a primary impetus, the elementary principles of all art" – would ground modernism in "the local conditions" of regional America.[11] Similarly, even expatriates such as Ezra Pound would identify modernist aesthetics with Walt Whitman's inaugural identity as quintessential American. On the other hand, such nativist impulses were inescapably mediated by the global scope of modernism as it was being conceived in such international urban cities as Moscow, Berlin, Paris, and London. Morrisson teases out the competing tensions between nativism and internationalism in the make-up of an American modernist canon by examining the publication history of the period's major little magazines such as *Poetry*, *The Seven Arts*, and *The Dial* as well as the shaping influence of notable anthologies and pedagogical textbooks of the American New Critics. In particular, Morrisson provides a case study of Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap's *The Little Review* from its inception in Chicago in 1914 – as a venue for Midwestern American poets – through 1926 and its increasingly transnational representation of such aesthetic movements as Imagism, Cubism, Vorticism, Dadaism and Surrealism. Quoting Anderson, Morrisson sums up the mutually enabling exchange that made up the nativist and international cast of this important cultural venue: "*The Little Review* was the

first magazine to reassure Europe as to America, and the first to give America the tang of Europe."

The first of three chapters on modern American literature, Rita Barnard's essay takes Alfred Kazin's retrospective study *On Native Ground* (1942) as its starting point for a consideration of how modern American fiction addresses "the need to learn what the reality of life was in our modern era."[12] Noting the era's transition from an economy based in industrial production to one increasingly defined by the consumption of abundant things, goods, services, and images, Barnard questions how these social and cultural transformations altered narrative form in terms of such basic categories of experience as space, time, and value. To begin with, Barnard examines the distinctively modern "location of culture" in the American settings of such urban American novels as John Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), Waldo Frank's *City Block* (1922), and Albert Halper's *Union Square* (1933). Moreover, in reading Ernest Hemingway, Mike Gold, Henry Adams, Richard Wright, and Willa Cather, Barnard demonstrates the changing presentations of modern American place, subject to the period's shifting demographics of race, class, and ethnic migration. In addition, Barnard notes the accelerating rhythms of modern industry as they reshape perception, sensation, and psychic sensibility in the experimental narrative techniques of Gertrude Stein, Sherwood Anderson, Hemingway, and Dos Passos. The stylized presentation of temporality pioneered by these authors, Barnard argues, influences such proletarian works of fiction as Tom Kromer's Depression-Era novel, *Waiting For Nothing* (1936). Finally, Barnard considers how modern American fiction negotiates changing notions of value, money, and economic exchange. Modern American self-fashioning, she argues, is powerfully mediated by the new narratives of fiscal accumulation and expenditure, profit and loss, class status and social mobility.

The interface between literary experiment and the new economic, cultural, and social energies of American modernism likewise shapes the rich rhetorical inventiveness of modern American poetry. As Cary Nelson demonstrates in his overview of the verse genre, modern American poetry's creative breadth, its variety of forms, and diversity of voices exceed any single or monolithic account of the period. Indeed, the dominant story of the modern Image – promoted by Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, F. S. Flint, and H. D. (Hilda Doolittle) – is no longer considered as *the* defining template for modern American poetry. Moreover, he argues, literary Imagism, as a "founding movement in modern American poetry . . . is richer and more diverse than we have been inclined to think." To take one example, image-text traditions in the arts, popular culture, and advertising discourse influence the collage techniques of such *291 Gallery* talents as Agnes Ernst Meyer and Marius de

Zayas in experimental works like “Mental Reactions.” As a vehicle of poetic innovation, modern collage, as Nelson shows, encompasses a remarkable presentational range of forms and techniques in the poetry of T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Mina Loy. Similarly, Nelson surveys the verbal experimentalism of Gertrude Stein, Marianne Moore, and Hart Crane. Equally important, as Nelson notes, such otherwise distinctive poets as Robert Frost, Claude McKay, and Edna St. Vincent Millay share a common agenda of masterfully appropriating traditional verse forms like the sonnet, ballad stanza, and dramatic monologue in powerfully original modes of new social expression. Beyond literary formalism and the compositional strictures of the Imagist movement in American verse, Nelson's critical survey also shows how the new social discourses of race, empire, class, and gender – not to mention the period's defining historical events such as the Spanish Civil War – complicate and enrich the literary heritage of modern American poetry.

In “Modern American drama” Stephen Watt begins with American theatre's roots in such nineteenth-century American traditions as the Virginia minstrels and the popular drama of James Pilgrim who featured narratives of Irish immigration in *Ireland and America* (1851) and *Irish Assurance and Yankee Modesty* (1854). Moving on to the rise of the Theatrical Syndicate in the 1890s, Watt argues that a diversified national drama arose far from the commercial venues of New York's Broadway theatre district. Chicago's Hull-House community theatre, the Chicago Little Theatre, and Provincetown Players offer models of an alternative, modernist drama that emerged in America during the first decades of the twentieth century. Such vital scenes of American modernist theater produced works like Susan Glaspell's *Suppressed Desires* (1914), *Trifles* (1916), *Bernice* (1919), and *The Verge* (1921) and Eugene O'Neill's *The Moon of the Caribbees* (1918), *Beyond the Horizon* (1920), *The Emperor Jones* (1920), and *Desire Under the Elms* (1924). In addition to these sites of emergent, modern American drama, Watt considers the influences of melodrama and realism on the productions of James A. Herne, David Belasco, and Clyde Fitch, as well as new dramatic narratives of desire, emancipatory feminism, and socialist politics in works such as Elizabeth Robins's *Votes for Women!* (1908), Rachel Crothers's *The Three of Us* (1906), *A Man's World* (1910), and *He and She* (1911), Elmer Rice's *The Adding Machine* (1923), and Clifford Odets's *Waiting for Lefty* (1935).

The first of three essays on the cultural dimension of American modernism, Mark Sanders's essay on the New Negro Renaissance reads the flowering modern African-American culture against contemporaneous philosophical, political, and anthropological currents of American pragmatism. Surveying

the influence that William James, John Dewey, Franz Boaz, and W. E. B. Du Bois had on American pragmatism, Sanders also takes into account such public intellectuals as Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank, Max Eastman, Randolph Bourne, William Carlos Williams, V. F. Calverton, and Alfred Stieglitz. Against earlier formalist models of an aesthetic "high modernism," Sanders lays out the case for a new "constellation of ideas, movements, publishing venues, and artistic communities that comprised a *heterodox modernism* in which New Negroes participated fully." In this vein, Sanders examines the "little magazines" and publishing houses that sponsored New Negro Renaissance writers such as Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Toomer, James Weldon Johnson, George Schuyler, Nella Larsen, Rudolph Fisher, Jessie Fauset, and Sterling Brown. Finally, in close readings of the work of Zora Neale Hurston, Sterling Brown, and Jean Toomer, Sanders considers the key contributions that these three authors made to the American modernist tradition. Hurston's "free indirect discourse," that fuses folk vernacular and third-person narrative in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), Brown's recovery, in *Southern Road* (1932), of the American democratic ideal animating Walt Whitman's poetics, and Toomer's verbal impressionism, narrative fragmentation, and mixed generic modes in *Cane* (1923) are three exemplary African-American interventions in modern letters.

The vital connection between African-American vernacular culture and modernism is further explored in Jed Rasula's survey of the jazz age from its folk origins in the blues to the more cosmopolitan rhythms of ragtime, on through the heyday of Big Band Jazz, and into the bebop era. Tracing the cultural geography of jazz from its inception in New Orleans and subsequent migration to such Northern urban centers as Chicago, Kansas City, and New York, Rasula examines how jazz culture became synonymous with the industrial and commercial energies of American modernism as witnessed in such classic works as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Flappers and Philosophers* (1920) and *Tales of the Jazz Age* (1922). But not just commercial entertainment, jazz's aesthetic novelty – its formal orchestration, sensuous tonalities, and syncopated rhythms – offered an "acoustic counterpart" to the radically new pictorial and literary forms of experimental modernism. Indeed, as an international phenomenon, jazz did not just set the tone for American modernism across the color line of the pre-Civil Rights era, but was a musical inspiration for such European composers as Claude Debussy, Darius Milhaud, Igor Stravinsky, Paul Hindemith, Maurice Ravel, and George Antheil, among others. A mass-mediated art form, jazz came of age with the emergence of such technologies as the radio and phonograph and, as Rasula shows, gave the modern era its distinctive "sound track."

What the Frankfurt school critic Walter Benjamin described as the "age of mechanical reproduction" also characterizes modernism's highly mediated visual culture beginning with the invention of the daguerreotype in 1837 and evolving so rapidly that by the 1880s George Eastman had invented paper-based photographic film and the Kodak roll-film camera. Between 1880 and 1904 – as Michael North discusses in his essay on the "Visual culture" of American modernism – photography began to circulate routinely in newspaper dailies, while these decades also mark the invention by Louis Lumière of the first motion picture camera in 1895 and Thomas Edison's vitascope projector the following year. For the European avant-gardes, American modernism was synonymous with the new visuality represented in journals such as Alfred Stieglitz's *Camera Work* as well as the kind of popular culture forms that Gilbert Seldes analyzed in *The Seven Lively Arts* (1924): Hollywood cinema, advertising billposters, and the visual antics of Charlie Chaplin, the Keystone Kops, and Krazy Kat comics. Moreover, as North shows in his reading of Georg Simmel's 1903 essay "The Metropolis and Mental Life," the accelerated panoramas of daily life mobilized through rapid train and automobile travel left their imprint on the visual imagination in ways that mirrored the experience of motion picture viewing. In North's analysis, the shifting perceptions of America's emerging society of the spectacle also mark the themes and new literary forms pioneered by American modernist writers, notably William Carlos Williams.

The influence of visual culture on Williams's compositional techniques, as Marjorie Perloff demonstrates, has another linkage to the more rarefied aesthetic traditions of the historical avant-gardes in American modernism. Tracing the term "avant-garde" back to its military origins, Perloff explores the ways in which Williams as well as Marcel Duchamp, Francis Picabia, Man Ray, Mina Loy, Baroness Elsa von Freitag-Loringhoven, Marius de Zayas, and Gertrude Stein, among others, provocatively challenged the traditional notions of artist and authorial identity, the art object and the literary work, and aesthetic form and generic conventions. Noting that New York Dada as an avant-garde aesthetic movement was actually the production of Europeans such as Duchamp, Picabia, von Freitag-Loringhoven, and Loy, Perloff also locates its origins two years prior to the 1916 inception of European Dada at Zurich's *Cabaret Voltaire*. The artistic scene of American modernism that flourished in New York through such sites as the 1913 Armory Show, the Walter Arensberg salon, and the *291 Gallery* produced some of the most radically fresh expressions in modern art, sculpture, and prose. Duchamp's "readymades," Alfred Stieglitz's photography showcased in his little magazine *Camera Work*, the typography of Marius de Zayas, Picabia's "mechanomorphic" drawings, Man Ray's "objects,"

Mina Loy's erotic surrealist verse are all notable examples of an avant-garde tradition that flowered in New York City during the modern period.

Not just an avant-garde poet, however, Mina Loy also imagined new models of feminist agency, gender and sexuality in the modern public sphere. As Janet Lyon explains, Loy did not limit herself to the political agenda of suffragettes such as Dorothy Day, Margaret Sanger, or Elizabeth Gurney Flynn. Equally important, Loy inaugurated new discourses of women's sexual difference in the cultural arena through the arts of poetry, art, conversation, performance and fashion. As Lyon shows, the cosmopolitan settings of American modernism fostered shifting social arrangements between men and women that radically altered traditional understandings of gender and sexuality. In close readings of Loy, Willa Cather, Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, Hart Crane, and Wallace Thurman, among others, Lyon further explores the ways in which literary form inscribes the fungible relations among sexuality, gender, and modern identity. In addition, Lyon considers the salon communities hosted by figures like Mabel Dodge, Alfred Stieglitz, Natalie Barney, Gertrude Stein, A'Lelia Walker, and Josephine Baker that fostered the era's cultural experimentation in art and life.

Amplifying the local contexts of American modernism, John Duvall examines the ways in which regionalism signified social difference in asserting emergent varieties of gender, race, class, and ethnic identities. To begin with, Duvall questions the notion that regionalism – insofar as it is traditionally tied to realist and naturalist writers of "local color" – is anathema to the experimental, cosmopolitan, and international connotations of modern culture. In accounting for the regional resources of American modernism, Duvall shows how such major modernists as Kate Chopin, Willa Cather, Ernest Hemingway, Robert Frost, Zora Neale Hurston, Richard Wright, and William Faulkner, among others, employed local, vernacular cultures – rooted in such settings as say, Michigan, Nebraska, Mississippi, Florida, and Vermont – to forge levels of psychological characterization, thematic complexity and formal innovation that we otherwise associate with the difficult intensities defining international modernism. Similarly, as Paula Rabinowitz demonstrates, the novel forms of communal association afforded by the rise of modern big-city life were defining aspects of American modernism for authors such as John Dos Passos, Muriel Rukeyser, Gertrude Stein, Joy Davidman, W. E. B. Du Bois, Hart Crane, Jean Toomer, James Agee, Nella Larsen, Meridel LeSueur, and Anzia Yezierska, among others. Like Janet Lyon, Rabinowitz explores urban space as a social site that provided radically new modes of self fashioning. As Rabinowitz shows, the urban experience of modern city life – increasingly characterized by a multiplicity, mobility, and diversity of social exchange among bodies, machines, commodities,

information, and signage – offered fresh opportunities for gender, ethnic, class, and racial cross-identifications that departed radically from traditional understandings of American national identity.

Completing the coverage of the *Cambridge Companion to American Modernism*, Douglas Mao's final chapter examines the major figures, schools, and movements of modern American literary criticism. To begin with, Mao presents the push for a so-called "New Humanism" that would revitalize the study of language and literature undertaken by figures such as Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More, Stuart P. Sherman, and Norman Foerster. Mao goes on to examine the lively aesthetic debates gathered in such classic collections of the era as *American Criticism* (1924). Against the conservatism, Puritanism, and old-line moralism of the New Humanists, critics like Joel Spingarn, Ernest Boyd, Van Wyck Brooks, H. L. Mencken, Max Eastman, Waldo Frank, and Randolph Bourne campaigned for more liberal, progressive, and experimental readings of American modernism. In addition, Mao presents the emergence of the period's "New Negro" aesthetic and cultural initiatives promoted by Spingarn, W. E. B. Du Bois, Alain Locke, James Weldon Johnson, Charles Johnson, William Stanley Braithwaite and Jessie Fauset, among others. The agitational criticism of Mike Gold and V. F. Calverton ties the race agenda of the former group to Marxist readings of literary form that are further refined in works such as Granville Hicks's *The Great Tradition: An Interpretation of American Literature Since the Civil War* (1930), V. L. Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought* (1927–1930), and Edmund Wilson's *Axel's Castle* (1931). Mao further reviews the origins of psychoanalytic criticism in America and considers the shaping influence of such regional initiatives as the evolving Fugitive, Southern Agrarian and New Criticism movements as well as the Chicago school, ending finally with a study of the New York school associated with the *Partisan Review* of the 1930s. Thus, as the twelve distinguished contributors to this volume show, the "Multiplicity, Diversity, Complexity, Anarchy, Chaos" that, for Henry Adams, described the emerging "grammar" of the twentieth century become most fully patent in the literary, cultural, and social energies that define American modernism. At no point in American history has the "pulse of the continent" been more vital, its aesthetic expression more bold, and its imaginative range more "unpent."

NOTES

1. Walt Whitman, "To a Locomotive in Winter," in *The Complete Poems of Walt Whitman*, ed. Francis Murphy (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 483.
2. Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, ed. Ernest Samuels (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 381.

3. Waldo Frank, *Our America* (New York: Boni & Liveright, Inc., 1919), 177–178.
4. Alain Locke, "The New Negro," in *The New Negro*, ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1925), 6, 7.
5. Max Eastman, *The Enjoyment of Living* (New York: Harpers, 1948), 409.
6. Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Movers and Shakers*. Vol. 3 of *Intimate Memories* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1936), 83; quoted in Rebecca Zurier, *Art for the Masses* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 105.
7. William Carlos Williams, *The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams* (New York: Random House, 1948), 134.
8. Kenyon Cox, "Cubists and Futurists are Making Insanity Pay," *New York Times*, March 16, 1913, magazine sec., pt. 6, 1; quoted in Allan Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism: Art Politics and the First American Avant-Garde* (University of Chicago Press, 2001), 47.
9. Thomas Crow, "Modernism and Mass Culture in the Visual Arts," in *Modernism and Modernity*, ed. S. Guilbaut and D. Solkin (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1983), 253.
10. Matthew Josephson, "The Great American Billposter," *Broom* 3 (November 1922), 304.
11. Williams, *The Autobiography*, 146.
12. Alfred Kazin, *On Native Grounds: An Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1942), viii, ix.

1

MARK MORRISSON

Nationalism and the modern American canon

London was a Mecca for modernist writers and visual artists, with its Bloomsbury experiments in aesthetics and lifestyles, its avant-garde exhibitions and arts workshops, its audacious poetry readings, and its fiercely independent small presses and little magazines. But as Hugh Kenner has noted, none of the "masterpieces" of modernist literature (*Ulysses*, *The Waste Land*, or the first third of Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, for instance) were written by English writers. Moreover, the English language and English literature itself had become decentered: Kenner went on to argue that "by mid-century . . . English was the language not only of the Three Provinces but also of several masterpieces best located in a supranational movement called International Modernism."[1] The literature that he espoused – primarily the work of T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, James Joyce, William Carlos Williams, William Butler Yeats, Marianne Moore, and Samuel Beckett – all, in Kenner's view, belonged to this "supranational movement." Indeed, modernism has often been conceptualized as a stridently international phenomenon across art and literature.

But if we accept such a vision of modernism as international, what could the phrase "American modernism" possibly mean? Does it refer to a specific subset of international modernism (that is, work produced by American modernists), or to a different kind of writing altogether? In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many American writers (modernist or not) were grappling with the "American-ness" of their own writing, seeking to understand what could define their literature as a national literature and not simply as a provincial footnote to English literature. American literary nationalism proved a powerful cultural force even as modernists began to engage with international avant-gardism. The national (or international) identity of modernism was by no means as lucid then as later scholarly assessments, including Kenner's, might suggest.

As America increasingly asserted itself on the world stage – becoming an imperial power at the turn of the century, reluctantly but successfully entering

World War I, and grappling with its relationship to the League of Nations after the war – nationalism and understandings of the arts' relationship to national identity metamorphosed a number of times. Nationalist political progressives of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries believed that European cultural refinement would gradually come to the American masses and that immigrants would be assimilated into this culture. Young cultural insurgents, among them many modernists, argued vehemently against gradual cultural progress and in favor of a cultural revolution or renaissance (two different rhetorical flourishes in the service of much the same goal) that would sweep away stifling, empty American conventions and replace them with a truly vibrant indigenous culture.[2] During the war, the Espionage Act was used to shut down several periodicals (including ones publishing modernism) that were deemed to be subversive and un-American; much of the American Left, however, saw itself as working for a better, more just, national culture, not subverting American ideals.[3] Progressivist notions of American identity were challenged by pluralism and then by nativism in the 1920s, a decade that also saw a resurgence of populist nationalism.[4] And most forms of American cultural nationalism drew not only from the country's history (a history whose very writing was a nationalist project) but also, at least since the early nineteenth century, from its varied and often spectacularly extreme landscapes.[5]

But just what is a nation? The issue was hotly debated in America during the modernist era. Could immigrants *become* American by enculturation, as progressivists imagined, or were they always somehow non-American culturally, even if they had attained American citizenship? Was "American culture" essentially Anglo-Saxon, as many would have it? Others argued that America's great strength as a nation was its very pluralistic composition. Was there a national identity that superseded regional identities? Were African-Americans and Native Americans truly American? Some claimed that America's major cultural contributions were primarily those of African-Americans, and they pointed to jazz, blues, dances, and folklore. Much of the discourse about modern American literature during the period was in the service of creating an American "imagined community" (Anderson) as a living organism, one that might be expressed and even *grown* by a national literature.

Against the backdrop of nationalist debates about American identity and American culture – about the nature of the imagined community that was "America" – many experimental writers began to forge something that could be called "American modernism." But which writers and artists truly represent American modernism? And who gets to decide? Editors of modernist little magazines or of mass-market periodicals? Mainstream

or avant-garde publishers? Anthologists? Literary prize committees? The writers themselves? Patrons? Critics? University professors and their growing numbers of student readers of American literature? The answer is that all of these have contributed, in varying degrees and at different times, to an ever-developing American modernist canon. They still do. But the notion of a *single* canon, even if it is understood as an ever-changing inventory, may be too simple, as we shall see.

Over the last few decades, scholars who study the processes of canonization have often relied upon two seemingly competing understandings of how canons are formed. An "aesthetic" model of canon formation assumes that creative writers *themselves* create the canon by their interaction with each other's work and that of their predecessors. By contrast, an "institutional" model suggests that cultural institutions dictate what is read and valued.[6] Some scholars have argued that both models might be necessary for a complete, historically nuanced picture of how a canon, or even alternative canons, might be formed in various historical periods.[7]

The modernist period saw a shift in the institutions of canonization in America. During the first quarter of the century, the writers who helped establish the reputations of other writers and artists worked in a range of publication venues – from the little magazine, small press anthology, and limited-edition book on the one end of the spectrum to the mass-circulation magazine, popular anthology, and mass-market book on the other. Poet-critics such as T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound exerted their influence on the reception of new literary work and the processes of canonization by publishing criticism and commentary in little magazines, wider circulation magazines, and books. They also influenced the offerings of publishers from the small-scale Egoist Press to the far larger Faber & Faber. But by the late 1930s, especially with the advent of the New Criticism, the academic institution – professors, the college English classroom, the textbook market – had begun to play a crucial part in canonization. While alternative canons, often directly influenced by poets and novelists themselves, persisted throughout the twentieth century and into the present, the academy remains highly influential in determining what work is valued and what is completely overlooked. As we explore the formation of the American modernist canon in the light of these models, we must consider the role of American literary nationalism in the stridently international aesthetic revolution of modernism.

American literary nationalism: Whitman and modernism

The nationalistic sense that America was a special country, a new country on the verge of a major cultural renaissance, was widespread in the pre-First