1. Regional Writing and the New Modernist Studies (Beveridge Hall)

David James (Queen Mary), ‘Regional Modernist Fiction and the Politics of Recuperation’

Of all the varied intellectual imperatives that are now reshaping the field of modernist studies, the ethos of expansion is surely the most prevalent. Revising the spatial and temporal coordinates of modernist production has mostly been welcomed as a progressive and necessary manoeuvre. But to argue that modernism happens in radically disparate locations carries certain implications for the very future of modernism as a concept. In his introduction to the *Handbook of Global Modernisms*, Mark Wollaeger notes that there have been a number of anxieties over the field’s ‘refusal of limits’, even as he sets out the agenda for mapping modernism’s planetary reach. Taking stock of such arguments, David James’s paper will address the methodological challenges posed by the incorporation of regional writing within the current ‘expansionist’ climate of the new modernist studies. After a short survey of emerging scholarship on regional modernist culture, he will discuss the politics of recuperation at a time when a range of new writing from other times and other places is compelling us to question our very assumptions about where modernism happens and what modernism formally does. James considers the advantages and consequences of rethinking the narrative modes of regional writers under the rubric of modernism (ranging from late modernists like Sylvia Townsend Warner to more contemporary figures like John McGahern). In so doing, he also asks to what extent ‘modernism’ becomes a purely evaluative epithet when it is transcribed onto the arc of the regional novel’s development. He thus addresses the issue with which the panel as a whole engages: namely, despite modernism’s increasing conceptual and literary-historical capaciousness, what are the limits of its applicability as both an explanatory frame and a measure of aesthetic value in discussions of regional and rural writing?

Stephanie Boland (Exeter), “‘Err-and-Stray’: The Matter of Modernist Guide-books’

“‘Err-and-Stray’: The Matter of Modernist Guide-books’

This paper takes as its subject a pair of publications located simultaneously on two of modernist’ studies shifting front lines. Lewis Grassic Gibbon and Hugh MacDiarmid’s *Scottish Scene* and Sylvia Townsend Warner’s *Somerset* employ the textual and bibliographic codes common in early twentieth-century guidebooks; by both incorporating and subverting the formal features of commercial guides, the volumes radically disrupt popular narratives of space, providing in their place idiosyncratic and multi-faceted portraits of the places they profile. Although each of their authors has been incorporated into the modernist canon, I will suggest these volumes remain difficult to place in relation to literary modernism: not only do their regional locations lay outside of what was, until recently, the accepted territory of modernist innovation, but their dialectic relationship with
the commercial travel guide places them between genres – and therefore situated in complicated ways against more conventional understandings of what constitutes formal experiment.

Dominic Head (Nottingham), 'Modernity and the Rural English Novel'

Dominic Head considers how the manner of the regional accent recently discerned in English modernism—for example in the 'anthropological turn' described by Jed Esty—is either matched or anticipated in the inter-war vogue for rural fiction in many respects, as can be seen in the complex nostalgia of H. E. Bates, the interrogation of belonging in Sheila Kaye-Smith, the slow embrace of mechanization in Adrian Bell, or the primitivism of Leo Walmsley. With reference to one or more representative example(s), Head shows how some of the dominant themes of modernity were registered in the rural novel of the 1920s and 1930s. The point here is not to contribute to the expansion of modernism, but rather to suggest how a shared cultural field brings together disparate forms of literary expression, or at least complicates how these disparate forms have been separated in literary history.

2. Modernism and Religion (Room G22)

Erik Tonning (Bergen), 'Modernism and Christianity as a Field of Study'

This paper examines the formative and continuing impact of Christianity upon Modernism. Central to the conception of Modernism adopted here is the idea that by the late nineteenth century, large numbers of artists, thinkers and cultural and political ideologues and activists had begun to experience the condition of Western modernity as a crisis: a seemingly unprecedented period of transition or epochal transformation pointing to an unknown, perhaps a revolutionized, future. A Modernist, on this reading, is thus both on some level a theorist or thinker of cultural crisis, as well as a practitioner of experimental responses to that perceived crisis. But the very idea of an epochal cultural transformation at this time would necessarily involve some confrontation with the still-dominant religion and cultural paradigm of the West. How was the Christian past to be assessed? Was it worth preserving, or should it be overcome once and for all? How to relate to Christianity's present influence, both socially and individually? And did it have a future? The paper juxtaposes the idea of formative tensions between Modernism and Christianity, with more explicitly Christian modernisms, arguing that both are essential to a coherent account of Modernism as a movement.

Elizabeth Anderson (Stirling), 'Everyday Sacred in Mary Butts and H.D.'

Recent work by scholars such as Suzanne Hobson, Pericles Lewis, Erik Tonning and Lara Vetter has taken the exploration of the intersection of modernism and religion in a myriad of directions, including considerations of religion and science in modernist discourse, the relationship between both popular and institutional forms of religion and modernist texts, and the relationship between modernist formal experiments and the philosophy and psychology of religion in the early Twentieth Century. This work builds on earlier work by Leon Surette and Timothy Materer on modernism and the occult and Helen Sword on modernism and spiritualism.

This growing area of interest in modernist studies has a number of points of contact with current interests in theology and religious studies. One fruitful, yet underexplored connection is how the turn towards phenomenology in theology and religious studies has brought an interest in materiality which resonates with
the concern with materiality in everyday life studies, a significant area of modernist studies. This paper explores the connections between current attention - within both modernist studies and theology and religious studies - to materiality, the everyday and spirituality, arguing that an everyday sacred emerges within modernist texts.

The paper then goes on to consider the work of two modernist women writers in this context. It argues that Mary Butts and H.D. develop an everyday sacred through their explorations of landscape, domestic interiors and objects that are both ordinary and sacred in their autobiographical prose texts *The Crystal Cabinet* and *The Gift*.

Matthew Rumbold (Warwick), “‘Priest and Artist in the Catacomb’: Place, Religion and Late Modernist Aesthetics in the Work of David Jones’

David Jones (1895-1974) was considered in the 1920s and 1930s to be not only one of Britain’s most prominent artists, exhibiting with the Seven and Five Society, but after publishing *In Parenthesis* (1937) and *The Anathemata* (1952), his poetry was lauded by W. H. Auden and T. S. Eliot as masterpieces of the twentieth century. However, Jones’s place in the Modernist pantheon has remained obscure and peripheral. Rather than a limitation, I argue that Jones’s marginality is in fact an asset. By locating Jones at the interstices of late modernist aesthetics, I suggest ways in which notions of modernism can be reoriented. For David Jones, the most significant interconnection is between space and the sacred, and the two are fused through a sacramental aesthetic. Referring mainly to *The Anathemata*, I emphasise Jones’s hybridity as an Anglo-Welsh writer preoccupied with both the city of London and the plurality of myth and ancient sites associated with Wales. Jones mediates the poles of ‘the metropolitan perception’ and a decentred peripheral regionalism. Furthermore, his predominantly Catholic aesthetic influenced by Jacques Maritain’s Neo-Thomism lends credence to a critique of modernity which he referred to as the “Break”. I suggest that as a refinement of modernism rooted in a secular challenge to orthodoxies, is a current of modern artistic practitioners responding to the “Break” of modernity’s alienation and disenchantment by working within a tradition of religious devotion. Whilst still employing radical formal experimentation, David Jones’s art exemplifies a sacramental vision based on gratuitous re-enchantment of place.

3. Contemporary Modernist Practices (Adaptation, Remediation)
(Room G26)

Benjamin Fowler (Warwick), ‘Breaking Through (Artistic) Borders: Intermediality as Theatre’s Modernism’

“On or about December 1910, human character changed,” wrote Virginia Woolf (Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown, 1924) in an essay exploding the stratifying rhetoric of nineteenth century social hierarchies (“masters and servants, husbands and wives”); modernist artistic innovation revealed social and political shifts in subjectivity. Almost 100 years on, theatre director Katie Mitchell forces film, the novel, poetry and live performance into collision, in an intermedial strand of work inaugurated by her theatricalisation of Woolf’s novel *The Waves* (National Theatre, 2006).
Contemporary experimental performance methodologies (e.g. postdramatic theatre, postmodernism) rely on what Koenpick and McGlothlin call “teleological historiography,” and the structuring logic of the “break” or “turn”. An intermedial approach, on the other hand, allows us to think of new media experimentation as contesting spatial and temporal hierarchies of old and new, offering instead the tools to “actualize certain promises of the past while at the same time changing our very understanding of that past” (Lev Manovich).

This paper, then, explores modernism as a historical movement and a living artistic practice. It scrutinizes Mitchell’s free adaptation of Strindberg’s Miss Julie (Schaubühne, Berlin, 2009), in which a team of performers construct a cinematic version of Strindberg’s play from the point of view of the servant Christine, projected live above the stage. It argues that Mitchell’s intermedial practice questions the hierarchical stratification of media—allowing, as Kattenbelt argues (and as Woolf asserted in 1924), “new dimensions of perception and experience to be explored”—as it simultaneously troubles the stratification of historical aesthetic regimes.

Andrew Campbell (Strathclyde), “‘Something that will still be worth saying’’. Public Service Broadcasting: “Night Mail”, Hauntology and the BFI Archive’

“...I think, together, they say something about the spirit of our own time. Something that will still be worth saying a hundred years hence.”

Marie Slocombe, founder of the BBC Archive, speaking in 1942.

In 2013, Public Service Broadcasting, an English indie-rock band, released Inform - Educate - Entertain, an innovative audio-visual project that utilised BFI archive film footage as its source material.

As an extended performance of collaborative hauntological intertextuality, Public Service Broadcasting synthesise material from modernist documentary films with contemporary electronic rock music. The principal concern of this paper, and the stirring centrepiece of Inform – Educate – Entertain, is their melancholic reinterpretation of W.H. Auden’s ‘Night Mail’ (1936), itself a collaboration with John Grierson’s G.P.O. Film Unit.

This presentation will draw upon a recent bloom of artistic production and scholarly interest grounded in Derridean hauntological theory and practices, and draw links between these and related popular culture motifs, such as the resurgence of ‘Keep Calm and Carry On’ merchandise. These visual tropes perform as both kitsch nostalgia product and the recurring presence of Modernist socio-historical and political contexts within the everyday settings of contemporary life.

Activated by these images of 1930s and ‘40s Britain, the cut-up music produced by Public Service Broadcasting finds numerous parallels with the work of contemporaries such as British Sea Power’s contribution of original scores to archive cinema texts including Robert Flaherty’s fictional ethnography Man of Arran (1934) and Penny Woolcock’s From The Sea To The Land Beyond (2013), a documentary montage of over 100 years of archival material. Public Service Broadcasting’s praxis foregrounds questions about archival access, representation and the possibilities of adaption, whilst critiquing the contemporary intermedia practices of cultural preservation which allow the completion and dissemination of such work.
Crucially, the artistic practice of Public Service Broadcasting’s collaborations with the BFI constitute a vitally significant archival intervention that teaches “the lessons of the past through the music of the future” (2013). These hauntological texts are both the product of a time which is “out of joint” and a thrilling, innovative example of Modernism, Now!

Sam Cooper (Sussex), ‘3 minutes of wobbly foxglove’: Patrick Keiller, British Surrealism and the Anxiety of Recuperation’

The British engagement with the Continental avant-garde tradition that runs from Dada through Surrealism to Situationism has been marked by a very particular anxiety: an anxiety of recuperation.

Recuperation was the name given by the Situationist International to the process through which politically antagonistic aesthetic practices are adopted and thus neutralised by the hegemonic order against which they position themselves. As avant-garde traditions extended into the twentieth century, they became increasingly anxious of the inevitability of their own recuperation, of their institutional recognition, and of their consignment to the museum—that mausoleum for dead art.

This paper positions Patrick Keiller at the forefront of British Surrealist-Situationist activity today.* Across his films, essays and exhibitions, Keiller’s Surrealist practice confronts two longstanding problems: the problem of ‘Britishness’ and its perceived incompatibility with ‘Continental’ avant-garde aesthetics; and the problem of recuperation, about which the historical avant-garde’s anxieties might now seem entirely justified, particularly on a visit to the Tate Modern. This paper will argue that Keiller’s engagement with the historical avant-garde mobilises the anxiety of recuperation, so that the anxiety, paradoxically, comes to preserve the politically antagonistic character of modernism, now.

* Patrick Keiller’s films include the trilogy of London (1994), Robinson in Space (1997) and Robinson in Ruins (2010); his exhibitions include ‘The City of the Future’ (BFI, 2008) and ‘The Robinson Institute’ (Tate Britain, 2012); and his collected essays have recently been published as The View from the Train: Cities and Other Landscapes (Verso, 2013).

Magda Dragu (Indiana), ‘Avant-Garde versus Modernist Intermedial Experiments’

In this paper I propose to show that early avant-garde and modernist artists and writers engaged with the other media (arts) in significantly different ways. While avant-garde artists like Oskar Kokoschka, Jean Arp, Kurt Schwitters, Wassily Kandinsky and Wyndham Lewis (Doppelbegabungen, multiple-talented artists) expressed the same concepts in several arts, modernist writers engaged with the other media indirectly. James Joyce and Aldous Huxley transposed musical forms (the fugue, polyphony) into their novels. Virginia Woolf used visual ekphrasis in her novels and experimented with musical form in her short-stories.

Avant-garde artists used a content-oriented intermedial transposition, in addition to producing mixed-media and intermedia texts (artists books). Modernist writers who engaged with other media (music and painting) used a form-oriented intermedial transposition followed by intermedial reference. Thus they respected the barriers between media.
Early avant-garde artists considered all media to be similar and used them interchangeably, regardless of the fact that they had very little formal training in the respective medium. Modernist writers respected the purity of the arts, and did not try to blur the limits between them. The intermedial transposition of the form of the fugue into a literary text (musicalized fiction) actualizes the differences between media. Modernist authors did not aim to create the Gesamtkunstwerk, which haunted all the endeavors of the avant-garde artists. The intermedial reference to music within modernist literary texts relies on the simultaneous perception of two media, without these media being present at the same time within the text.

4. Ezra Pound: Questions of Reception and Influence (Room 261)

Giuliana Bendelli (Università Cattolica, Milan), ‘Pound in Italy and Italy in Pound in the 1930s’

The paper focuses on the presence of Pound in Italy in the 1930s when, some years after his move to Rapallo, he fosters an international cultural debate through his “critical” writings in important literary journals, such as “L’Indice” and “Il Mare”.

Though he was widely known as ‘il poeta americano’ Pound was arguably better known as literary critic, editor of Cavalcanti, economist, concert impresario and man of action who had obtained an audience with Mussolini than as a poet. The paper aims to investigate how contemporary Italian poets like Marinetti, Montale and Ungaretti understood and reacted to Pound’s poetry in the context of existing publications and translations. This is an archaeology of the beginnings of the Italian reception of Pound’s poetic work within the context of Fascism, before the major translation work by Mary de Rachewiltz was started.

Julian Stannard (Winchester), ‘Bunting’s Chomei at Toyama: Redaction and Prefiguration’

Bunting’s second stint in Rapallo (1929-33) was one of his most fruitful periods. Proximity to Pound and the ‘Ezuversity’ was of vital importance, yet there were on Bunting’s part two serendipitous discoveries which were also of great significance. The English poet was familiar with Genoa, the great sea port, north of Rapallo and here on its quayside, amongst the bookstalls and second-hand bookshops, Bunting discovered Marcello Muccioli’s Italian translation of Kamo-no-Chomei’s Hōjōki. This gave rise to Bunting’s ‘Japanese’ poem Chomei at Toyama, which is a poetic redaction of early medieval Japanese prose. Chomei is an exquisite piece of work, which sets itself apart from the cycle of early sonatas – Villon, Attis, The Well of Lycopolis. The vitriol and self-laceration, which often characterize these sonata pieces, give way to a worldly resignation in the Confucian-Buddhist tradition. Such ‘disengagement’ could be said to prefigure similar moments of withdrawal in Briggflatts. Chomei’s Buddhism also resonates with Bunting’s Quaker/pantheistic beliefs.

Eliot said of Pound’s Cathay that the American had ‘invented Chinese poetry for our time.’ This paper will make a number of observations regarding the editorial /poetic methodology of Bunting’s ‘Japanese’ poem and enquire as to whether Chomei acts as bridge of sorts between Pound’s Cathay and the later work of poets such as Gary Snyder and Robert Hass as well as British poets such as Kenneth White, whose writing feeds into what has been described as ‘The Cold Mountain School’.

Richard Parker, ‘Two Poundian Essay Collections’
In this paper I will provide an overview, explanation and brief theorisation of a book that I have edited and which will have appeared through Shearsman Press shortly before the Modernism Now conference in June. Entitled *News from Afar: Ezra Pound and Some Contemporary British Poetries*, the volume is made up of essays and poems by various contemporary British writers and seeks to address Pound’s continuing relevance to formally innovative British poetry. I will briefly, summarising some of the critical positions prominently held in the volume, make the argument that, though these poets disagree with Pound politically and aesthetically, the American nonetheless provides a crucial model for many of today’s young and politically-motivated writers.

I will then, in more detail, address the ambivalent importance of Pound to the poetry of Keston Sutherland. Sutherland’s poem-collage ‘In Memory of Your Occult Convolutions’ (which is published in News from Afar) marks one of this generation’s most striking engagements with Pound, and I will look at this work’s status as both homage to and critique of Poundian methods and criticism, suggesting that Sutherland’s carefully argued position is emblematic of that of his peers.

5. Listening to Modernism (Room 264)

Sarah Collins (New South Wales), ‘“Political Internationalism and Personal Individualism”: Musical Futures of the Inter-War Period’

In Ralph Vaughan Williams’ noted 1934 text *National Music*, the composer seemed to forward a passionate argument for musical nationalism, which together with his compositional style and its associations, contributed to his historical alignment with British nationalism at the turn of the last century. Recent scholarship has provided a more nuanced reading of Vaughan Williams’ motivations however, including highlighting his perceptions of the humanitarian potential of English folksong and his support for a federated Europe. Indeed, the composer formulated a corollary notion of cosmopolitanism that rested upon what he described as the necessary coexistence of ‘political internationalism and personal individualism.’

At the opposite end of the political spectrum the Cambridge music scholar Edward Dent is commonly cast as an ardent internationalist. Dent’s linguistic and translational abilities, his interactions with German, French and Italian musicologists, his knowledge and dissemination of European culture in Britain, and his active fostering of Anglo-German relations during the Wars, evidenced his cosmopolitan outlook at a time when the British music press was renowned for its xenophobic tendencies. Dent contrived business opportunities for ‘destitute musicians’ in Paris during World War I to ensure that they had the ‘chance of earning their living in something like their normal way.’ He was also of course the first president of the ISCM from 1923—an organisation whose establishment during the inter-war period capitalised upon the notion that music could act as a ‘common language’ between warring nations—a notion that Vaughan Williams explicitly rejected in his writings.

While in literary studies a great deal of powerful theorising has issued from studies into varying valuations of cosmopolitan critical practices in the work of writers such as Charles Dickens, Matthew Arnold and George Eliot for example, the writings of composers and competing notions of musical innovation have so far been largely absent from these discussions. Drawing from and extending this work, this paper will examine the complex manifestation of cosmopolitan and nationalist practices in debates about the state of modern
music and the future of music during the inter-war period in the historical and critical writings of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Edward Dent.

Catherine Clay (Nottingham Trent), “‘Contextual Modernism’: Christopher St John’s Music, Theatre and Film Criticisms in the Feminist Weekly *Time and Tide*’

In a recent essay on ‘Modernist Music’, Simon Shaw-Miller advances the concepts ‘formal modernism’ and ‘contextual modernism’ to differentiate between ‘two streams’ of modernism, ‘both generated from music’. The first sees modernist music as ‘a paradigm of abstract formal techniques’ and the second regards it as ‘a powerful multi-sensory or multidimensional model’. Shaw-Miller’s contention is that although formal modernism became the dominant model for the first half of the twentieth century, contextual modernism (which later became equated with postmodernism) ‘was always bubbling under dominant views of modernist culture’, destabilizing from the beginning modernism’s more exclusionary narratives. (*Oxford Handbook of Modernisms*, pp. 604-605)

This paper will take up the concept of ‘contextual modernism’ in an exploration of the contributions made to *Time and Tide* by one of its regular staff writers Christopher St. John (née Christabel Gertrude Marshall). St. John wrote regular music and theatre criticisms for *Time and Tide* from 1920-1930, and was almost certainly the contributor of a feature on film which ran from 1924 to 1926 and was published under a pseudonym. At once echoing Walter Pater’s famous assertion that ‘all art constantly aspires to the condition of music’, St. John’s reviews resist formalist definitions of that condition as absolute and abstract. With reference to the ideas of authorship, creativity, impersonality and tradition in T. S. Eliot’s early literary criticism, I will argue that St. John pursues a feminist cultural agenda in *Time and Tide*’s pages that radically destabilizes the forces of formal modernism asserted in this decade.

Edward King (Yale), ‘Nationalising Aesthetics: George Orwell’s Radio Medicine’

John Reith wrote in a 1925 memorandum that “the printed world has failed... It is left for Broadcasting to effect something which no other agency has done in the past, something which may not be far from saving civilization.” For Reith radio broadcasting embodied a reinvigoration of the enlightenment fantasies of print and the civilizational fantasies of imperialism. The infrastructure of the airwaves provided a powerful metaphor for a fully integrated and spatially cohesive model of imperial governance and Western culture. In this paper I explore the afterlife of this fantasy, attending to George Orwell’s radio career. I pay particular attention to Orwell’s radio magazine *Voice*, as well as his essay “Poetry and the Microphone” in which the fantasies of attention that could be secured by radio become imagined as a means through which to culturally reinvigorate aesthetic character. By imagining literary broadcasting as “a dose of medicine” for a sickly national subject, Orwell figures radio as an inoculation against the decline of the nation’s aesthetic sensibility. I argue that Orwell’s radio career was characterized by an attempt to reimagine the aesthetic and social cohesion of the nation state in the light of the changing geographies of late empire, and the emergence of the postwar welfare state. I conclude that we can read these cultural reformulations as articulating a pronounced shift away from the “metropolitan perception” of high modernism towards a new idea of national culture.
Arnulf Christian Mattes (Oslo), ‘Adorno, Schoenberg, Kolisch: Modernism, Performance and the Aesthetics of Resistance’

Whilst modern performance practice has got increasing attention as a generic style of musical performance emerging during the early twentieth-century, the notion of a more specific modernist performance style still lacks an appropriate scholarly assessment. This paper seeks to address the construction of a specific modernistic style of musical performance, featured in the performance theories of the extended Schoenberg school. As the practitioners of a modernist aesthetics of resistance, the performers belonging to the Schoenberg school constructed an idiom which understands itself as a ‘progressive’ mode of expression, in opposition to both the contemporary-romantic and the anti-romantic-objectivist currents of performance practice. Drawing on a deeper conceptual understanding of the intricate relationship between ideology, theory, and practice the modernist idiom emerged from, some excerpts from the recordings by the violinist Rudolf Kolisch shall illustrate how modernist ideas informed the musicians interpretive choices, stylistic strategies, and idiomatic habits. Kolisch, not least due to his intimate knowledge of both Arnold Schoenberg and Theodor W. Adorno’s theories of performance, achieved a prominent position among the group of committed performers dedicating their careers to the interpretation and dissemination of modern music during the first half of twentieth century.

6. Modernism and Ireland (Room 246)

Francis Hutton-Williams, ‘The Problem of Irish Modernism’

This paper moves away from the modernism / nationalism binary that has structured so much recent literary criticism by challenging interpretations of ‘Irish modernism’. It draws attention instead to the social dynamics of religion, provincialism and censorship in the Irish Free State (1922-37). The paper develops the concept of an ‘avant-garde’ in reaction to these conditions, considering how poetic experiments of the 1930s challenge the lyric as a versifying form after Irish independence. Surveying patterns of dissent within the pages of literary periodicals, I discuss the work of three poets – Denis Devlin, Samuel Beckett and Thomas McGreevy – who placed themselves on a social periphery that was antagonistic to neo-Revivalist traditions within the national culture, the consecration of which had achieved a ceremonial status in the public mind. I highlight instances of this cultural divide with a selection of examples taken from Denis Devlin’s Intercessions (1937), Samuel Beckett’s Echo’s Bones and Other Precipitates (1935) and Thomas McGreevy’s Poems (1934). The paper reads these poems alongside essays of cultural opinion that were published in Ireland’s ‘little magazines’: a forum in which the period’s literary and political antagonisms most visibly intersect.

Graham MacPhee (West Chester), ‘Hermeneutics of Illegibility: State and Nation in the Cyclops Episode of Ulysses’

“In the course of this duration, the concrete realities rise up before the eyes of the beholder all the more distinctly the more they die out in the world.”

—Walter Benjamin, “Goethe’s Elective Affinities” (1919–22)

In a characteristically ungrounded modernist move, Walter Benjamin deployed the very temporal ruin or decay of the text as a heuristic for charting its renewed aesthetic and semantic potential. But while
Benjamin’s hermeneutics of illegibility may be attractive when it comes to individually-based aesthetic experience, what kind of purchase does it have for the collective and more historically situated categories of politics?

In this paper I explore this question by looking at the Cyclops episode of Ulysses. The Cyclops episode has proven particularly amenable for retrospective political construction, first in the 1960s and 1970s for liberal humanist criticism and then in the 1980s and 1990s for postcolonial critics. In each case, the politics of Joyce’s text is seen to revolve around the nation, either as a critique of ethno-nationalism or in its ability to reimagine the homogeneity of the nation as heterogeneous and open. But the element that has remained stubbornly resistant to these readings is the way that the text connects its figuring of the nation with a consideration the state, a pairing of state and nation that troubles the ease of such retrospective reading and points to a more difficult and rebarbative political vision. I argue that this more fraught conception of state and nation both recalls an overlooked discourse of state and nation in decolonizing Ireland and anticipates the neoliberal predicament of post-imperial politics.

Emma Zimmerman (Nottingham), “‘Chairs standing round dejectedly”: Vital Matter and the Modernist Impulse in Elizabeth Bowen’s The Last September’

Elizabeth Bowen’s The Last September (1929) is a novel indebted to the realist tradition and the conventions of the Anglo-Irish Big House novel. However, it also displays striking affinities with the High Modernists, in its negotiation of human consciousness and the dynamic relationship between humans and the material world. This paper traces out the modernist impulses in Bowen’s novel by focusing specifically on her representation and articulation of domestic architecture and objects. In order to extend criticism that notes the ‘literary animism’ in Bowen’s work (Inglesby 2007: 306), I employ Jane Bennett’s recent theory of vital materialism, which posits ‘the capacity of things […] not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own’ (2010: viii).

Undertaking close readings of Bowen’s novel, I show how architecture and objects operate as vital forces at both the level of theme and form. I argue that the materiality of the Big House not only determines the psychological life of Bowen’s yearning protagonist, Lois Farquar, but also usurps her agency so as to trap her within the domestic traditions of the Ascendancy class. Providing detailed textual analysis, I also demonstrate the ways in which Bowen stylistically represents these material propensities through the use of syntactic anthropomorphism. Ultimately, this paper positions Bowen in a specifically modernist context, arguing that The Last September is an intriguing and under-acknowledged example of twentieth-century literary innovation.

7. Woolf Now 1 (Room 349)

Theodore Koulouris (Brighton), ‘The Elasticity of Outsiders – Three Guineas and the Politics of Negativity’

Virginia Woolf’s Three Guineas, a seminal modernist text, presents readers with a challenge, focused not on the opening question supposedly posed to the imaginary narrator – how to best prevent war – but rather on the narrator’s seeming inability to proffer a credible, realisable answer. From Q.D. Leavis’s early negative review to more favourable, recent analyses concentrating on Woolf’s extended pacifist circle as the intellectual rubric
through which TG ought to be explored, the text itself appears, on a surface level, as a tract in prevarication peppered with supra-textual reservations about Woolf’s social status and commitment to a Victorian (almost) notion of liberalism.

Without rejecting the objections raised by empirical, socio-political approaches, and expanding on the 2004 analysis advanced by Naomi Black, this paper will read TG in terms of its wholesale rejection of the social, political and economic structures which promote and sustain inequality, injustice and, of course, armed conflict. Specifically, I argue that the elasticity Woolf explicitly attaches to ‘the society of outsiders’ implies not a ‘flight’ from reality (to recall Showalter), but a radical break with nominalism – ‘liberty’, ‘patriotism’, ‘feminism’ – at whose altar millions are sacrificed.

In radically externalising such hostility, TG foreshadows the contemporary re-emergence of negativity as a credible socio-cultural stance and political option, and compounds the continuing relevance of modernist tradition in contemporary culture. I will conclude that the only affirmation that Woolf advances in TG is the top-to-bottom rejection of the perennial political structures that breed inequality and conflict.

Elizabeth Brunton (Queen Mary), ‘Woolf’s Teenage Daughters’

If childhood was a Victorian invention, adolescence belongs to the twentieth century. The teenager – struggling with emotional angst and the formation of identity – comes centre-stage after the second world war, however, this troubled and drifting character is nascent in modernist fiction. In this paper, I examine the daughters in Woolf’s To The Lighthouse, and Mrs Dalloway, showing the nurturing, yet oppressive influences of their mothers and the inability of the fathers to understand their needs in this new age for women.

Elizabeth Dalloway is at her happiest with her dog or finding independence on the bus; her lack of interest in gloves and parties leaves her outside of her mother’s comprehension. Mrs Ramsay’s domesticity, beauty, and evangelical belief in marriage prove fatal to Prue, however, while the younger daughters are released after her death, this release is no more than a setting adrift. These young women are left in limbo; Nancy struggles with the domesticity Mr Ramsay expects of her, while surly, lagging Cam is left to fight ‘the tyrant’ alone as her brother is reconciled to their father. Elizabeth’s final appearance in Mrs Dalloway, where she is judged by her approving father to be a ‘lovely girl’, suggests that ultimately she will be subsumed into the world she longs to escape. In Nancy Ramsay, playing God at a rock pool then terrified by her own impotence, we can see the struggle of these young women with the limits of their identity, power and gender.

Patricia McManus (Brighton), ‘Feminist or Female Subject? Virginia Woolf’s Modernism’

This paper will use the relationship between Virginia Woolf’s style and her politics in the essays which comprise Three Guineas to assess the political legacy of her modernism. It will create an argument that Woolf’s commitment to a fractured liberalism pushes her away from any commitment to a ‘feminism’ which could produce a political agent.

Generations of feminist scholars have construed Woolf’s modernism – in particular her style of writing – as indicative or constitutive of a radical politics. This paper will note the limits of this interpretation, and will conclude by relating Woolf’s will-to-liberalism to the current ideal subject of neo-liberalism.
Given the centrality of Woolf’s work to our understanding of modernism in English and/or European modernism, this work is an important site for any reassessment of modernism, and in particular for a re-evaluation of the political possibilities of modernist subjectivities.

Maggie Humm (East London), ‘Visual Modernisms: Critical Issues and Virginia Woolf’
It is now an accepted commonplace that modernity witnessed a transformation in technologies of the visual and that cinema and photography offered new ways of thinking about perception and identity. In the last decade a plethora of approaches to the visual and modernism have developed in literary studies of modernism. The paper will first assess these key themes and approaches of the last decade in terms of their contribution to understandings of modernism, and then consider Virginia Woolf’s writings about the visual as an example of visual modernisms.

Virginia Woolf is one of the foremost visual modernists of the twentieth century. Woolf frequently uses a vocabulary drawn from the arts, the Woolf’s Hogarth Press taught Woolf the graphic arts, and the Woolfs published many books about the visual from art to cinema. Throughout her life, Woolf wrote about exhibitions, was an avid photographer, and compiled scrapbooks as preparation for Three Guineas. She wrote the first British essay about avant-garde film.

Using Woolf as a case study, the paper will examine the main features of Woolf’s essays about the visual, and sketch out some of the problematics of visual studies.

8. Periodical Spaces (Room G22)
Alyssa Mackenzie (CUNY Graduate Center), ‘Anxious Publicity: Rethinking Ulysses, The Little Review, and Female Display’
The Little Review’s most famous issue published the conclusion of the “Nausicaa” episode of James Joyce’s Ulysses, and led to one of the most famous acts of literary censorship in Anglophone literature. The resulting ban revealed an anxiety that encompassed not only Gerty McDowell, Leopold Bloom, and Ulysses, but the wider phenomenon of women in public for visual consumption and its attendant issues of power, gender, and sexuality. Scholars have tended to view this anxiety as imposed upon The Little Review by prudish external forces, an attack by restrictive cultural values on the free-thinking avant-garde. Concurrently (and, I argue, not coincidentally), scholars have also tended to focus on the offending portion of Ulysses, and have largely neglected the material that originally accompanied it. In this paper, I consider the challenged portion of Ulysses in the context of its first publication. In doing so, I complicate the critical assumption that The Little Review was simply a victim of cultural anxieties about woman in public irrationally aggravated by a single scene of male-on-female voyeurism. If we look beyond Ulysses in the July-August 1920 issue of The Little Review we find that this problem of gazing man and gazed-upon woman, with all of its attendant anxiety, at the heart of multiple pieces. Reading the issue as a whole reveals that Joyce’s work forms part of a larger dialogue about the modern woman and the male gaze, allowing us to re-evaluate the place of both The Little Review and Ulysses in their cultural landscape.
Alex Runchman (Trinity College Dublin), “‘Only Social Credit could have produced this poet’: The Publication of Ezra Pound’s ‘Alfred Venison’ Poems in *New English Weekly*”

Between February 1 and October 25, 1934, Ezra Pound published a series of poems under the pseudonym ‘Alfred Venison’ for A. R. Orage’s *New English Weekly*, a journal that explicitly promoted C. H. Douglas’s theories of social credit. These ‘bits’ (as Pound liked to call them) have been almost entirely disregarded. James J Wilhelm pays more attention than most in condemning their unconvincing dialect and over-apparent doggerel, but underestimates the ways in which their simultaneously parodic and satirical impetuses might align them with his more universalizing critiques of ‘usura’ in the *Cantos*. Acknowledging the ways in which Pound/Venison defines his modernity by lampooning Tennyson and Kipling, this paper argues that to read these poems within their original newspaper context goes a long way toward mitigating their apparent triviality, also suggesting Pound’s comfort with, and manipulations of, his medium. Venison initially appears too illiterate an Everyman to be much of a modernist, but the disguise enabled Pound to take shots at co-contributors who were largely hostile toward literary modernism. By placing these poems at the centre of a tryst between Pound and J. L. Beever’s—whose *New English Weekly* review and correspondences scoffed at Pound’s *Active Anthology*—I argue that Pound’s ability to write to the moment (not just for eternity) should be as central to our sense of his modernity as his more canonical works.

Natalie Ferris (Oxford), “‘from song to the centre of energy’: Spatialisme in England”

In the same year that his little-known ‘abstract’ poetry collection *Worte sagen aus* (1962) was published, Herbert Read was commissioned to write an article for *Encounter*, entitled, ‘What is There Left to Say?’ As an assessment of ‘what the writer has actually become’, burdened by the demands of the state, wearied by the ravages of war and faced with a new ‘technological civilisation’, for the first time Read sounds the knell for the poet and the contemporary literary arts: ‘The poet has become an anachronism. He does not possess even the entertainment value of a clown. His verse is read by a diminishing number of fellow-poets, and the Arts Council and the BBC present him with a few leaves of artificial laurel. Solemnly to entertain the idea of a poetic career is an absurdity. Let us dismiss it’, before we ‘retreat into despair, silence or some “Dirt-dump” like *Finnegans Wake*’.

In the same year, on the other side of the channel, the French poet Pierre Garnier announced a ‘new poetry’ under his ‘Revue du spatialisme’. This paper will reconcile Herbert Read’s reluctance to engage with a cultural and literary landscape he no longer recognised, it all of its ‘adolescent pruriency’ and ‘beatnikery’, and his appropriation by Pierre Garnier’s nascent *avant-garde* poetic movement, Spatialisme, and its British proponents John Furnival, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Dom Sylvester Houédard and Edwin Morgan. As POETYPGRAPHER Houédard was to remark in a personal letter to Read, ‘I just need a fiction like you to work ideas out in front of –no?’

9. Beckett after Modernism (Room 349)

Conor Carville (Reading), ‘Beckett, Modernism and the Romantic Image’

Frank Kermode’s ‘Romantic Image’ argues, amongst other things, for the importance of a particular form of the image in his account of modernist poetics. The idea of a poetic image that is concrete and autonomous,
grasped directly rather than filtered through language, is tracked through a number of writers including Eliot, Yeats and Hulme. As suggested by the title of the book Kermode traces this concern back to the Romantics, and to Coleridge in particular, arguing for a profound continuity between Romantic and Modernist aesthetics.

This paper will extend some of Kermode’s observations to Samuel Beckett’s work, looking at Kermode’s three core examples of the Romantic Image: the tree, the dancer and in particular the death’s head. Beginning with an account of Beckett’s notion of the concretely apprehended ‘symbol of itself’ in his essay on Proust, and also his approach to Racine in the TCD lectures, I will demonstrate how Beckett’s early criticism comes very close to the position outlined by Kermode, although his sources serve to contextualise that outline in interesting ways. I will then go on to examine several examples of Beckett’s use of the death’s head and allied images in his work of the 1930s. This section will finish by considering a key passage from Adorno’s ‘Trying to Understand Endgame’ where Beckett’s onstage deployment of the death’s head is discussed. Reading Kermode with Adorno, I will set out the key transformations of the Romantic image in Beckett’s post-war writing.

Finally I will turn to the late plays and prose in an attempt to sketch Beckett’s inheritance of, and more importantly his departure from, the Romantic Image, and in doing so suggest some of the issues at stake in his relationship with Modernism itself.

Daniela Caselli (Manchester), ‘Insufferable Beckett: The Unbearable Archive’

Manuscripts have always been important in Beckett studies, but the high volume of archival material currently published indicates their unprecedented cultural validation, which mirrors the centrality of this branch of research in contemporary modernist studies. But what do we do with those elements in the archive that embarrass biographers and appear of very limited interest to scholars – of a genetic persuasion or otherwise?

In this paper I am planning to look at the Pamela Mitchell correspondence with Samuel Beckett as recently donated to the Reading International Foundation by Mitchell herself. A small portion of the correspondence referring to Beckett’s work has been published in the Letters, but when read in its entirety the very personal exchange between Beckett and Mitchell raises uneasy questions and certainly makes for uncomfortable reading.

Moving from intimacy to polite distance, these letters trace a familiar trajectory from short-lived love affair in Paris to courteous occasional exchanges across the Atlantic. The way in which tenderness and distance take shape in these letters seems to leave little space for anything other than a gesture of helpless compassion on the part of a reader feeling like prying into something not meant for public consumption.

What do we make of a bereaved Beckett admitting to Mitchell, who was back in Paris, that he is very fond of her but does not love anyone? Perhaps we can feed it back into the infernally familiar love triangle, as Play does? Or accept it as the sign of a Beckett who is simply human after all? And on a cultural level, how do we interpret the fact that Mitchell not only kept the whole correspondence, but also made it public, thus running the risk of being read either as a victim or as wanting to reclaim privileged access to Beckett? What do we do with this unbearable archive without falling into moralistic or voyeuristic positions? Wouldn’t it be better to just politely ignore the whole thing (as done so far)?

These, the paper will contend, are relevant questions to pose at a moment in time in which critical theory grapples with formulations of affect. The paper will interrogate the unbearable and intractable status of
this correspondence as an object in Beckett criticism and will analyse it as a case study to rethink the role of the archive in modernism now.

Dan O'Hara (Birmingham City), ‘Beckett, Acceleration and the Ruin of Language’

E. M. Cioran's analyses of decay in style and the novel, written before the period of his acquaintance with Beckett, outlined a series of literary-historical tensions unresolved either by the classicism of modernist expression or by a mid-20th century return to the ideals of romanticism. Cioran's admiration of Beckett's works, and Beckett's initial reciprocation, indicates less an intellectual rapport between the two writers than a mutual appreciation of the importance of technique.

Though seldom acknowledged as such, both writers were at least as influential as Deleuze, Nietzsche, or Ballard upon accelerationist thinking and writing, from its early-90s cyberpositive expressions to its current prominence in political theory. The difference between Beckett’s and Cioran’s influence is key to a full understanding of current accelerationism, particularly as the movement’s present enthusiasts largely disregard both its aesthetic origins, and the more general role aesthetics have played in the shaping of ideologies.

Beckett's stylistic 'solutions' to historical and conceptual impasses - techniques focused on tempo and duration, hiatus, elision, the speeding up or slowing down of language - whilst as important an influence upon accelerationist texts as Cioran's philosophical nihilism, are not in themselves philosophically 'neutral' techniques. This paper describes those influences, in order to illustrate how the ideological division that presently troubles accelerationism so much is an artefact of ignoring Beckett's originary accelerationist maxim - 'Fail again. Fail better' - as an aesthetic corrective to the absolute nihilism of Cioran's Untergangspornophilosophie.

David Tucker (Chester), ‘Beckett, Pinter and Modernist Lineage’

This paper explores the professional and friendly relationship between Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter, taking a twin-tracked historiographical and comparative approach. Pinter and Beckett remained in close contact between 1960 and 1988, with Beckett often commenting on Pinter's plays (their texts and how aspects of them might be best presented onstage). The extensive collection of material on Pinter held at the British Library, which includes around forty letters from Beckett to Pinter, as well as other collections such as the recently acquired Martin Esslin Papers at the University of Oxford, help historicize this fascinating relationship. Such material allows us to look into the nature of the mentoring role Beckett held for the younger Pinter, and also informs the question of how much in Beckett’s shadow Pinter felt his work to be.

The two writers shared many things – a love of Proust and cricket as well as Nobel awards not least among them – yet their divergences are of a particularly intriguing nature. The paper addresses questions of how validly aspects of Pinter’s work might be characterized as poised between late-Modernist European avant-garde and British realist theatrical traditions, and how Pinter put his playwriting to the service of a much more explicitly political mindset than Beckett ever did.

10. In and Out of the Margins (Room G26)

In 1956 John Middleton Murry remarked: I have the feeling that I have been completely outside the main stream of literature: that I don’t ‘belong’ and indeed never have belonged.” He considered himself a “moralist” and had the feeling that his “concern” was shared in the old days by Lawrence and by Katherine, “which set them apart, “absolutely, from the Bloomsburies”. He considered himself “the sole remaining representative of our particular integrity, our particular concern, and insisted that they “were all socially outsiders, quite without the social and domestic tradition” of the “Bloomsburies”. Although Katherine Mansfield’s significance to the development of literary modernism is by now critically accepted, in part by the arguments I made in Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction (1991), and the complexities of D. H. Lawrence’s responses to modernism even more broadly investigated, the contributions of Murry (1889-1957), as writer, critic, and editor, need to be brought back into the critical discussion after years of negative publicity. The recent acquisitions of Murry’s unpublished journals and other papers by the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, New Zealand, have opened up a considerable resource for modernist scholars. By making use of these journals, I found it possible to complicate the arguments of earlier biographers and critics about his personal and professional relationships with Katherine Mansfield and D. H. Lawrence, which resulted in my recent book: Circulating Genius. John Middleton Murry, Katherine Mansfield and D.H. Lawrence (2010). By using Murry as the fulcrum of an investigation of the development of modernism in Britain during the first quarter of the twentieth-century, the boundaries of modernism itself begin to shift. New participants enter the conversation and the pressures of literary politics make for some unusual alliances. The issue of marginality becomes a motivating force, not only in its dimensions of class, gender, and nationality, but in relation to dominant critical positions and socially “fashionable” styles of discourse.

Patrick Jeffrey (Kent), ‘John Middleton Murry: The Romantic Modernist’

Frequently ignored or even ridiculed in contemporary discussions of Modernism, John Middleton Murry made a significant contribution to the circulation of Modernist ideas, art and literature as editor of Rhythm and the Athenaeum, publishing Woolf, Eliot, Lawrence and his wife Katherine Mansfield among others. But in 1922, when he began editing the journal Adelphi, he pursued an explicitly Romantic agenda, focused around totemic author-heroes such as Keats, Chekhov, Hardy, Dostoevsky and most significantly, Jesus, who Murry saw as a great poet. This was literature with what he called, “significance for life”, in contrast to the “exhibitions of formlessness” he criticised in Joyce and Proust. Eliot, then editor of the Criterion, positioned his Classicism in direct opposition to Murry’s Romanticism in a series of antagonistic editorials, and as Eliot’s critical standing became more canonical, Murry faded from view.

This paper will assess what significance Murry’s work has for current scholarship in Modernism and particularly whether his omission from the canon serves to present a more simplified, reductive vision of the period as a reaction against 19th Century Romanticism. I will argue that if we are to see Modernism not as a single movement but a collection of diverse and complex Modernisms, then we must include discussions of Murry’s personalised, “inner voice” criticism as an essential counterpoise to the “impersonality” of Eliot and
Pound. With Eliot’s style the dominant mode, I will also aim to show the worth of Murry’s intuitional response for the modern critic.

Leslie de Bont (Sorbonne Nouvelle / Nantes), “‘But little is known of this very curious & interesting animal’: (Re)discovering May Sinclair’s Modernism through Her Theoretical Writing’

May Sinclair (1863-1946) was a novelist, but she was also Suffragette, a scholar in philosophy and psychology, a “sceptical” member of the Society for Psychical Research and a keen critic of the imagist movement. Her biography thus encapsulates the history of early modernism; yet, her fiction does not quite fit in with the stylistic experimentations of the high-modernist canon and her novels are today largely forgotten.

Along with the newly founded May Sinclair Society, this paper calls for a renewal in Clairian studies and investigates the influence of Sinclair’s theoretical writings on her fiction. It argues that Sinclair’s neglect is caused by a very specific dialogue between her fiction and her non-fiction, which necessitates new interpretative tools. Sinclair’s fictional representations of her philosophical, psychological, feminist and aesthetic reflections are often interdisciplinary (e.g. her pantheistic understanding of the term libido or her neo-idealist interpretation of sublimation) and invite a new type of reading experience, as they are supported by unique narrative devices (such as the second-person narrative in Mary Olivier: A Life).

This paper will thus address the Clairian hybridization of the fictional with the theoretical as a peculiar form of early modernism. It will show how Sinclair singularizes her characters in the manner of the psychoanalytical case-histories of her time and thus participates in the modernist shift of paradigm, through her own scientific aesthetics of uncertainty. It will also provide an analysis of Sinclair’s innovative experimentations with the fictional reading contract.

11. Modernism Outdoors (Room 261)

Benjamin Poore (Queen Mary), ‘Why Leonard Bast Had to Be Killed’

At the end of E.M. Forster’s Howards End, the poor clerk Leonard Bast is killed by a sudden heart attack and a pile of falling books. Why did Leonard Bast have to die? In this paper I follow Jacques Rancière and argue that Bast, like Emma Bovary, tries to blur the boundaries of art and life, a gesture characteristic of what Rancière terms the “aesthetic regime of art”. This paper examines Bast’s attempts to experiment with new forms of life: reading poetry, writing like Ruskin, and “tramping”. These moments are part of a process of emancipation that is “polemical verification of equality”, a verification that is furthermore “necessarily intermittent and precarious”. It is, as we read in Howards End, the moment of a “quick interchange” in which “a new light dawn[s]”. Bast’s efforts are an attempt to seize back the shattered hours of his evenings and to use the aesthetic to disrupt the given distribution of the sensible, which assigns Bast a particular social and economic place, and excludes from participation in politics as such.

The Schlegels hope to teach Bast what it means to experience culture: for this reason I argue that the novel is, at its heart, about pedagogy, and that it must be read with respect to Forster’s own institutional commitments as an educator. My reading offers some resistance to approaches to the novel (John Carey,
Jonathan Rose) that target it for embodying Forster’s elitism and his hatred of a mass reading public coming to culture for the first time. For such readers, Bast is killed because he expresses Forster’s anxieties about challenges to the haute bourgeois ownership of culture. But by examining Forster’s teaching and his work in adult education, this paper offers an alternative vision of the relationship of politics and aesthetics in his imagination.

Helena Bonett (Royal College of Art/Tate), ‘Modernism Preserved: Experiencing Anachronism at the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden’

‘It’s like she’s just left the room.’ Visitors to the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden in St Ives, Cornwall, often make this knowing anachronism, full of the heady pleasure of suspended disbelief, as they look into the modernist sculptor’s preserved studios. The museum as a whole is full of chronological inconsistency; one room, for example, reconstructs, to quote the original guidebook, ‘something of the feeling Trewyn Studio had in the 1950s when the artist was living and working there’, while the preserved studios display a calendar fixed with the date of Hepworth’s death: 20 May 1975.

These temporal dislocations contrast with the largely chronological interpretation of Hepworth’s career, such as in her own Pictorial Autobiography (1970), the archive display in the museum, and in an upcoming Tate Britain retrospective. In contrast, I will argue that for many visitors the experience of the museum is a charged engagement with modernist heritage that encourages a nostalgic conflation of past and present.

The artist Linder Sterling, currently engaged in making work responding to Hepworth’s legacy, is collaborating with a perfumier to create a Hepworth scent – using fragrances from the garden, from tobacco and whisky amongst the studio clutter. Is it possible that this aroma might stimulate a Proustian sensory connection to a modernist past? Might we consider modernist legacy as a kind of haunting in which unresolved concerns return to upset the flow of time? In this paper, I will navigate these varied anachronisms, charting how Hepworth’s modernist legacy is perceived today.


E.M. Forster’s play England’s Pleasant Land (1940) was first performed at Milton Court, Surrey, in 1938, and was written for the Dorking and Leith Hill District Preservation Society. It used the form of a traditional pageant play in order to portray a summarised history of England’s landscape, and to persuade the audience to keep this landscape from being developed. The script was published with the Hogarth Press in 1940, and it subsequently influenced Virginia Woolf’s last novel Between the Acts (1942). This paper will amount to the first detailed comparison of these two works, and will argue that together they present a unique insight into the role of environmentalism in late literary modernism.

The talk will place a particular emphasis on the concept of preservation, and explore how both writers depict an association between the process of preserving rural landscapes, and that of ‘preserving’ the world through the written word. While Forster’s text suggests that landscapes can be preserved in reality and replicated through art, Woolf presents the landscape as constantly changing, unpredictable and impossible to control. Both writers explore this concept through the character of the author or storyteller, who has the
futile but necessary task of communicating the essence of the landscape to its inhabitants. Woolf and Forster’s representations of environmental activism and authorship are indicative of a particular historical and cultural moment, and offer an insight into a chapter of modernist history that resonates with present day concerns.

12. Legacies: 21st-century Modernism and Beyond (Beveridge Hall)
Steven Matthews (Reading), ‘T. S. Eliot’s Coriolan, and Geoffrey Hill’s’

Geoffrey Hill has variously of late repeated a startling claim that it is T.S. Eliot’s failure to complete his religio-political sequence of the early 1930s, Coriolan, that lies behind subsequent poets’ inability to mount a sustained political poetics. This paper will review the political implication of Eliot’s maimed poem, in order the better to weigh Hill’s implication that, putatively, it offered a mediational prospect between the Fascist poetics of Pound’s Cantos, and the Stalinism of Hugh MacDiarmid’s epics in English. More particularly, the paper will attempt to grapple with something of the omnipresence of Coriolan in Hill’s thought, and in the drafts of his poems in the notebooks at Leeds, from at least the mid-1990s onwards. Box 1 of the index cards towards drafting Scenes from Comus, for example (BC MS Hill/1/14/1) opens with ‘CORIOLAN’ written on the first card, and later lists Eliot’s title amongst an array of seeming titles for Hill’s own book in the making. My paper will therefore draw upon the archive as a way of signalling a seeming haunting omnipresence of Eliot’s text behind Hill’s recent political interventionism, but, more importantly, behind the framing of his late poetics. This extends down to the outrageous role Coriolan plays as protagonist in the recent Daybooks (2013). The paper will, therefore, speak to the proposed topic of ‘modernism as a continuing event’, to measure a pragmatic revisiting of a modernist fragment against its redeployment in a contemporary’s late poetry.

Neil Levi (Drew), ‘21st Century Modernism and the Problem of Value’

This paper examines two contemporary projects that claim fidelity to modernism: the conceptual poet Kenneth Goldsmith’s 2011 Uncreative Writing and Helen DeWitt’s 2000 novel, The Last Samurai. Both are clearly inconceivable without the precedent of high modernism, and both explicitly appeal to high modernists to situate their own work: Goldsmith to Duchamp and Benjamin, DeWitt to Schoenberg. I critique Goldsmith’s appeal to high modernism as fundamentally conservative and laud DeWitt’s as fundamentally emancipatory. The argument rests on an implicit distinction between exhibiting fidelity to the institution of modernism and fidelity to the event of modernism.

Mary Horgan (King’s College London), ‘About Change: Ali Smith’s Numismatic Modernism’

Many modernist writers demonstrate a fascination with money. Ali Smith – a contemporary modernist - is no exception. Her works interrogate what it means to exist in a world driven by the profit motive, as well as playfully exploring money’s creative and political potential. The Global Hotel, the claustrophobic setting of Smith’s Hotel World (2001), is a space of social and physical exclusion, composed of and gripped by the money form. Like the Bonaventure Hotel theorised by Fredric Jameson, it poses no resistance to the commercial sign-system in which it is situated. Within this late capitalist microcosm, though, coins are rendered uncannily present, arising as an unlikely oppositional force, or alternative language. Circulating in unusual and incongruous ways, misused and repurposed, they are held in the mouth, shared through kissing,
collected on the carpet, and bundled down a disused dumb waiter shaft. In this paper, I trace the novel's numismatic narrative, examining the ways in which Smith taps the art potential, or art value, of the material monetary form through a series of affective, performative money rituals that work to reassert the body, space, and community – things threatened by the hotel and the cash nexus for which it stands. Ultimately, I examine whether this creative misuse can be designated modernist, and suggest a model of modernism within which Smith might be situated. I align Smith with an ongoing, unfinished, politically-engaged modernism that constructs a critical, interventional response to capitalist modernity through formal experimentation and aesthetic play.

Nick Hubble (Brunel), 'Modernism, Two Hundred and Ninety Eight Years from Now: 2312'

In 2009, Kim Stanley Robinson generated media interest with an article in the New Scientist criticising the ‘ignorant’ judges of the Booker Prize for neglecting science fiction: ‘the best British literature of our time’. In contradistinction to the currently favoured historical novels, he argued that SF was about ‘now’ in the way that modernism had once been. He backed this up by referring to the correspondence between Virginia Woolf and Olaf Stapledon and arguing that ‘Between the Acts ... ends with Stapledonian imagery, describing our species steeped in the eons. Woolf’s last pages were a kind of science fiction.’ Apart from being a former PhD student of Fredric Jameson’s, Robinson is also a leading SF writer and, as if to show his claim about Woolf was not just journalistic hyperbole, his 2012 novel 2312 is clearly an attempt to show that, at least some, SF is modernism’s successor: the most clear-cut form of modernism now.

This paper investigates this implicit claim by analysing 2312 in terms of its intertextual references to Marcel Proust’s À la recherche du temps perdu (1913-27) and (among others) Samuel Delany’s Dhalgren (1975) and Charles Stross’s Accelerando (2005); and its structural similarities to John Dos Passos’s USA (1930-36). While USA includes numbered ‘Newsreel’ and ‘The Camera Eye’ sections interspersed between its narrative, 2312 includes numbered ‘Lists,’ ‘Extracts,’ and ‘Quantum Walks’ in its narrative. In analysing these elements, this paper will discuss some possible futures of modernism in terms of one its most overlooked legacies: SF.

13. Questions of Periodisation (Room 264)
Margery Palmer McCulloch (Glasgow), “‘Caught in the Whirlwind of Modern Thought”: Edwin Muir, Zeitgeist and Jetztzeit”

Edwin Muir’s We Moderns, from which this abstract’s title quotation is taken, is a collection of short aphoristic essays which first appeared as a series in A. R. Orage’s New Age, before publication in book form in 1918, and with an American edition introduced by A.L. Mencken following in 1920. Although Muir himself later dismissed the collection as immature and over-influenced by Nietzsche, the book is distinguished for its capacity to communicate both the ‘nowness’ of the new modern age and its author’s simultaneous struggle against this. This paper will explore Muir’s attitude to the new and the now not only in We Moderns but also in his 1926 collection of critical essays Transition, where he stresses – this time consciously and explicitly – his belief that the contemporary writer of importance is the one who ‘wrestles’ with the age, as opposed to attempting to escape from it or accommodate himself to it. Muir’s understanding of the ‘now’ was double-sided, an apprehension of ‘the story and the fable’, and therefore different from the historical materialist approach to
Jetztzeit put forward by Walter Benjamin. The paper will therefore additionally examine Muir’s self-confessed obsession with philosophical Time (which had little to do with the early twentieth-century fascination with speed and machine movement), and his admiration for the work of Woolf, Joyce, and (through his work as translator) Kafka, in whose writing he recognised a capacity to bring together Time’s dual nature, philosophically as well as formally.

James Underwood (Hull), ‘Philip Larkin, Derek Walcott and the Boundaries of Modernism’

Although written in very different contexts, the similarities between Philip Larkin’s ‘Church Going’ and Derek Walcott’s ‘Ruins of a Great House’ are remarkable: both poems make use of historical sites, and intertextuality, in order to explore issues of historical and cultural change, and the role of literature. Both poems were also composed during roughly the same time period. But the place in literary history which each poem (and, consequently, poet) has been allotted looks very different. Walcott’s poem has been seen as the product of a postcolonial writer who engages with western, Eliotic modernism. Larkin’s poem, on the other hand, was firmly associated with Movement poetics, which are largely defined as a reaction against the Eliotic brand of modernism. This paper will consider some of the reasons for that difference, but will compare the two poems in order to re-evaluate Larkin, not as a modernist writer, but rather a writer who – like Walcott – genuinely and eruditely engages with modernism. In doing so, the paper will raise questions about the boundaries of modernism (historical and geographical). It may be going too far to state that the result is a re-drawing of modernism’s periodisation, but this paper will suggest that the limits of modernism’s influence and legacy can be extended.

Jennifer Huang (Princeton), ‘Flann O’Brien’s The Third Policeman and the Relativisation of Modernism’

This paper proposes to take Flann O’Brien’s The Third Policeman as a point of entry into the issues surrounding modernism’s persistent recalcitrance in the face of repeated attempts at periodization. The twenty-seven-year gap between its completion and its publication locates the novel in the ambiguous bight of the century, somewhere between the twilight of modernism as traditionally conceived and the rise of postwar experimental fiction ripe to co-opt the work upon its publication. Text and author alike exist in a dual state of permanent anachronism and prolepsis, appropriately enough for a body of work small enough to make explicit some enduring fixations—for the purpose at hand, in particular, a wonderfully wrongheaded rendition of modernist models of atomic theory and relativity that allows postmen to become their bicycles, bicycles to become their riders, and the unnamed protagonist to return from what he believes to be a few days’ journey to terrify his partner in crime decades after his presumed death. Much of the work produced on O’Brien’s treatment of advances in twentieth-century physics suggests both a deep ambivalence on the part of the author toward the science of his day and a reluctance on the part of critics to read too much of Einstein into his novels, though for the purposes of this paper Schrödinger and his cat may be the more interesting model. I will be interested in reading this form of unresolved semi-existence and posthumous return in the wider context of the novel’s publication history and recent critical work on modernism’s afterlives in contemporary culture: How does a novel outlive itself? In what ways does The Third Policeman maneuver between the established signposts of
modernism and its successors? How (if at all) does it come to grips with its own anxieties about change and its suspicion of the impossibility thereof?

14. Image and Text (Room 246)

Cristiana Pagliarusco (Trento), ‘English Poetry Meets American Modernist Art: Charles Tomlinson and Georgia O’Keeffe’

Here I will consider the work written by British poet Charles Tomlinson (born 1927) inspired by his meeting with Modernist American artist Georgia O’Keeffe (1887-1986) in January 1963. Tomlinson’s writings are the result of a long-term fascination the poet experienced with O’Keeffe’s work, after receiving a small reproduction of her painting, The Mountain (1930), by Donald Reid on his 19th birthday. Tomlinson, an outsider in British poetry for his attraction and attention to both visual and aural perception, has been a frequent traveler to America. Influenced by the work of American contemporary poets early in his career, he has always admitted an affinity for Modernism and the Objective Tradition confessing that Modern America represented the continuing education that Cambridge had failed to provide him.

This work, articulated within visual studies and literature, analyzes a selection of Tomlinson’s poems included in his collection The Flood (1981), which contains the poem “Abiquiu” inspired by O’Keeffe, together with some excerpts from his essay “Georgia O’Keeffe: a Late Greeting” (1979). It aims at revealing how modernism still functions as a continuing aesthetic in the 21st century involving multiple disciplines, geographies and traditions. The artistic relationship between Tomlinson and O’Keeffe represents the translation and intersection of different traditions anticipating the idea of a transnational culture carried on by later artistic productions whose views towards multiculturalism and diversity confirm Neil Levi’s “idea of a contemporary perpetuation of artistic modernism”.

Carol Jane Ribi (Zurich/Berlin), ‘Ideograms and the Modernist Art to Use Words as Images’

That there is no essential difference between poetry and painting, as W.J.T. Mitchell defends in his essay “Image versus Text”, is, as I will argue, a very modernist point of view that artists have stated since the 19th century till today. Despite the famous theoretical assertions of Lessing in his Laocoon, there were and still are approaches to minimize or even overcome the differences between visual arts and literature. We can think of Stéphan Mallarmé’s Un coup de dés jamais n’abolira le hasard (1897) or William Blake’s poems in “illuminated printing” or Paul Klee’s Schöpferische Konfessionen (1920), a travel diary where he “tells” a story by merely drawing lines in allusion to Laurence Sterne’s Tristram Shandy (1761/67).

In my paper I want to discuss why we can read what we consider to be visually perceived art and why words in the shape of an image can be labeled as modernist art. Following Mitchell’s statement I try to describe the functional and structural dimension of notational forms in visual arts. My aim is to find the principles that govern the notational forms and to move the theoretical focus away from a dividing and categorizing theory towards a model of coherence of text and image always in connection to historical material and specific phenomena. In arguing that Nelson Goodmans functional approach in Languages of Art (1976) is an important but not sufficient step to explain the image-text cohesion, I suggest the ideogram, following Roland Barthes, to be the modernist concept of inter-dependence between image and writing.
Cécile Guédon (Groningen), ‘Literary Abstraction, 1890–1930’

This paper seeks to address the question of modernist “abstraction” in literary terms. I am suggesting that the concept is operating a transposition from a pictorial—and quite successful—innovation to the realm of literary experimentation during the timeframe of Modernism. I would like to show how this literary notion has been historically met with various degrees of success: while Mallarmé and Stevens invested a great deal of interest in this idea, Lewis and Stein quickly decided to give up on abstraction as a literary form, for instance, whereas Yeats consistently objected very strongly to it—although his own Four Plays for Dancers might reveal more affinity with the concept than what he seemed ready to admit. I will aim at establishing a typology, showing a gradual understanding of how truly ‘abstract’ various experiments were across three literary genres—moving from poetry with Mallarmé, ‘The Dice Throw’ (1897) and Stevens’ ‘Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird’ (1913) to drama with Lewis’ Enemy of the Stars (1914) and Yeats’ Four Plays for Dancers (1921); last, from drama to narrative with Stein, Tender Buttons (1914) followed by Woolf, To the Lighthouse (1927). I will finally propose a critical appraisal of the productive types of misunderstanding occurring between the two domains of literature and the visual/performing arts across the variegated spectrum of these experimentations in literary abstraction.

15. Woolf and… (Chancellor’s Hall)

Urvashi Vashist (UCL), ‘Critically Modern: The Non-fiction of Arundhati Roy and Virginia Woolf’

Author of the eminently successful The God of Small Things and activist Arundhati Roy can perhaps be described, most accurately, as a professional dissident. Since she won the Booker in 1997, Roy’s writing has focused almost exclusively on the failures of democracy in India and abroad, on the intentional and incidental violence of majority views, and the oppressive nature of established social structures, paradigms of thought, and ‘knowledge’. Her uncompromising polemic, commitment to political dissent, and ‘accurate description of [that] slice of reality’ which is rarely presented as any version of the ‘truth’ by politically correct or moderate littératures and journalists, have made her as thoroughly unpopular at home as she is lauded overseas.

This paper reads Roy’s consistently counter engagement with India’s ‘new modernism’, her articulation of the citizen exile through singularly interdisciplinary and stylistically controversial manifestos of resistance from The Algebra of Infinite Justice (2002) to Broken Republic (2011) as analogous with—as an enactment of—the ‘outsider’ position Virginia Woolf advocated in Three Guineas (1938). I take advantage of the textual and contextual parallels and correspondences between Roy’s and Woolf’s strategically contrary dissent to arrive at a theory of reading the critically modern. Engaging with the languages of alterity and transnationality both in Woolf and Roy and in the maps of modernism drawn around them—speaking to issues of neocolonialism in relation with Harry Sullivan’s ‘parataxic distortion’; using the concepts of planetarity and geomodernism as well as Judith Butler’s notion of recognizability— and through an epistemological discursion into modern feminisms and postfeminist modernisms, this paper examines its own participation in the proliferation of diverse, imaginative, critical modernisms.
Diane Warren (Portsmouth), ‘Woolfian Echoes in Linda Grant’s When I Lived in Modern Times and Still Here’

In this paper I will show how Linda Grant’s fiction engages with modernist cultural concerns, and that readings of Grant’s work can be most productively read in relation to the work of Virginia Woolf in especial. The concern with ethical integrity, and its relationship to aging which lies at the core of Mrs Dalloway; the interrogation of the relationship between gender and thought which underpins To The Lighthouse; the sharp sense of disparate perspectives seen in both texts, all reverberate in Grant’s When I Lived in Modern Times and Still Here in particular.

Like Mrs Dalloway, When I Lived juxtaposes the idealism of an eighteen year old with the aging woman that she has become, and poses questions about the ethical implications of the transition made. Where Mrs Dalloway pinpoints this transition against the backdrop of London 1923, When I Lived parallels the individual human struggle with the evolution of the modernist city of Tel Aviv, which is in turn positioned as the product of European modernists’ architectural imagination. Still Here is also concerned with the fate of idealism in the aging individual, and the cultural status of the aging woman in particular: Clarissa Dalloway’s sense that aging “Women must put off their rich apparel” still resonates over eighty years later. Reading Grant’s work alongside Woolf’s underscores the many modernist continuities between the texts, and intensifies the analysis of gender, aging and idealism that they all offer.

Catherine Delesalle-Nancey (Jean Moulin-Lyon 3), ‘Surviving Modernism in Michael Cunningham’s The Hours’

Michael Cunningham’s The Hours, which he himself describes as “a riff” on Virginia Woolf’s Modernist masterpiece Mrs Dalloway, begins with a prologue staging Virginia Woolf’s suicide. The whole novel therefore appears as surviving Modernism in both acceptances of the phrase: it survives the death of the Modernist author while also keeping Modernism alive. Besides, surviving is at the heart of all three plots since the three protagonists are confronted with the issue: Woolf through the decision she has to make as to the fate of her character, Mrs Dalloway – with overtly autobiographical overtones –, Laura Brown through her choice of leaving her family behind as her only means of survival, and Clarissa Vaughan surviving the death of her friend, Richard, who has somehow authored her in his novel. This paper will examine Cunningham’s own strategy of surviving, his getting rid of the authority of the Modernist writer giving way to a three-folded sharing of author-ity between writer, character and reader which mirrors current critical approaches. Surviving Modernism implies furthering its debunking of authority while paradoxically challenging its advocating impersonality for the link between the three plots clearly appears to be not only the novel Mrs Dalloway but also the author Virginia Woolf. The underlying and unifying energy sought after by Modernism, that which survives all deaths, is here provided by a figurehead of Modernism, but the latter proves to be no root but instead a rhizomic structure that questions the Platonic notion of model and copy. What seems eventually to be affirmed is the “moment of being”, the here and now that opens up into the palimpsestic dimension of time.

16. Modernist Temporalities and the Popular Front (Room 349)
John Connor (Colgate), ‘When Was the Popular Front? Raymond Williams and the Legacy of the Thirties’

So powerful remains the narrative of the 1930s as a low, red, dishonest decade brought to a close by the timely confessions of its public-school poets that it can be hard to register other durations, longer terms and later endings to the period of the Popular Front. But the social movement deserves other epitaphs and less punctual palinodes than those mobilised to meet the needs of post-war anticommunism. In this spirit I address the cultural production of Raymond Williams from his 1940 playscript, “Revolt in Rome” to People of the Black Mountains, the trilogy of “historical materialist” novels he left unfinished at his death in 1988. I do so to ask the question he once more famously asked of modernism: When Was the Popular Front?

Of modernism, Williams claimed that it had become the cultural logic of “the new conformism,” a style au fait with international capitalism and the Cold War consensus. The challenge was therefore to “search out and counterpose an alternative tradition taken from the neglected works left in the wide margin of the century.” It is this that Williams does as he engages in criticism and in his creative practice the legacy of the Popular Front. From the 1940 propaganda play, which situates an undergraduate Williams at the heart of Cambridge Socialist Club and Popular Front culture, to the posthumously published trilogy, a latecomer to the Popular Front revival of the historical novel, I chart Williams’ changing allegiances to modernist experiment and mid-century realism, and his unchanging commitment to a vision of cultural production that would restore our ability to imagine community.

Kristin Ewins (Örebro), ‘Sylvia Townsend Warner and Late Modernist Pastoral’

The quirky pseudo-allegorical novel Sylvia Townsend Warner wrote in 1938, After the Death of Don Juan, has all the ingredients of a late modernist classic: formal awareness, a problematic relationship with tradition, laughter, satire, almost pantomime. Her poet friend and sometime political ally Arnold Rattenbury called it her ‘oddest novel, and perhaps her least successful’. For Warner herself it was a favourite and one of her most personal, ‘though it appears to be quite impersonal because it’s written with an arid degree of satire’. It indirectly attacks Fascism’s inroad in Spain, and the plight of the Republican government during the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) came to preoccupy Warner more than any other political cause.

I read the novel in the context of Warner’s other fiction, non-fiction and poetry on pastoral Spain at the time of the civil war, written in quite different modes and published straight after her return from Barcelona where she’d had a stint with the Catalan Communist Party (PSUC) and taken part in the Second International Writers’ Congress in Defence of Culture in 1937. These stories, poems and articles appeared in The Countryman, Left Review, Life and Letters To-day, New Statesman and Nation and Time and Tide.

The paper makes a case for After the Death of Don Juan as a late modernist novel in which pastoral tradition, politics, satire and phoney allegory interplay, at times discordantly, to produce a strangely ambiguous and atypical leftist interpolation on the ethics of aesthetics.

Ben Harker (Manchester), “‘Hullo Stranger’: Culture, Labour and Factories in the Long Popular Front’
Searching in 1937 for a way to describe the intensifying atomisation of intellectual life under capitalism, Edgell Rickword struck upon an image that pleased him. The ‘specialisation of intellectual work’, he wrote, ‘is like the minute sub-division of the factory process.’ For Rickword as for other Popular Front figures, this modern cultural world, fragmented like a factory, was frequently conceived in terms of its natural opposite: an organically integrated pre-industrial lifeworld in which culture and labour were still one.

This paper scrutinises the Popular Front period’s sometimes surprising investment in the nation’s pre-industrial cultural past. It also recovers the processes—historical, political, theoretical, cultural—through which in a few short years these apparent opposites—modern factories and organically integrated pre-industrial communities—appeared to become potential equivalents in leftist cultural thinking. The wartime conjuncture, with its military alliance with the Soviet Union, planned production and ‘upsurge’ in working-class cultural participation aroused optimism, and factories were drastically reconceived. No longer synonyms for alienation, they became locations of significant cultural activism and imaginings. Sampling from a range of texts, including Jack Lindsay’s wartime factory novel *Hullo Stranger* (1945), I present factories as unlikely spaces of a projected cultural renaissance. They were, I argue, seen as integral to ‘healing the wound’ in a culture supposedly polarized between mass culture, which allegedly distracted labour from exploitation, and modernism, regarded as the cultural logic of a rentier class remote from production.

Benjamin Kohlmann (Freiburg), “‘By implication, poetic’: Mass-Observation’s Artistic Origins in the 1930s’

In 1937 the New Statesman and Nation printed a famously programmatic letter – “Anthropology at Home” – signed by the ‘founders’ of Mass-Observation, Charles Madge, Humphrey Jennings, and Tom Harrisson. The critical attention paid to this manifesto-letter has long eclipsed the complex artistic prehistory of Mass-Observation. Turning to MO’s early literary aspirations, rather than to its well-documented anthropological impulse, this paper will argue that the movement’s early roots lay in the atmosphere of the Popular Front period. Taking as my focus Jennings’s and Madge’s hopes that MO would give birth to a form of ‘popular poetry’, I concentrate on the underlying problem of the project’s earliest phase: the relationship between a writing done by the (amateur) masses and an editorial and poetic reworking performed by the (professional) few, i.e. Madge and Jennings.

Central to Jennings/Madge’s idea of popular poetry were the day surveys which volunteer Observers sent in from across the nation in the spring of 1937. Excerpts from these surveys were collected in the book *May the Twelfth*. Ironically, *May the Twelfth*, which took several months to be edited, was only published after the more clearly ethnographic Mass-Observation (co-authored by Madge and Tom Harrisson). My paper seeks to reclaim *May the Twelfth*’s status as the movement’s (chronologically, structurally, thematically) ‘first’ book. I reconstruct how Jennings’s editorial work (euphemistically dubbed “write-up” by Jennings) moulded the reader reports into a particular late-modernist vision of England. Jennings and Madge, I suggest, did not ultimately succeed in doing away with the bourgeois idea of poetic authority, and *May the Twelfth* can be seen to privilege structural complexity and metaphorical over-determination over the messier data which MO was trawling from the lower depths of English society.
17. Modernism/Theory 1 (Room G22)

Niall Gildea and David Wylot (Queen Mary), ‘The and of Modernism’

Palgrave Macmillan’s series Modernism and… aims through the ‘cumulative impact’ of its titles to ‘expand the application of this highly contested term [modernism] beyond its conventional remit of art and aesthetics.’ This remit is based on a definition of ‘modernism’ which ‘embraces the vast profusion of creative acts, reforming initiatives, and utopian projects that, since the late nineteenth century, have sought either to articulate, and so symbolically transcend, the spiritual malaise or decadence of modernity, or to find a radical solution to it through a movement of spiritual, social, political – even racial – regeneration and renewal.’

This logic of cumulative appropriation requires that the and of the series title becomes not simply conjunctive but conjugal. Etymologically, conjugality and conjugation name a performative appropriation (a yoking) that passes for a constatation of originary propriety; a constatation borne out by Palgrave’s rhetoric whereby novel gestures of creation, reform and utopianism transfigure modernism into an ahistorical essence unchained from its historical irruption. Modernism thus becomes a continuing, originary promise.

We take this (anti)periodizing logic as symptomatic of a universalism which nominates modernism as a tangible event but simultaneously refuses this event’s epochal closure. We question the idea of an event’s potency following its nomination, drawing on Alain Badiou’s contention that an event is only knowable once it has passed, until which point it remains outside the horizon of the imaginable. To identify the formal and epochal specificity of an event whilst disavowing its historical finitude – is this an attempt to have one’s event and eat it?

This reading is rooted not in any hostility to modernism, but in an interrogation of the ethics of the foreclosure endemic to this particular trend in modernism scholarship. That is, if declarations of novelty are conjugated with a particular, knowable, continuous art form, does this delimit in advance what we might call, with Quentin Meillassoux, ‘the totality of possible outcomes’?

While we agree that the future should be theorized and explored, we offer these philosophical perspectives on eventality to question whether this future has to be modernism’s.

Irmeli Hautamäki (Helsinki), ‘Singular Modernisms and the Problem of Universalism’

Adorno has considered the problematical relation between the special and general in art in his Aesthetic theory. Art has always attempted to rescue the special, he says, progressive particularization has been immanent to it. Successful works have always been those in which specification has flourished. In aesthetics there is an oppositional tendency to develop general concepts, which describe genres, styles and isms, but it is questionable whether they correspond what is essential in the works. It is problematical, Adorno points that these universal aesthetic concepts establish themselves as norms in art. In radical modernism the very notion of style is denied, however as a consequence, singular modernisms multiply in contemporary art. Thus, the dialectics of the special and general raises several difficult problems: for instance, whether the generalizing concepts do justice to the principum individuationis in art and if not, how can art theory and criticism address the multiplying modernisms without such notions? Adorno deals the conflict between nominalism and universalism by pointing out that simple disjunction of nominalism and universalism does not hold. However, his solution, which refers to Platonism, is not instructive. In my mind modern perspectival realism – about
which Ronald Giere and other philosophers of science have written – offers a more realistic solution to the problem of the opposition between universal and special. The basic idea in perspectivism is that all theoretical instruments are human creation; they do not transcend human perspectives. The problem posed in *Aesthetic theory* appears as an opposition between objectivism and constructivism.

Mark M. Freed (Central Michigan), ‘Robert Musil: Lessons on the Hermeneutics of Modernity’

This paper argues that the ontology of the present organizing Robert Musil’s *The Man Without Qualities* finds no “totality” and no “decidability” in the text of the present of the kind that would be required by a hermeneutics of the present. The resulting impossibility of a hermeneutics of the present not only casts Musil’s own writing about Modernity into the space of some other discourse: it has implications regarding the possibility of understanding Modernity on its own terms.

Musil formulates the ontology of the present as *Seinesgleichen geschieht* ("pseudoreality prevails"): while an individual’s experience of an event is determinate, the generality or meaning (Bedeutung) is not determined but washed out, ambiguous, and “unsurveyable” (*unübersichtlich*). For Musil, the present becomes atomized into “event” and reduced to “experience.” But in Modernity “experiences have made themselves independent of people” such that “a world of qualities without man has arisen, of experiences without the person who experiences them.”

Read against the Nietzsche-Heidegger-Derrida confrontations, this ontology of the present raises difficulties for the possibility of a hermeneutics of Modernity. The challenge that Derrida (deconstruction) brings to Heidegger (hermeneutics) in contested readings of Nietzsche concerns the “decidability” of Nietzsche’s text, of truth, and of the very possibility of interpretation—of hermeneutics—in general. Installed as a background for Musil’s account of Modernity, the hermeneutics-deconstruction debate allows the question of the possibility of a hermeneutics of Modernity to arise within Musil’s writing about Modernity and reveals that this is part of what is thematized in that writing.

18. Print versus Digital Scholarship: Current Projects on Ezra Pound’s Cantos (Room 243)

Roxana Preda (Edinburgh), ‘The Cantos in Hypertext: New Possibilities for Scholarship’

Since their publication in in 1980 and 1986, the two volumes of Carroll Terrell’s *Companion to The Cantos* have been the constant textbook and source of reference for Pound scholars. The annotations it contains have suffered the vagaries of the print medium and its promise of permanence: once published, the glosses could have been developed further, in subsequent editions; yet these editions did not materialize. The annotation of a companion is a synthesis of what we know about a text at a given moment – as that moment recedes into the past, it becomes necessary to adjust it to new scholarship. Annotation is a form of mediation that is strictly bound to practice and the local case. As a result, it has routinely been accused of many shortcomings: perverting the reader response, providing unnecessary information, aggressing and misinterpreting the writer, spoiling art.
Can hypertext be the answer to the problems above? Hypertext indeed corrects defects of annotation that are not so much intrinsic to the activity itself but are rather derived from and conditioned by the print medium and the idea of the book. By letting the defects of print be corrected by the digital, and the potentially limitless abundance of hypertext be corrected by print culture assumptions, we might arrive at more satisfactory and accurate working models on how to mediate texts. The paper presents the architecture of the digital The Cantos Project as an answer and solution to the above cautionary critique.


If for no other reason, the fact that all published editions of the Pisan Cantos have been unable to execute Ezra Pound’s instructions for the insertion of Greek and have omitted over fifty sets of Chinese characters that he directed his publishers to include would be sufficient cause to re-edit the poem. But the case for a new edition is stronger than that. Owing to the extraordinary conditions of its composition and transmission, approximately five hundred corruptions of Pound’s typescript text survived into the poem’s first English and American publications. Pound’s typescript of the Pisan Cantos was the product of the harsh conditions of his imprisonment (his wavering memory following a mental breakdown, his lack of books, and the many errors he inevitably produced typing at odd hours on unfamiliar typewriters). Just as seriously, many of Pound’s emended carbons never reached his editors at New Directions and he was forced during his continued incarceration in the U.S. to delegate responsibility for many kinds of correction he would normally have made himself. Although there can never be a definitively “corrected edition” of the Pisan Cantos this does not mean that an edition cannot be established that eliminates the corruptions that later crept into the text. A critical edition based on the typescripts Pound produced at Pisa and including a complete historical apparatus is currently in preparation with Oxford University Press and will not only achieve these aims but also make it possible to understand the deficiencies of the poem’s current texts.

19. Modernism, Transnationalism and Empire (Beveridge Hall)

Christina Britzolakis (Warwick), ‘Mediterranean Modernism’

In this paper, I will explore the significance for modernism of the Mediterranean as a world-historical space which acquired a new kind of visibility on the world stage during the modernist period, as it became the arena for geopolitical conflicts which threatened to reignite the recently ended War. An area that had historically brought numerous peoples into intimate contact under the impact of trade and imperial expansion, the Mediterranean presented a particular polyethnic configuration of empire, urbanity and cultural contact at odds with the nineteenth-century model of the nation-state as the vehicle for democratic, technological modernity. The Greek-Egyptian poet Constantine Cavafy is increasingly viewed as having articulated a diasporic cosmopolitanism lost with the early twentieth-century transition of the Eastern Mediterranean to sovereign nation-states. In their historical recreation of the Hellenistic period of late antiquity, his poems depict Hellenism as a global cultural system historically encompassing, diverse ethnic, religious, linguistic and sexual identities in Europe, Asia and Africa. Influential English writers and readers such as E.M. Forster and T.S. Eliot played a central role in establishing, through the medium of translation, Cavafy’s reputation in the English-
speaking world. This paper brings his work into dialogue with the more familiar cosmopolitanism of metropolitan modernists, focussing particularly on the politics of his reception as a poet writing in modern Greek.

Madhumita Lahiri (Warwick), ‘Modernism and Pan-Asianism’
In this paper, I will explore the significance for modernism of the Mediterranean as a world-historical space which acquired a new kind of visibility on the world stage during the modernist period, as it became the arena for geopolitical conflicts which threatened to reignite the recently ended War. An area that had historically brought numerous peoples into intimate contact under the impact of trade and imperial expansion, the Mediterranean presented a particular polyethnic configuration of empire, urbanity and cultural contact at odds with the nineteenth-century model of the nation-state as the vehicle for democratic, technological modernity. The Greek-Egyptian poet Constantine Cavafy is increasingly viewed as having articulated a diasporic cosmopolitanism lost with the early twentieth-century transition of the Eastern Mediterranean to sovereign nation-states. In their historical recreation of the Hellenistic period of late antiquity, his poems depict Hellenism as a global cultural system historically encompassing, diverse ethnic, religious, linguistic and sexual identities in Europe, Asia and Africa. Influential English writers and readers such as E.M. Forster and T.S. Eliot played a central role in establishing, through the medium of translation, Cavafy’s reputation in the English-speaking world. This paper brings his work into dialogue with the more familiar cosmopolitanism of metropolitan modernists, focussing particularly on the politics of his reception as a poet writing in modern Greek.

Anna Snaith (King’s College London), ‘Jean Rhys and the Politics of Sound’
The relationship between Jean Rhys and ‘modernism’ has been somewhat troubled by her colonial background and position outside recognizable networks of modernist cultural production. I want to argue that the recent ‘acoustic turn’ in modernist studies can provide a fresh lens through which to view the modernity of Rhys’ writing. Song lyrics, street singers and sonic memories are everywhere in the noisy soundscape of her fiction, but without properly annotated editions the import of these allusions have gone ‘unheard’.

In this paper, I will argue for the polyvalency of Rhys’ sonic allusions. On one level, specific musical references to popular lyrics, Caribbean songs or musical forms (such as beguine) create an auditory collage of parallel and often counter-textual meanings. Rhys employs sound to explore questions of cultural translation or, as in ‘Let Them Call it Jazz’, cultural theft as allegory for the colonial encounter. Sound is also central to the spatial politics of Rhys’s urban landscapes from the lack of privacy and silence in her bedsits and hotel rooms to the array of street performers in her novels. Many critics have noted the cosmopolitanism of her urban environments; this is invariably figured acoustically. She depicts xenophobia, too, as opposition to the ‘noisy foreigner’. Finally, the act of writing sound is a manifestation of loss or incompleteness, a mode which is key to Rhys’ writing. Attention to this aspect of Rhys’s oeuvre, then, can bring to modernist sound studies a crucial emphasis on the cultural and politics dimensions of hearing.

20. Modernist Origin(al)s (Room 246)
Juliette Taylor-Batty (Leeds Trinity), ‘Modernism and Translation Studies: Destabilising the Modernist “Original”

In recent years, the ‘transnational turn’ in modernist studies, has led to an increasing awareness of the multilingual networks and compositional processes inherent to writing of the (traditionally-defined) modernist period. In-depth studies of modernist translation practices, however, still remain relatively scarce. In this paper, I will assess the impact of translation studies within modernist studies, and will argue for its continuing importance, not only in the context of translations in the period, but in the analysis of apparently ‘original’ texts.

Studies of modernist translation have demonstrated the extent to which it tends to be a defamiliarising and an appropriative practice, both resisting fluency in the target language and asserting the ‘cultural autonomy’ of the translated text, ultimately producing what Beasley defines as ‘a different form of domestication’: ‘rewriting the source text to serve modernist cultural agendas’. One significant effect of this is a destabilisation of the traditional hierarchy of ‘original’ and ‘translation’, including the use of translation for compositional processes, and a valorisation of the translated text as valid artwork independent of source text. A particularly fascinating dimension of this – and one which has hitherto received very little attention – is the status of texts that appear as ‘originals’, but which are underpinned by (unacknowledged) translational sources. It is two such texts that I propose to examine here: Jean Rhys’s ‘La Grosse Fifi’, which rewrites and subverts Maupassant’s ‘Mademoiselle Fifi’, and Katherine Mansfield’s ‘The Child-Who-Was-Tired’ which bears an undeniable and controversial similarity to Chekhov’s ‘Sleepy’. In 1928, Oswalde de Andrade’s ‘Manifesto Antropófago’ argued for the ‘cannibalistic’ cultural appropriation of texts in the context of establishing a postcolonial Brazilian literary identity. Andrade’s text, highly influential in postcolonial translation studies, also, I would argue, bears relevance to such modernist practices as Rhys and Mansfield’s, and provides a theoretical means of considering the significance of translational appropriation in modernism more generally.

Isabelle Parkinson (Queen Mary), ‘Modernist Evolution in Gertrude Stein’s “Natural Phenomena” and Kim Rosenfield’s “re: evolution”

2d. Sophocles wanted a true language in which things were ontologically nominal. This is true in fiction and history.

Fiction meaning poetry.

Poetry meaning history.

History meaning the future state of having been.

This is the job of Gertrude Stein’s The Making of Americans.

In Vanessa Place and Robert Fitterman’s Notes on Conceptualisms (2009), quoted above, in Marjorie Perloff’s Unoriginal Genius (2010), in Kenneth Goldsmith’s introduction to Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing (2011) and in many other instances, Gertrude Stein is claimed as the modernist progenitor for conceptual poetry, and her work is cited as an originating example of conceptual writing. This paper will consider the cogency of this reading of Stein’s work and engage critically with the notion of origin upon which such claims are founded. The paper asks two questions. First: in which ways can Stein be considered as a
progenitor for conceptual poetry? Second: in proposing such a genealogy for itself, what history of modernism is conceptual poetry writing?

In order to explore these questions, the paper examines Kim Rosenfield’s 2008 book *re: evolution* and Gertrude Stein’s 1926 unpublished text ‘Natural Phenomena.’ Both texts provide a reworking of the Darwinian progressive model, reimagining notions of origin, genealogy and evolution. These texts, I would suggest, coincide in a number of related ways: in their resistance to a comprehensive taxonomy, in their emphasis on the multiplicity of strains, and in their rejection of an authoritative position from which to rewrite the past. The paper argues that both these texts therefore postulate the impossibility of an authentic recuperation of origins, and that, in those conditions, tracing a genealogy becomes an act of composition. The paper further argues that modernism’s concern over its genealogy, fossilized in the high modernist canon, is regenerated in conceptual poetry’s creative rewriting of literary history.


My paper aims to investigate how modernism can remediated in twenty-first century. I will focus in particular on *Superzelda. The Graphic Life of Zelda Fitzgerald*, written and illustrated by Tiziana Lo Porto and Daniele Marotta in 2011. The original Italian version has immediately been translated into English, allowing this graphic novel to gain critical attention for its double value as biographical source and as artwork. In *Superzelda* we witness a rare case when criticism moves towards and merges with art, to eventually generate new art – thus requiring further critical attention.

Although the majority of the dialogue is real, extracted from diaries, letters, interviews and short stories, it is arranged so as to embody a new strand of twenty-first century modernism. Animated by gin-drinking, bobbed-haired Charleston dancers, *Superzelda* explores the bewildering personality of Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald as a writer and artist, as well as a passionate woman, fuelled by art, ennui, alcohol and schizophrenia; in its colourful vignettes and witty speech bubbles, this graphic novel critically explores Zelda’s consuming artistic genius, which was flanked – and overshadowed – by a much more mature and famous husband.

The historical Zelda travelled from Alabama to New York, to Minnesota, to Paris, to Italy to Hollywood; her public image as icon seems not to have stopped travelling yet. After having raised critical interest in the field of modernist studies all over the world, she seems now to start her twenty-first century world-trip from Italy, ready to re-cross the Atlantic, as star-character of her own *Graphic Life*.

21. Modernist Legacies: Art and Sculpture (Room G26)

Morgan Thomas (Cincinnati), ‘Leftover Modernism: Rothko’s Late Series’

The scale and abstraction of New York School painting is often identified with the ‘endgame’ of modernism and with an aggrandizing universalism expressive of America’s global hegemony in the postwar era. Large scale would thus act to inflate the authority and purview of the artworks; radical abstraction would reflect a levelling of differences—cultural, historical, geopolitical—in the pictorial field and beyond; together, these attributes would constitute a violent repudiation of basic realities and the fallacy at the heart of the pretension to universality in the modernist ‘project’. I examine these questions with regard to the later work of Mark
Rothko in order to show how his paintings test and contest these critical orthodoxies. The paper focuses on the appeal to ‘human need’ that Rothko placed at the center of his conception of art, as well as the question of the liaison between abstraction and universality in his work. If, as Rothko wrote, his paintings aimed to combat the ‘anaesthetics’ and amnesia of modern social institutions, rendering the impasses of daily life in a ‘socially consumable’ form, their resonance with current lines of thought concerned with the contours of modern subjectivity is perhaps not surprising. Considering his late series of paintings (1958-69) with particular reference to the writings of Kafka and Kierkegaard (key sources for Rothko), the paper shows how these late works may now point to a rethinking of the aesthetic remainder of modern universality and subjectivity in our contemporary world—a universality of the leftover, beginning with suffering, fragility and ‘human need.’

Sam Rose (Cambridge), ‘Charles Harrison’s Modernism’

In assessing the present-day state of modernist art theory and criticism in Britain, the culmination of Charles Harrison’s thought provides a strikingly novel perspective. From a pioneering early advocacy of conceptual art in England to a later return to interest in painting in conjunction with the Art & Language group, Harrison consistently attempted to work in relation to Clement Greenberg’s canonical writings rather than simply abandon them wholesale. Recently this attempt has gained increasing attention internationally, as critics and historians unsatisfied with standard accounts of modernism but unwilling to abandon the notion altogether look to Harrison’s theorisation as a possible way in which to think through modernism’s continuing intellectual and aesthetic force.

This paper will focus on the substance of Harrison’s late, fully developed, defence of modernism. In particular it will look in detail at the way that Harrison combined the thought of the American critic Michael Fried with the English philosopher Richard Wollheim in his attempt to both develop and depart from Greenberg, in the process moving beyond traditionally favoured concepts such ‘significant form’ or medium specificity. Closely examining these deep theoretical justifications, the paper will assess the almost unrivalled ethical commitments that Harrison felt modernist art could lay claim to, including a form of ‘realism’ deeper and more significant than any narrowly conceived academic or anti-modernist kind.

Inge Lise Mogensen Bech (Aarhus), ‘Modernism and Art History: From a Danish Point of View’

Within art history the concept of modernism is at the same time wonderfully and exasperatingly unspecific. The term modernism sometimes refers to art from the middle of the nineteenth century and at others even includes art from the middle of the twentieth century. Different approaches have been employed to grapple this vagueness of the concept, and the recent global move from a singular modernism to a geographical, cultural and artistic plethora of modernisms seems to be a reasonable strategy. But how can the traditional art historical canon interact with the new pluralism of modernisms? With what methodological and theoretical strategies can art history work towards a multifaceted understanding of modernism? How does a broadening of the material included in the investigations affect the concept of modernism?

Guided by the above questions this paper will address Danish art history and art historiography through the investigation of a single modernist painting by the Danish painter Harald Giersing. I will discuss the
painting in relation to contexts of popular culture, the Danish art magazine Klingen (The Blade, published 1917-20), archive material and art histories of early 20th century Danish Modernism. Through these contextualizations I will outline the diversity of interests and ideas present in formulation of a concept of modernism for the visual arts in Denmark. The selected empirical case study thus offers an exploration of the coming into being of a concept, the uniformity of which it at the same time aims to dismantle.

22. New Poetic Environments (Room G26)

Stephen Ross (Warwick), ‘Mikhl Likht’s “Incomprehensible” Yiddish Modernist Poetics’

This paper forms part of a larger recovery project of the Yiddish modernist poet, Mikhl Likht (1893-1953), whose major long-poem, Protsesiyes (“processions”), I am now translating with Ari Resnikoff. A younger contemporary of Pound, Loy, and Williams and in some ways a forerunner of Zukofsky and other “Objectivists,” Likht remains more or less the only Yiddish poet to have modeled his practice on Anglophone modernism, especially what he took to be Eliot’s program. As such, he literally wrote himself out of any conceivable readership, remaining inaccessible to non-Yiddish readers and alienating his Yiddish-speaking peers in the US, who found his collage technique and aesthetic purism suspiciously apolitical and “umfarshtendlekh” (incomprehensible).

And yet, as Resnikoff and I are discovering, Likht’s work of the mid-1920s to mid-1930s, namely Protsesiyes (1932), maintains significant dialogues with key figures of Anglophone modernism such as those listed above, most of whom he translated into Yiddish. This paper, which will be co-written with Resnikoff, will survey these important and unexamined links, with special attention to Likht’s “Procession: I” and its debt to Loy’s “Songs for Joannes”. The hope is to revisit—and reconceive—an intriguing crossover moment in American and Yiddish poetic history, and in doing so, add a new chapter to the story of modernism.

This paper will also touch on the challenges of translating Likht in the context of his explicitly modernist commitments. In this regard, our work owes an important debt to Merle Bachman, whose pioneering translation of Likht in Recovering “Yiddishland” (2007) inspired us to begin this project. To date, Resnikoff and I have published scholarly versions of “Procession: I” (Eleven Eleven: A Journal of the Arts, issue #16, Jan 2014) and “Procession: II” (on the “Poems and Poetics” weblog curated by Jerome Rothenberg on the Jacket2 website, Feb 3 2014).

Mandy Bloomfield (Bedfordshire), ‘Collage Ecopoetics: Allen Fisher and the End of the World’

‘What we’ve perpetrated on our environment has certainly affected a poet’s means and material. But can poetry be ecological? … how does poetry register the complex interdependency that draws us into a dialogue with the world?’ (Forrest Gander)

This paper will explore how and why contemporary writers are reviving and reworking modernist collage to engage the challenges of ecological thinking. To do so, it will examine the poetry and poetics of Allen Fisher, focusing especially on his collaging of diverse appropriated material in the three books that make up the long-running project Gravity as a Consequence of Shape (1982 – 2011). Ecological concerns have long
been part of the context for Fisher’s work, and have found their way into his poetry in multiple ways, from his intimate exploration of place, to his wide-ranging reading across the sciences, to formal structures and dynamics of interrelatedness which might be said to embody textual ecologies. I will be especially interested in demonstrating how Fisher’s process of ‘facture’ breaks and remakes research materials as part of an investigatory poetics which tests epistemological and ontological modes of relatedness to ‘the world’. Ecophilosopher Timothy Morton has recently claimed that thoroughly ecological thinking ‘implies that there is no world’, but only an ‘infinite mesh of life forms’. Fisher’s collage poetics suggests productive ways of negotiating the end of the world in an age of ecological emergency.

Sarah Kennedy (Cambridge), ‘Ern Malley’s Ghost: Judith Wright, Australian Literary Modernism and the Search for Authenticity’

This paper explores some of the creative tensions within Australian modernist poetics of the post-war period through the clarifying figure of Judith Wright (1915–2000). Wright was an Australian poet and activist whose work gave interrogative voice to the search for an ‘authentic’ Australian poetry. Her creative and critical engagement with the problems of being an Australian poet (including as assistant poetry editor at the key little magazine Meanjin) is tested as a form of mediation between two polarised expressions of mid-century modernist restlessness: the Jindyworobaks and the Angry Penguins. The Jindyworobak poets of the 1930s led by Rex Ingamells sought to escape the pseudo-European sterility of post-settlement Australian society, appropriating indigenous language and cosmogonies to create a hybridised (and evacuated) primitivism. Equally stridently, Max Harris—standard-bearer for the internationalist Angry Penguins—issued a clarion call for Australian poets to embrace Surrealism and French Symbolism in order to break the cultural isolation they perceived as the prime cause of Australia’s moribund literature. These fissures were exposed in the spectral person of Ern Malley, the Australian poète maudit and modernist hero who never was, and whose notorious invention in 1944 by literary hoaxers hostile to experimentation revealed the fragility of the Australian avant-garde. Immersed in, yet apart from, this contentious poetic environment, Judith Wright’s critical and creative negotiations deserve further attention in the ongoing narrative of the difficult birth of Australian modernism.

23. Modern Periodical Studies Now (Room G22)

Charlie Dawkins (Oxford), “‘A Hunt of Such Fascination’: Responding to ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’ in the Nation and Athenaeum’

This paper starts with a specific case, the publication of Virginia Woolf’s essay ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’ in the Nation and Athenaeum in December 1923, and three articles that responded to it – with varying and uneven degrees of success – in the following issues of the magazine, by J. D. Beresford, Logan Pearsall Smith, and Michael Sadleir. By considering these responses to Virginia Woolf’s essay in the context of Leonard Woolf’s tenure as literary editor (1923-30), I hope to explore what a weekly periodical like the Nation and Athenaeum might contribute to the developing study of modernism and magazines.

If periodicals allow critics to respond to Woolf’s arguments about modern literature, they trace contemporary debate about modernism in progress, as it were; one reason, among others, why periodicals are rightly feted by scholars of modernism. But what happens when such debates are unsuccessful? I argue that in
the case of Woolf’s ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’ these responses fail to address the arguments raised by Woolf. From this, I offer some thoughts about the significance of such points of failure in periodicals – moments where hoped-for dialogue or debate breaks down – and consider how problematic debates such as these complicate our understanding of modernism and periodicals, and even test the limits of the usefulness of periodicals as a way to explore modernism.

Faith Binckes (Bath Spa), “‘Dime stores, corny songs, and practical jokes”: The Magazine as Modernist Curiosity Shop’

This paper will take as its starting point two recent studies of theories and protocols central to modernism: Jeremy Braddock’s Collecting as Modernist Practice (Johns Hopkins, 2012) and Michael North’s Novelty: a history of the new (Chicago, 2013). I will argue that Braddock’s focus on editorial and curatorial intervention, and North’s analysis of the processes and paradoxes of modernist novelty, produce a productive framework through which to re-examine the role played by periodical texts in our current conceptions of modernism.

In the last decade or so, scholarship on twentieth-century periodicals has developed a series of methodologies through which periodicals can be mapped and positioned, placed within sophisticated systems or networks. While such models remain vital, I intend to explore the unnerving ability of this form not only to inhabit, but also to evade and to interrogate, systematisation and classification. Braddock observes the importance of idiosyncrasy within collections, and North identifies the disreputable associations of the word ‘novelty’ (‘redolent of dime stores, corny songs, and practical jokes’). Following their lead, I will argue that it is through the eclecticism of their form, and the provocative curiosity of their contents, that periodicals can connect the modernist ‘new’ with modernism ‘now’.

Chris Mourant (King’s College London), “‘There is really, my friends, no salvation in Geography”: The New Age and Global Space’

In 1910, the influential periodical The New Age, edited by A. R Orage, published an image titled ‘The “New Age” World’ at the end of a literary supplement. Ostensibly used to highlight the global distribution of the periodical, this illustration also made the publication space of The New Age analogous to global space; the ‘world’ in all its complexity is presented as immediately legible and comprehensible within the pages of the magazine, an imperialist gesture inherited from the nineteenth-century periodical form. Moreover, ‘The “New Age” World’ also highlights how art and culture in The New Age, symbolised by the palette and lyre at the bottom of the map, were clearly framed by this sense of global geography and an awareness of the connections between cities, nations and indeed continents.

Using The New Age as a case study, and focusing in particular on the ‘travel’ writings of Katherine Mansfield and Beatrice Hastings, this paper will explore how the study of magazines can extend our understanding of the ‘transnational’ dimensions of modernism. Work analysing print culture and new media rhetorics has remained largely segregated from developments and formulations of the ‘transnational turn’ across modernist studies, as Patrick Collier observed in a recent issue of Modernism/modernity. How might we begin to establish substantive connections between these two currently separate enterprises in contemporary modernist criticism?
24. Inventing the Modern: Current Work in the Centre for Modern Literature and Culture, King’s College London (Room 349)

Simon Vickery (King’s College London), “‘Our Houses Must Be Made to Fit Us Like Garments’: The Building of a Nascent Modernism”

Wyndham Lewis’s *The Caliph’s Design* (1919) calls for the creation of a new urban spectacle to invigorate and revitalise a jaded population. Paul Edwards has described this scathing polemic as ‘the ghost of an English contribution’ to the development of the International Style on the continent, but, in the staid architectural climate of inter-war Britain, Lewis was a voice crying out in the wilderness. The Caliph’s Design was a radical, modernist statement on the present and future of urban space, and it ran counter to the prevailing mood amongst both architects and members of the public, captured by Evelyn Waugh in his satirical swipe at the Modern Movement in *Decline and Fall*.

However, this paper will argue, Lewis’s text does not constitute a break with contemporaneous architectural discourse in Britain so much as one development of it. Modernist architecture on the Continent was regarded in Britain as cold, dispassionate, machine-like, inhumane. The Caliph’s Design insists upon the primacy of the human body within built space, and this places it within the lineage of a peculiarly British attitude to building and inhabiting architectural space that stretches from the Arts and Crafts movement through to the development of post-1945 British architectural modernism, and encompasses figures as diverse as Hermann Muthesius, E.M. Forster, W.R. Lethaby and Nikolaus Pevsner. Through reading Lewis’s text with reference the work of these other individuals this paper will look to both re-insert it into a British tradition and to identify how some of the concerns taken up by British architectural modernism post-1945 were nascent during the first decades of the twentieth century.

Julia Schoen (King’s College London), ‘Encounters on a Dissecting Table. John Rodker’s “The Future of Futurism” and Its Literary Possibilities’

With the hindsight of more than a decade, John Rodker asked in 1926 how the arts and especially literature could get back in touch ‘with that world which it was their function to interpret, a world which every day grew more mechanical, expressing a new fluidity in an infinity of geometric and rigid shapes.’

Although he lived and worked among the most eminent and notorious modernist writers (Pound, Eliot, Lewis and others) Rodker remains unknown. This paper makes a case for the importance to modernism of Rodker’s little pamphlet the ‘Future of Futurism’, which speculates about the ‘aliments’ and possibilities of literature in the future. Drawing on his extensive knowledge of European and American literature, Rodker disentangles different tendencies and stages of development in literary history from Baudelaire via Romaines to Stein and Joyce. But the reader who expects to be presented with a neatly structured treatise and reasoned account of modernism’s objectives and achievements is sent skidding into a complex series of subjectively assembled, paradoxically arranged statements and examples.

I would like to highlight some of the features that Rodker sees as making up literary modernism: free association, scientific observation, and a kind of telescopic gaze into the human mind. For Rodker these strategies collectively invigorate the work of literature, provoking and exciting its readers. I will end with a
consideration of Rodker’s own poetry, which is virtually and perhaps justifiably ignored to this day. As a poet Rodker zooms in on deformations of mind and body effected by social, political, psychological and temporal forces, invoking the uncanny chemistry of life.

Johanna Malt (King’s College London), ‘The Shadow of the Object: Modernism and the Surfaces of Art’
This paper will examine modernist practices of the found object that exploit the imprint of that object and the traces it leaves behind. Beginning with Duchamp and the surrealists, modern artists take up casts and impressions of non-art objects as a way of investigating the boundaries of the subject and the division of the world’s matter into things. By the mid twentieth-century, these practices become central to the work of artists as varied as Giuseppe Penone, Bruce Nauman and Yves Klein, and also find echoes in writing, notably in the work of the French poet Francis Ponge. Deliberately undoing the hierarchical distinction in the Western academic tradition between impressions from life, which might be used as models in the creation process or for reproducing existing works, and the ‘true’ work of art, which must not slavishly or mechanically copy the real, but should elevate, idealise and transform it by an act of imagination, these works are a kind of photographic negative of the Duchampian readymade, challenging notions of craft, uniqueness and mediation and exploring in a very literal manner the way both subjects and objects are defined by the surface contacts between them.

25. Periodising Modernisms and Everyday Life (Room 243)
Yoshiki Tajiri (Tokyo), ‘Trauma and Ordinary Objects in Virginia Woolf and Samuel Beckett’
This paper explores a connection between a traumatized psyche and ordinary objects surrounding it. While a traumatized subject is compelled to return to the original shocking event, it also needs to cope with the ordinary flow of everyday life. In the process, ordinary objects may assume unexpected significance.

In Virginia Woolf’s Mrs Dalloway, Clarissa is haunted by the sense of precariousness of life. This mental instability is overshadowed by the trauma of the First World War. On the other hand, she constantly pays attention to ordinary objects she encounters by chance as if to reassure herself that she is still alive. In the case of her ‘double’ Septimus, who is directly suffering from shell shock, the perception of ordinary objects becomes more unstable and problematic.

Samuel Beckett’s work shows the human psyche more radically destroyed. But as humanity seems to be reduced to its barest minimum in the aftermath of the Second World War and the Holocaust, ordinary objects become oddly meaningful. In Happy Days, for example, Winnie continues to use and even examine her tooth brush in an improbable ruin-like setting, thus stressing the absurdity of ordinary life against the trauma of the calamity.

By discussing these two authors representing high and late modernism, this paper will illuminate the way trauma and ordinary life are correlated rather than opposed. It aims to shed new light on modernism in relation to both trauma studies and everyday life studies.
Kunio Shin (Tsuda College), 'The Late-modernist Mishmash: Transnational Intertextuality and Hybridisation in Wyndham Lewis and William Plomer'

Wyndham Lewis’s *The Apes of God* (1930)—an exemplary late-modernist text, according to Tyrus Miller—has often been read as depicting the cultural and political stagnation of interwar Britain which even the General Strike of 1926 failed to shake up. Meanwhile, it is noteworthy that this novel also reveals the transformation of everyday life in the metropolitan space of London by presenting an unlikely mixture of numerous exotic objects and characters who deliberately flaunt their foreign or ethnic backgrounds. This paper addresses these symptoms of hybridization—what I term the “late-modernist mishmash”—in the light of Lewis’s awareness of the decline of the British Empire and the rise of new international politics. I suggest that Lewis’s satire of the metropolitan mishmash can be productively juxtaposed with William Plomer’s *Turbott Wolfe* (1926), a pioneering South African modernist novel set in the colonial “periphery” of the empire. This novel’s satirical exposure of the dilemmas of racial intermixture in South Africa earned Lewis’s admiration, while Lewis also attacked Plomer as a propagandist of racial romanticism in *Paleface* (1929). A transnational reading of these two texts will thus illuminate how the process of hybridization (both racial and cultural) transformed the everyday life across the empire. This will also enable us to recontextualize the apparent stagnation of the metropolitan life in *The Apes of God* in terms of the transnational perspective that Lewis gained through the critical reading of Plomer’s text.

Motonori Sato (Keio), ‘Modernism and the Everyday Revisited: A Comparative Reading of Greene’s *It’s a Battlefield* and Conrad’s *The Secret Agent*’

A difficulty of associating Greene with high modernists is derived partly from his debt to early modernists, writers such as Ford, James and Conrad. Especially, Greene’s debt to Conrad is obvious in his early novels, *It’s a Battlefield* (1934), a typical late modernist text, being virtually a remake of Conrad’s *The Secret Agent* (1907), an early modernist text. The debt is not just a matter of settings, seedy London locations, but also a matter of characters: “the assistant commissioner” of *The Secret Agent* reappears in *It’s a Battlefield*, similarly unnamed; and Conrad Drover, a hypocritical idealist in the latter, is an allusive acknowledgement of Conrad’s influence on his literary creation.

The aim of this paper is twofold. On the one hand, it compares and distinguishes the two authors by closely reading their texts; on the other hand, it historicises the texts in terms of their attention to the detail of everyday life. According to the newly emergent studies of everyday life, modernism is not just a matter of “make it new”; more importantly, a subtle tension is always to be found between novelty and convention, modernism and the ordinary, the event and the everyday. Taking cue from Michael Sayeau’s idea of a dialectic relation between the event and the everyday in modernist narratives, my paper will explore the two texts on the margins of high modernism in terms of their mode of attention to everyday life, and thus address the concept of modernism generally from a fresh perspective.

26. Modern Cultures, Conflicts, States (Beveridge Hall)
John Nash (Durham), ‘Joyce, Yeats and the Irish Free State’
In the early years of the Irish Free State, James Joyce was invited to return to Ireland by W. B. Yeats, as a ‘guest of the nation’. The personal, the political and the literary intertwine in the terms on which Joyce could be invited to return. Their correspondence – both published and unpublished – between 1922 and 1924, along with their imaginative responses to the Free State, show how each differently conceived the cultural project of the new nation state in relation to their own work, and how each envisaged the idea of a national audience at this crucial moment.

James Smith (Durham), “‘Has left wing tendencies but might be used with caution’: J. B. Priestley and the British Secret State’

It is no secret that, across his career, the outspoken and fiercely independent Priestley often attracted ire and suspicion for his political views, perhaps most evident in the fact that his famous wartime ‘Postscripts’ on the BBC were suddenly axed, and that he was one of the names featured on Orwell’s notorious secret list of suspected crypto-communists. This paper will consider the MI5 file held on Priestley (released to the National Archives only in February 2014), in order to understand how the state security-intelligence apparatus participated in such concerns. The file shows how Priestley attracted attention due to contact with left-wing figures such as Nancy Cunard and Ivor Montagu and organs such as the Left Review, but also how his highly critical stance towards many communist-linked organizations complicated easy assessments of his political affiliations. The result was not so much an attempt at blacklisting as it was an attempt to manage the risk he posed: MI5, on the one hand, cleared him to speak for the BBC and the British Council, but, on the other hand, passed information on his activity to covert propaganda organs such as the Information Research Department. Consequently, what emerges from this file is a new understanding of Priestley’s political interactions, and an important portrait of how the British secret state sought to harness the activity of left-wing intellectuals in the mid-century era.

Marina MacKay (Durham), ‘Citizenship and the Novel in 1945’

This paper considers notions of citizenship made available in late modernist literature as Britain made the transition from warring state to welfare state. Much has been written on the relationship between novel and nation; this paper places its emphasis instead on the novel and the state. Indeed, it argues that at the very core of the fiction of 1945-50 is an effort to divide the affective power of the nation, which (in a wartime move) apparently compels our loyalty, from the cold power of the state, which (in a postwar move) does not. This paper will draw examples of resistant citizenship from late modernists such as Henry Green, whose work will be read alongside the work of more explicitly political writers and in relation to the anti-state work being done through the 1940s by Cyril Connolly’s Horizon, in which (from the journal’s 1940 inauguration) a ‘Modernism’ of a symptomatic mid-century making stands for a resistance to co-optation by the political sphere.

Jason Harding (Durham), ‘Modernism and the Literary Politicos: Encounter Magazine and the Shaping of the Modernist Canon’
This paper seeks to explore the role of *Encounter* magazine (funded by American and British intelligence services) on the valorization of a select canon of writers (and aesthetic strategies) that were crucial to academic definitions of Modernism: the paper addresses the essays and reviews by the literary editors (Stephen Spender and Frank Kermode) and leading contributors (above all Lionel Trilling) but also the role of the US political editors in commissioning articles on major modernist authors that are inflected by a clear ideological point of view.

27. Beckett Now (Room 246)

Tzu-Ching Yeh (Sun Yat-Sen), ‘Late Modernism in Samuel Beckett’s *All that Fall*: Reassessing Joyce-Beckett Relationship’

My paper seeks to examine the Joyce-Beckett relationship through literary affinities between James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and Beckett’s first radio play *All That Fall* (1956), by addressing such thematic issues as fall and loss, so as to determine the sense in which Beckett’s radio play can be profitably regarded as late modernist – a distinctive style that grows out of and goes beyond modernism. Applying literary-periodising terms to Beckett’s work is a prevalent trend, and the concepts of modernism and postmodernism dominate Beckett studies; however, this practice is hardly ever directed at his radio drama. I shall here seek a way beyond that binary impasse by working with the newer notion of ‘late modernism’ in relation to Beckett’s radio drama. Although the concept of ‘late modernism’ is relatively new and not well defined, I will demonstrate how it can be the most helpful literary framework to further understand the nature of Beckett’s work for radio. I will propose a limited model to reassess the Joyce-Beckett relationship through Beckett’s practice of rewriting Joycean elements of fall and loss in *All That Fall*. I seek to examine the double functions of late modernism that both succeed and transform modernism based on an examination of the Joyce-Beckett relationship to explore how Beckett’s *All That Fall* is in crucial respects indebted to as well as a departure from Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man."

Joseph Anderton (Nottingham), ‘Beckett’s Late Modernism and the Creature’

This paper will adopt the terms ‘creature’ and ‘creaturely life’ to reinforce the view of Samuel Beckett as a late modernist. The creature, as Julia Lupton has noted, indicates a made or fashioned thing but with the sense of continued or potential process built into the future thrust of its active verbal form. More recently, in Eric Santner’s conception, creaturely life describes a state of melancholic nostalgia, living in animated suspension, which, I argue, captures the activity and inertia that marked the initial tensions in the nineteenth-century germs of modernism and constitutes the survival of modernist traces in Beckett’s works after 1945. In this paper, I reiterate the notion that the agitations of creaturely life are a sign of modernity, but also recognise that the ongoing process inherent to the creature is a feature of postmodern relativism. Read together, then, creaturely life and the creature are productive concepts for articulating enduring modernist sensibilities during a period when postmodern ideas were taking root. In Beckett’s case, this dichotomy casts the creature as a paradoxical appellation for ‘this unnamable thing that I name and never wear out’. By delineating the creature as a type of being preoccupied with or hopeful for a settled form of meaning but actually subject to the frisson
of the creative process, this paper conveys Beckett as a figure of late modernism, lingering on the loss and possible renewal of self and community, but without convincing totalising gestures.

Stefano Rosignoli (IES), ‘Samuel Beckett’s Quietistic Approach to Augustine’s Thought’
The pervading influence of Medieval philosophy on Samuel Beckett’s works can hardly be overestimated. The general framework during his training in the early Thirties was offered exclusively by Wilhelm Windelband’s Geschichte der Philosophie, as displayed by the “Philosophy Notes” now held at Trinity College Dublin. As the scholars of the Middle Ages, in Windelband’s history, progressively found in antiquity a source of immense inspiration for the creation of their own works, Beckett as well, as if taking over from them, appears to have deeply benefited from his long-lasting meditation on Medieval philosophy. The Geschichte, though, describes the Medieval appropriation of ancient culture as a passive act, while on the contrary Beckett’s notes display a functional approach, that is to say a reception driven by his personal culture and curiosity, which is confirmed by the subjective nature of the selection and rewording of the source text.

Basing on these premises, the aim of my paper is to provide an interpretation of Beckett’s notes concerning the thought of the central philosopher of the Middle Ages: Augustine of Hippo. At the very core of my considerations will be the idea that the philosopher, considered by Windelband as the initiator of a new line of thought that focuses on Internality as a source for knowledge, becomes in Beckett, thanks to the mediation of the Geschichte, the first member of a group of thinkers who informed a contemporary form of Quietism which, in a broad sense and devoid of its theological implications, characterises all of Beckett’s ethics.

Claudia Clausius (King’s University College), ‘Imagination Dead Imagine: A Modernist Collaboration – Samuel Beckett and Sorel Etrog’
To celebrate Samuel Beckett’s 75th birthday John Calder published a special signed, limited edition of Imagination Dead Imagine illustrated by the Romanian/Canadian artist Sorel Etrog. The original Beckett/ Etrog edition took shape between 1969 and 1977. Calder’s exclusive 1981 publication demonstrates both Beckett’s life-long fascination with abstract painting, but also his enduring relationship with specific artists. Beckett’s influence from and on modern painters is a sign of his works’ continuing relevance, adaptability, and aesthetic appeal. In 2007, the Centre Pompidou held a Beckett exhibit featuring the work of famous artists influenced by the author. In 2013, the Art Gallery of Ontario held an exhibition of Sorel Etrog, whose collaboration with Beckett was referenced both in the exhibit and the bookstore. The Beckett/Etrog collaboration in Imagination Dead Imagine seizes the fundamental modernist dilemma between abstraction and articulation, between imaging and speaking. In this unique work, text and images collude in a choreography of imprisoned rhythms of sound and markings. The text’s avowed unpredictability of dark and white, of temperature, of direction and duration corresponds with an artistic method based on aligning outlines of shapes and figures with their stable counterparts on paper. The surface values typical of modern art, as well as the drawings’ torturous links, respond to and reflect the narrator’s musings. The change from Giacometti’s solid “Head on a Stalk,” which appears on the front of the 1965 edition, to Etrog’s ethereal lithographs charts how publishers, artists, and scholars alike continue to interpret Beckett’s imagistic words well into the 21st century.
28. Modernism and Dance (Chancellor’s Hall)
Alex Goody (Oxford Brookes), “‘Economizing on perspiration’: Social Dance, Performance Dance and the Bestial in Djuna Barnes’ New York’

In a 1916 article published in Bruno’s Weekly Djuna Barnes interviewed Adolf Bolm, a lead male dancer with the Ballets Russes during their first American tour. In one of her characteristic interpolations Barnes comments that ‘the whole production had struck most of us as art under the skin’ concluding of the dancers, ‘they seem to be economising on perspiration’. Barnes bemoans here an absence of what she describes as ‘savage sharpness’, suggesting that the Ballets Russes production was lacking in the primitive energies its audience was expecting to witness. This is not the only place Barnes’s New York writing engaged with dance; her first feature article with the Brooklyn Daily Eagle in 1913 covered the new Arcadia Dance Hall and the craze for animal inspired dances such as the Bunny Hug and the Turkey Trot, she wrote other feature articles on exhibition dancing, chorus girls, the New York Theatre’s roof-top Jardin de Danse, she interviewed Vernon and Irene Castle, and her short stories and poetry featured tango-teas, cabaret dancers and a dancer performing Salome for the (fictional) ‘Prevention of Impurities on the Boards’ committee. In these different accounts of dancing, Barnes negotiates competing contemporary discourses about individual expression, social decorum and the natural female body focusing in particular, as this paper will demonstrate, on ideas of the animalistic or primitive.

In an examination of Barnes’s coverage of, and engagement with, the heterogenous manifestations of the 1910s dance craze in New York, this paper brings together emergent strands in modernist studies: the burgeoning interest in the work of Djuna Barnes, the growing body of scholarly work on dance in modernism, and the careful attention to the diversity of modernist magazines in current scholarship, what Andrew Thacker describes as the ‘multifaceted’ ‘periodical field in North America’. The paper will read across the mass and minority publications that included Barnes’s work, and demonstrate how the ongoing concern in her writing with the ‘beast turning human’ can be related back to the discourses and debates around dancing, decorum and the natural in Progressive Era America.

Sue Ash (Oxford Brookes), “‘Natural’ Movement and Anxiety with the Female Moving Body’

In 1924 Mary Anderson Johnstone, Headmistress of Manchester Central High School for Girls published The Physical Training of Girls; the culmination of her search for the best of the new training systems which could counteract the ‘dangerous’ effects of modern society on young girls and women. While appreciating eurhythmics, she enthusiastically supports Madge Atkinson’s Greek style ‘Natural Movement’ system as the most effective training for the ‘natural’ improvement of the bodies and minds of her female students. It is still in use in education today. In 1929 The Dancing Times published a letter from Marie Rambert - a Ballet Russes’ dancer, trained in eurhythmics, and aid to Nijinsky’s dancers in Le Sacre du Printemps (1913) - who protests against women learning male dance movements on the grounds of ‘hygiene’ and ‘aesthetics’.

This paper will explore the anxieties which Johnstone and Rambert raise by examining the relationship between female bodies in performative and societal spaces and state concerns over such bodies, through the lens of the new forms of physical culture which were trending in the public and private spheres.

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Modernism’s engagement with neo-Hellenism and the ‘natural’ was corporeally expressed in the performance and teachings of Atkinson and others - Isadora Duncan, Ruby Ginner, Margaret Morris. This form of movement, this dancing, embodied the utopian harmony of mind, body and spirit for Atkinson, thus linking the modern scientific world with ancient classical cultural ideals.

Sue Jones (Oxford), ‘Modernism and Grace’
When Samuel Beckett came to direct his own plays in the 1970s he frequently instructed the actors to read Heinrich von Kleist’s ‘Über Das Marionettentheater’ (1810) in order to prepare them for the required style of movement and action of a Beckett drama. Kleist’s ambivalent narratorial perspective (in part drawing on eighteenth-century accounts of grace) produced a highly skeptical interpretation of the relationship between self-consciousness and grace. The essay has also proved fruitful in unpacking certain kinds of modernist choreographic uses of the puppet figure and the automaton in the twentieth century. Yet discussions of the meaning of grace and its relationship to dance practice rarely arise in wider explorations of modernism, whether examined as a mode, as an historical period, or in conjunction with ideas about modernity. If anything, we tend to note the emphasis on anti-grace in modernist aesthetics, and, conversely, the enduring expressionist tendencies of many forms of ‘modernist’ dance practice, that, however skeptical they are of original forms and movement vocabularies, place them in a very different category to the ‘expressionless’, yet modernist movement of a Beckett play. By comparing American dance experimentation of the 70s and 80s (Trisha Brown, Judson Church – frequently termed ‘postmodern’) with the movement of Beckett’s plays of this period, this paper explores the ways in which dance practices help to illuminate the complex role of grace in new ways of thinking about what constitutes ‘modernism(s)’.

29. Legacy, Innovation and Interpretation: Woolf’s Modernisms, Past and Present (Room 349)
Derek Ryan (Kent), “‘Was it Flush, or was it Pan?’: Virginia Woolf, Ethel Smyth and Canine Biography’
When Miss Barrett, in Flush: A Biography (1933), asks: ‘Was it Flush, or was it Pan?, she most obviously alludes to the mythological god of the wild, flocks and shepherds: ‘Was she no longer an invalid in Wimpole Street, but a Greek nymph in some dim grove in Arcady?’. This passage certainly refers to Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s own poem, ‘Flush or Faunus’ (1850), which compares Flush to that ‘goaty god’. But buried within the above question is another possible allusion to a very earthly dog (or rather, series of dogs) owned by Ethel Smyth. This paper will consider Woolf’s references to Smyth’s Pan in numerous letters, and will draw comparisons between Flush and Smyth’s Inordinate (?) Affection: A Story for Dog Lovers (1936) – the publication of which she discussed with Woolf (L6: 56) – in order to delineate their different treatments of canine biography. In doing so, it will argue that Smyth sentimentalizes and stratifies her dogs based on notions of purity, whereas Woolf explores a canine animality that is fundamentally ‘mongrel’ in nature. That is, whilst Flush is centred on the life of a cocker spaniel, Woolf’s layered allusion to ‘Pan’ provides one example of her mixing reality with myth, fact with fiction, domestic with worldly – the name ‘Pan’ is, after all, contained within the specific breed
‘Spaniel’ whilst also deriving from the Greek root ‘pan-’ meaning ‘all, every, whole, all-inclusive’.

Monica Latham (Lorraine), ‘Virginia Woolf’s Neomodernist Heirs: Nostalgic Innovators’
This paper examines the kinship between contemporary narrative fiction and that of the early twentieth century by dint of a specific example, namely Virginia Woolf’s Mrs Dalloway, a novel that has mothered numerous neomodernist heirs. Neomodernism, a branch or subcategory of literary fiction, reproduces and updates characteristics of modernist fiction. Neomodernist practitioners of literary fiction nod allegiance to modernism in the sense that they make use of modernist aesthetic approaches and formal strategies, which are reworked and reconfigured to depict their contemporary interests. I would like to closely follow the implicit dialogue engaged by a few authors with the prefigurative text and observe how they invoke the Woolfian text and legacy, which remain more or less detectably present in their texts. These contemporary novels show that authors today are not at the “crossroads” (Lodge) anymore, choosing between antithetic approaches to fiction, realism or modernism; they find themselves in a labyrinth of possibilities, in an aesthetic supermarket (Lodge) selecting ingredients (styles, techniques, scenarios) that they combine in their novels. The result is a clever mixture of modernism – not a “fundamentalist modernism” (Bradford), but a domesticated breed of their predecessors’ pure innovative modernism at the beginning of the twentieth century – and realism – certainly not a form of nineteenth-century realism, but a realism without any “fixed or determining set of social or ethical mores” (Bradford). What constituted avant-gardism at the beginning of the twentieth century has now become a familiar, “more polished and reader-friendly” (Bradford) fiction.

Nicolas Pierre Boileau (Aix-Marseille), ‘Representing Subjectivities with or without Woolf’
Rachel Cusk’s Arlington Park and Jon McGregor’s If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things focus on the plight of individuals lost in the seemingly ordered space of (sub)urban life. Their characters form a loosely connected community (expressed in the disconnected narrative) whose common ground is the city they inhabit, or towards which they gravitate. Space organises the narrative more than the story, a feature that has led many to liken these novels to Woolf’s work. Both novels open on a moment of pause, “a suspension of disbelief”, before the narrative probes into the characters’ subjective experience. This pause enables the narrators to describe the city in a way that renews the literary topos of the incipit: is this a realistic description of a city that has become a common place? Or is this an imaginary projection of the characters’ subjective perception? This paper seeks to explore how Cusk and McGregor invent new ways of representing a crisis in subjective experience through space, while revealing that there is no secured place for subjectivity in language (Lacan). Both write after a global, traumatic event (9/11) – as Woolf did after the First World War – and they sustain Woolf’s work into the twenty first century by working on creating characters out of voices and poetry out of the quotidian. Thereby they reveal a contemporary crisis in experience that pays tribute to Woolf’s experimental novels (Mrs Dalloway and The Waves), which have now become a reference, but in their cases, not one that needs deconstructing.

30. Modernism in the Magazines: 1945–Present (Room G22)
Lauren Du Graf (UNC-Chapel Hill), ‘From Rue de Fleurus to Warhol's Factory: Charles Henri Ford and Transhistorical Modernist Communities’

In The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, Gertrude Stein writes: “Of all the little magazines which, as Gertrude Stein loves to quote, have died to make verse free, the youngest and the freshest was the Blues. Its editor Charles Henri Ford has come to Paris and he is young and fresh as his Blues and also honest which also is a pleasure.”

A native of Brookhaven, Mississippi, Ford was an influential editor and well-networked cosmopolite with deep connections in literary and artistic salons on both sides of the Atlantic. From 1929 to 1930, Ford published Blues: A Magazine of New Rhythms out of his home in Columbus, Mississippi, eliciting submissions from the likes of Stein, Ezra Pound and Louis Zukofsky. Ford went on to edit View (1940-47), a publication that William Carlos Williams called “the impossible magazine of the arts no one could have dreamed.” With its focus on French surrealism, View distinguished itself by publishing the first English translations of Albert Camus and Jean Genet, and the only interview Andre Breton ever gave in the States.

This paper illuminates Ford’s overlooked contributions to literary publishing while examining his position as a social catalyst and cultural intermediary in twentieth-century avant-garde circles—including his relationship to Andy Warhol, for whom Ford bought his first movie camera. In so doing, I investigate Ford’s social agency within various modernist communities as a vital form of intellectual history that offers a dynamic perspective on the transatlantic, transhistorical emergence of global modernisms.

Eric White (Oxford Brookes), ‘Unfinished Spaces: Aspiration, Incompletion and Speculation in Avant-garde Journals’

In his essay “Small Magazines” for The English Journal, Ezra Pound argued in 1930 that “the term ‘art movement’ usually refers to something immobile. It refers to a point or an intersection or a declaration of conclusions arrived at. When the real movement or ascent has occurred, such a declaration is made, and things remain at that point or recede.” In short, Pound suggested that avant-gardes moved faster than printing presses, and that upon publication, manifestos became epitaphs for “art movements,” rather than stimuli for further creative production. Taking Pound’s polemic as its point of departure, this paper explores avant-gardes’ unrealised, partially realised, or deferred projects, and how modernist studies has attempted to address them. From early attempts to fill the vacuum created by the demise of Alfred Kreymborg’s seminal journal Others, to Jean Toomer’s proposed collaboration with Sherwood Anderson on an “American” magazine “concentrating on the contributions of the Negro to the western world”; and from Pound’s various schemes to launch collaborative journals in the 1920s to the Objectivists’ attempts to reach a broader readership in the 1930s, the paper argues that the speculative programmes of historical avant-gardes created a sustained engagement with literary modernism. Mid-twentieth century journals, including Cid Corman’s Origin magazine, showed how such projects played out in little magazines long past the moment of their first articulation.

Sophie Seita (Queen Mary/Columbia), ‘Reading Modernist Poets in Late-modernist Magazines: Stein, Riding Jackson, Loy’
This paper will discuss modernist legacies in some late-modernist British and American journals, primarily from the 1970s onwards, by looking at their shaping of modernist reception. It will analyse modernist texts and figures as reprinted or reframed in post-WWII little magazines dedicated equally to both poetry and poetics.

How would we now theorise modernism and late-modernism in dialogue when reading modernist poetries and poetics renegotiated through the eyes and words of late-modernist writers? Some of these journals reprint or print for the first time key modernist texts in their own journal/press (e.g. Stein in 0 to 9, Stein through Something Else Press, Barnes through Sun & Moon Press). Others dedicate a special issue to a poet (Stein in L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E, include reading notes, reviews, or cite modernist poets (Niedecker, Loy, Riding Jackson, H.D., Moore, in However, Parataxis, Sun & Moon, L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E, etc.). Others again may provide extended critical discussions of modernism’s relevance for contemporary practice, indeed maintaining modernism as contemporary practice (see Parataxis).

I will examine why specific modernist poets and poetic features are highlighted and which removed. Sometimes the same poet is claimed for different reasons by seemingly opposing sides on the poetic spectrum, be it as a declaration for renewed relevance (historical, cultural, ideological) or as an aid to a new programme for the later magazine. Lastly, I will consider how such references and discussions help form groups and signal alliances—establishing transhistorical as well as local communities through these little magazines.

31. Modernist Performances (Chancellor’s Hall)
Catherine Rovera (Paris-Dauphine), “‘Music-hall-ity’ and Modernism: Mixin’ Drury Lane with Tin Pan Alley’

It is now a well-established fact that avant-garde artists tapped into various cultural forms that were frequently dismissed as lowbrow or demotic—one may think of Marinetti’s manifesto in praise of the Variety Theatre. Likewise, among the various forms of popular culture that literary modernism both absorbs and reflects, the performing arts feature prominently. Indeed, many modernist writers drew inspiration from both the music-hall tradition and the syncopated rhythms characteristic of the jazz age. One might even argue that the stream of consciousness technique owes much to scat singing.

It strikes me that the Victorian and Edwardian music-hall is ubiquitous in the works of some modernist writers, not just as a social or cultural subtext but as an art form. What interests me first and foremost is the ways in which modernist fiction assimilates some specific techniques that are directly derived from music-hall turns and variety shows. So in this paper, I will explore how and why the British music-hall shaped the aesthetics of several modernist writers, namely James Joyce, Katherine Mansfield and Jean Rhys.

I will argue that some of the narrative strategies used by such writers as Joyce or Rhys to bypass governmental or commercial censorship, or at least please their publishers and make their works more palatable to the general public, may have been modelled on specific "parasexual" techniques perfected by some music-hall performers in order to escape stage censorship, in the wake of the social purity crusades. I will use a three-pronged approach (cultural, aesthetic and genetic) and take specific examples from the published and unpublished works of James Joyce and Jean Rhys.
Katharine Cockin (Hull), ‘A Modern Crusader (1912): Women’s Suffrage Drama and the “Fire of Prometheus”’

Florence Edgar Hobson’s play, A Modern Crusader was produced by the Pioneer Players in 1912 for the National Food Reform Association. Although Rebecca West condemned this production, the play’s powerful depiction of the oppression of women and animals drew its strength from a modernist mode of representation and treatment of emotion. The play challenged the kind of misogyny at work in the Futurist manifesto in its call for a ‘scorn for Woman’ and the ‘hygiene of war’. The play endorsed the political dimensions of vegetarianism and feminism by staging the feeling for animals as well as the violent feelings about women which underwrote the anti-suffrage movement of the pre-war period. This paper will examine the strategies used in this play to appeal to the audience’s feelings about others (principally animals). Leah Leneman highlighted the scene when the protagonist, Josephine is in her father’s butcher’s shop, revolted by the carcases on display and horrified by the squeal of pigs in the slaughter house off-stage. Leneman interprets the emotional and aesthetic arrangement as ‘melodramatic’ and an ‘identification of women as victims with animals as victims’ (Women’s History Review, 1997). Rebecca West claimed that ‘not even the fire of Prometheus’ would make artists of either the Pioneer Players or the Actresses’ Franchise League. This paper will ask what was it that has excluded women’s suffrage drama from the canon (literary/modernist/theatrical) and invite reconsideration of this body of work.

Claire Warden (Lincoln), “‘Let the good incendiaries with charred fingers come!’: Modernist Performance and the Destruction/Construction of Legacies’

The modernist avant-garde was littered with transient performances. Thrown up quickly, they engendered shock, confusion, anger and delight, before disappearing again leaving little material evidence in their wake. In a sense this ephemerality is the joy/bane of all performance, but it seemed particularly evident in the work of the futurists, dada and the surrealists. As figures from all three inter-related ‘movements’ rejected notions of re-performance, legacy and institutionalism, twenty-first century scholars and practitioners are left with a perplexing problem: how should we best respond to or understand work created by leaders like FT Marinetti who, in the 1909 Futurist Manifesto, claimed they should be ‘thrown in the waste paper basket like useless manuscripts’ as soon as they hit 40 by vigorous, new artists.

Taking Marinetti’s provocation and the transient, destructive, experimental attitudes of his compatriots as challenges, alongside Susan Stanford Friedman’s scholarly call to arms that ‘change is what drew me to modernism in the beginning. Why should it ossify? Why should the fluid freeze over, the undecidable become decided?’, this paper seeks to trace the fragmented journey of modernist performance ideas into the twenty-first century. Examining recent work from site-specific performers like Studio Azzurro, playwrights like Michael Vinaver and Martin Crimp, the ‘cyborg theatre’ of La Fura dels Baus and others, this paper aims to tentatively reconstruct an ongoing fractured narrative of modernist performance, concluding by suggesting multiple ways modernism might act as a catalyst for contemporary performance makers.

32. Postwar British Experimental Fiction (Room 243)
Stephanie Jones (Aberystwyth), ‘Too little too late’: British Modernism and Christine Brooke-Rose’s Thru

In a review of Christine Brooke-Rose’s experimental novel Thru (1975), Peter Ackroyd claimed that the novel is ‘too little and it’s also too late […]It is very brave of Miss Brooke-Rose to apply certain European strategies to the indigenous product, but like a great many Europeanisms they have a faded date-stamp upon them. The English have missed that particular development of modernism but it is too late to imitate it: we must go beyond it.’ The facet of Modernism that Ackroyd claims that the English have ‘missed’ is that of fiction which directly engages with theoretical works, in order to both interrogate and to plot these theories as narratives of reading. In this paper I will assert that Brooke-Rose’s Thru is an example of this development of Modernism in British fiction and that its neglect as a novel originated in part from the idea that this form of Modernism as being strictly European, rather than British, and the resulting attitude that it is, therefore, ‘nothing to do with us’.

As an author, Christine Brooke-Rose has been haunted by the reception of her novel Thru, and is frequently dismissed as an essentially French author, whose novels are simply ‘too difficult’ to read as a result of their preoccupation with literary theory. In this paper I will focus on Brooke-Rose’s interrogation of these theories and their extrapolation by the author in order to test them to their limits.

Carole Sweeney (Goldsmiths), ‘Weird Modernism?: Alienation and Experimentalism in Anna Kavan’s Writing’

Anna Kavan (1901-1968) is a writer situated within many different modernisms. A writer of what might be called late or later modernism, Kavan’s work variously employs and resists many modernist conventions in its deployment of an almost impenetrably private language of alienation and deprivation that casts a nightmarish pall across all subject-object relations, reducing any sense of an outside to a continuously diminishing psychological space. Saturated by what she calls a ‘night-time language’, Kavan’s writing strains at the borders of modernism, surrealism and the avant-garde. Never sitting easily within any of these categories, it frequently threatens to tip over from eccentric autobiography or surrealist memoir into science fiction, or slipstream fiction as it has been more recently named, depicting a world almost entirely shaped by a decentred alienation that is at once intensely intimate and oppressive.

Beginning as a ‘home counties’ novelist, a series of severe breakdowns and subsequent life-long heroin addition resulted in a dramatic change (and a new literary persona) in Kavan’s writing after 1930. While she can be claimed as an example of a late modernist writer, in both tone and theme, her work demonstrates many elements characteristic of the affectless narratives of the nouveau roman. This paper explores some of the ‘weird’ modernist and experimental narrative techniques and preoccupations across Kavan’s writing between the 1930s and the 1960s and, more specifically, examines her dystopian, post-apocalyptic novel Ice (1967).

Hannah Van Hove (Glasgow), ‘Towards an Alternative Genealogy of the British Modernist Novel: Situating the Works of Anna Kavan, Alexander Trocchi and Ann Quin’
Various studies on modernism in more recent years have proposed that our understanding of literary modernism should extend beyond the question of periodisation. In particular, as the value of the term ‘postmodernism’ has been contested, the supposed ‘decline’ or ‘disappearance’ of modernism has fruitfully been called into question. As David James explains, challenging the view that the modernist project has crashed offers a twin corrective: ‘the refusal to let modernism be rigidly periodised is reciprocated by a similar refusal to view the postwar as a phase in which experimentation was written off as the residue of high-modernist involution.’

Attesting to the value of such an understanding of modernism, this paper hopes to contribute to current research on the postwar British novel by placing the often neglected works of Anna Kavan, Alexander Trocchi and Ann Quin in the foreground. As this paper will argue, these novels, defying straightforward categorisation, highlight the complex continuities of modernism in postwar writing and provide a useful starting point to think about an ‘alternative’ genealogy of the British modernist novel.

33. The Touch of Modernism (Room 246)

Kevin Riordan (Nanyang), ‘Remembering to Forget the Kodak: Modernism’s Curious Click’

In reflecting on her trip around the world in 1889, Nellie Bly expresses few regrets, only that in her “hasty departure [she] forgot to take a Kodak.” In 1895, when H. G. Wells’s time traveller returns from the future, he echoes Bly, “‘If only I had thought of a Kodak!’” And in Virginia Woolf’s 1915 The Voyage Out, St. John Hirst reproaches himself while in South America, “‘What an ass I was not to bring my Kodak!’”

These characters all find themselves exposed to the unprecedented. To write, to narrate, or to describe what they see—of the world, the future, or the exotic—is insufficient, and the authors all allude to this perceptual excess with the same brand specificity. The characters pronounce “Kodak” and—with its onomatopoeic consonance—the word itself shocks the scene that the text can suggest but not capture. Speaking the word, “Kodak,” ekphrastically flashes that which the writer wants witnessed but that the reader cannot quite see.

In 1888 the George Eastman Company introduced the portable, film-roll camera, and photographic reproduction was put into the hands of average travellers for the first time. The Kodak became a standard means to record experience as one travelled, but as these literary invocations suggest it also came to shape experience more generally, strangely even in its own absence. In this paper, I revisit modernism’s conventional reflections on photography to show how the Kodak imaginatively produced Benjamin’s “posthumous shock” or Barthes’s punctum without even so much as a camera’s click.

Naomi Toth (Paris Ouest Nanterre), ‘Blink and You’ll Miss It: The Flickering Modernist Moment’

This paper proposes to revisit the link between the “present moment” (“now”), vision and knowledge in Modernist fiction by examining the recurrent motif of the blinking eye. The importance of the “present moment” in Modernist poetics has long been considered by critics through the prism of “epiphany”, however this reading has more recently been called into question by New Historist scholars, who see it as contributing to the reification of art (“art for art’s sake”). My hypothesis is that the motif of the blink, which
conjugates clarity and obscurity in a present that flickers, allows us to account for the epistemological significance of “now” in Modernism while avoiding both the idealism associated with “epiphany” on the one hand, and the marginalisation of this aspect of Modernist poetics on the other. Passages from the works of James Joyce, Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf and T. S. Eliot will inform my discussion. I would also like to suggest that the link between the present, the visual, and the epistemological in Modernist literature may be contrasted with the role the metaphor of the blinking eye plays in Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology and Bertrand Russell’s theory of knowledge respectively, both of which were being developed over the same period. Such a comparison may then allow us to identify the specificity of the literary conception of “now” in Modernism, and thereby provide the basis for a reflection on such a conception’s legacy in the twenty-first century.

Niklas Salmose (Linnaeus), ‘Modernist Fiction and Sensorial Aesthetics’

Viktor Shlovsky wrote almost hundred years ago that there is art that makes one “recover the sensation of life”. His famous remark “to make the stone stony” refers, in my mind, to the very concept of a sensorial aesthetic; objects should be described as they are sensed not as they are perceived. Modernist novels occupy an ambiguous space between being mono-medial and multi-modal, acting as both self-referencing works of art and, at the same time, evidently referring to and being inspired by other media such as cinematography and music. Studies of modernist fiction, and its relation to the sensorial modalities vision and sound, are numerous and convincing, especially in concordance with modernity and technology (Danius 2002; Jacobs 2001; Kern 1983; Kundu 2008); discussions on the remaining sensorial modalities, smell, taste and pressure, are scarcer. In this paper I will investigate modernist fiction in the light of a sensorial aesthetic that (a) relates to text as sensorial rather than as perceptive, e.g. the production of sensorial perception in readers rather than perception inherently already being part of literary discourse, and (b) focuses mainly on smell, taste and the auditive. Rather than investigating why modernism, in particular, accentuated sensorial modalities, my paper is concerned with aesthetic strategies and emotive reception. This investigation will, apart from sketching some general historical and theoretical outlines, mainly discuss examples from texts by Malcolm Lowry, Virginia Woolf, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and William Faulkner, in order to convincingly establish a relation between modernist fiction and sensorial aesthetics.

James Berger (Yale), ‘Modernism and Disarticulation: Cognitive Impairment, Language and Modernist Narrative’

For Georg Lukacs, the epistemology and aesthetic of modernism reflected “the nebulous consciousness of an idiot” and an “obsession with the morbid and the pathological.” This tendentious judgement is, of course, mistaken, even obtuse. Yet it contains some truth. Some of the defining works of modernist fiction depict in central roles figures with cognitive and linguistic impairments. In Conrad’s The Secret Agent, Faulkner’s The Sound and the Fury, and Barnes’ Nightwood, we see elaborate strategies of dis- (and dys-) articulation. Those without linguistic capacity (dysarticulate) are violently severed (disarticulated) from the social fabric. The dys-/disarticulate figure serves as a point of intersection and conflict for the most significant discourses of modernity—those of science, administration (and their combined force in discourses of eugenics), aesthetics,
ethics, religion, and sexuality. The “mental defective,” “degenerate,” or “idiot” occupies a vexed place in these texts. Older tropes of “sacred fool” or “wild child” have been replaced by newer clinical and bureaucratic understandings, and these new approaches work together with broader modern tendencies toward scientific, technological, and administrative control. Outside the perceived totalizing apparatuses of modernity, the dys-/disarticulate figure’s alterity stands in opposition to modernity’s dream of omniscience. Further, these texts invoke premodern values of care (often between siblings) that oppose modern institutional procedures. As resistances to modernity, however, these dys-/disarticulated gestures are limited. Stevie, Benjy and, in different ways, Robin are genuinely impaired; they require care, and the efforts of others to care for them ultimately fail. And the logic of familial care has two further drawbacks. It cannot address structural, political problems. And it requires, as I will discuss, a massive repression or exclusion of sexual desire. Indeed, the political catastrophe of Nightwood results from the untethering of desire that was rigorously contained in the two earlier novels.

I might add that these dys-/disarticulate dynamics of alterity, resistance, repression, and failure are reinscribed parodically in later “postmodern” fiction which feature the return of versions of the “wild child” (e.g. Kosinski’s Being There, DeLillo’s White Noise, and Auster’s City of Glass), and then replayed quite differently, in terms of a neurological spectrum of cognitive modes, in more recent fictions bearing the influence of contemporary neuroscience (Lethem’s Motherless Brooklyn, Haddon’s The Curious Incident of a Dog in the Night-Time, and Powers’ The Echo Maker).

34. Global Modernisms (Room G26)
Sourit Bhattacharya (Warwick), ‘J. M. Coetzee’s Resistances and Jibanananda Das’
Dichotomies: Anomalies in Global Modernist Studies’
The rise of global modernist studies is welcoming both in its revisions of geo-history and methodology. However, a few things remain unaddressed. What happens to a writer who draws influence from European literary modernism and refuses to be grouped under categories like nation-specific modernism, postmodernism or postcolonialism? J. M. Coetzee’s entire oeuvre seems a repeated dialogue with ‘high’ modernist writers uncompromised by tendentious geopolitical ends. Is ‘provisionally peripheralizing’ these ‘high’ writers as prioritized aim, as Mark Wollaeger suggests in The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms (2012: 6), an implicit readymade rejection of writers like Coetzee, whose modernist vein of writing was anomaly to politically committed art in apartheid South Africa, and now the assumptions of global modernisms? Shouldn’t there also be a ‘cluster’ of modernism’s lateness, which writers like Coetzee in a Benjaminian understanding of modernity’s interruptive history so compellingly render? Secondly, modernism, when it comes to India, had a much more complicated picture than the one Jessica Berman (Global Modernisms) finds because of India’s vast cultural and linguistic differences. For example, Jibanananda Das’ poetry in form, diction, and philosophy heralds literary modernism in Bengal in the 1940s, whereas his prose fiction, which was undiscovered till the late 70s, stands anomaly to it in its realist bourgeoisie class narrative. Proclaiming Das modernist, which he has been, calls for understanding of specific literary and socio-political factors which may not correspond to contemporary other forms of modernism in India. Global modernist studies needs to address these anomalies in its research on ‘geopolitical’ question.
Mele Pesti (Tallinn), 'Cultural Anthropophagy Revisited'

"Cultural anthropophagy", a concept born in Brazilian modernism that developed towards a cultural model during the 20th century, gives us a valuable tool to analyse fundamental cultural processes of contemporary Brazil and possibly the world.

Cultural anthropophagy is a metaphor created by a Brazilian modernist Oswald de Andrade in "Manifesto Antropofago" (1928). The manifesto functioned as a bold pledge for cultural resistance against a (neo-)colonial discourse labelling Brazil as merely a weaker copy of Europe. It was an extremely original proposal to build Brazilian national identity upon the image of not the noble but the wild and at first look aggressive savage, the cannibal, who - at a closer look - appears to be the creation of the European mind. De Andrade recycled this European Other as a mighty, but surprisingly non-aggressive figure who, in the spirit of ritual anthropophagy, devours all external cultural impact, but maintains its identity thanks to its strong base, the Indigenous heritage. He thus offered an optimistic strategy of maintaining cultural sovereignty in the situation of extremely strong foreign influences entering a culture.

The reception of the manifesto was nearly non-existent in 1930s-40s. From 50s onwards various Brazilian cultural movements developed its main ideas to fit their contemporary needs. Concrete poets of the 50s, the pop music movement Tropicalists of 60s, theatre and cinema avant-garde drew upon the anthropophagic answer to the classical question: how to compile a healthy mix of local and foreign. In 1990s Brazilian anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro developed Amer-Indian perspectivism based on de Andrade's anthropophagy.

In contemporary globalised world with intense migration processes, the pressure of incoming cultural influences is more topical than ever. Anthropophagy might offer a model worth considering as an example.

Nesrin Degirmencioglu (Warwick), 'Jameson’s Notion of Impossibility of ‘Cognitive Mapping’: A Postmodern or a Modern Phenomenon?’

In Postmodernism (1991) Fredric Jameson associates postmodernity with the notion of impossibility of cognitively mapping one’s position within a global multinational network and suggests the invention of a new aesthetic form that would capture the individual’s experience of postmodern condition. His association of impossibility of cognitive mapping with postmodernism opens up new opportunities for the reconsideration of modernism as an aesthetic form. This paper will examine the origins of the condition of postmodernity in the modernist novels of John Dos Passos’s Manhattan Transfer and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpinar’s A Mind at Peace. By bringing New York and Istanbul together as part of a singular economic system (as Jameson argues in A Singular Modernity), it will explore what the new methodological approaches of world literary studies hold for the examination of the twentieth century American and Turkish novels and how the examination of these modernist texts from a global economic perspective can inform the twenty-first century reader about the origins of the condition of postmodernity experienced today. In Manhattan Transfer and A Mind at Peace, this paper will focus on the formal registration of the urban and global transformation and the individual’s experience of it through the immigrant characters Bud Korpenning and a Rumelian beggar, and upper class characters, Jimmy Herf and Mumtaz. As a result, I will reposition Jameson’s postmodern concept of
impossibility of cognitive mapping as a modernist phenomenon, arguing that in spite of their different geographic locations, both novels capture modernity as an unmappable totality through the subjective experience of fragmentation, distraction and dislocation.

35. Modernism and War (Beveridge Hall)

Peter Lowe (Bader International Study Center), “‘Their Name Liveth for Evermore’: Modernism and the Great War Memorial’

As the centenary of the outbreak of World War One approaches, it is to be expected that debates about the role of Modernism as an aesthetic response to the War will be revisited, and with these the issue of whether ‘Modernism’ as a literary and artistic style actually had a shaping role in the memorialisation of the conflict. Although the War years are, chronologically-speaking, closely associated with the rise of a ‘High Modernist’ aesthetic, and many of the figures who were to become Modernist figureheads were active before 1914, much of the writing and visual art of the time was founded upon a sense of nostalgia, suggesting that the trauma of the War was best countered by variations on traditional themes rather than the “shock of the new” (to use Robert Hughes’ phrase). In the years after the conflict, when Modernist aesthetics are introduced into the act of memorialisation they are often seen as inadequate with regard to the scale of the losses in question, as though a return to older artistic forms would, in itself, carry more gravitas and better commemorate the dead and missing.

By reviewing proposals for several ‘memorial’ projects; in verse, in paint, and in stone, this paper will explore the capacity of a Modernist style to capture the emotional weight of the trauma of the Great War, and the reluctance of those who survived the conflict to see the dead commemorated in forms whose complexity was seen as antithetical to the stark reality of their sacrifice.

Kate McLoughlin (Birkbeck), ‘Modernism Then: War Casualties in Wordsworth and West’

Modernism arguably enters English poetry in 1798 when Wordsworth discovers a ‘Discharged Soldier’ resting by the side of the road: an ‘uncouth’ (unknowable) figure with a ‘ghastly’ visage, a ‘lean’ and ‘desolate’ victim-perpetrator of colonial wars in the West Indies, curiously unable or unwilling to talk of his experiences (‘in all he said / There was a strange half-absence, and a tone / Of weakness and indifference’). The exchange between the narrator-poet and the veteran peters into silence (‘Discourse had ceased’): an unusual outcome in Wordsworth’s encounter poems.

Though there is no evidence that he had Wordsworth’s Discharged Soldier in mind, Walter Benjamin might have been describing him when, in his 1936 essay ‘The Storyteller’, he remarked that men were coming home from war ‘not richer but poorer in communicable experience’. The ‘war’ in question was the First World War, which Benjamin cited, along with industrialization, the fragmentation of traditional communities, bourgeois individualism and the rise of mass media (i.e. the age of mechanical reproduction) as a proximate cause of the modern(ist) inability to pass on traditional wisdom. But in this paper, I will argue that Benjamin got the date wrong: this peculiarly modernist silence was a product of the age of mass, industrialized warfare, which can be dated to the French levée en masse of 1793. I will make this argument for a ‘modernism then’, with reference to the figure of the war veteran in two texts: Wordsworth’s poem and Rebecca West’s The
Rachel Franklin (Sheffield Hallam), “‘The Middle Ages were being reborn with their springtime of superstition’: ‘Cultural Renewal’ and the Death of Modernity in Salvador Dalí’s novel, Visages Cachés (1944)”

This paper discusses Salvador Dalí’s relationship with Modernity in terms of the form and content of his novel, Visages Cachés (1944), a work which has received little in depth scholarly attention. I will look at the ways in which the novel explores the value of Modernity in a war-torn Europe.

Visages Cachés presents Modernity, associated with an intellectualism which favours ambivalence (Visages Cachés, 153-154) and symbolised by the Surrealist Movement, as coming to an end. ‘Cultural renewal’, figured in terms of a return to traditions of the past, is conceptualised as a way to rejuvenate the society of malaise, stasis, and lack of purpose which Dalí saw as characterising the dying Modern world. I will look at how the notion of ‘cultural renewal’ in the novel is integrally tied up with fascist ideology and male sexuality, the lead up to war being characterised as a period of ‘sexual tension’ culminating in an ejaculation which will re-energise those individuals who think themselves powerful enough to take a leadership role in the renewal of society. It has been argued that Dalí was a fascist (Foster, 1991), but I will suggest that these claims are complicated by the novel undermining at the same time as glorifying those characters associated with ‘renewal’. By building ambiguity into his novel he thus seems to be taking part in the Modernist intellectual ambivalence that ‘cultural renewal’ is presented as reacting against.

Mercedes Aguirre (UCL), ‘Home and Abroad: Reassessing the English Literature of the Spanish Civil War’

The cultural response generated by the Spanish Civil War was extraordinary. Despite its domestic nature, the Spanish war caught the imagination of artists of all nationalities, becoming a symbol of the growing connection between literature and politics in the decade of the 1930s, and serving as a catalyst for discussions about the social responsibility of the writer. Writers like W.H. Auden, Ernest Hemingway, George Orwell, and Sylvia Townsend Warner, among many others, were inspired by the conflict, in which many saw the ultimate fight between democracy and Fascism.

Perhaps because the passions that the foreign war inspired in many British and American writers and artists seem almost disproportionate to the importance of the conflict, the literature of the Spanish Civil War has consistently been seen as “exceptional”. Consequently, critical studies have almost always analysed it independently, and hardly ever in relation, for instance, to the First or Second World Wars. My paper will question how the literature of the Spanish war fits in the idea of Modernist literature. It will also engage with the current debate on the meanings of “cosmopolitanism” in the literature of the interwar period, considering the political and ethical implications of being, as several authors considered themselves, “tourists of war”.

36. Parade’s End – and Ford – Now! (Room 349)
Rob Hawkes (Teesside), ‘It’s Going to Be Hard Work: Parade’s End and the Modernist Adaptation’

In the run up to the broadcast of Tom Stoppard’s BBC/HBO adaptation of Parade’s End in August 2012, the leading actor Benedict Cumberbatch warned audiences not to expect ‘some crappy, easily digestible milk-chocolate on a Sunday evening… it’s going to be hard work, but it will pay dividends if you stick with it’. Echoing Cumberbatch, the director Susanna White described the series as ‘television that makes demands on you – if you go away to make a cup of tea, you’ll be lost’. This paper will examine both the adaptation itself and the discussion that surrounded it in the media before, during and after it was broadcast and will ask what the dramatisation did for Ford, for Parade’s End, and for the modernist novel. In emphasising the difficulty of both the source text and the series itself, did the discussion surrounding the adaptation simply reiterate tired clichés about modernist writing or open up new avenues for discussion and debate? Comparing the series to the adaptations of other modernist novels, I will ask how and whether modernist novels successfully translate to the screen. I will also look beyond the issue of the ‘faithfulness’ of modernist adaptations to their source texts while suggesting that, in the case of Parade’s End, changes made by Stoppard to the chronology of Ford’s narrative and his decision largely to omit the final novel of the tetralogy, Last Post, from the adaptation, have refocused critical attention on some of the most engaging and challenging aspects of the Tietjens books.

Rebekah Lockyer (Birmingham), ‘Editing Ford’s Rhythms’

With the publication of the Carcanet scholarly edition of Ford Madox Ford’s Parade’s End in 2010–11, readers have unprecedented access to the details and editorial variants of the text. This paper considers the difficulties of editing Ford’s irregular ellipses, in the light of the rhythms and musical intricacies of his prose. As the son of a musicologist and Wagner expert, Ford was influenced from a young age by the Wagnerian aesthetics of the Gesamtkunstwerk, and despite his abortive musical career his understanding of music was carried into literary work. Taking as its starting point the pioneering work on Ford’s musical youth by Carl Smith and Sondra Stang (1989), my paper contends that the writer’s musicality finds its ultimate outlet in Parade’s End and that it is the combined force of this duality of form which enables Ford to address the ‘inexpressible’ trauma of war. Focusing particularly on the use of ellipses and layout in A Man Could Stand Up to communicate specific musical moments and transcribe the rhythms of consciousness, I examine the details of Ford’s typescript and emendations, and the problematics of musical rendering for both writer and editor. I contend that the long neglected connection between music and Ford’s literary techniques represents a vital new consideration of Parade’s End in the context of the current interdisciplinary expansion of Modernist studies.

Max Saunders (King’s College London), ‘Parade’s End, Editing and 21st-century Ford’

The central question in this paper is: how might our understanding of Ford Madox Ford’s work in the 21st century differ from the received approaches of the 20th century? I shall start from the ways in which working on the Carcanet critical edition of Parade’s End changed the editors’ sense not only of that work but of Ford’s oeuvre. The argument will be that the editorial process revealed a richer and more complex text, the study of the compositional processes revealing much about authorial concerns, and the attention to the tetralogy’s architectonics revealing a work arguably more modernist not just in its dense allusiveness and foregrounding of
language and style, but in its opacities, uncertainties and disjunctures. But also that part of that richness was an enhanced sense of how intricately Parade's End related to other Ford texts as well as the texts of others; and thus how intertextual his substantial body of work is; and how it needs to be understood as an oeuvre. I shall consider how recent developments in Ford studies have also demonstrated both the complexity of his literary and cultural contacts, and the interrelations between his books. Finally I shall sketch out how future editorial plans might deliver a different-looking Ford for the future.

37. The 1930s (Room G22)
Anna Cottrell, ‘Intermodernism and the Perils of Gender: British Women Writing the Urban Worker in the 1930s’

Intermodernism has emerged in recent years as an important new critical field which has fostered a long-overdue discussion of several British writers whose work has been ignored by most scholarly evaluations of twentieth-century literature. Two aspects of this new approach to writing in mid-twentieth-century Britain are especially thought-provoking. On the one hand, Intermodernist criticism has contributed to the growing body of critical work that considers why certain writers do not fit into university curricula, or why no room is found for them in overviews of modernism, however it is defined. On the other hand, to speak of a writer such as Storm Jameson, Inez Holden, or Betty Miller as ‘Intermodernist’ is to steer away from the highly reductive category of ‘women’s writing’ which, as critics such as Maroula Joannou and Kristin Bluemel have argued for over a decade, has hindered a serious analysis of these writers’ work.

In this paper, I would like to build on the Intermodernist model of an ‘eccentric’ canon, while paying more attention to the fact that not only did the Intermodernists work in central London and interacted (often unhappily or unproductively) with its literary circles, but they also consistently wrote about central London, and specifically about the insecure female worker in the city. I will pay particular attention to three 1930s novels that engage with this character and her working day (or night). A shift in a hairdressing parlour described at length by Betty Miller in The Mere Living (1933), the glove shop assistant’s dreary routine Storm Jameson chose for A Day Off (1933), and the Soho dance hostess’s nightly employment in Norah Hoult’s Youth Can’t Be Served (1933) – all of these are tales of work done by women only. These gendered choices cannot have been accidental: the fact that Jameson, Hoult, and Miller wrote repeatedly about experiences of not fitting in that were of a completely different kind from their own experiences of maladjustment or in-betweenness merits a discussion.

Natasha Periyan (Royal Holloway), ‘Worth dying for’: Henry Green, Technical Education and Working Class Discourse

On reading Henry Green’s public school autobiography, Pack My Bag, Evelyn Waugh found: ‘it was a book no-one else could have written […] I know [you] far less well than I did before which […] I take to be its purpose’. Countering the tradition of formalist approaches to Green, I join the current shift in modernism now towards a historicized approach (Marius Hentea, Henry Green at the Limits of Modernism, 2014). Indeed, this paper contextualises Pack My Bag in terms of the 1930s generation’s contentious class politics and their response to the First World War heroes.
I suggest how Green defies the heroic tradition in this ‘blind’, anonymous text as he rejects the commemorative function of the proper name in the post-war period (Bob Bushway, 'Name Upon Name: the Great War and Remembrance'). Green aligns his alienated written style with an estranged set of upper class values, which are denigrated in comparison to the ‘heroic’ directness of working class speech and social relations.

In 1941 Green commented: ‘a man’s style is like the clothes he wears, an expression of his personality’. How does Henry Green’s style in Pack My Bag connote a class-based critique of the heroic? I shall explore this through historical and linguistic analysis, revealing how Green rejected the cultural conditioning of his public school background in favour of working class language and values. Values he found to be ‘worth dying for’ at the outbreak of the Second World War.

Sarah Hayden (University College Cork), “‘The Creative Life vs Dictatorship’: New World Modernists on Old World Anti-modernism’

On July 19, 1937, the ‘Entartete Kunst’ exhibition opened in Munich. A day earlier, the opening of the ‘Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung’ had inaugurated the nearby Haus der Deutschen Kunst. Together, these exhibitions symbolize dual strands of a bipartite Nazi Kunstpolitik: namely, the violent suppression of all art (and, accordingly, artists) denigrated as 'degenerate' and the promotion of an alternative aesthetic deemed appropriate to the Nazi regime and the myth of Germany it was attempting to inculcate. They also represent the culmination of a process announced four years earlier: a cultural policy which combined calculated polemics with annihilating terror. ‘Entartete Kunst’ was the mobile, mass-marketed keystone in a campaign to turn the German people against Modernist art.

News of ‘Entartete Kunst’, which saw 2 million visitors in its first 4 months, travelled far. Journalistic reports on the exhibition, and on the almost 16,000 works of modern art confiscated by Ziegler’s commission in 1937 alone, appeared worldwide. As avant-gardists turned fugitive, New York received a highly specialized tranche of creative exiles. The New York artworld celebrated the arrival of these highly decorated Modernists as the moment of its inauguration as a new art capital and bewailed — not unproblematically — the barbarism of the old world that had cast these geniuses out.

This paper looks to New York’s literary anti-establishment of the late 30s and early 40s and asks: How, if at all, did Modernist voices in the land of the free respond to the outlawing of Modernist art?

Emma Liggins (Manchester Metropolitan), ‘Conspiracies of Silence: Representing Abortion and Female Promiscuity in 1930s British Women’s Fiction’

This paper focuses on representations of abortion and female promiscuity in 1930s women’s fiction in the light of debates around birth control and the campaign for the legalisation of abortion headed by Stella Browne in the inter-war period. Feminist campaigners such as Marie Stopes and Winifred Holtby argued for women’s right to birth control in a time of shifting attitudes to female sexual behaviours, when pre-marital sex for women was becoming much more common, yet was still only advocated by a minority of medical advisers and practitioners and members of the feminist avant-garde. The unmarried mother and the mistress were demonised in British society, which associated illegitimacy and female promiscuity with social decline. Advice
literature identified the 'conspiracy of silence' around middle-class abortion, reinforcing the dangers of advising young girls to limit or deny their 'natural' motherhood.

The 1930s is sometimes neglected as falling outside the period of 'high' modernism; this paper re-evaluates the ways in which 1930s fiction has been categorised and interpreted, particularly in relation to the vexed divide between modernist and middlebrow writing. Through an examination of the new, shocking fictionalisation of abortion and its aftermath (it had rarely appeared in British fiction before the 1930s), I address the difficulties faced by both modernist and middlebrow female writers in incorporating the limits and consequences of sexual promiscuity into their narratives of separated wives and sexually experienced single women. It focuses particularly on abortion scenes and promiscuous female behaviours in Jean Rhys’s *Voyage in the Dark* (1933) and Rosamond Lehmann’s *The Weather in the Streets* (1936), which show abortion as a kind of punishment for uncontrolled female sexuality whilst evoking sympathy for women at the mercy of their bodies. Rhys’s hallucinatory description of abortion is arguably more modernist in its fragmented, disjointed style than Lehmann’s more sober, realistic account. I consider their representations in relation to debates about modernism and censorship raised by Celia Marshik (2006) and others. Did 1930s British fiction allow the woman writer to break the silences around abortion, or did it ultimately reinscribe conservative ideologies of motherhood? And what are the implications in terms of our understandings of modernist sexualities and of the 1930s?

38. Modernist Structures (Chancellor’s Hall)

Bernard Vere (Sotheby’s Institute of Art), ‘End of Season Modernism: The Modernist Football Stadiums of Florence and Turin’

In 1931 AC Fiorentina moved into their new stadium. Designed along Italian Rationalist lines by Pier Luigi Nervi, it was built in reinforced concrete and named for Giovanni Berta, a Florentine Fascist martyr drowned in the Arno. The ground was part of a wave of new stadiums being built both in Italy and across Europe during the 1920s and 1930s. Many remain in use: Torino play in what was once the Mussolini stadium (now the Olimpico), Lazio and Roma in the stadium designed as the centrepiece of Rome’s Foro Mussolini.

New materials and methods of construction were allied to an increasing interest in organised sport from both politicians and theorists. In 1926 the future Bauhaus Director Hannes Meyer had argued that “the stadium has carried the day against the art museum”. The Italian stadiums partook of this widespread enthusiasm, but attempted to establish a distinctively Fascist response to international modernism; influential critics hailed the stadium in Florence as the first masterpiece of Fascist architecture and that in Turin as “profoundly and completely Latin and Fascist”. They remain the most visible examples of modernist architecture of the Fascist period.

These stadiums may be reaching the end of their useful life, not because of their compromised origins, but because the contemporary stadium is required to be an entertainment complex rather than simply a sporting ground. Fiorentina plan a new stadium based on Munich’s Allianz Arena; Juventus have left the Olimpico, while Torino hanker for a return to their former ground.
Emily Richardson (Royal College of Art) and Helena Bonett (Royal College of Art/Tate), ‘The Modernist Architect’s Home: A Screening and Discussion of Emily Richardson’s new film exploring H. T. Cadbury-Brown’s house, 3 Church Walk, Suffolk’

For Modernism Now! I am proposing to screen a section of the 30 minute film on Cadbury-Brown’s Suffolk home, 3 Church Walk, followed by a Q&A chaired by Helena Bonett.

HT ‘Jim’ Cadbury-Brown was a British modernist architect best known for his contribution to the design of the iconic Brutalist development of the Royal College of Art, and earlier work on pavilions for the Festival of Britain in the summer of 1951.

Cadbury-Brown and his wife Elizabeth designed their modernist home at 3 Church Walk in Aldeburgh, Suffolk, in 1960 on a site originally earmarked by Benjamin Britten for an opera house and lived there until Jim’s death in 2009. The house is an L-shaped, flat roof building that incorporates and expresses the couple’s modernist ideals. Since Jim’s death in 2009 the house has been uninhabited but many of the couple’s possessions remain, hinting at a former life. The once tended garden is a verdant wilderness encroaching on the rational lines of the house.

3 Church Walk takes the empty and neglected house of the modernist architect as its subject describing a journey through the space, with an accompanying soundtrack composed from recordings of the surfaces and materials of the house.

This film is the first in my series on British modernist architects’ houses that are living representations of their modernist architectural thinking. In the discussion following the screening, Helena and I will draw out the themes of modernist legacy, how modernism informs my artistic practice, and possible modernist futures, which are relevant to this film.

39. ‘Contextualising May Sinclair’ (Room 243)

Rebecca Bowler (Keele), ‘The Defence of the Solitary Genius: Being Charlotte Brontë’

This paper will look at May Sinclair’s writings about the Brontë sisters, and how Sinclair constructed a version of the Brontës, particularly Charlotte Brontë, that accorded with her own views on what a woman genius should be, and how a woman writer should be remembered and positioned.

Sinclair’s Charlotte is a strong, independent, and essentially solitary woman. She is uninterested in love, and she should not be explained with relation to any other person, literary or otherwise: she is free from what Sinclair calls, in her novel The Creators, the ‘literary taint’. Sinclair constructs her in this way because she needs her to be this way. She acknowledges this, and apologises for it in the introduction to her Brontë biography: ‘If I have tried, cruelly, to take from Charlotte the little beige gown that she wore at Mr. Thackeray’s dinner-party, it is because her homemade garments seem to suit her better. She is more herself in skirts that have brushed the moors’. Actually, Charlotte Brontë is more May Sinclair than herself when she is dressed up in this way.

Sinclair’s reappropriation of Charlotte, as against the biographers who want her to be Heger’s Charlotte, and against the literary critics who want her placed squarely within a literary circle, is one of defence. It is important to Sinclair that she establishes that feminine genius is self-sufficient. It is an idea she returns to time and time again in her novels; it is hyper-identification; and it is self-protective. Contextualising
women writers, Sinclair suggests, necessarily means putting them in relation to the male writers of the time, or influences that are bigger than themselves. This, she feels, is dangerous and reductive. She herself would like to be remembered as the solitary woman genius, wandering the hills.

Charlotte Jones (UCL), ‘Impressions of Modernity: May Sinclair, Ford Madox Ford and Avant-garde Ambivalence’

The First World War is often used to locate the precise moment of Modernist rupture with the past. To many critics the conflict represents, or even initiates, the epistemological break dividing the Modernist and Victorian eras. Yet the reality of the war’s literary legacy is much more complex, a complexity encapsulated in the work of May Sinclair, the quintessential ‘Modern Victorian’ in the words of her biographer Suzanne Raitt. Sinclair departed for the Belgian Front as part of an ambulance corps in autumn 1914. Having experimented before the war with a ‘proto-Modernist’ representation of interiority in The Three Sisters, she turns during the war to a more characteristically nineteenth-century mode of representation: Impressionism. It is admittedly difficult to define what exactly ‘Impressionism’ means in an artistic, let alone literary, sense, and the problem is as much temporal as taxonomical; by 1910 Roger Fry was already declaring art ‘Post-Impressionist’, the same year that Ford Madox Ford was just beginning his numerous attempts to define ‘Literary Impressionism’ as a method. Yet recent critical rehabilitation (Jesse Matz, Tamar Katz, Max Saunders, Adam Parkes) suggests that this very indefiniteness has made Impressionism a useful category in problematizing the relationship between Modernism and its forbears.

Sinclair and Ford are excellent case studies for exploring this tension of Modernist inheritance. A generation older than ‘les jeunes’, both began writing in the late nineteenth century but ended up producing canonical texts of Modernism (Ford’s The Good Soldier; Sinclair’s reviews of Richardson and ‘Prufrock’). How might approaching Modernism through these two authors alter or enhance our understanding of it? And how particularly might it re-frame the way we conceive of the literary heritage of the First World War, poised as it is – like these authors – looking simultaneously back to Victorianism and Edwardianism, and forward to Modernism and avant-gardism?

Claire Drewery (Sheffield Hallam), ‘Mysticism, Monism and Psychoanalysis: May Sinclair’s “Uncanny” Modernism’

This paper traces an early-twentieth century cultural change in perceptions of the construction and representation of ‘reality’. I examine this epochal shift through a consideration of the modernist author May Sinclair’s engagement with contemporary philosophical and psychoanalytical discourses, her personal crisis of Anglican faith and her growing interest in philosophical Idealism. Moreover, following the publication of two of Sinclair’s short stories ‘The Victim’ and ‘Jones’s Karma’ in T. S. Eliot’s periodical the Criterion, both Herbert Howarth and Rebeccah Kinnamon Neff have pointed out connections between spiritual themes in the work of Eliot and Sinclair, citing Eliot’s interest in Sinclair’s theme of ‘the relation between the Buddhist concept of karma and the Christian preoccupation with guilt’.

This emphasis on spirituality and mystical themes in Sinclair’s fiction may be further illuminated by its frequent juxtaposition with psychoanalytic theories of sublimation. For example, Sinclair’s 1923 volume of
Uncanny Stories – indebted for its title to Freud’s 1919 essay ‘The Uncanny’ – contains numerous examples of sublimation as a quasi-mystical state which closely anticipates the modernist aesthetic of the epiphany. Her short stories and novels, I shall argue, may be read as fictional illustrations of the theories which inspired her commitment to spiritual Monism: the ‘ultimate reality’ she defined variously as unity, the Absolute, and ‘God’.

As the above observations suggest, situating May Sinclair within a modernist context reveals her influence as having been more pervasive than her experimentations with the psychological novel or coining of the ‘stream of consciousness’ label might suggest. Conversely, her contributions to contemporary literary and philosophical debates offer fresh potential for investigating possible influences on the key modernist aesthetics of mysticism and the epiphanic moment of transcendent insight or revelation.

40. The Signature of Modernity. Walter Benjamin’s Reading of Charles Baudelaire (Room G26)

Jan Sieber (University of the Arts, Berlin), “Blanqui’s deed was the sister of Baudelaire’s dream”. Language and Politics in Charles Baudelaire and Louis-Auguste Blanqui

Charles Baudelaire is, for Walter Benjamin, one of his important witnesses of modernity. His counterpart is the revolutionary August Blanqui. Both are witnesses for the processes of decay and of downfall that Benjamin locates at the very heart of modernity. Baudelaire, as the greatest French poet of modernity, witnesses the expansive decay of experience behind the phantasmagorical disguise of bourgeois society, whereas Blanqui, as the most important leader of the Parisian barricades, testifies to the secret history of the losers and the oppressed. Both share a deep kinship in their attitude towards the modern world: “the enigmatic stuff [Rätselkram] of allegory in one and the mystery-mongering [Geheimniskrämerei] of the conspirator in the other”. And yet they radically oppose each other in their different positions in ”the tribunal of history”.

It is through this comparison and opposition of Baudelaire and Blanqui that Benjamin develops an unique way of thinking together artistic and political modernity. Based on this comparison, Baudelaire’s modernism, the reoccurring motifs in his poems, the secret involvement of his writings in the transformation of bourgeois society, the interconnection between allegory and the forces of ”high capitalism”, Baudelaire’s role of a crown witness in the historical process of modernity are all to be understood.

The paper will firstly give an introduction into Benjamin’s reading of Baudelaire and his kinship with Blanqui. This part will present Baudelaire “as a secret agent in his own class” and how his relation to the Second Empire is reflected in his book The Flower of Evil. In the second part, the paper will elucidate how both oppose each other in their different positions towards the historical process. Whereas Blanqui mystifies his experiences in his Nietzsche-like myth of the eternal return of the same, Baudelaire, however, comes to reveal the ”ever-same” of the new as the signature of modernity itself. This insight of Baudelaire will be shown to be intimately linked to his use of the allegoric form.

Stefano Marchesoni, ‘Loss without Mourning: The Dark Side of Modernity in Benjamin’s Reading of Baudelaire’

As Walter Benjamin points out in his reflections on the storyteller, ”in the course of modern times dying has been pushed further and further out of the perceptual world of the living”. Nevertheless the motif of death
plays a central role in Baudelaire’s Flowers of Evil, as seen in the very last words of Le Voyage: “To the depths of the Unknown to find something new!”. This line offers a condensed synthesis of Baudelaire’s lucid view of modernity, that Benjamin sums up in his Exposé about the Arcades Project with the following words: “The last journey of the flâneur: death. Its destination: the new”. How can this deep relation between death and the new, i.e. the fundamental feature of modernity, be clarified? According to Benjamin’s reading of Baudelaire, modernity is mainly characterised both by a restless striving for the new and the predominance of shocks, with the inevitable consequence of the decay of both experience and tradition. The new strikes us as a shock, thereby leaving us no time for letting the various perceptions go deeper into our minds. As a consequence modern man is deprived of his ability to grieve.

In my paper I will try to show how Benjamin’s understanding of modernity is based precisely on the dialectic between the decay of mourning on the one hand and its redemption through the "Eingedenken" on the other. Some of the most significant motifs in Benjamin’s Baudelaire studies – spleen, ennui, and melancholy – can be read as different symptoms of the modern loss of mourning. A reference to the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience and "Trauerarbeit" by Freud will be helpful.


Taking its cue from a note in Walter Benjamin’s convolute [J] on Baudelaire from the Arcades Project in which Benjamin elaborates on a particular thought found in Marx’s Kapital, my paper will focus on what Benjamin carves out as a key figure or trope for the interpretation of the emblem as the main element of baroque allegory. In reading Marx’s account of the "fully developed factory", as it emerged in the 19th century, and the continuity of the production processes that it was designed to realize, Benjamin highlights the status of the "half-finished product" (Halbfabrikat) in its epistemological potential for an understanding of the dispersed and fragmentary opacity of things that characterizes emblematic presentation in baroque, as an area of a ‘not any more’ of mere nature and a ‘not yet’ of a closure of the historical process in the face of a given telos.

Modernity, as an epoch of temporalized notions of history, here thus serves as a negative template by which a specifically baroque idea of history as (fallen) nature can be accounted for. Since it is precisely this modern notion of history with which Baudelaire’s writing finds itself at odds, the papers aim is to trace the entanglement of reciprocal modellings that structure Benjamin’s reading of Baudelaire just as much as it makes accessible an understanding of baroque allegory that is largely determined by Baudelaire’s poetry.

41. Late Modernist Temporalities (Beveridge Hall)

Finn Fordham (Royal Holloway), ‘Modernist Communal Vision and the Outbreak of World War II’

‘The sky was upon us’. Paul Nash.

As part of my project examining the effects of the outbreak of World War II on culture, this paper will look at particular responses of British modernists (surrealists, minimalists, constructivists, expressionists, such as Gascoyne, Read, Nicolson, Penrose, Bomberg, etc) or of modernists in Britain (Mondrian, Kokoschka, Gabo) to the outbreak of war in September 1939. The micro-histories that result break up any residual sense
of a unified modernism, even though certain embattled principles are aggressively defended (Read, for instance, sensitive to even the slightest return to representationalism by Ben Nicolson). They also reveal a more colourful spectrum of the relations between culture and politics than have been imagined. I will focus on the transformation of the fragment and destruction of the modernist epic: the experience of the intense revelatory moment becomes a historical moment; the ‘individual is transcended’ (Gascoyne), as personal dreams becomes communal nightmares, and the impersonality of abstraction becomes the empathy of representation. The intimate ‘now’ becomes a collective ‘now’ (as in ‘East Coker’). The vision of humanity is that of the Angel of History, and the wreckage at its feet means it cannot tolerate any experimental grand narrative of epic (only an epic political programme like Wells’ Declaration of Human Rights). Hence the ambivalent if bewildered reaction to Finnegans Wake amongst such as Nicolson, Bowen and Richardson; and also to Pound’s 1940 ‘Cantos’.

Rod Rosenquist (Portsmouth), ‘Retrospective Modernism: Temporality, the Memoir and the Movement’

As the modernist movement grew increasingly institutionalised and increasingly well known by a general public, memoirs of the movement appeared with increasing frequency throughout the 1930s. By the time Wyndham Lewis writes his Blasting and Bombardiering in 1937, he knows what the public expects from such volumes and aims to construct a clear pantheon of the most important and up-to-date writers, famously named the Men of 1914. This retrospective formulation of the modern men of letters is most often questioned in terms of gender or other forms of bias, but rarely examined in terms of temporality, despite Lewis being so vocal in his disregard of the time cult. What is fascinating is that the Modernism Now of 1937 is built so clearly on a review of exploits from 1914 to 1922, effectively homogenising events safely in the past. The truth was rather different as the men had scattered: Pound isolated in Fascist Italy, Joyce less than five years from death, Eliot (according to Blasting and Bombardiering) ‘alive but no longer kicking’.

This paper will address the complex temporality of a number of modernist memoirs all seeking to capture a clear sense of the modern and its corresponding movement without necessarily bringing the movement to a halt. Using the time philosophy of Henri Bergson to frame the various attempts at fixing the evolving ‘now’ of modernity from a retrospective position, I will argue that memoirs by Ford, Lewis, Williams and Bryher engage with techniques of temporality and memory that are distinctively modernist but continually plagued by questions of now-ness.

Sarah Chadfield (Royal Holloway), “[T]hey will carry to their own countries […] the story of what they see now”: Muriel Rukeyser and the “To-day” of Life and Letters To-day’

When Bryher bought the journal Life and Letters in 1935, the word ‘to-day’ was appended to the title. Robert Herring, explaining the significance of the addition, commented that the journal’s ‘main interest is with work looking forward.’ He continued to explain that the particular use of ‘to-day’ as opposed to ‘modern’ was ‘so as to be free of time-label. Modern is so often the mode of a yesterday that never had a tomorrow. Today is continuous.’
The ‘to-day’ that the journal sought to capture was avowedly international and interdisciplinary. But it was not until the beginning of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 that Life and Letters To-day also actively discussed political developments in Europe. The ‘now’ of the journal was increasingly concerned with questions about the role of the writer and their responsibilities in the climate of the inter-war years.

No writer was more aware of this sense of responsibility than Muriel Rukeyser. Indeed Horace Gregory saw Rukeyser’s line ‘breathe-in experience, breathe-out poetry’ as emblematic of a group of new poets who wrote ‘with a direct view to the Left’. This paper considers the way in which Rukeyser was understood at the time, and how her contributions to Life and Letters To-day helped to fulfil the journal’s desire to capture the ‘now’ of the 1930s.

Tim Armstrong (Royal Holloway), ‘The New Apocalypse and the Uncertainties of Modernism’

Such a literary movement is the one we aimed at debunking – it began with the Dadaist movement in France during the last war, which gave birth to the Surrealist movement, which was followed in England by the New Apocalypse school, whose Australian counterparts are the Angry Penguins – this cultism resembles, on a small scale, the progress of certain European political parties.

This report on the origins of the fictional poet Ern Malley, apparently a distant Melbourne member of the ‘New Apocalypse’, is the starting point for a paper on an interlinked series of modernist groupings in the late thirties, for all of whom the question of the modernist inheritance was a key issue – the question of what modernism is and might continue to be. The question was co-ordinated in particular ways: by reactions to Surrealism; by the issue of what D. H. Lawrence’s legacy was; and also increasingly by the presence of the war as an interruption to writing itself, breaking the sense of a live connection to a modernist inheritance. I will discuss poets including Henry Treece, Edgar Foxall, Rayner Heppenstall, Nicholas Moore, and the outlandish Ern Malley himself.

42. Surrealism Then and Now (Room 246)

Marius Hentea (Ghent), ‘Defining Modernism Then and Now: The 1922 Congress of Paris’

This proposed paper examines the ill-fated 1922 Congress of Paris, an international conference organized by André Breton whose aim was to diagnose the sources of the ‘modern spirit.’ If modernism has made little inroads in French literary scholarship, this paper shows how debates over defining modernism were very much alive in Paris in 1922. Largely remembered today as being the death knell of Paris Dada, the very public fight between Tristan Tzara and Breton over the Congress’s aims meant that the Congress never took place but also that Paris Dada was dissolved, this paper uncovers the tensions involved in self-consciously defining ‘modernism.’ I argue that an inherent ambivalence over the term shaped the main participant’s understanding of the Congress, with Tzara accusing the conference organizers of seeking to standardize and formalize the avant-garde into a water-down modernism that would appeal to everyone. Breton hoped for the establishment of a certain baseline of understanding modernism that would be acceptable to all ‘progressive’ artists; Tzara
argued that the avant-garde had to remain separate from modernism and freed from theory. This paper also explores the uncanny similarities between the 1922 Congress and the current hegemony of New Modernist Studies, whose ‘expansionist’ quality depends upon removing ideological fissures within modernism by presenting a stripped-down (and undefined) modernism that can appeal to the widest possible audience.

Alys Moody (Waikato), ‘Global Modernism/World Hunger: Surrealist Poverty from Breton to Marechera’

As studies have revealed modernists’ strategies of self-promotion and their successful manipulation of the market, the impoverished figure of the starving modernist writer has increasingly come to seem unconvincing, even perhaps somewhat insincere. Nonetheless, this figure—sincere or not—has been repeatedly incorporated into modernist aesthetic strategies, linked to, for example, both automatic writing and surrealist hallucinatory vision in the writings of André Breton and Joan Miró. While such references are usually only glancing in the works of European surrealists, they become increasingly central as modernism becomes global modernism and the banner of surrealism is taken up by writers based in countries where starvation is widespread. In this new context, the link between hunger and surrealist aesthetic strategies promises new ways of writing some of these societies’ greatest problems.

This paper examines what happens when the connection between aesthetic practice and the experience of starvation that, in European surrealism, is tied to the individual figure of the starving artist, is appropriated to account for mass privation. Moving from Breton and Miró through Aimé Césaire’s “hungry Antilles” in Cahiers d’un retour du pays natale to Dambudzo Marechera’s kaleidoscopic view of a hungry Rhodesia in “The House of Hunger,” it traces the aesthetic consequences of the shift from starving artist to world hunger. In so doing, it argues that global modernism’s expansion of the field must entail a re-evaluation of the role of poverty in modernist aesthetic experimentation.

Natalya Lusty (Sydney), ‘Vernacular Modernism and the Arrival of Surrealism in the “Hallucinatory City”’

The official arrival of Surrealism in Australia was marked by the Herald exhibition of French and British contemporary art, which toured Australia in 1939 and was followed by James Gleeson’s essay, “What is Surrealism?”, published in the premier contemporary art journal, Art in Australia in 1940. The following year Breton was commissioned to write an essay for the journal, “Originality and liberty”, which sealed Australia’s links with an increasingly international Surrealist movement. Several years before Surrealism’s formal arrival, however, Surrealist influences had made their debut in Sydney department store windows and in the fashionable interior design magazine, The Home, published by Sydney Ure Smith, who also published Art in Australia. The paper examines the everyday sites of Surrealist transmission, including window dressing, fashion design, photography and advertising in what Laurie Duggan has described as the “hallucinatory city”, referring to Sydney’s cultivation of a modern, cosmopolitan sensibility in the interwar period.

With the world’s attention now shifting to the economic and cultural innovations of the Asia-Pacific region, including Australia, understanding the global reach of modernism has perhaps never been so prescient. More broadly, the paper takes up the challenge of a global modernist studies to think beyond the imperial
centres of Europe and the US to reconsider the relationship between avant-garde and vernacular aesthetic forms as intrinsic to the uneven development of modernist cultures across the globe.

43. Modernity and the Model of Russia, 1914–1939 (Room G22)

Rebecca Beasley (Oxford), ‘War Work: Russian Literature in Britain During the Great War’

This paper will explore the representation of Russia during the Great War, and in particular the way opposing narratives about Russia’s backwardness or modernity were used in British propaganda. For anti-war campaigners in the Manchester Guardian, Russia was ‘a country just emerging from barbarism’, which should not be allied with Britain. For the Oxford classicist J.W. Mackail and his colleagues working for C.F. Masterman’s Propaganda Bureau, ‘it is useful to think of modern Russia by comparison with the England of a hundred years ago’, moving through the early stages of industrialisation. Following the revolutions of 1917, Russia became tentatively associated with the future. The British public’s rapidly growing knowledge of Russian literature was placed in the service of these diverse arguments.

Though aspects of the British enthusiasm for Russian literature during the war are well known (notably the ‘Dostoevsky cult’ generated by Constance Garnett’s translations for Heinemann), little attention has been paid to the way it was inflected by the specific requirements of the war. I’ll explore the intersection of this grande passion of early modernism with the work of British diplomacy in discussion of D.H. Lawrence, John Middleton Murry, Bertrand Russell and, if time permits, literary Russophiles with direct access to diplomatic circles in Russia itself: Maurice Baring, Bernard Pares and Arthur Ransome.

Matthew Taunton (UEA), “‘The Radiant Future’: The Bolshevik Revolution and Modernist Temporality”

After 1917, in the minds of many writers and intellectuals, the idea of the future became inseparable from debates about the Soviet Union. Or, to stand this on its head, the future - as a space of possibility, imagination and fantasy - had disappeared, to be replaced by a geographical entity: the Soviet Union. This paper explores the consequences of this new geo-temporal configuration: Russia, which had long represented the autocratic, feudal past, had morphed into the Communist future. As a result, I will argue, the status and nature of the future shifted in ways that shaped debates about political morality, informed a new sense of historicity, and interacted with modernist approaches to temporality.

I will begin by briefly surveying some literary engagements with the Russian revolution (including writing by Wells and Koestler) that highlight the way it disrupted Edwardian conceptions of futurity. I will then focus my analysis on Dorothy Richardson’s Pilgrimage. In that novel sequence, the protagonist Miriam Henderson recoils from the Russian revolutionary socialism with which Richardson had come into contact after the 1905 revolution. I will show how, for Miriam, the Russians had too sure a sense —grounded in the Marxist theory of history—of what the future will hold, and consequently a dangerous tendency to sacrifice the present to the ‘Radiant Future’ (described by Sheila Fitzpatrick as one of the sustaining myths of Soviet society). I will propose that this corresponds with Richardson’s rejection of narrative teleology in favour of an insistence on the ethical and aesthetic primacy of the ‘now’. Richardson’s response to Leninism is enacted in
her distinctively modernist style, which can thus be understood as more than the apolitical 'inward turn' of Lukács’s anti-modernist polemics.

Nicholas Hall (Oxford), “‘The real truth about Russia at last’ – the Accounts of Visits to the Soviet Union by Gareth Jones, 1929–1939’

This paper seeks to examine the experiences of British journalist Gareth Richard Vaughan Jones (1905–35) in the Soviet Union, with reference to other British visitors who published accounts of their time there.

There were many British visitors to the Soviet Union between the two world wars, and many wrote on what they had seen. ‘Like everyone who goes to Russia these days’, wrote George Lansbury in the preface to his What I Saw in Russia (1920), ‘I am writing a book’. Lansbury, his wife Violet, and many others, such as the Webbs and Alexander Wicksteed, published favourable accounts of their time in the Soviet Union.

Gareth Jones visited the Soviet Union in 1930, 1931 and 1933. He played a key role in exposing the famine that had taken hold in Ukraine and southern Russia over the winter of 1932–3. His diaries from those trips provide a startling and shocking first-hand account of the Soviet reality. This paper seeks to explore Jones’s experience with reference to accounts of others, such as Alan Monkhouse, Violet Connolly and Archibald Lyall, and other less favourable accounts of the Soviet Union. It focuses in particular on the recording and representation of modernisation (industry, religion, essentialism), political ideology and control, and the role and intention of, and the problems raised by the accounts of, the journalist/travel-writer/visitor to the USSR at the time.

44. Postwar American Modernism (Room G26)

Thomas Karshan (UEA), “‘All the rest is waiting/For a letter that never arrives”: Ashbery, Pynchon and the Undelivered Letter of Modernism’

In John Ashbery's 'The One Thing that Can Save America' (1975), we read that 'It is the lumps and trials / That tell us whether we shall be known / And whether our fate can be exemplary, like a star. / All the rest is waiting / For a letter that never arrives, / … / The message was wise and seemingly / Dictated a long time ago./ Its truth is timeless, but its time has still / Not arrived'.

The letter here can be many things, but - like the many letters that do not arrive in Ashbery - it reminds us of the unfulfilled, undelivered, un-received, or inaccessible legacy of modernism, like the letter in Finnegans Wake, a letter which Shem carries and which can never be opened, a letter which, among other things, is like the will in Swift’s Tale of a Tub, the uninheritable legacy of the past. Or like the letter in W. H. Auden’s ‘The Letter’, ‘Speaking of much but not to come.’ Or like the will in Pynchon’s Crying of Lot 49, the difficulty of fulfilling which leads us into a wild-goose chase that encompasses the discovery of a secret seditious postal system whose time has never come.

This paper will focus on Pynchon’s Crying and selected letter-poems of Ashbery and read these against the modernist texts whose inheritance they are poking through, principally the image of the undelivered letter in Finnegans Wake and in early Auden. In doing this, it will ask about the ways in which that avant-garde legacy has been radicalised, or domesticated.
Has the anti-didacticism implicit in the image of the undelivered letter been betrayed, or improved by the return of the Idea? How coherent or otherwise is the 'postal system' which links the various intellectual or emotive elements of a poem or novel together? What does all this have to do with our experience of the now, the experience of always 'waiting / For a letter that never arrives', and the moment of the poem, in which, as in Eliot’s Four Quartets, ‘Time present and time past / Are both perhaps present in time future’, and ‘In order to possess what you do not possess / You must go by the way of dispossession’? And how is this elusive newness embodied in the language of postmodern poetry and prose?

Sarah Barnsley (Goldsmiths), ‘The “new” New York Poets: Late Modernism in Manhattan’

This paper recovers and surveys ‘early’ forms of ‘late’ modernism as enacted by a loose network of American poets based in New York through the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s (Mary Barnard, Babette Deutsch, May Swenson and T.C. Wilson) as part of a project to reconsider modernism as a continuing event in the American twentieth-century.

Inspired by Tyrus Miller’s conception of mid-century modernist writing as a series of ‘vanishing points’ of early 20th-century modernism, I focus on the ways in which this group gained critical cohesion through their common refinement of the ‘new’ of Poundian-Williams modernism in both their poetry and their employment. From the ‘late Imagism’ of Barnard and Swenson, Deutsch’s promotion of what she called the ‘live limbs’ of Poundian-Williams ideals in her literary criticism, Wilson’s co-editing with Pound of the ‘raucous cries of the modernists’ in their 1935 Westminster Anthology, Barnard’s curating of Williams’ archive through to Swenson’s editing work at New Directions, the paper re-assesses the significance of their creative and professional interactions. If, in the 1940s, some of their contemporaries felt modernism’s ‘rails terminate,’ as Randall Jarrell said, then this paper gives voice to these ‘new’ New York poets who were quietly yet surely extending the rails after Pound and Williams, laying out, I argue, unmistakeable tracks of late modernism in Manhattan.

Christopher Oakey (New South Wales), ‘Heidegger and Wittgenstein in American Modernism’

In 1921 Ludwig Wittgenstein published his Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus to great acclaim, and six years later Martin Heidegger published his equally seminal Sein und Zeit. In the second half of the twentieth century, many writers and artists in the United States were influenced by these innovations in European philosophy. Heidegger’s thinking was central to poets such as the Objectivist George Oppen and, as Marjorie Perloff argues, Wittgenstein’s writings were especially important to the work of Ron Silliman and the other Language poets.

This parallel is striking since the two philosophies seem fundamentally opposed, as do the problems, ideologies, and forms of analysis to which each responds. Just as striking is the fact that Heidegger and Wittgenstein have more recently returned as parallel presences in literary criticism. This development is not confined solely to readings of those poets and writers who enjoyed a direct influence. Heidegger and Wittgenstein have become philosophical figureheads for two (again parallel) strands in contemporary criticism,
the one looking to apply what we might call a Heideggerian ‘poetics of being’ and the other a Wittgensteinian ‘poetics of limits’, even when reading poets who worked prior to any possible influence.

This paper examines the parallelism of these two seemingly incommensurable philosophies in current modernist criticism, examining in particular the ideological reasons for their continued presence. It argues that Heidegger and Wittgenstein have come, often problematically, to represent answers both to problems posed by and within modernist poetry and, more importantly, those problems posed for contemporary criticism by its own situation and enterprise.

James D. Bloom (Muhlenberg College), ‘Ethnics and Midcentury American Writing – the Prepostmoderns’

A generation of scholarship from Marcus Klein’s Foreigners (1981) to Walter Benn Michaels’ Our America (1995) has defined now canonic interwar US modernist writing as largely an anxious, often nostalgic and sometimes reactionary, response to modernity, especially to demographic changes and the consequent status anxieties occasioned by mass immigration, industrialization, and urbanization. This scholarship coincided with what came to be called “postmodernism,” a development greeted as the antidote to modernist anxieties, a release from the “master narratives” on which “modernist” anxieties had rested. The popular view of postmodernism as transformative was facilitated by the chronological elision my paper will address: The impact on the relationship between modernism and postmodernism of work by American novelists during the 1950s and 1960s who addressed the postwar era’s unprecedented egalitarian and heterogenizing pressures. My paper will highlight this gap by focusing on the work and career of some of the more “demographically” and conceptually disruptive American writers who became prominent during these years: James Baldwin, Grace Paley, Philip Roth. My presentation will demonstrate how these novelists addressed questions raised by canonic interwar modernists, whose cultural authority peaked during these Cold War decades. My argument will focus on how these midcentury novelists revisited their modernist predecessors’ questions in ways that diffused and discredited the anxieties and animuses that characterized interwar modernism. I'll argue that while asking typically modernist questions, the writers I'll be focusing on prompted more egalitarian and agnostic answers to these questions and thus laid the groundwork for the more palatable, less threatening "subversiveness" that came to be known as postmodernism.

45. Modernism and Trauma  (Court Room)

Katharina Donn (Augsburg), ‘The (Cultural) Ecology of Modernism: Trauma Literature’

The contemporary frameworks of cultural ecology and ecocriticism, though increasingly prevalent in general, are still surprisingly sparse when it comes to the study of modernism. After all, typical modernist topics such as urbanity, technology or industrialized warfare at first glance appear diametrically opposed to the premises of ecocriticism. In my paper, I present a productive instance of crossing these lines, and focus on trauma literature as a field where the disorienting experience of technological and violent acceleration comes into contact with organic, creative structures and the topic of nature in general.

This approach offers two crucial insights: first, nature and ecology are central topics in relevant texts which respond to the trenches of an industrialized warfare, maiming soldiers and landscapes alike. Writers
such as Virginia Woolf (The Waves), or Ernest Hemingway (Big Two-Hearted River) respond to this conspicuous interrelation between trauma and the natural landscape in their texts. They subvert such culturally stabilizing notions of nature as the pastoral idyll or the sublime encounter; their literary landscapes rather materialize the haunting, present absence of traumatic memories. Secondly, and that is even more important, ecological processes become salient in the structure of these texts; they provide subtle dynamisms to renew cultural memory and literary representation after the shattering shock of trauma.

Approaching modernism from contemporary ecocriticism, therefore, provides a productive new take on the topical and aesthetic complexity of these texts, and offers stimulating perspectives on the simultaneity of shock and innovation, fragmentation and creativity which characterized the modernist period.

Adam Winstanley (York), ‘“If you’re listening to this, you must have survived”: Belatedness, Fragmentation and Trauma in Scott Walker’s late Trilogy’

Drawing upon historical events including the grisly demise of Benito Mussolini’s mistress Clara Petacci or the execution of the Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaucescu, as well as more intimate forms of despair such as Elvis Presley’s recurrent conversations with his stillborn twin brother Jesse, Scott Walker’s late trilogy of albums Tilt (1995), The Drift (2006) and Bisch-Bosh (2013) are dissonant, fragmented soundscapes indelibly marked by the aftermath of trauma. In this paper, the atelic nature of Walker’s late modernist trilogy (bish-bosh means an improper, unfinished work; bish is slang for a miscarriage; while Hieronymus Bosch painted a world gone to rack and ruin) will be read as a case study that might help us think through the relationship between modernist fragmentation, incompletion and trauma. If trauma is often described, to paraphrase James Berger, as an unrepresentable discourse, an event that destabilizes language or demands a vocab inherently incommensurable with previous modes of expression, then, the paper argues, modernism and trauma share a number of characteristics as texts that demand an act of transference, an engaged working through that can never achieve closure or totalization. Highlighting Walker’s persistent privileging of the lyrical, the paper draws upon the work of literary critics such as Maurice Blanchot, Geoffrey Hartman and Dominick La Capra to tentatively examine these shared characteristics. Finally, I examine the significance of Walker’s decision to predominantly record the album in digital to fully realize the ‘spaces’ between the lyrics; spaces which, in turn, both ‘dictate the spaces’ between the instruments and register the non-representational properties of traumatic events.

Amanda Greene (Michigan), ‘Wounded Beauty: Lee Miller and the Aesthetics of Injury’

The work of Lee Miller- surrealist muse and artist, fashion model and photographer, international war correspondent for British Vogue – seems to defy classification and comprehension. The incredible range encompassed by her diverse career has posed a problem for critics and biographers alike who tend to organize her life and artistic production into largely distinct categories, eliding its provocative continuities. But Miller’s surrealist modeling and her war photography evince profound consistencies because both are rooted in explorations of the violent vulnerability of the physical body and the problematics of viewing its pain.

Miller’s unusual positioning as model and photographer, shifting from one side of the lens to the other over the course of her career, is key to her engagement with such ideas. Catherine Gallagher has convincingly
argued that this mobility enables a strategic interrogation of gender relations. Yet the uncomfortable and often violent ways in which Miller’s photographed body is fragmented and imprinted upon by a threatening external environment is not only charged with a feminist critique; it is also an engagement with the radical contingency of corporeal form. The performative space of bodily brokenness and injury that she occupies as a model inflects the construction of a similar, literalized, disability aesthetic in her later photographs of real wartime wounds, such as the Bad Burns Case and the Beaten SS Guard.

These two iconic photos, which resist simple interpretation as documentary fact and force the viewer to affectively engage with the wounded body in the photograph, illustrate how Miller’s surrealist understanding of her own body as subject informs her work from the other side of the camera and is essential to the development of her unnerving, arresting aesthetic of injury.

46. A Race with a Shadow: Malcolm Lowry’s “Lost” Novel In Ballast to the White Sea (Room 261)

Patrick A. McCarthy (Miami), ‘Before and After the Volcano: Malcolm Lowry’s In Ballast to the White Sea and Its Afterlife’

In June 1944 a fire broke out in the shack in British Columbia where Malcolm Lowry and his second wife, Margerie, were living. Although the Lowrys saved many of his working papers, including drafts of Under the Volcano, the fire destroyed virtually everything related to his other novel-in-progress, In Ballast to the White Sea. Rather than attempting to recreate In Ballast, Lowry mourned its loss and, in time, romanticized it as a potentially great work, its destruction one of the central tragedies of his life. He also referred to the lost novel in later writings, notably Dark as the Grave Wherein My Friend Is Laid. The myth of the burned novel was a staple of Lowry criticism until 1997, 40 years after Lowry’s death, when his first wife, Jan Gabriel, revealed that she still had a carbon copy of a 1936 typescript. The novel remains unpublished, but an annotated edition, based on manuscripts at the New York Public Library, is forthcoming from the University of Ottawa Press. In this paper I will describe the form and themes of In Ballast, speculate on Lowry’s reasons for not attempting to retrieve the typescript that he surely knew existed, and comment on the place of the two In Ballasts—the forthcoming edition and the fictionalized book within the narrative of Dark as the Grave—in relation to Lowry’s other writings.

Chris Ackerley (Otago), ‘Malcolm Lowry’s In Ballast to the White Sea: The Oslo Connection’

In late August of 1931, Malcolm Lowry travelled from Ålesund to Oslo, to meet the Norwegian author, Nordahl Grieg. I note, first, some aspects of Lowry’s time in Norway, correcting several misapprehensions in the previously accepted account, Gordon Bowker’s Pursued by Furies, which relies uncritically on details in the typescript, to which he had been given access by Lowry’s first wife, Jan Gabriel. Errors range from the trivial (Lowry could not have seen his first photograph of Grieg on the cover of Kinesiske Dage [1927], as it had no cover), through the ambiguous (Bowker mis-locates the Viking ship Lowry saw in Oslo), to the profoundly misleading (Bowker, on the basis of Lowry’s writing, confuses fantasy with fact and gets the crucial meeting with Grieg, in both life and novel, very wrong). My major focus will be on the “long letter” Lowry wrote to Grieg in Oslo, wherein he quoted apparently from memory swatches of Rupert Brooke’s John Webster and the
Elizabethan Drama (1916), which he did not have with him. This feat impressed Hallvard Dahlie, who first discovered the letter, and Sherrill Grace, who edited it. A scrutiny of the letter in the National Archives (Oslo), however, provides evidence that Lowry’s source is another book, Houston Peterson’s recent study of Conrad Aiken, The Melody of Chaos (1931), from which large chunks were taken, almost verbatim. These details reveal a complex dialogue between biographical and fictional “fact”.

David Large (Otago), ‘Nordahl Grieg’s Ultramarine: Contextualising the Early Malcolm Lowry’

Malcolm Lowry’s second novel In Ballast to the White Sea is a particularly introspective attempt on Lowry’s behalf to write himself out of Nordahl Grieg’s shadow. My focus in this paper, however, will be on the relative depths of Grieg’s shadow in Lowry’s first novel Ultramarine. I catalogue and examine Lowry’s wholesale adoption of several poems, translated from Grieg’s Norwegian to English prose. These lyrical phrases suggest an authenticity of experience, belying their origins, which were never acknowledged by Grieg and only in the faintest of terms by Lowry himself. Lowry’s modernist practice is, in the most general of terms, reactionary: the polyphonic and intricately interwoven expression in Ultramarine comes as a direct consequence of his identification with those writers who formed his literary world. I argue in this paper that Ultramarine represents a qualification to (or subset of) late modernism that I term Lowry’s ‘consequential modernism’: the novel encompasses Lowry’s tendency to write as a consequence of his wide-ranging reading; but also to write of the consequences of his reading.

47. Gender and Modernism (Room 349)

Elizabeth Bidwell Goetz (CUNY Graduate Center), “Countless tiny deportations” and Virginia Woolf’s Modernist “Street Haunter”

In “Street Haunting: A London Adventure,” Virginia Woolf lauds those taking the time to separate from daily life’s normal structuring forces and to fully absorb their surroundings, specifically, the urban space that houses their community. Her “street haunters” experience moments as opening with previously invisible surfaces evoking familial memory and ever-mobile cultural identity. Such astute passersby exercise not only incredible powers of perceptiveness but also empathetic creativity. Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway provides a useful case study to examine the kinds of societies of passersby that street haunting can create as the novel portrays an ever-multiplying cast of flâneurs, few—if any—of whom feel full belonging in the place they call home. I examine this novel’s various narrative perspectives and the shifting public and private identities they depict to argue that while, for Woolf, male flâneurs fall into the dandyish model depicted by Baudelaire and Benjamin, her female characters expands this modernist category of the flaneur, demonstrating alternative points of view and resistant ways of being that suggest their gender and sexuality enforce a turn toward more creative modes of engagement with the world as they deploy what Michel de Certeau calls “tactics” and the capacious empathy Woolf describes in “Street Haunting.” Drawing on Deborah Parsons’s work, I suggest that the female flâneur must reorganize local geography and the associated political and social boundaries in subtly, subversively political ways to engage with her surroundings, while her male counterparts may leave the city as they find it.
Elizabeth Pritchett (Keele), ‘Dorothy Richardson’s Female Mail’

In her 1925 essay, ‘Women in the Arts’, Dorothy Richardson argues that women possess ‘an inclusive awareness, from which men, for good or ill, are exempt’. This paper proposes the letter-form within Richardson’s long modernist novel, Pilgrimage (1915-1938/67), as a model for the non-hierarchical intertextual relationships that Richardson establishes throughout her thirteen-volume novel. Given that letters from Pilgrimage’s female characters are rendered as fragments, reassembled through the consciousness of protagonist Miriam Henderson, the “female mail” in Pilgrimage asserts a democratically-inflected aesthetic that specifically highlights the ways in which the female subject is shaped by the contingencies of her material world.

With work now well underway on the AHRC-funded Richardson Editions Project, new research is examining the role of modernist networks in articulating and positioning modernist agendas. As Richardson’s own body of letters suggests, hers was a vast and inclusive network of fellow writers, artists, publishers, students, friends and family. This paper will further explore the representation of letters within Pilgrimage as models of intertextual influence as Richardson would have it: inclusive, anti-authoritarian, and provisional. In Pointed Roofs (1915), for example, a letter to Miriam from her sister is presented in a fragmented and collaged form, suggesting an imposition of multiple voices and influences that are so seamless as to be untraceable.

Further instances of co-option and collage within Pilgrimage’s letter-form reveal a modernist aesthetic impelled by Richardson’s demand for the inclusion of diverse women’s voices within the larger, and largely male, body politic.

Tara S. Thomson (Edinburgh), “‘The weight of everyday life’: Resisting Domesticity in Dorothy Richardson’s The Tunnel’

This paper examines everyday practices in Dorothy Richardson’s The Tunnel, the fourth volume of her Pilgrimage series, in which the protagonist Miriam rents out a room in London and takes up secretarial work. I argue that, although The Tunnel appears to champion independence through work and ‘a room of one’s own,’ like many other ‘New Woman’ novels, attention to the mundane practices in the novel reveals a reproduction of Victorian-style domesticity and patriarchal ideology within those spaces. In response, the novel identifies alternative sites of resistance to domesticity, most notably when Miriam takes up cycling. I argue that the ‘mobile space’ created by cycling mounts a powerful resistance to an ideologically produced everyday, and poses a challenge to the ‘room of one’s own’ as the privileged symbol of feminist modernism.

This reading draws on the everyday life theories of Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau, while simultaneously challenging their claims that women cannot properly critique everyday life because of their embeddedness within it. This paper also asserts the concept of the everyday as a new way of understanding modernism as feminism, which does not rely on the essentializing notions of ‘feminine style’ or ‘feminine consciousness’ common to much Richardson criticism.

This paper responds to several topics listed under the conference theme. Most notably, it speaks to “modernist legacies,” demonstrating how the ‘double bind’ of feminist progress, still relevant today, is established in the modernist period. As such, it also argues that Richardson’s significance to modernism extends much further than her creation of the stream of consciousness technique. This paper also takes up the new trend of everyday studies within modernist studies.
Faye Harland (Dundee), “‘That Creature in the Glass’: The Gendering of Windows and Mirrors in the Short Fiction of Katherine Mansfield’

In modernist fiction, windows and mirrors constantly reappear as motifs, acting as visual representations of diverse themes, from dual identities to the isolation experienced in an increasingly urbanised world. This paper proposes that the engagement with the visual in modernism is a gendered phenomenon, having different social and cultural implications in the works of female writers. Through a study of Katherine Mansfield’s short stories, I will discuss her use of windows and mirrors as a means of exploring women’s performative identities and lack of agency in a patriarchal society, examining Mansfield’s anticipation of modern theories of the gaze and its significance to gender relations.

In addition, the paper will trace the development of the modern window, from an aperture providing light and ventilation to a two-way permeable interface. The role of the window in an increasingly commercialised world is also relevant to the Baudelairean concept of the flâneur, and I will examine Mansfield’s treatment of flânerie in terms of its effect on female subjectivity. The paper will argue that Mansfield’s gendered interpretation of the visual continues to be relevant today, through a discussion of women’s representation in modern media and the ways in which they are viewed by society.

48. Poetry Now and Then (Room 264)
Daniel Katz (Warwick), “‘Be Gone by Morning’: Ben Lerner’s 21st Century’

By virtue of three books of poetry and one novel, Ben Lerner has established himself as one of the most important American writers to emerge in the new century. In both genres, Lerner shows himself keenly aware of modernist legacies, especially in terms of poetics. In the novel Leaving the Atocha Station, whose very title cites that of a John Ashbery poem to the letter, the narrator, young poet Adam Gordon, muses over fundamental modernist contradictions throughout. On the one hand, in this book Ashbery becomes the ultimate exemplar of the post-Mallarméan principle that “poems aren’t about anything” (36), instead ideally only referring to the space of their own saying: “The best Ashbery poems... describe what it’s like to read an Ashbery poem; his poems refer to how their reference evanesces. And when you read about your reading in the time of your reading, mediacy is experienced immediately” (91). However, this classic modernist statement of autotelic self-sufficiency is undermined by another valence of the novel’s title: not only does the narrator actually “leave” the Atocha Station of Madrid at the exact mid-point of the novel, but also, this book is very much “about” a crucial historical event: the Atocha Station bombings of March 11, 2004, and by extension, the post-911 world and the depredations of the Bush Administration at the height of the Irak War. In this context, the novel everywhere focuses on the political and ethical possibilities of and demands on poetry: an equally classical modernist concern. In my paper, then, I will focus primarily on Lerner’s poetry in light of these questions, and especially on how he extends into contemporary debate the essential modernist contradiction between aesthetic autonomy and critical political engagement; a contradiction seen tragically in the career of Ezra Pound, whose imagistic principles are referenced by Lerner in a typically terse and tense invocation: “Go in fear of abstraction / But Go. Be gone by morning” (Mean Free Path, 26). For Lerner, the 21st century is still the long night of modernism.
Joanna Lilia Mąkowska (Warsaw), "‘Be insatiable/ma semblable, ma soeur!’: The Corporeal Subject in the Poetry of Mina Loy and Adrienne Rich’

“Poetry is prose bewitched, a music made of visual thoughts, the sound of an idea.” With such an evocative motto Mina Loy begins her essay “Modern Poetry,” in which she elaborates fundamental features of American idiom. Surprisingly, she devotes considerable attention to those aspects of poetry that were rather ignored by Ezra Pound when he famously proclaimed her verse logopoeia par excellence, “a poetry that is akin to nothing but language,” “the dance of the intellect among words and ideas.” Nevertheless, rediscovered in the seventies by feminist critics, Loy’s poetry was no longer regarded as devoid of emotions and highly abstract. On the contrary, the overarching role of sensory experience, sexuality and physiology was eventually recognized and Loy’s verse was declared an outstanding example of corporeal, gender-conscious writing. This paper attempts to demonstrate how Loy’s epoch-making, (post)modernist body politics appears to resonate in the works of Adrienne Rich, whose transgression from the formalist aesthetics to the personal poetics of the body was marked by the publication of the poetry collection “The Dream of a Common Language” and the groundbreaking essay “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence.” Bringing the works of the aforementioned poets into perspective also aims to prove that corporeal writing can function not only as an idiosyncratic aesthetic phenomenon, but also as a means of socio-political protest endowed with a significant subversive potential.

Tram Nguyen (CUNY), ‘Feminist Myths, Modernist Continuities: H.D.’s Helen in Egypt and Timberlake Wertenbaker’s The Love of the Nightingale’

Like many modernists, H. D. found inspiration in Greek myths, translating two plays by Euripides, Hippolytus Temporizes and Ion, between 1927 and 1937. From Euripides she extrapolated and succored her own tendency toward striking imagery and modernist detachment, producing an epic poem in 1952 that refracts the horrors of the Second World War. H. D.’s Helen in Egypt follows Euripides’s Helen, which posits that Helen was never in Troy, but rather secreted away in Egypt. While Euripides’s play is a comedy of marriage contrivances, H. D.’s Helen in Egypt offers up a critique of the narrative operations that engender myth and silence women’s experiences. The original “legend of murder and lust” is transposed and obfuscated to render the trauma of war and mythology a wound in women’s psyche (81). The text becomes the silenced female body, wherein “she herself is the writing,” the silenced tongue of women’s consciousness (91). As a feminist precursor, H. D.’s mythographic revisions help to contextualize the contemporary practice of remaking myths by playwright Timberlake Wertenbaker. Wertenbaker, like H. D., translated Euripides’ Hippolytus. Wertenbaker’s The Love of the Nightingale challenges the moral lessons that sanction phallogocentrism by destabilizing the dominant voice. Like H. D., this contemporary playwright uses ambiguity, self-reflexivity, and inversion to authorize agency as a political and public act, rather than simply a personal will. H. D.’s Helen in Egypt and Wertenbaker’s The Love of the Nightingale embody the three elements theorized by Deleuze and Guattari that characterize their works as a “minor literature”: 1.) a radical transformation to the dominant narrative; 2.) a politicized resonance; and 3.) a collective impetus. Using this theoretical framing, I argue that
these feminist writers share in formulating a modernist tradition that produces an alternative political framework and epistemology.

49. Comedy / Laughter / Nonsense (Room 246)

Yuexi Liu (Durham), ‘Satire and Laughter: Evelyn Waugh’s Decline and Fall and Charlie Chaplin’s Silent Films’

Decline and Fall (1928), Evelyn Waugh’s debut novel, is a satirical comedy where the young writer further experimented in the cinematic fashion that he had begun to explore in his first short story ‘The Balance’ (1925). Departing from the High Modernist writers who had already formed the canon such as Woolf and Joyce, Waugh decidedly found his dissenting voice through the challenge of the new art of cinema (1). This paper engages closely with the debate about late modernism and argues for an exterior modernism, which Waugh and Wyndham Lewis represent.

1927, a year before Decline and Fall (2) came out, saw the birth of the sound film, The Jazz Singer. However, Charlie Chaplin, the icon of the silent era, continued to make silent films until 1940 (3). Chaplin’s initial resistance to the ‘talking pictures’ may not simply be an inability to deal with change and new technology; like Waugh, he genuinely regarded the silent cinema as a form of art on its own (4).

Well-versed in cinema, Waugh borrowed its technique liberally to benefit his fictional writing (5). He hailed Chaplin’s genius, eulogised his latest creation Monsieur Verdoux (1947) and defended him in the review entitled ‘The Man Hollywood Hates’ (6).

Drawing an analogy between the two artists’ early works, this paper examines how both satirise and fiercely protest against the automatism of the modern age through comedy (7), which induces the reader/audience’s laughter and thinking. Lewis’s savage satire and mirthless laugh are pertinent to the discussion.

1 While Virginia Woolf gave an ambiguous account in her essay ‘The Cinema’ (1926), Waugh had already finished the cinematic ‘The Balance’.

2 The novel was later adapted for the screen and named Decline and Fall... of a Bird Watcher (1968).

3 The Great Dictator, Chaplin’s first talkie, was released in 1940.

4 See Chaplin’s autobiography, My Autobiography, and David Robinson’s Chaplin: His Life and Art. It is important to point out here that what Waugh objected to was not the sound film but the ‘intrusion of uncouth voices’: ‘I hope fervently that this disturbing new invention will soon be tamed so that we can once more look upon the cinema—silent or “talky”—not as an imitation stage play but as genuine and self-sufficient art.’ ‘My Favourite Film Star’ in The Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh, ed. by Donat Gallagher (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p. 68.

5 It is not a coincidence that while Waugh was making his film The Scarlet Woman, he was writing ‘The Balance’.


7 In Decline and Fall, the self-appointed Professor of Architecture Silenus’s rants about ‘the elimination of the human element from the consideration of form. The only perfect building must be the factory, because that is built to house machines, not humans.’ See Evelyn Waugh, Decline and Fall (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 120. In Modern Times, the Little Tramp works mechanically on the assembly line in a factory.
Michael Rodgers (Strathclyde), ‘“A Hundred Years Apart”: Modernism and Literary Laughter’

Michael Wood’s claim that we are ‘positively arthritic with the ache of modernity’ (1977, 26-27) suggests not only that the period was an inherently painful one but also critical ossification of a previous age - that our gnarled, postmodern hands are paying a high price for continually pointing backwards in the same way. This paper aims to address this by exploring the relationship between modernism and what I call ‘literary laughter’. The number of early twentieth-century narratives in which readers are encouraged to laugh at ‘inappropriate’ matter such as death, cruelty, and ignorance through experimental form suggests a simultaneous evolution of literary technique and humour. By comparing and contrasting ‘literary laughter’ in the work of writers such as Joyce and Eliot with those such as David Foster Wallace (via particular twentieth-century theorists such as Bergson, Bakhtin, and Fish), the paper also aims to also enact the second half of Wood’s claim: that, ‘it would be a form of rejuvenation to find out what the ache felt like when it was just beginning’. By challenging traditional understandings of the period as a highly serious and impersonal one, the paper attempts to expand our conception of Modernism by claiming that humour is a vital, yet lamentably overlooked, facet of the period and that this ‘modernist humour’ still seems to be with us.

John Attridge (New South Wales), ‘Nonsense, Ordinary Language Philosophy and Flann O’Brien’s The Third Policeman’

The affinities between The Third Policeman (completed in 1940 but not published until 1967) and the literary tradition of nonsense writing exemplified by Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear have often been pointed out. In particular, several critics have drawn attention to what O’Brien himself called the “perfectly logical and matter-of-fact treatment of the most brain-staggering imponderables of the policemen”. This paper compares O’Brien’s literary experiments in nonsense with the contemporary investigation of nonsense being conducted by philosophers at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford around the same time, under the auspices of what would become known as ordinary language philosophy. The concept of nonsense emerged as a powerful weapon in certain arenas of British philosophical debate between the wars, theoretically capable of explaining why an uncongenial argument could be neither accepted nor disproven. I aim to show that the approach to nonsense developed in the 1930s and 1940s by ordinary language philosophers like Ludwig Wittgenstein and J.L. Austin is pertinent to our understanding of O’Brien’s literary nonsense, not only for what it reveals about his literary technique, but also for the light it sheds on his cultural historical positioning as a novelist writing in the immediate aftermath of high modernism. I suggest that the interest in both nonsense and ordinary language that O’Brien shared with philosophers like Wittgenstein and Austin was not altogether coincidental, but rather emerged out of a common intellectual climate, informed in both cases by a sense of crisis in the traditions they respectively inherited, and a sense of exhaustion with existing solutions to those crises.

Nadia Fuchs (Nice), ‘From Modernism to Postmodernism in the Films of Woody Allen’

Woody Allen’s work has always been seen as the embodiment of nostalgia - hardly a modernist concept - however this nostalgia is most of the time directed towards the modernist period in the United States, Europe and Russia/the Soviet Union.
This is true first on a diegetical level with several of his films situated during the modernist period (Zelig (1983), The Purple Rose of Cairo (1985) Midnight in Paris, Magic in the Moonlight (2014)).

On a deeper level, Allen’s films make extensive intertextual references to modernist texts (Mayakovsky’s The Bedbug (1920) in Sleeper (1973), and the plot of Unchained by the Film (1918) in The Purple Rose of Cairo (1985), Eisenstein in Love and Death (1975). But they more importantly use modernist narrative strategies and modernist theories of the time, especially those of the Russian Formalists.

The diegeses, narration and enunciation in all his films can be seen as applying the concept of ostonanenie (defamiliarisation) developed by Victor Shklovsky in Art as Technique (1917) and later by Brecht and the Verfremdungseffekt.

Finally, Allen’s work is constantly breaking the spectatorial illusion by exposing the filmic and cinematographic devices. This is perhaps best represented by a recurring element in his films, that of the Chinese magic box (or its equivalents) poetically symbolising the camera itself.

50. Woolf Now 2 (Room 349)

Clara Jones (Queen Mary), ‘Virginia Woolf’s 1931 “Cook Sketch”’

‘Dear me, I spent 20 minutes dashing off a cooks talk – so much I need random rollicking humour.’ (D4 47)

Virginia Woolf’s 1931 ‘Cook Sketch’

This paper will focus on Virginia Woolf’s lost, rollicking ‘cooks talk’, which I have located in a 1931 manuscript notebook held in the Morgan Library in New York. As well as situating this archival finding, which I call the ‘Cook Sketch’, within its literary and historical contexts, this paper will address the contentious question of Woolf’s co-option of a working-class woman’s voice in this sketch. Positioning this rare act of class ventriloquism in relation to Woolf’s failure to include working-class voices in her 1931 novel The Waves, I suggest how it might inform our understanding of Woolf’s attitudes towards class and the ways in which she persistently engaged with class in her writing.

This paper responds to the coalescence of the concerns of Virginia Woolf studies and modernist studies in recent years. Its approach is informed by both Michael Levenson’s call for ‘more ambitious acts of contextualisation, more inclusive histories, and more precise readings of formidable works’ in the name a new modernist studies, and what Anna Snaith has identified as Woolf studies’ increasing emphasis on ‘more nuanced and contextualized treatment of issues surrounding Woolf, class and gender’.2


Bryony Randall (Glasgow), ‘Virginia Woolf’s Short Fiction: What Does a Modernist Scholar Want?’

What kind of text does the modernist scholar need now? The many competing demands placed upon the textual editor are particularly fraught in the case of Virginia Woolf’s short stories, in preparation in a new edition from Cambridge University Press. Of the 66 pieces to be included in The Collected Short Fiction, only

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18 were published during Woolf's lifetime, necessitating a return to typescripts or manuscripts at various stages of apparent completeness (and sometimes there is more than one for each text) to establish copytexts for the new edition. A delicate balance has to be struck, therefore, between the various possible answers to my opening question: the modernist scholars want a 'clean', readable text; a text without silent emendations; comprehensive but comprehensible textual apparatus – the list is not exhaustive.

This paper will first give an overview of these general issues, and then take two texts (‘A Dialogue Upon Mount Pentelicus’ and ‘The Introduction’) as case studies demonstrating the decisions which have to be made in preparing an edition from typescripts or manuscripts, and the wider theoretical implications of these decisions. In particular, this paper will consider ambiguity – not only a notably Woolfian characteristic, but one that Woolf herself, inter alia, identified as particularly apt to be expressed in the short story genre. Discussion of these texts will provide examples of the challenges involved in preserving an appropriate level of ambiguity in the text while balancing the various other demands of any new edition. All questions need not, perhaps should not, be answered...

Jane Goldman (Glasgow), ‘Editing Modernism Now/Modernism Editing Now: Woolf’s To the Lighthouse in Textual Process’

Like Mrs. Bast and Mrs. McNab, salvaging and laying out on the lawn the relics of Scott’s Waverley novels ‘fetched up from oblivion’, every reader of To the Lighthouse is encouraged to curate in the now, almost in the manner of an editor of a recovered ancient inscription, the text of the novel in all its numbered fragments and parentheses. Every such curation is unique in negotiating the text’s now and the now’s text. And more readers than ever before may now access the material archive of the composition of TL – avant-textes, manuscripts, typescripts, proofs and significant variant editions, all now available online.

Woolfonline.com constitutes a new ‘now’-ness for TL in all its newly simultaneous genetic states and forms. My Cambridge Edition systematically maps all extant textual variants. The ‘willed’ substantive, significant formal, variants made by Woolf’s own hand to the simultaneously published (but rarely until now simultaneously read) first U.K. and U.S. editions are important for any consideration of the novel’s formal strategies. The Cambridge Edition inevitably renders the text in new material printed form, carefully attending to spacing and typographical layout as important formal signifiers, yet without the fixed anachronistic constraints of facsimile. But both new TL forms allow readers access to the bifurcated form of variant twin first editions and textual genesis. The new now of TL is matched by its newly shaped formal capacity to edit the now of its readers, and invites questions of editing modernism now—and modernism editing now.

Christina Iglesias (Columbia), ‘Virginia Woolf’s The Years and Purgatorial Modernism’

Forster concludes A Passage to India (1924) by deferring the possibility of friendship between his protagonists: ‘“No, not yet,” and the sky said, “No, not there.”’ Lady Chatterley’s Lover (1928) ends with the text of Mellors’s letter to Lady Chatterley, signed “a little droopingly, but with a hopeful heart—...” In Part V of The Waste Land (1922), Eliot’s poet imagines the providential implications of his journey while it is still happening: "But when I look ahead up the white road / There is always another one walking beside you.” While some critics have theorized Modernism as a hellish descent into the underworld, my paper proposes an alternate
allegorical mode—Purgatory—as a means through which these scenes of deferred paradise might be better understood. I argue that the purgatorial works as a lens through which we might read both the reaching, wistful tone pervading so many of these texts as well as the practices of introspection and self-betterment so many of them suggest as antidotes for the alienation and anonymity of modernity.

My paper will take Virginia Woolf’s The Years (1937) as its focal point, a text that not only includes a recurring utopian vision of a “New World” defined by its deferment, but also features Dante’s Purgatorio as a crucial—and undertheorized—intertext. Throughout the novel, Eleanor, eldest of the Pargiter children, articulates her desire for a future marked by self-consciousness and intellectual freedom: “When will this New World come? When shall we be free? When shall we live adventurously, wholly, not like cripples in a cave?” In “Present Day,” the novel’s final section, Eleanor reimagines her fantasy of wholeness as a “state of being” rather than a destination, emphasizing its potential for redeeming a hitherto “broken” and disconnected “here and now” in which “we know nothing, even about ourselves.” As the novel ends, Eleanor identifies a fleeting glimpse of the fruition of her vision in the figure of a young couple exiting a cab at the end of the novel. That Eleanor imagines human intimacy—the paradisiacal telos of so much of Woolf’s oeuvre—as contingent on self-consciousness reflects that she has internalized her reading of Purgatorio earlier in the novel, which itself articulates that “the good” consists in rigorous self-examination as well as human connection: “There was a meaning, however; a hook seemed to scratch the surface of her mind: ‘For by so many more there are who says ‘ours’/ So much the more of good doth each possess.’” I argue that revisiting The Years through the lens of purgatorial tropes offers an alternative framework for thinking about how modernist writers imagined living in the present—a “now” tempered by the possibility of inhabiting “another life.”

51. ‘James Joyce has a lot to answer for’: Late Modernism and the 1960s
Experimental Tradition (Room 264)
Sebastian Groes (Roehampton), ‘Maureen Duffy’s The Microcosm: Joyce and the Sixties’
The Microcosm is a counter-cultural novel set in a lesbian bar in Swinging London, exploring the ways in which contemporary society is undergoing changes, social, cultural, economic and sexual. The novel is also an avowedly Joycean experiment: ‘I wanted a structure in which the parts would take their meaning from being juxtaposed to each other rather than chronologically consequent on each other. I wanted a novel that could put on any dress not just a sober suit […] I invented for what I wanted to do the term ‘a mosaic style’ that would break the tyranny of linear narrative, and that consciously harked back to Joyce.’ This paper analyses why Duffy felt compelled to appropriate, and write back to, the master of the modern novel, arguing that the conceptualisation of the novel at the level of form is profoundly intertwined with the novel’s subject matter. The paper takes the audience through the various Joycean narrative and poetic strategies employed by Duffy, explaining why her subversive work aligns itself with the European literary tradition, and showing why The Microcosm is both a late modernist homage to Joyce, as well as an attempt to overthrow his authority.

Adam Guy (Oxford), “‘Something definite to say about contemporary life in a contemporary way’: The British Novelistic Avant-garde and the nouveau roman’
This paper proceeds from the idea that, in the 1960s–70s in Britain, the nouveau roman was considered to be less an inheritor to high modernism, and more its immanent presence in the contemporary novel. Such cues were not only taken from within the nouveau roman – where writers evoked Proust, Kafka, and Faulkner in relation to their formal experimentation – but also from without, C. P. Snow, for example, detecting (pejoratively) the techniques of Bloomsbury modernism. After tracing this context, I consider the uses of the nouveau roman in articulations of a British avant-garde in the novel. I look first to the publisher Calder & Boyars, who used the model of the nouveau roman to portray authors such as Ann Quin and Alan Burns as part of a “New British School”. I chart similar notions of literary history in Calder & Boyars’s promotional writing, theoretical statements by B. S. Johnson and Alan Burns, and two novels from the period – John Berger’s G., and Brigid Brophy’s In Transit. This range of texts share the concept that contemporary literary experimentation reflected a new reality that could not be conveyed with the “clapped-out” (Johnson) forms of nineteenth-century realism; this concept displays a strong family resemblance to the earlier ideas of the nouveaux romanciers Michel Butor, Alain Robbe-Grillet, and Nathalie Sarraute. Drawing on Adorno’s ideas about modern art – its creation of taboos and reconfiguration of the idea of tradition – I conclude by sketching the troubled possibility of a Europe-wide avant-garde in the novel emerging in the postwar period, one partially redeemed through the dialectics of modernism.

Julia Jordan (UCL), ‘Evacuating B. S. Johnson’

This paper understands B.S. Johnson’s work as emblematic of a particular response to the aftermath of modernist innovation. It will read his oeuvre through the figure of evacuation, illuminating Johnson’s preoccupations with vacuity, void, exile, and excretion, which emerge as extensions of his self-proclaimed status as ‘an evacuee forever’. Johnson enumerates the body’s discharges and articulates anxieties about these discharges’ voluntary and involuntary nature: he is preoccupied with the void and the vacuum, spaces of absolute nullity, and, paradoxically, with vacuums that speak of uneasy presences; he fixates on the self’s exile and withdrawal, its inhabitation of nonplace and place at the same time. It suggests that this trope of evacuation is typical of a tendency inherent in late modernism itself, linking Johnson in particular to Samuel Beckett.

The word ‘clonic’, used by Johnson in The Evacuees to indicate the ‘other’ meaning of evacuation, of the bowels, is derived from klonos, Greek for turmoil and tumult. For Beckett, the clonic is also about laughter, or precisely, about a sort of excessive laughter, as Murphy found a joke ‘most funny, more than most funny, clonic’. Clonic spasms evacuate rigorously, systematically, operating as if without agency. Tyrus Miller has identified this mixture of the satirical and the compulsive as characteristic of the period: for Miller, late modernist writers are defined by a subversive and satirical undermining of modernist appeals to mastery and control, instead offering ‘vertiginously deranged’ satire. In analysing Johnson and Beckett’s shared attention to voiding and vacancy, I will suggest that their textual evacuations and displacements leave something new in their own right – the anxious, nullified, evacuated narratives of late modernism.

52. Questions of Definition (Room G26)

Emma Short (Newcastle), ‘Brave New World: the New New Modernist Studies’
In their introduction to Bad Modernisms (2006), Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz identify new modernist studies as a movement that aggressively sought to move beyond the confines of high modernism to expand the range of writing which might be considered modernist. The resulting expansion and revision of the modernist canon, however, has triggered critical anxieties regarding the preservation of modernism as a distinct field (Altieri, 2012). I argue for a New New Modernist Studies, which relies on a radical revisioning and questioning of the boundaries of modernist literature. Rather than retracing our steps back to a supposedly safer, more stable understanding of modernism, we in fact need to move further beyond our current understanding of the term to place it within a larger cultural discussion that incorporates the popular and the middlebrow. This paper argues that the popular and the middlebrow should carry the same critical value as modernism. This democratisation of terminology can show how texts in all three categories participate in the same practices. To illustrate this, I offer a reading of the ways in which narrative form and structure is shaped by the space of the hotel in modernist, middlebrow and popular literature. I suggest that we can chart the development of a ‘hotel narrative’, one which is fragmented and often non-linear, beginning in media res and lacking resolution, and which reveals experiments with narrative and form to be widespread not just in modernist literature – such as in Ford Madox Ford’s The Good Soldier – but across the literatures of modernity, as in the popular fiction of authors such as Elinor Glyn, and the middlebrow writing of Arnold Bennett. This paper calls for a decisive shift from the now fairly traditional new modernist studies approach to a far more significant and vital account of ways of thinking across and between literary forms in the first part of the twentieth century.

JT Welsch (York St John), ‘“Once more in the city I cannot name”: John Beer’s The Waste Land and the Possibility of Metamodernism’

In their 2010 ‘Notes on Metamodernism’, Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker respond to Linda Hutcheon’s earlier (2002) call for ‘a new label’ for post-postmodernism, first defining metamodernism as ‘characterized by the oscillation between a typically modern commitment and a markedly postmodern detachment.’ This paper will consider the arts movement first identified by Vermeulen and Akker, and championed more recently by poet Seth Abramson and artist Luke Turner, with particular emphasis on the avowed versus historical links between its literary incarnations and literary Modernism as such. Where Turner’s 2011 ‘Metamodernist Manifesto’ insists on the need to ‘liberate ourselves from the inertia resulting from a century of modernist ideological naivety and the cynical insincerity of its antonymous bastard child’, Abramson sees the ‘meta-’ prefix as a means to ‘transcend’ the ‘burden’ of modernism and postmodernism’s allegedly polarised intellectual heritage. I’ll consider the extent to which this branding exercise depends upon a reductive, whiggish narrative of modernism’s ‘allusiveness’ and ‘naiveté’ giving way to postmodernism’s ‘parataxis’ and ‘detritus’, or might be indicative of modernism’s general cultural status, by taking up the case study of John Beer’s more literally meta-modernist The Waste Land and Other Poems (2010). In its playful, but formally faithful pastiche of Eliot’s poem’s five parts (and notes), Beer’s poem tests the limits of high modernism’s legacy as well as such dismissive characterisations, I’ll argue.

Jolene Hubbs (Alabama), ‘William Faulkner and the New Modernist Studies’ Old Boy Network’
The new modernist studies—its fresh texts, contexts, and approaches—has not done enough to trouble modernism’s old boy network. Shifting attention from Conrad’s Lord Jim and Joyce’s Stephen Dedalus to Fuentes’s Artemio Cruz and Rulfo’s Pedro Páramo yields a more global, but no less masculine, conception of modernism. In Faulkner studies, recent comparative scholarship corrects the Eurocentrism of international modernist studies but leaves its androcentrism largely intact.

Endeavouring to redress the neglect of women’s voices in comparative criticism on Faulkner, my paper looks at the dialogue between Faulkner’s female narrators and those imagined by American women writers, centering on a pair of comparative readings:

(1) Faulkner and Anita Loos: tales told by “idiots”

Beginning with Faulkner’s own comments on the figure, I argue that Lorelei Lee, narrator-protagonist of Loos’s Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1925), encouraged Faulkner’s stylistic evolution from the stilted Joycean prose of his early fiction to the fluid narrative forms of The Sound and the Fury (1929). I concentrate on Benjy’s homophonic intonations, arguing that they developed from the language of Loos’s female narrator.

(2) Faulkner and Sylvia Plath: death-obsessed female narrators

Using archival evidence from Smith College’s Plath collection, I argue that Addie Bundren was a model for Plath’s most famous poetic persona: the formidable, death-obsessed speaker of “Daddy” (1962/1965). This approach uncovers Faulkner’s influence on confessional poetry—a form commonly understood as a decisive break from modernism that, from my analytical vantage point, looks like modernism’s kin.

In this paper, I work to map the terrain left uncharted in the critical move from international modernism to transnational modernism: the space of female narration in modernist fiction.

53. Modernist Pasts (Court Room)

Jessica Yeargin (Azusa Pacific), ‘The Brotherhood Gang: Peter Schjeldahl’s Gang Theory Applied to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood’

The evolution of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood has been discussed by great art historians such as Peter Corbett, Elizabeth Prettejohn, John Ruskin, and William Holman Hunt, himself. However, these art historians have not applied a contemporary 21st century art theory to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood to provide a clear and concise reason for the formation and dissolution of the Brotherhood. If evaluated through the lens of American art critic, Peter Schjeldahl’s Gang Theory, the development and disbandment of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and most art movements becomes obvious.

According to Schjeldahl, gangs form as an educational collaboration of academic misfits. This collaboration becomes a hot bed of information and creativity amongst gang members. Nevertheless, a truly successful gang will dissolve) within three to four years. In The Brotherhood Gang, I apply Peter Schjeldahl’s Gang Theory principles to answer a series of questions.

By applying the Gang Theory principles to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, The Brotherhood Gang will address the causes for the varying artistic characteristics of Millais, Rossetti and Hunt from 1860-70. It will also explain the socio-economic undertones of modernity in the late 19th century which shaped this short lived movement. In addition, this study will utilize the Gang Theory to demonstrate why the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was predestined to dissolve.
I am confident that The Brotherhood Gang will be an appropriate addition to current theorizations of modernism as a social, cultural, philosophical or political category for the Modernism Now! Conference.

Alex Murray (Exeter), ‘Decadence Revisited: Evelyn Waugh and the Afterlife of the 1890s’

As modernism set to establish its own modernity, celebrate its novelty, measure itself as a literary evolution it invariably sought to distance itself from its immediate predecessor, namely the Decadent literature of the fin de siècle. Yet the narrative of separation and rupture that modernist writers developed is disingenuous; the literary energies of the 1890s were not exhausted by Wilde’s trials or the birth of a new century. Indeed modernists were engaged in a complex and shifting relationship with Decadence as one literary movement saw itself reflected in the other. This paper will focus on Evelyn Waugh whose response was idiosyncratic, but also reflected broader cultural currents: he was drawn to the modish neo-Decadence of Ronald Firbank in the early 1920s, satirised and dismissed the increasing popularity of Wilde in the late 1920s, before developing a fond, even nostalgic attitude towards 1890s aestheticism in Put Out More Flags (1942) and Brideshead Revisited (1945). These shifts reflect the broader cultural climate in which the 1890s moved from notoriety to acceptance over the first half of the twentieth century, a history that can help us to understand the ways in which we read Decadence and Modernism today. Decadence is, despite the best historicist attempts, still a twentieth-century construction and it was writers like Waugh, as well the earlier generation of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound who were responsible for the image of an affected, effeminate Decadence that still characterises popular representations. But as the case of Waugh reveals this was not a simple rejection of the 1890s, but a continual revisiting as the period became an index for Waugh’s shifting relationship to ideas of literary fashion and aesthetic beauty.

Allan Johnson (City University of Hong Kong), ‘Embodied Narrative Absence: Living for the Present in the “Fisher King” Narrative’

Celtic mythology tells the story of the Fisher King, a ruler who suffered an incapacitating wound to the groin that never healed and which led to the ruin and desolation of his kingdom. Repeated and recast, the story of the Fisher King and his wound subsequently entered Arthurian legend and the Grail quest mythos, and, in this context, bears out the traumatic impossibility of trying to reclaim something that is no longer there. This paper will explore the ways in which the legend of the Fisher King’s wound was widely enacted in modernist writing. Moving beyond its most obvious portrayals in The Waste Land, Lady Chatterley’s Lover, and The Sun Also Rises, this paper reads the famous legend alongside three works clustered at the conclusion of World War II. The first-person narrators of Evelyn Waugh’s Brideshead Revisited (1945), Nancy Mitford’s The Pursuit of Love (1945) and Christopher Isherwood’s The Berlin Stories (1945) each turn to writing their stories because of an extraordinarily painful loss, yet each boldly refuse to explicitly acknowledge this pain in their story. Because of this, these texts invite the reader to see something that is blatantly not there: that is, the pain of loss that continues to define the narrator at the unseen moment when they write their stories. Confounded by Fisher King wounds that have never healed, these narrators retroactively read the influences pressing upon them in their youth, identifying these forces in the redemptive and protective exercise that comprises their narratives. These novels thus become as much about this lost past as they are about the present moment in
which the narrator has sat down to write their story. As this paper argues, the prevalence of Fisher King narratives is indicative of a particularly modernist literary style that vitalises the narrator, giving them life beyond the page while registering the anxieties of the modern world in a decidedly new manner.

Angela Berrichillo (Sorbonne), ‘Virtual Modernism: Madame Bovary’s Deleted Scene of the Coloured Glass’

In May 1852, the French novelist Gustave Flaubert decided to go for a rather peculiar walk, holding different pieces of coloured glass in front of his eyes in order to observe the countryside. This experimental stroll had a purpose: preparing the writing of a new scene of Madame Bovary. This scene, which was to start with the main character – Emma – going for a secret crepuscular walk in the gardens of a castle and entering an abandoned cottage, was entirely conceived as description of Emma’s shifts from one coloured window pane to another and the consequent changes these colour-shifts provoked: Emma’s changes of moods tuned on the landscape’s variations in texture and light. After six rewritings, Gustave Flaubert finally removed the scene from the final manuscript.

Flaubert’s famous claim ‘il faut que ça hurle par l’ensemble’ has naturally led modernist criticism, since Joseph Frank and The Idea of Spatial Form (1945), to regularly emphasise Madame Bovary’s modernist dimension and the synchronized changes linking Emma to the landscape undoubtedly fall within the conceptual territory of simultaneity. However, beyond this intra-diegetic simultaneity, the scene of the coloured glasses, because of its virtuality, draws a text-zone of modernism that exists both along and outside the actual version of Madame Bovary and forces us to reconsider the problem of simultaneity on a different scale. This paper argues that the scene of the coloured glass invites us to consider its deletion not as a missed modernist attempt but as the very heart of Madame Bovary’s modernism.

54. Same-sex Desire and Queer Theory (Room 246)

Ana Tomčić (Zagreb), ‘Modernist Educational Bodies – an Economy of Fear or the Beauty of Permanent Mistakes’

By means of a dynamic exchange with the works of Djuna Barnes and Franz Kafka the paper seeks to investigate a clandestine ideology at the heart of psychoanalysis. Kafka’s short story In the Penal Colony in association with a variety of Freudian case studies as well as more recent psychoanalytic texts will be used to explore the intricate relations between this ideology and contemporary conceptions of work, education, sexuality and identity formation. Barnes’s novels (primarily Nightwood and Ryder) will then serve to subvert and develop the ideological precepts disclosed in Kafka and Freud and pave the way to a new economy of education, which must openly acknowledge its corporeo-political impact. Through a combination of psychoanalytic, Marxist, feminist and queer perspectives, the paper attempts to show how the work of two modernist authors and the changes they initiated in their socio-textual reality can be applicable to the (inextricably connected) crisis currently affecting capitalist education systems and the traditional heterosexual family. From a point of view which is historical as much as it is psychological, the need to return to modernism today is more than a research interest. The present analysis employs several early 20th century narratives –
scientific as well as literary – to deconstruct the borders between them and elucidate the political potential of modernist fictions for the contemporary reader.

Ellen Ricketts (Hull), ‘Conventional Radicals: Same-sex Desire and the (Anti-)Modernist Novel’
This paper seeks to open up new critical dialogue around the concept of “lesbian modernism”. As a critical trend in recent decades which sought to reclaim and reassess the contributions of writers in whose lives and works same-sex desire was a significant presence, it comprises two anachronistic terms which together suggest a particular agenda when assessing the sexual past in early twentieth-century literature. This paper presents a disaggregation of the term “lesbian modernism”, building on recent critical projects which have aimed to challenge the progress narrative of a modern lesbian subject in literature and culture. The primary aim of this paper is to deconstruct, rather than take for granted, the relationship between lesbianism and modernism, and to complicate existing understandings of lesbianism’s uses, effects and representational possibilities within the literary landscape of the early twentieth century. This paper aims to achieve this by presenting an overview of an ongoing research project, offering a discussion of some neglected novels in which modernist techniques can be seen to operate alongside aspects of anti-modernism, including sentiment, traditionalism and a gaze turned towards the past. Falling uncomfortably between the representational modes of realism and modernism, these novels have been misconstrued as either too conventional to be revolutionary, or else interpretatively troubling because they cannot be entirely dismissed as conventional. This paper challenges the notion of any simple or rigid divide between realism and modernism, and concurrently seeks to reconceptualise the ways in which the lesbianism of literature is mapped onto the modernism of literature.

Ery Shin (Oxford), ‘Modernism, Phenomenology, Queer Theory’
This paper examines how modernism, phenomenology, and queer criticism intersect. As Carole Bourne-Taylor and Ariane Mildenberg argue in their introduction to Phenomenology, Modernism and Beyond, modernism and phenomenology grew out of the same historical anxieties underlying the early-twentieth century and share fundamental concerns that render them incisive heuristic methods for one another. Both movements are difficult to define, reformulate the workings of consciousness, and seek to overcome misguided assumptions behind nineteenth-century objectivism, such as rigid subject-object distinctions, empirical infallibility, and impartial narration. While a modernist reading of phenomenology or a phenomenological reading of modernism easily follows, this paper stays within the latter, tracing how consciousness shaping, and being shaped by, our cultural horizon becomes an urgent concern for queer-based modernist criticism.

To elaborate, the pertinence of modernism’s phenomenological emphases to queer criticism rests in how phenomenology, especially Merleau-Ponty’s body-oriented phenomenology, locates queer desire beyond the usual constraints of fear and disgust in the phenomenologist’s renunciation of the “natural attitude,” that is, common-sense. Phenomenology’s call to rid ourselves of ideological biases and gaze upon the world afresh finds its correlate in queer theory’s effort to unsettle sexuality and gender from their default modes. Both
upheavals loop back into modernism, in turn, insofar as it remains committed to pushing the boundaries of its mediums—whether visual, verbal, aural—as far as possible. Beyond homosexual innuendo, there are timely questions here regarding the meaning of new forms and values for the “outside” artist-thinker and how one breaks away from the mainstream to become such a figure in the first place—even how far one can go without turning back.

Jesse Wolfe (California State), ‘What about now and here? — Modernism, Metanarrative and the Present’

Jean Francois Lyotard equated postmodernism with “incredulity toward metanarrative,” and treated public life as the stage on which metanarrative fables (Christian, Marxist, liberal) would or would not come true. In my reading of postmodernism, and of its engagement with modernist precedents—particularly those of the Bloomsbury group—this provocative formulation begs to be updated in two major ways.

First, intimate life should be seen to be as significant as public life, as an arena in which novelists limn the march of progress—or, barring belief in such a “march,” then in the sprawl of history. As same-sex love gains wider social acceptance, as interracial love gradually but continually spreads, as marriage rates decline and divorce rates remain high—all signs (albeit debatable ones) that freedom-in-intimacy is expanding—does happiness-in-intimacy also increase? Is there a metanarrative logic to how we love?

E. M. Forster’s A Passage to India opens with Hamidullah’s question “whether or no it is possible to be friends with an Englishman” and closes with the sad verdict “No, not yet … no, not there,” in Chandrapore, India, circa 1924.

An indirect legacy of Passage, Hanif Kureishi’s 1990 Buddha of Suburbia effectively revises Forster’s novel and asks, of interracial, same-sex love, “What about now, and here?” when its half-Indian protagonist forms a crush on his white schoolmate. Kureishi is not Pollyannaish about contemporary intimacy (or society), but neither does he evince thoroughgoing incredulity concerning the possibility that history has a logic, in both the public and the intimate arenas.

55. Popular Science and Anglo-American Print Culture  (Room G22)

Jennifer Cole (Oxford), ‘“The song through the noise”: Science as an Editorial Resource in the Crisis, Poetry and the Little Review’

In her recent study of nature and modernism, The Degenerate Muse, Robin Schulze demonstrates that the impulse to return to nature in much early 20th century American poetry was not simply nostalgic and anti-modern, but in fact driven by contemporary debates within the life sciences, specifically concerning degeneration. Schulze’s argument reveals the centrality of mainstream Progressive-era science, even to theories of poetry which are, at first glance, antipathetic to that aspect of modernity. Rather than dismissing ‘science’ as simply one of many sociological influences on literary modernism, as anthologists and critics continue to do, we must continue working to uncover the complex interrelationships with science that shaped modern poetry in general, and modern American poetry in particular.

My research is focused on the material and print culture aspects of this line of inquiry. By examining editorial writing from the first years of Poetry, the Little Review, and the Crisis, I will explore the strategies
employed by editors to position their publications against the cultural background of scientific authority. While in the Crisis W. E. B. Du Bois actively solicited and carefully framed contributions from scientists such as Franz Boas and Jacques Loeb to discredit the outmoded racist claims of popular anthropology, the editors of the Little Review employed the vocabulary of evolution and psychology and simultaneously repudiated ‘science’ as the antithesis of the poetic imagination. Whether they embraced or rejected the values associated with science, all three editors recognized the resource science represented for defining the voices of their respective magazines. I pose the questions of what ‘science’ signified to modernist writers, and how recognizing the unique relationships to science established in these three modernist magazines can enrich our readings of the poetry published in their pages.

Michael Collins (Kent), ‘Divorce Has Its Uses: Cultural Diffusion and the Ethnographic Imagination in Edith Wharton’s The Custom of the Country’

This paper considers Edith Wharton’s novel The Custom of the Country within the context of its original, serial publication in Scribner’s Magazine (1913). I read Wharton’s novel as an aesthetic response to the changing intellectual landscape of American ethnography as it was treated in Scribner’s and its predecessor The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine, which frequently published field reports from John Wesley Powell’s Bureau of American Ethnology and other anthropological surveys alongside fiction, poetry and fine art criticism. I look at how the narrative of the novel, which moves from a concern with the exclusive and autonomous, “rites and customs” (Custom, 299) of a closed New York society towards a discussion of what Brad Evans has recently called “circulating culture” in a transatlantic space, charts the shift in turn-of-the-century American anthropology from a Lamarckian focus on environmental determinism towards questions of cultural diffusion and exchange. Consequently, I see Wharton’s heroine Undine Spragg as not merely a conservative satire of the vulgar “conspicuous consumption” (Veblen) and transatlantic mobility of the rising American upper-middle classes, but as an example of the author’s rich understanding and engagement with changes in ethnographical research culture in the Gilded Age USA, drawn from her reading of general interest publications such as Scribner’s and The Century. In offering an interpretation of the novel that combines print culture studies with literary criticism and intellectual history, I present The Custom of the Country as a transitional work in Wharton’s oeuvre between her earlier naturalism (bound to Social Darwinian models of cultural evolution) and a later, decidedly more “modernist”, vision informed by a pluralistic focus on diffusion, mobility and exchange across cultural boundaries that would be explored more fully in The Age of Innocence (1920).

Cathryn Setz (Oxford), ‘Intersections of Evolutionary Science and Literary Culture in The Dial, c. 1924–1929’

Before The Dial became one of the US’s most significant publications of modernist literary texts (under the auspices of Scofield Thayer, Kenneth Burke, Marianne Moore, and others), its previous life was as a generalist review of the latest books of interest, across the arts and sciences. Particularly in the US, too, evolutionary science in its most popular forms (via textbooks, Museums, and debates in widely available journals such as Nature) saw a period of profound change, as palaeontologists and other practices of morphology eventually
shook off older, contra-Darwinian models of natural selection. In this paper I want to investigate how we can approach the fact that the period science historians call the 'Eclipse of Darwinism'—the last vestiges of idealist, teleological, and otherwise nineteenth-century modes of evolutionist discourse between 1875 and 1925—is an era marked by what Peter Bowler calls ‘cul de sac’ or ‘dead end’ science, and yet it is also the period literary scholars and cultural historians traditionally refer to as modernism. How and why is this significant, in terms of the cultures of knowledge modernist authors lived and thought through? Two focal points serve to orient discussion, as I consider Marianne Moore’s close reading of the latest evolutionary studies available to the reading public, and the pointedly eugenic works of American Museum of Natural History Director Henry Fairfield Osborn. I argue that The Dial enables us to build a picture of the publishing industry during this period, and an emergent body of literary critical language enmeshed in such broader discursive material from the life sciences.

Rachel Crossland (King’s College London), ‘Reviewing Modernist Science and Literature: Popular Science in The New Quarterly, 1907–1910’

The fact that there was a boom in popular science following the announcement of the experimental verification of Albert Einstein’s general theory of relativity in 1919 has been widely acknowledged, as has the impact of Einstein’s ideas on modernist writers like Virginia Woolf (see, for example, Alan Friedman and Carol Donley’s Einstein as Myth and Muse, 1985, and Katy Price’s Loving Faster than Light, 2012). The role of periodicals in the dissemination of Einstein’s ideas has also been the subject of close critical attention, most notably from Michael Whitworth (Einstein’s Wake, 2001). However, Peter Bowler has recently argued that the popular science boom of 1919 was not the first such boom of the twentieth century (Science for All, 2009). So what if new scientific ideas were available to emerging modernist writers more readily and earlier than has previously been supposed?

Drawing on the developing field of modernist periodical studies, this paper takes as a case study Desmond MacCarthy’s short-lived New Quarterly (1907-1910), which was subtitled ‘A Review of Science and Literature’. Although the New Quarterly has been commented on by critics before, in particular Whitworth, it has not yet received the detailed attention it deserves. In this paper I will analyse its significant, although decreasing, scientific content, most of which was contributed by eminent practising scientists. Time permitting, I will also investigate the ways in which the scientific articles in the New Quarterly can be seen to overlap and interact with the non-scientific articles which appeared alongside them.

56. Pound and… (Room 261)

James Dowthwaite (Oxford), ‘The Place of Philology in Ezra Pound’s Literary Scholarship’

Ezra Pound’s university education (1902-1907) took place during what Gerald Graff describes as a conflict between rival modes of literary scholarship. The development of modern language and literature departments in the early twentieth century was characterised by a conflict between two opposing academic tendencies (Graff, 1987). One the one hand, the old philological methods that were applied to the classical languages asserted their method as the proper, ‘scientific’ approach. On the other hand, the ‘generalists’ believed that the proper study of literature should focus on aesthetic value judgements.
Both during and after his time at university, Pound cast aspersions on ‘Germanised’ scholarship, and refers to his time spent ‘in the slough of philology’ in The Spirit of Romance (1910). It is thus easy to see Pound aligning himself with the ‘generalist’ camp, given both his penchant for discerning the aesthetic and artistic merit of texts, and his desire for a ‘a literary scholarship, which will weigh Theocritus and Mr Yeats with one balance’ (SR, p. vi). It is clear that Pound felt restricted by philology. However, this paper proposes to read Pound’s early criticism as a sustained engagement with philological practice. Despite his reservations, philological detail pervades Pound’s approach to literature, from historical notes to linguistic curiosity. In reading Pound’s early poetry and prose in light of the academic struggle described by Graff, I hope to show that for all of his aversion, Pound’s work reflects a complex engagement with, not simply a departure from, philological methodology.

Alex Pestell, “‘With an eye to censorship’: Ezra Pound’s Aesopian Language’

The date appended to Canto 100 – ‘i Jan ’58’ – locates its collocation of historical and contemporary anecdote and allusion in a very specific moment. Pound’s preoccupation with decisions made by the US administration around the time of WWII endures into the fifties, as his poetry and letters make clear, and raises questions as to the relation between the persistence of contemporary historical issues and that of the more ancient questions as they are embodied in Pound’s source texts. This paper argues that one is not so much intended to point to the other, as they are to be seen as a continuum. And, by extension, Pound asks to be seen within this same continuum, on a par with the other heroes in the poem, persecuted for uncovering uncomfortable truths. The allusions to ancient charters in Thrones do not only figure a lost political ideal: they engage with constitutional questions animating the American far-right in the 50s. When Pound echoes Lenin’s phrase ‘Aesopian language’, it is clear that he believes himself to be writing (like Lenin) ‘with an eye to … censorship’. Unlike Lenin, however, Pound does not as a result of this circumspection ‘confine [himself] strictly to an […] analysis of facts’. Rather, he elaborates a discourse of exoneration, recrimination, reminiscence and prescription, masked as analysis. Through a close reading of Thrones, and with specific reference to Pound’s interest in constitutional documents, this paper will explore the implications of Pound’s use of allusion and misdirection as an aggressively defensive rather than instructive or analytical device.

Orla Polten (Cambridge), ‘Classical Metres in Modernity: Pound and Swinburne’

What happens when we write English poetry in Greek or Latin metres? Close attention to this question may help us to hear some of poetry’s strangest and most mesmerising moments. This paper is part of a larger project that aims to elucidate the influence of classical metres on the development of English verse during the crucial years of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Here I will use classical metre as a starting point to offer a revisionist reading of Pound’s long poem of 1917, Homage to Sextus Propertius, as a mélange of metrical forms from across the traditions of English and Latin verse, which gesture towards a wide range of genres: mock-heroic epic, satire, lyrical love elegy, pastoral, and burlesque. This multilingual medley attempts to reinvigorate the English language, cheapened and deadened by war and the exhaustion of empire. The poem employs sarcasm and irony as a strategy to push aside what Pound perceives as the junk of language—gossip
and chatter, cribs of dead Latin elegies—and reach for small moments, intense and poignant, in which the power of poetry might authentically flourish again.

57. Mainstream Women’s Magazines (Room G22)
Alice Wood (Portsmouth), ‘Modernism, Novelty and Familiarity in British Vogue and Eve’
Mainstream women’s magazines strike a balance between novelty and familiarity, attracting readers back issue after issue with news of the latest fashions, celebrity gossip and household innovations packaged within a routine format. These periodicals situate themselves perpetually in the now, constructing their audiences as constantly alert to new trends in dress and design while possessed of the timeless good taste to distinguish between a passing fad and an eternal ‘classic’. This paper explores how modernist art and literature are mediated through tensions between novelty, familiarity, ‘nowness’ and timelessness in early British Vogue and Eve. How do these magazines respond to and represent modernism, and what role do modernist aesthetics play in their perennial quest to refresh the now? Frictions abound between modernity and conservatism, experimentalism and cliché in British Vogue and Eve in the late 1910s and early 1920s. My paper will examine the adoption and subversion of modernist aesthetics within these publications in the service of their editorial project to tempt and retain readers with a taste of the new. While high modernism sought to defamiliarize the everyday, British Vogue and Eve sought to familiarize the reader with modernism. Alongside analysing the treatment of modernist works and practitioners within these mainstream magazines, this paper will address wider questions about popular culture’s manipulation of modernism and the relationship between fashionability and the avant-garde.

Ilya Parkins (British Columbia), ‘Modern Fashion Magazines as Philosophical Text’
This paper argues that ongoing considerations of fashion, beauty, femininity and sexuality in the pages of fashion magazines should be recognized as constituting a popular mediation of philosophical ideas in the interwar period. Drawing on examples from influential French, British and American magazines such as Harper’s Bazaar, Eve, Gazette du Bon Ton and La Femme Chic à Paris, I suggest that these women’s magazines were particularly engaged with ideas about “being” and “seeming,” or ontological and epistemological questions. The discussion will identify several genres of philosophical mediation in these pages, including the Editor’s letter, the second-person address by a man to women in general or to a putative lover, and the illustrated snapshot of a trend in fashion or adornment practices. Treatments of women’s surface and depth, changing class and gender conventions, the relationship between an ‘eternal’ feminine and contemporary self-fashioning, and the structures of desire, attraction and heterosexual love often contain lengthy discussions of the nature of being and knowing, which have broad implications that are not limited to women or femininity. Such material is potentially important in broadening the focus of interdisciplinary modernist studies. It forces us to recognize a largely trivialized and overlooked forum that complements related explorations in modernist little magazines and in other avant-garde fora. It suggests that feminized mass cultural spaces of modernity made significant contributions to a broad renegotiation of regimes of knowledge in the early twentieth century, taking their place alongside mediations of similar ideas by more recognizable modernist figures.

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Amanda Carrod (Keele), “The time has come [...] to talk of many things”: The Vogue of Dorothy Todd 1922–1926

There is no other magazine that is as much about the NOW! as Vogue. With such a focus on the NOW! why does the Vogue of THEN need to be considered by scholars of Modernism NOW?

Up until NOW! there have only been several brief and fleeting articles on the subject of Vogue magazine during the dynamic decade of the 1920’s. The Vogue of THEN editor Dorothy Todd had an instrumental effect upon the issues modern readers are NOW! confronted with.

My current PhD research considers how Dorothy Todd’s editorship instigated a Modernist experiment in Vogue magazine which included the publication of many writers and artists we would NOW! consider to be among the makers of Modernism. This paper will demonstrate fully why Vogue deserves a lot more consideration from scholars of Modernism than it has previously been granted. NOW! is the time for a reassessment of "the world’s most famous fashion magazine,” NOW! is the time to consider Vogue as part of the dialogue of Modernist magazines.

In particular this paper will consider the role of fashion in Vogue during this time. Fashion in Vogue between 1922 and 1926 has been either dismissed entirely or discussed in isolation and thus the role of clothing in the magazine during the Todd era has seldom been considered in conjunction with the presentation and promotion of Modernism. I wish to consider the way in which Todd, attempted to integrate fashion with more traditional high-brow art forms, with the hope of achieving "civilisation in the minds” of her dedicated readership.

Deborah Pike (Notre Dame Australia), “Masquerading as Herself”: Desire, Selfhood and Modernity in Zelda Fitzgerald’s Magazine Fiction

This paper examines the consumerist rhetoric of modernity and how this manifests itself in representations of desire and feminine selfhood in Zelda Fitzgerald’s early writings. It focuses on her magazine writing—her journalistic articles and short stories—which were published in fashionable periodicals such as Harper’s Bazaar and The New Yorker between 1920 and 1930. The ensuing argument involves an investigation of how literary form relates to modernity.

Fitzgerald seeks to define the flapper in her first piece of journalism, 'Paint and Powder’ (1920), where she argues that flappers should inspire desire, and always appear as objets d’art. In this work and other journalistic pieces, she champions the idea of a modern consumerist selfhood for women. However, in her short-stories, known as the ‘girls stories’, Fitzgerald challenges these notions in a comic and ironic fashion – in the same magazines which promote them. Fitzgerald portrays different kinds of young women in American society: Southern Belle, club-girl, debutante, movie actress. In so doing, she critiques the identities made available for them through the popular media. Her stories, written later, contrast sharply with the ‘flapper’ philosophies presented in some of her journalistic pieces. Zelda’s ‘girl’ characters find ultimate fulfillment and a sense of self, it seems, not by pursuing the dream of success, glamour, or romance, but rather through working and earning their own living.

58. Beckett after Theory: Empiricism, Materialism and Circulation (Room 261)
Holly Phillips (Otago), ‘After the Empirical Turn: Beckett, Descartes and the Revolt of the Particular’

Since the 1990s, Beckett studies has witnessed something of an ‘Empirical turn’. The drastic expansion of Beckett’s archive and the disclosures of Knowlson’s Damned to Fame in 1996, heralded an unprecedented return to scholarly sources and a fruition of empirical methodology among key Beckett scholars (Knowlson, Gontarski, Ackerley, Feldman, and Tonning among them). The co-occurrence of these material and methodological shifts (doubtless inter-related) has born an increasingly precise appreciation of the place of Beckett, and his work, in the intertextual space. These investigations have revealed, among many other things, that much of Beckett’s early philosophical posturing, in works like Whoroscope and Dream, derived directly from the young writer’s gifted ‘rehashing’ of synoptic sources (J. P. Mahaffy’s Descartes for Whoroscope, most famously). How can we re-conceptualise Beckett’s frequent engagement with philosophy in his early writing, now that we’ve been forced to dispense with any pretence of precocious ‘mastery’?

This paper attempts to answer this question through an analysis of medieval Scholasticism in Beckett’s early works. The symbols, paradoxes, debates and impasses of Scholasticism abound in Beckett’s pre-war writing, this is manifest and fascinating enough in itself, but to understand why an avant-gardist of the 1930s would adopt the structures of an ancient body of knowledge it is vital to return, once again, to his sources. Synoptic works made up the majority of Beckett’s early philosophical reading, and it is the contention of this paper that the compact version of intellectual history presented in them cultivated a distinct macro-historical awareness in the young Beckett. This awareness encouraged him to conceptualise human intellectual endeavour as an eternal (and interminable) restatement of the same incommensurable problems of existence. Through an empirical analysis of these early sources, this paper seeks to demonstrate that the intellectual wranglings of the Scholastics were, in fact, highly influential in the development of Beckett’s very twentieth-century aporia.

Dominic Walker (Sussex), “‘And things, what is the correct attitude to adopt towards things?’: Beckett, Property and Materialism’

As Beckett himself has confirmed, the Three Novels culminate in an ‘absolute disintegration of the subject’, a divestment or disowning of subjective attributes that is usually restated by critics in ontological terms. Much has been said about the liquidation of the subject in relation to narrative and language; but the final phase has attracted less attention. ‘[F]irst of all my stories and then, last of all… my inventory’: ‘the things that remain in my possession.’

This paper investigates a connection in Beckett’s work between ‘inventing’ and ‘inventory’, between subjective extinction and the enumeration of possessions. It will do this by considering some of the conceptions of the subject present in Beckett’s most pervasive influences, with particular attention to Arnold Geulincx, whose role in Beckett’s development David Tucker has recently adumbrated. Beckett and Geulincx: Tracing a Literary Fantasia will provide an empirical basis for some remarks on the political meaning or extension of the idea of the dis/integrated subject in Beckett’s fiction, which, I will argue, treats the subject not as a separable locus of properties but as a form—perhaps the paradigmatic form—of property itself. Situating Beckett in a tradition of materialism, and developing arguments by Alain Badiou and Shane Weller, I will
suggest that the minimisation of the subject—that ultimately private property—does indeed represent an ‘opening to the Other’ in Beckett’s work, however inchoately; but not, or not primarily, in the ontological terms that it has previously been understood.

Thirtankar Chakraborty (Kent), ‘Circulation: Tectonic Shifts in Beckett’s Worldly Whirl’

In Samuel Beckett’s Endgame, Ham orders Clov, ‘Take me for a little turn. Not too fast! Right round the world! Hug the walls, then back to the centre again.’ Beckett’s writings have travelled the globe. Not only has he drawn responses from prominent thinkers, but he has also been read, performed, and translated into numerous languages and adapted in various forms in distinct cultural and socio-political settings. An important question to be addressed in the light of this global circulation is how one might read Beckett as an instance of world literature.

As a case study, this paper will examine how Indian authors and artists have adapted some of the key modernist genres, themes, and techniques through Beckett’s works. Divided into two parts, the first part will discuss Salman Rushdie’s allusion to the Beckettian ‘Not I’ in The Satanic Verses, while also briefly touching on selected passages by more recent Indian novelists, such as Upamanyu Chatterjee and Vilas Sarang. The second part will consider Ashish Avikunthak’s short experimental film Antaral (Endnote), which is, what the artist calls, ‘a cinematic interpretation’ of Beckett’s ‘Come and Go’ in Hindi and Bengali. Supposing India is regarded as a mirror of world literature on account of its immense linguistic and literary diversity, the analysis will present the ramifications of the global circulation of literature. More specifically, it will address the question as to whether Beckett’s works weather the tectonic shifts in moving across foreign literary landscapes, transmute into hybrids, or are altered entirely in the process.

59. Scientific Poetics in Modernist Poetry (Room G26)

Stephen Thomson (Reading), ‘Fables of Science and Subjectivity: Paul Valéry’s Descartes’

The Routledge Critical Idiom volume on Modernism (2000) lists Paul Valéry amongst the symbolist poets, who (allegedly) reacted against the systems of Darwin and Marx by producing a froth of reverie. A glance at Valéry’s verse might seem to sustain this view. Yet Valéry has also frequently provided epigraphs and aphorisms for critical works on science and culture, notably Daniel Dennett’s essay, ‘In Darwin’s wake, where am I?’, in The Cambridge Companion to Darwin. Indeed, Valéry’s essays and notebooks demonstrate a sustained, if idiosyncratic, engagement with scientific epistemology, and its implications for culture and poetry. It is perhaps tempting to see the essayist and the poet as falling apart, as discrete sides of Valéry. But Valéry’s repeated return to Descartes attempts a strange and provocative mediation. In some respects, Valéry’s Descartes can be compared to that of his near-contemporaries T.H. Huxley, Edmund Husserl, and José Ortega y Gasset, for whom a return to Descartes means a return to the moment at which a world of (ideal) value and a world of (material) practical science part; and so a chance to re-run the programme and to heal a world dominated by runaway, but headless, technical success.

But Valéry also seems to take his cue from his master, Stéphane Mallarmé, who takes from the Discours de la méthode an idea of ‘fiction’ that seemingly enables him to produce poetry after an extended crisis. A little like George Eliot’s idea of ‘the make-believe of a beginning’, Valéry’s pronouncement, in his essay
on Poe’s Eureka—‘Au commencement était la fable, elle y sera toujours’—claims to establish a priority and an ascendancy of fiction, not by turning aside from science, but by burying deeper into it to find a moment of pure decision rooted in subjectivity. Equal parts philosophical proposition and sleight of hand, this proposition has itself the character of a fable. Here too, Valéry draws on a reading of Descartes’s cogito as a fable, as an empty proposition that makes things happen. While conceding that this is a manner of argument rather more likely to sway poets than practitioners of scientific research, I will conclude by meditating on its possible implications for our reading of Valéry’s poetry, and by pushing to the limit the idea that its very froth might have something to say to science.

John Holmes (Reading), ‘Teleological Evolutionism in Modernist Epic Poetry’

Evolutionary theory is a recurrent point of reference in the experimental epics written by modernist poets over the course of the twentieth century. Yet like many late nineteenth-century poets, these modernists looked to evolution for a scientific corroboration of purpose and direction, not for the haphazard workings of natural selection proposed by Darwin. In the process, they drew on and contributed to a strong rear-guard action by anti-Darwinian evolutionists that came close to supplanting Darwinism itself in the early twentieth century and remained a vocal if increasingly marginal presence even within post-war biology.

In this paper I want to consider the use of evolutionary science in the narratives and imagery of three modernist epics in particular. In Ezra Pound’s The Cantos (1917-69), Darwin is increasingly supplanted by his Swiss-American critic Louis Agassiz as the model for interpreting biology and geology within the poem. In David Jones The Anathemata (1952), the geological and evolutionary history of life on earth becomes focussed on what is for the Catholic Jones the central historical moment of the incarnation of Christ. In Man (1970-74), Ronald Duncan – a protégé of Pound – structured his entire poem in 63 cantos around the evolutionary history of life on earth culminating in and accounting for the capacities of humanity. In all three cases, the poet’s own straining after a recapitulation of epic form that is sustainable in a modern age is mirrored in his determination to re-inscribe a version of evolution that affirms rather than dispels the central importance of human life. Evolution becomes for the modernist poet at once an analogue for his own enterprise, as he struggles to create a poem that comprehends the world and its history and yet can still in Pound’s word ‘cohere’, and a guarantee that that enterprise itself is part of an inherent drive within the universe towards its own self-comprehension through art and science.

Fathi Nasaif (Reading/Bahrain), ‘Science and Technology in Muriel Rukeyser’s “The Book of the Dead”’

Muriel Rukeyser employed forms and tackled themes that were considered atypical of women poets at the time. Epics produced by modernist poets such as Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot inspired her to write similar long poems. Rukeyser’s interest in science, especially in Willard Gibbs’s theory of the Phase Rule, describing a condition in which a mixture of two or more distinct physical states of chemical substances can coexist in a state of equilibrium, provided an impetus to her experimenting with different forms in her poetry. Moreover, the Phase Rule offered Rukeyser a model for her idea of a triadic scheme representing the relationship between poet, poem and readers. Her incorporation of science and the documentary form (discussed at length
by Catherine Gander in Muriel Rukeyser and Documentary: The Poetics of Connection) in her long poems ‘Theory of Flight’ (1935) and ‘The Book of the Dead’ (1938) constitutes both an extension and a revision of the modernist epic poem.

My paper deals with the way Rukeyser integrated science and technology in ‘The Book of the Dead’ so that they represent fields of relationships rather than self-contained concepts. She creates complex webs of meaning around scientific concepts and symbols of technology to reveal the contrasting aspects they embody. Her relational poetics can also be observed in her deployment of the documentary mode, which gains a wider significance as it is placed in the context of the relationships operating in ‘The Book of the Dead’.

60. Geographies of Modernism 1: China and Japan (Room 264)
Zhang Helong (Shanghai International Studies University), ‘The Chinese Response to Anglo-American Modernist Literature’
During the 20th century, the Chinese response to Anglo-American modernist literature was characterized by two major critical strategies: one was psychologically oriented; the other was marked by a political orientation. The first critical strategy, typified by psychological perspectives, originated in the 1920s and 1930s and formed a strong undercurrent which for a long time remained in the background. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the politically oriented criticism began to take shape when the People’s Republic of China was founded. It followed synchronically the theories of Russian academics and also inherited the leftist and ultra-leftist ideas which had emerged in the 1920s and 1930s. After the ten-year interregnum which had taken place during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the 1980s witnessed a great debate on Western modernism including Anglo-American modernism. It can be tentatively interpreted as an open and sharp confrontation between the two critical approaches in a new political and cultural milieu. By the 1990s, the two strategies had undergone significant change. At that time, psychologically based criticism began to replace political criticism as both dominant and widely accepted. As political criticism was not a consequence of simply importing or repeating the ultra-leftist paradigm in the former Soviet Union, so the “normalization” of evaluating modernism in the new millennium has not just resulted from positively reiterating or parroting Anglo-American scholarship. The “legitimization” of the current attitudes towards Anglo-American modernism has been a product of diverging academic and non-academic elements that have fused together during the long historical process.

Wendy Gan (Hong Kong), ‘The Shanghai Essays of Emily Hahn’
If Emily Hahn is remembered today it is probably for her long-time affiliation with The New Yorker. A prolific writer, impossible to pigeonhole (Hahn wrote novels, journalistic essays, travel books, biographies, memoirs, and even cookbooks), Hahn occupies the edges of the conventional modernist landscape in both the Anglophone and Sinophone worlds. Friends with Dorothy Parker, Rebecca West and the modern Chinese literary set when she moved to Shanghai in 1935, Hahn’s career took in the key global cities of the modernist period. Smart, sassy, and bohemian, Hahn was at ease amongst the avant-garde.

Her bright, succinct writing with its deft comic touch was, however, seemingly too accessible. Humour though was to become the means by which Hahn remained approachable and yet challengingly modern. This paper will focus on Hahn’s Shanghai essays (first published in The New Yorker), in particular
those that relate to the Pan family. Hahn's intimacy with the poet Zao Sinmay (Pan Heh-ven of the essays) gave her unprecedented access to Chinese domestic life. The essays are often characterised by Hahn's perplexity with Pan's cultural difference. Though Pan begins as the comic butt, Hahn is also aware that from his Chinese perspective, she is comically inadequate too. We laugh at him, but also at her as Hahn establishes for us a sense of the shifting relativity of both Chinese and American norms. Crossing into the world of the Pans is thus an exercise in dissolving and remaking boundaries with humour easing this cross-cultural re-shaping of worldviews.

Simone Heller-Andrist (Zurich), ‘A Return to Darkness: The Role of the Japanese Shadow in Modernist Poetry and Today’

Allen Upward’s imagist poem “The Gold Fish” compares the “golden fins” (2) in the dark greenish water to the emotional upheavals of love in the lover’s heart, and more generally, it links the flames in the darkening night to these emotions. Hence, darkness seems to figure as necessary foil to the deepest human emotions. This imagery, underlined by a reference to the goldfish, draws on the Japanese tradition of a celebration of shadows, which hold the power to reveal utmost beauty with only a little light. Upward’s poem thus anticipates Jun’ichiro Tanizaki’s essay In Praise of Shadows, which displays a deep nostalgia for the darkness lost to the new city lights. The dichotomy between city lights and rural darkness with a starry sky (famously celebrated in Japan as Otsukimi – literally moon watching), which is omnipresent in modernist writing, as well as the one between fish tank and goldfish pond, which results from the poem, epitomize, in turn, the ongoing academic controversy of the placing of Modernism in literary history. Does modernist practice constitute a radical break with tradition – celebrating progress, for instance – or is it a continuation of Romantic practice – e.g. fathoming the human condition through natural phenomena –, which takes these to their extreme (cf. Jarrell’s “The End of the Line”)? Furthermore, can the Modernist fascination with the Japanese tradition of celebrating darkness be linked to the current debates about renewable energy and the saving thereof? The return to the shadows, tragically triggered by the nuclear meltdown in Fukushima, seems to pave the way for a revival of this aesthetic ideal – not only to the advantage of our environment, but apparently also to the benefit of the human condition.

Jerry Chi-Yu Lin (National Taiwan University), ‘Translating Modern/ism: On Nakajima Atsushi on Robert Louis Stevenson’.

Recently, reading Modernist work “globally” has been an overwhelming trend along with the translational/transnational turn in literary studies and the advocacy of (and controversies aroused by) world literature; to take this as a standing point, I would like to propose an investigation on less-known Japanese modernist, Nakajima Atsushi, whose works are often neglected and understated in studies of Japanese Modernism (even in the Japanese academia), and at the same time try to relate his work to current modernist studies. Being affected by Kafka and an advocate of aestheticism (“Art for Art’s sake”), Nakajima asks in all his fictions quasi-existentialist questions concerning the modern(ist) self, despite the various background of his stories.
In this paper, I would like focus on his only complete novel, Light, Wind and Dreams, in which Nakajima reconstructs the story of the last years of Robert Louis Stevenson in Samoa by Juxtaposing Stevenson’s biography and (pseudo-)diary. First published in 1942, the high time of WWII, it shows how a writer tries to either confluence or resist the policies and ideologies of fascist Japanese Empire. In this novel, in fact, Nakajima put into contestation the concept of colonialism, illness, reason, childhood, and the meaning of literature, among many; however, by analyzing the concept of “Nanyo” (the South Sea, or “the South” in general), which serves as the central motif of the novel, I aim to show that the novelist’s romanticized concept of Aestheticism is in effect a refraction of the colonial discourse of the Japanese empire, and his resistance to war-time ideology actually functions as the opposite.

61. Gertrude Stein among the Modernists (Room 246)
Tania Ørum (Copenhagen), ‘Gertrude Stein between Modernism and the Avant-garde’
Like the Great Generation of modernists who each created their own distinctive style of writing, Stein also developed her unmistakably personal way of writing. Yet, while other modernists, who were initially perceived as “difficult”, have long ago become accessible, Stein has remained “unreadable” until very recently. She herself declared that contemporaries like Joyce “smelled of the museum”, but her own writing seems to have been so much ahead of its time that she had great problems getting her work published and included in literary history and has only received scholarly recognition during the last 20 years. Because of this “futurist” character of her work, she should perhaps be classified as an avant-garde writer rather than a modernist. Her claim to artistic genius, however, clashes with avant-garde critique of the art institution and the cult of the artist. In her programmatic statements Stein seems to share the modernist doctrine of impersonality, but in her her fondness of gossip and the everyday, not only in her so-called “audience writing” (especially The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas), but in all of her work, and in the marketing and cultivation of her reputation as a fashionable salon hostess and art collector she seems closer to the popular culture often appropriated/appreciated by the avant-garde than to high modernism.

Solveig Daugaard (Linköping), ‘Gertrude Stein: Revolutionary Revolutionary’
Recently, heated debate on Gertrude Stein’s political stances has taken place – spurred by the revelations of Stein’s forgotten translation of speeches by Pétain during the Vichy years. In Unlikely Collaboration Barbara Will explores the development of Stein’s politics from 1918 to her death. Will connects Stein to a “reactionary modernism” that she traces through her political remarks and private letters as well as in her literary writings. However, the subversive use of Stein’s writing remains active. In their 2012 collaborative online-book Revolution: A Reader, Canadian writers Lisa Robertson and Matthew Stadler use Stein’s 1926 Cambridge address Composition as Explanation in their attempt to map out revolution as resistance against the smoothing ideologies of market and the consensus of community formation. The central grip of the Reader is the reproduction of texts by various authors accompanied by a commentary dialogue, taking off from the margins of the printed or electronic book and continued in online “reading commons.” Here, Stein’s concept of “contemporary composition” is taken into the “global street” by Stadler and Robertson: “The street is the space of the contemporary composition: the social and political will be things “made by being made,” in
Gertrude Stein’s terms” (www.revolutionreader.com). According to Stein “composition” is a physical becoming, to compose is an action embracing life and art and thus, in Stadler and Robertson’s conception, revolutionary. In my paper I want to explore the tension between Stein’s conservative political views and her aesthetics that I claim remains revolutionary in regard to language and life forms, and subversive of authorities and conventions and thus, as the example of Revolution: A Reader shows, it is still invested with performative powers that can be put to use by contemporary experimental poets and activists.

Sarah Posman (Ghent), ‘We Dirty Modernists: Juliana Spahr Muddling with Stein’s Autonomy’

In a 2003 interview the American poet Juliana Spahr recounts that it was Carla Harryman’s confident appropriation of the modernist tradition at an MLA convention that spurred her to claim “her” modernism: “I had always felt that modernism was too divorced, too lofty for me to claim. […] I think after that moment I started to think more about how I might find my modernism, which I guess is this way of reading modernism as a literature that is thinking about what is happening to the world through colonialism, imperialism, globalism.” Spahr is an insightful reader of Gertrude Stein and her way of reading (Stein’s) modernism conflicts with the traditional understanding of modernist writing as centered on autonomy. Ashton has recently reaffirmed this view by spotlighting what she understands as the change from the phenomenological in the early Stein to the logical in Stein’s full-fledged modernism, with logic as an autonomous discourse. What distinguishes postmodernist from modernist poetry, for Ashton, is a change from an understanding of the text as an autonomous entity to the text as a participatory event. Spahr’s study Everybody’s Autonomy, by contrast, shows how Stein’s modernism combines the anarchic or self-governing with the connective and the collective. The collective constellations through which Spahr claims modernism – colonialism, imperialism, globalism – may be hardly alien to modernism studies but they are not often touched upon in Stein studies. In this paper I explore how we can read Stein’s work as dealing with globalism and how Spahr’s own poetry draws on Stein in thinking about the worlds we share.

62. Designing Modernism (Room 349)

Christine Atha (Royal College of Art), ‘Anthony Bertram and Everyday Britain’

“Bert looked at his wife’s open mouth and saw that there were little foam-flecks in the corners and wondered whether if he tried to wipe them off it would wake her. She’d been took bad that sudden, working in the morning as cheerful as you’d wish when he looked in for his dinner and then at dusk when he was stabling the horses, little Eileen had come down to say mother was took bad, mother was lying on the kitchen floor and couldn’t speak.”

Anthony Bertram was one of the key proponents of Modernism and design reform in Britain in the 1930s. This paper examines the representation of both the rising working class and lower middle classes as portrayed in both his novels and design reform texts, and discusses his anxiety about them polluting taste and social values.

Bertram while producing books and radio broadcasts on design was also writing somewhat sentimental accounts of the struggles of working class life. In the literary interpretations of the working class
condition that abounded during the thirties, as they had in the nineteenth, the terrible conditions in which they lived were often romanticized. This was a distinctive feature of Bertram’s works. Attempts at copying working class patterns of speech and the representation of the working life of the protagonists were often over exaggerated and mawkish. If there were kind words for the proletariat there were equally callous words for the owners of the “bijou baronial” who were on the increase in the 1930s and responsible he felt for driving taste standards downwards. In books such as They Came to the Castle (1932), Men Adrift (1935), The King Sees Red (1936), Bright Defiler (1940) and The Pleasures Of Poverty: An Argument and an Anthology (1950) he combines all aspects of sociopolitical discourse. Add to this Pavements and Peaks: Impressions of Travel in Germany and Austria published in 1933, and we have a singular set of texts.

Hana Leaper (Liverpool), ‘Modernism for the Middlebrow: Hand-printed Linocuts in the Age of Mass Reproducibility’

‘a real and vital art of to-morrow’
Claude Flight

The linocuts made by Claude Flight and many of the artists he taught at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art – most notably Sybil Andrews, Cyril Power and Lill Tschudi – bring the widely held notion of the unbridgeable gap between modernism, and middlebrow cultures, into question. This divisive view of culture in the modernist period was instituted by critics and writers of the interwar period who placed high (who claimed modernist techniques as their exclusive domain), middle and lowbrow cultures into distinct and opposing categories, most memorably in Virginia Woolf’s ‘The Middlebrow’. This ‘battle of the brows’ was energetically fought in the public arena, and the legacy of these often ‘bombastic and hyperbolic’ (Sullivan and Blanch, p.1) pronouncements has been the formation of a canon of modernism that is anxiously protective of an elitist and exclusive highbrow. Flight’s conception of the linocut is ‘complex and border-crossing’ (Sullivan and Blanch, p.4) in many respects: mass-produced, yet on a small scale; professional, yet hand/home-made; a form ideally suited to a high modernist abstract idiom and the consciousness created by modern life, yet cheaply manufactured and appropriate for the ‘average man’ (Flight, p.5) This paper will demonstrate how Flight’s medium of choice – the linocut – made high modernist formal aesthetics available to a middlebrow audience, laying the foundation for further research into an artistic modernist middlebrow.

Alessandra Vaccari (IUAV Venice), ‘The Craze in the Early Twentieth Century Fashion’
Fashion has often been presented as a “total change” and modernist perspectives have celebrated and criticised it as a radical shift of sensibility based on craziness, immanence and loss of memory. Craze was an up-to-date term in the fashion culture of the early 20th-century decades, used either to refer to fashion’ fast and viral spread, or to highlight its excessive, weird and exciting aspects.

The paper puts the concept of craze under close critical and historical scrutiny, with the aim of exploring and better understanding the relationships between fashion and what Elizabeth Wilson has called ‘Modernity’s Other’ – aspects extraneous to a constructive, progressive, and rational vision of modernity.

Focusing on the case of tango craze – which the early 20th-century fashion considered as a vibrant new phenomenon – the paper questions the capacity of the peculiar relationships between fashion and
modernism to shape sensibilities. It suggests craze as a fruitful approach to investigate into the emotional aspects of fashion and modernism at the beginning of the 20th century and to understand its 21st-century legacy. The paper also highlights a historical shortage of criticism about the concept of craze, neglected because of its manifesting itself as meaningless and apparently empty of specific contents. The analysis carried out in the paper allows to reflect on how fashion specifically constructs its meanings, on the reasons why these latter are not always acknowledged, and why fashion is accused to be void of any enhancing strategies.

63. Lawrence Now (Court Room)

Jeff Wallace (Cardiff Metropolitan), ‘The End of Experience: Geoff Dyer and D. H. Lawrence’

In ‘On Interest’ (1996), Adam Phillips contends that people seek out psychoanalysis as, in Jamesian terms, ‘the failed artists of their own lives’, unable to generate ‘the kind of interest that might make them love life.’ Taking D.H. Lawrence’s Twilight in Italy (1916) and Geoff Dyer’s Out of Sheer Rage (1997) and Jeff in Venice, Death in Varanasi (2009) as main reference points, this paper reflects upon the critical dynamic between Lawrence and Dyer, in terms of a shared failure of interest. For Dyer, Lawrence was ‘the writer who made me want to become a writer’; he places Lawrence within a group of ‘nomadic self-exiles’, including Shelley, Orwell and John Berger, who ‘arranged their lives in such a way as to seek out the experiences appropriate to their respective gifts.’ But is it thus appropriate to speak of Lawrence inspiring Dyer to become a writer, and exactly what kind of ‘experiences’ were sought out by each? As is well known, Out of Sheer Rage is a book about Lawrence that emerges out of the failure to write a book about Lawrence. Taking the experience of Italy and Lawrence’s much vaunted emphasis on ‘spirit of place’ as focal points, this paper proposes that Dyer helps us to re-read Lawrence’s modernist reputation as a vitalist, and to consider instead the significance of a failure of interest and the ‘end’ of experience.

Jennifer Cooke (Loughborough), ‘Female Sodomy and Pedagogy: Positioning D. H. Lawrence and Martin Amis’

Sodomy has a special relationship with pedagogy. Its legacy stems from informal contexts of male learning and teaching where the relationship’s inequality structures its erotics. From the Socratic love of an older philosopher for the beautiful young boy he is teaching through to the fear of unnatural closeness between impoverished intellectual humanist scholars and their uneducated but wealthy patrons in the Renaissance, male desire and the anal sex it is presumed to involve has been a dynamic – even if only visible as a rumour – of the male teacher/pupil relationship. When Lawrence has Lady Chatterley’s gamekeeper anally penetrate her, this legacy comes into heterosexual play: Mellors is teaching Connie how to burn out ‘the deepest, oldest shames, in the most secret places’ and she in turn is learning about herself and how ‘she had needed this phallic hunting out, she had secretly wanted it’. This paper examines how Lawrence draws upon the legacy linking anal sex, pedagogy and relational asymmetry in Lady Chatterley’s Lover, and then discusses how this has influenced the depiction of female anal sex in contemporary fiction. I use the example of Martin Amis’s London Fields (1998), whose protagonist, Nicola Six, has a predilection for sodomy, an uncanny knowledge of when and where she will die, and a desire to teach the men she encounters about their sexual selves, with destructive and
catastrophic results. Lawrence uses female sodomy to indicate a learning of life, Amis for a learning of death, a sexually more conservative position, I argue.

Emily Schuck (Claremont), ‘The Fox in the Woods’
In “The Fox in the Woods,” I examine D.H. Lawrence’s unusual presentation of nature in his novella, The Fox. Many critics categorize Lawrence as a “nature novelist,” in the modernist tradition. In several of his works, he associates nature’s presence with love, sexuality, and happiness. However, in this novella the construction of nature is ominous, and serves as the choice weapon for murder. This project interprets this negative conception of nature as a painful struggle towards heteronormativity.

I approach the text with a functional, theoretical, and biographical methodology. I interrogate the relationship between the characters, how they navigate the natural world around them, and explore how this presents the fluidity and instability of gender norms. My reading of this text draws upon Michel Foucault’s ideas of discipline and Eve Sedgwick’s work on the closet. I argue that nature in the text symbolizes society’s pervasive policing in which individuals internalize “normalcy,” or in this case, heterosexuality.

Drawing on Lawrence’s letters and life experience, I examine his attitude towards the “heterosexual challenge”—one that he certainly took on himself—and his reverence for reproductive relationships.

Ultimately, I argue that in The Fox Lawrence is transcribing and transferring his own anxieties about the “heterosexual challenge.” Departing from a typically modernist view that laments industry and the loss of appreciation of nature, Lawrence creates a narrative that uses landscape to demonstrate the socially inflicted struggle towards a heteronormative life.

64. “More Forms and Stranger”: Actual and Imaginative, Intermodernist to Late Modernist Journeys (Room 349)
Katherine Stevenson (Austin), “In Favour of Strangeness”: Interwar Anxiety in The Mortmere Stories
Written during the 1920s but published in 1993, The Mortmere Stories capture Edward Upward and Christopher Isherwood’s youthful attempts to navigate their literary and cultural inheritance as authors and as middle-class English men. While they attended Cambridge, Upward and Isherwood invented the imagined landscape of Mortmere, a fictional country village that served as a satirical microcosm of English society. Like the city of Cambridge that Upward and Isherwood thought of as hypocritical in its strict adherence to social mores and class boundaries, Mortmere appears to be an old-fashioned, traditional British community. As the authors’ narrating alter-egos Hynd and Starn explore the village, they uncover the everyday adventures and intrigues of pedophilic vicars, lesbian heiresses, murderous schoolmasters, and a central villain whom Isherwood fashioned after “our conception of the appearance and habits of Mr T.S. Eliot.”

While The Mortmere Stories might appear to be simple schoolboy fantasies, I read them as explorations of the authors’ strong feelings of resentment towards the generations preceding them, of their anxieties regarding the future of their own generation, and as foreshadowing their very different adulthoods as nearly invisible members of “the Auden generation.” Thirty years after the creation of Mortmere, Isherwood would become a U.S. citizen, an out gay man, and a disciple of Vedanta yoga; Upward would become a
schoolteacher and a Communist, having rejected imaginative fiction in favor of political prose. The Mortmere Stories were Upward and Isherwood’s reaction to the fraught interwar years in which they came of age, a time Isherwood would later describe as “un jour sans lendemain, a day without a morrow,” rife with fear for the uncertain future.

Brianna Hyslop (Austin), “‘An Effect of One’s Own Strangeness’: Vita Sackville-West in the Contact Zone’

While Vita Sackville-West’s position within literary modernism is often viewed in light of her romantic relationship with Virginia Woolf in the 1920s, it is important not to overlook the ways in which this peripheral Bloomsbury figure engaged with the epistemological concerns often associated with high modernism. Sackville-West’s first travel narrative, Passenger to Teheran (1926), stands out as a text self-conscious about its own form and content. Constructing literary landscapes in her travel narrative, Sackville-West explores modernist interests in the limits of language, perspective, and imagination.

In an attempt to avoid the pitfalls of form and language she sees in other travel books, Sackville-West privileges the power of the imagination, apparently celebrating her method of seeing only the surface over attempts to “know” the land she visits and its inhabitants. Yet this approach inevitably leads to its own problems throughout the travel narrative, primarily in moments of encounter. Sackville-West’s descriptions of the actual landscapes she travels through and the inhabitants she encounters therein reveal her ultimate inability to eschew the class, gender, and national privileges she enjoys and which color her perception and representations. In this paper, I will analyze these moments of friction throughout the travel narrative to show the complex nature of these contact zones during the interwar period.

Mia Carter (Austin), “‘Absit Omen’: Winifred Holtby’s Fantastic Quest’

Winifred Holtby’s Mandoa, Mandoa!: A Comedy of Irrelevance (1933) examines crises of representational and humanist faith in the midst of emerging globalization and colliding humanitarian, imperialist and corporatist interventions. Progressive journalism, the transformative efficacy of high modernist literature, the limitations of liberalism, and the possibilities of feminism, internationalism, and socialism are examined through the lens of Holtby’s zany, frequently acidic, polyphonic, world-weary, and tragic-comic satire. Holtby’s experience as a journalist, union organizer, and active participant in the League of Nations Union assemblies (from 1923-30) injects Mandoa with the pungency of the real; I am particularly interested in the cross-pollination between Holtby’s journalistic research and writing, and the ideological and aesthetic dynamism of her many-voiced novel. While Mandoa, Mandoa! and Holtby’s satirical style have been compared to Evelyn Waugh’s satires, I want to suggest that Holtby’s worldly commitments and the breadth and scope of the metropolitan, settler, and colonial publics with which Holtby was engaged infuse her novel with an antic, yet deeply ethical fictionalized journalistic urgency. The novel also sounds and excavates a range of literary inheritances, ranging from Olive Shriner, to A.E. Houseman, T.S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf, in what can be read as Holtby’s time-pressured search for meaningful form and a socially just world.
Reid Echols (Austin), “‘We Hade Made Ourselves Anew’: Narrative and Flux in V.S. Naipaul’s The Enigma of Arrival’

V. S. Naipaul’s The Enigma of Arrival negotiates intersections of place, memory, and identity through its narrator’s changing relationship with the English countryside—a community in which he arrives as a postcolonial outsider, only to discover that his is merely the latest of a long and ongoing series of invasions. Both pilgrim and exile, he arrives in a landscape of decay, haunted by the relics of past lives, littered with the fading evidence of cultivation. Like Eliot in The Waste Land, Naipaul’s narrator attempts to reconcile a host of conflicting literary, personal, and political legacies, but in doing so is confronted with a sense of overwhelming flux; the ruins he occupies, both real and imagined, are those against which few fragments of identity may be shored.

However, by tracing the development of his narrator’s changing perspective, Naipaul reveals a sense in which the process of writing can sustain identity even amidst a confluence of compromised cultural inheritances. The ongoing work of interpreting and reinterpreting his own perspectives, negotiating between real and imagined landscapes, becomes a means of resisting decay and alienation. Just as ceaseless physical labor ties the gardener to his garden, the act of writing becomes a means of participation with landscape, culture, and community—of “remaking the world” despite “the tenuousness of his hold on the land.” Through this process, Naipaul is able to locate himself within an ongoing narrative of place, no longer alien to him because he recognizes it as one of his own making.

65. Modernism/Theory 2 (Room G22)

Catherine Driscoll (Sydney), ‘Modernism as a Relation to the Present’

Fredric Jameson compellingly argues that, as subjects of modernity, “We cannot not periodize.” Many writers have made similar or compatible claims. But when it comes to accounting for modernism the position from which we periodise—what historical claim constitutes that “we”—is generally overshadowed by the series of “breaks” periodisation produces. It is hardly controversial to claim that history is written from the present, but shifting emphasis from the break to the contemporary might have important implications for modernist studies. I want to ask what difference such a shift might make and argue that it is productive to discuss modernism as what Michel Foucault calls, discussing the modernity of both Baudelaire and Kant, a “relation to the present”. Such a relation to the present would, of course, be impossible to relegate to the past of any period and in making this case I’m thus also responding to Raymond Williams’s important reminder that the present is the most urgent concern of art as well as politics.

In describing a modernism that necessarily remains contemporary I’m going to use examples from the “classics” of modernist literature, centrally James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, to physical installations of modernism the endless recalibration of which is more explicit, like Jørn Utzon’s Sydney Opera House and Disneyland. I want to distinguish my argument from any discussion of the afterlife of modernist works and focus instead on modernism as an endlessly recalibrated relation to the present to which some works and forms are more amenable than others.
Helen Tyson (Queen Mary), ‘At This Very Moment In This Work Here I Am’: (Jacques Derrida) Modernism and the Time of Reading

Plunged into the intricate convolutions of the modernist novel, the reader faces a complex negotiation with time. In Virginia Woolf’s The Waves, snippets of poetry slip in and out of consciousness, returning across time in the minds of characters, invoking a cyclical rhythm in which readings are never-finished, always returning. Fragments of poetry—like negated parts of the self—float around in people’s minds in this novel, which subtly posits a form of readerly unconscious. Reading these portraits of reading closely, this paper suggests that the dramatization of reading in The Waves solicits an identification that draws the reader inside—engulfs them in the ‘now’ of reading—and simultaneously pushes them outside into a moment of self-estrangement. This splitting of the self in the ‘now’ of reading mimics the novel’s portrayal of reading as a form of negotiation with one’s own past and future selves, invoking a disjunction between the apparently linear time of reading and a cyclical, non-linear time of reading.

This paper suggests that this peculiar temporal experience of reading as represented in (and solicited by) The Waves foregrounds an ambivalence about the idea of art as a form of redemption. Exploring the affinities between Woolf’s invocation of a participatory aesthetic experience which nonetheless threatens to dissolve into scenes of abject self-dissipation, and Melanie Klein’s anxious cyclical dramas of identification and splitting, this paper argues for the centrality of the concept of psychic time in theorising modernist aesthetic experience.

Both Woolf and Klein indulge in a fantasy of the aesthetic as a reparative suture for a fragmented existence—that ‘culture of redemption’ condemned by Leo Bersani. But what Bersani reads as a linear urge towards transcendence is insistently countered by, held in tension with, a cyclical anxiety about the negative—potentially totalitarian—aspects of redemption. Attending to the cyclical nature of time in Klein’s theorisation of psychic life, I suggest that this model of psychic time provides a distinctive approach to the never-finished readings of The Waves, foregrounding the novel’s ambivalent theorisation of aesthetic experience.

Alireza Fakhrkonandeh (Warwick), ‘Prufrock, on the Couch or in the Street? A Schizoanalytic Reading of Eliot’s Early Poetry and Thought’

In this essay I intend to propose a schizoanalytic reading of Eliot’s early poetry, and “The love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” in particular. I am wielding the term schizoanalysis in the sense elaborated by Deleuze in his Anti-Oedipus and also drawing on his discussion on the relation between the critical and the clinical in his later works. However, prima facie, to juxtapose Eliot and Deleuze in a critical analysis resembles seeking to establish affinities between Bach and Schoenberg. Eliot’s unswerving tendency towards the constitution of a transcendent paradigm for cultural politics and criticism, and also towards socio-cultural integration, establishment, harboring the however far-fetched and unrealizable Hegelian aspiration of a universal unification, stands in an egregious contrast with Deleuze’s unremitting attempts to instigate the dismantling of all rigidly orthodox socio-symbolic distinctions.

Nevertheless, despite deep-seated divergences and irrespective of their proximity in their caustic critique of liberal humanism and adversity towards fascism, as well as their both being profoundly affected by Bergson’s philosophy, I would argue, there is a crucial convergence with regard to their attitude towards their
contemporary culture. Both Eliot and Deleuze regard themselves as “physicians of culture”: in both of its aspects: a symptomatologist, diagnosing the inveterate ills afflicting the psycho-dynamics of the individual and the society; and a therapist purveying remedies to relieve those afflictions. One transpires a Christian (Augustinian-Dantean) and the other a Nietzschean healer.

Furthermore, in Eliot’s early work, the characters (their psychosomatic as well as ego boundaries) and the spatial and relational territories are much more fluid and porous in comparison with post-conversion Eliot. In the light of the foregoing points, this critical study seeks the demonstration of three arguments. First, that ontological and epistemological conceptions of self, perception of temporality and the relation to the other in early Eliot bear striking affinities with Deleuze’s ideas of the middle period. A point that renders the early poems of Eliot, including Prufrock and Other Observations and Early Poems (in conjunction with his critical and philosophical reflections) highly amenable to a schizoanalytic reading, a task which I intend to pursue throughout the paper. Second, establishing Prufrock as a borderline (or more strictly, schizoid) individual and exposing the underlying historical and socio-cultural premises of this pathological state, I will proceed to explore the manner Eliot’s excision of “Prufrock Pervigilium” section can be construed as a highly revealing and symptomatic gesture that attenuates Prufrock’s critical psychopathological state and salvages him from acute psychosis (schizo-paranoid) onto a borderline (between neurosis and psychosis): a gesture which proleptically anticipates and presages later drastic moves in Eliot’s work and life.

Eventually, Deleuze and Guattari, in their discussion of the schizoids’ potential and dormant capacities claim that the schizoid still has the essential capacity of relinquishing himself to the multiplying motion and force of production. The schizoid is not intimidated by the ‘madness’ that normal members of society fear; furthermore, he is not ‘neurotic’ in the way that normal members of society are neurotic, whom Deleuze identifies as “the only incurable”. Accordingly, predicated on this account, at the end of the poem, there is no such triumph for Prufrock. He totally fails to implement his potential force to ward off the crushing coercion of both internal and external worlds and is drowned by the “tyrannical human voices”. Prufrock’s reverting to fantasizing rather than praxis or performance in the concluding part of the poem attests to Both the self/identity and mode of relation being more reactionary than revolutionary and how he fails to undergo the “procedure of becoming”. A fact that I would argue not only does not undermine or refute Deleuze and Guattari’s postulated theories but cogently upholds their differentiation between schizo-revolutionary and schizophrenic subject, between schizophrenia as a process and schizophrenia as a state. Thus, Prufrock remains riveted to his couch.

Lauren Xandra (Oxford), ‘Trauma and Visuality: Neo-Modernist Painting and Modern Warfare’

Across various accounts, the skin serves as the visible plane for different forms of assault in the modern world. This visualisation reveals the individual body and the collective landscape as just as precarious as one another. Metaphorising devastating collective effects as a wound to the skin reveals how our tendency to project our own corporeal status onto the world serves as a tool for understanding the outside through the expressive system familiar to our own bodies.
The work of contemporary artist Julie Mehretu seeks to provide an affective understanding of lived experience in dynamically changing and oftentimes politically fraught environments. I will focus on one particular artwork, Believer’s Palace, to reveal how Mehretu lends insight into the traumatic reality surrounding the bombardment of the site, Believer’s Palace, in Baghdad. I will argue that one prominent violent trace engages with the way forcefulness disturbs and distorts comprehension.

In conflating boundaries between inside and outside and disturbing temporality and spatiality, this piercing painted gesture yields a unique approach to understanding a traumatic reality (particularly when trauma itself is understood as existing at the limit of representation). Furthermore, I will analyse how the metaphor of the wound can help to further understand Mehretu’s work and how, in turn, through Neo-Modernist techniques, her painting contributes to the discourse of trauma theory in the context of modern warfare.

66. Vanguards and Politics (Room G26)
Judith Paltin (University of California, Santa Barbara), ‘Crowds and Modernism: The Style of Crowd Politics in the Public Squares, 1914–2014’

From the nineteen-hundreds through the thirties the crowd and its politics appeared as a peculiar obsession in sociology, psychology, political science, and in popular and intellectual news-streams. In this period, “mass psychology” became a recognized disciplinary field of research and speculation, and site of social, political and commercial engineering projects. It was argued that the political strategies of the future would center on the persuasion and control of crowds, and that new technologies of doing so were already taking shape in the traditionally autocratic European nations. Popular and scientific anxieties and fantasies rallied around theories of crowd dynamics. Virtually irresistible group dynamics or “social facts” were described as producing the mob’s powerful appetite for violence, the crowd’s subservient and/or rebellious behavior (corollary to its problematic relationship to a charismatic leader and to established authority), the crowd-altered individual’s alleged primitivism, femininity or infantilism, evasion of social and moral debts, disavowal of respect for property rights and detachment from other institutions. Crowds are in the headlines once again, from Egypt and India to the Ukraine and Venezuela. The energy underlying these phenomena comes directly from the modernist period. When a people fragments, it fragments into crowds. At that point, one’s survival depends upon the agility and power of the crowd within which one is submerged, upon its power and flexibility. It seems to me an appropriate moment to rethink the crowd and some of the standard stories about its genealogy at the present moment, when global migrations, digital crowd-sourcing, or on crowd movements such as Occupy are drawing wide attention. I draw on the literary as an archive for this new genealogy, as an underused resource in crowd studies, and the modernist archive in particular, as a moment that serves as a hinge from the nineteenth-century crowd to the contemporary multitude as described in empire studies and biopolitical theories. I discover political and other agilities in some modernist fictional crowds, by which I mean each of those crowds deploys polymorphic and expansive identities, and the energies of its enthusiasm, to create a new repertoire of languages, gestures, imaginaries and responses to interpellations – taken together, they build what I think of as a performativity of the crowd.
Glyn Salton-Cox (University of California, Santa Barbara), ‘Queer Vanguardism’

Until very recently seen as the most awkward of bedfellows, Marxism and queer theory have been put into productive dialogue by a number of scholars in the past decade, including Kevin Floyd, Elisa Glick, José Esteban Muñoz, and Matthew Tinkcom. This work has focused on mid- to late-twentieth-century American culture, a fruitful point of departure given the emergence of recognizable forms of modern gay life at this site of the intense transformation of capitalism. And yet, there has been little attempt to look to other moments and locales for instructive encounters between Marxism and queer theory.

This paper will examine the vanguardism of contemporary queer theory: not in the sense of a cutting-edge methodology or a self-aggrandizing coterie – as queer theory has often been celebrated or denigrated – but rather, very specifically in terms of the Bolsheviks’ modernist political imaginary, which holds that class-consciousness should be brought to the masses by a small group of highly conscious theorists and activists, who are themselves invigorated by the masses’ spontaneous revolutionary energies. Reading Lenin’s What is to be Done? (1902) alongside Michael Warner, Lauren Berlant, and José Esteban Muñoz, I will argue that the interventions of queer theory persistently track a theory/praxis dialectic between the often spontaneously queer but as-yet-unconscious masses, and a vanguard of consciously sex-radical subjects. In so doing, I will also re-imagine the misunderstood role of abjection in Soviet vanguardism, contending that queer theory’s revalorization of the abject illuminates the complex ways in which Leninist theory relates to the masses.

Elinor Taylor (Salford), ‘British Marxism and the National Politics of “Late” Modernism’

During the last decade, significant new work has drawn attention to the importance of the nation as a concept in understanding modernism’s ‘late’ or residual phase, particularly Jed Esty’s positing of an ‘Anglocentric revival’ among modernists in the thirties (A Shrinking Island, 2004), and Marina MacKay’s exploration of the importance of the second world war to a modernist reckoning with the claims of nationality (Modernism and World War II, 2007). These important replottings of modernism’s relationship with the longer history of Britain’s transition from, as MacKay puts it, a ‘class-bound Empire to a medium-sized welfare state’, invite a reappraisal of the politics of national culture in the thirties. Focusing on the British journal Left Review (1934-1938), this paper will examine the complex inter-relations between Marxism, modernism and the nation during a period when the threat of fascism called urgently for the defence of national cultures. Contrary to critical assumptions that British Marxists were bound by Soviet-mandated anti-modernism, Marxist writers challenged modernists’ claims to national culture and heritage not by outright rejection but rather by making competing claims to the same territory, as revealed especially by a number of strikingly sympathetic Marxist responses to T.S. Eliot’s conservative and national turn. In charting this dialogue, in which unresolved questions over modernism’s relationship with fascism and European universalism were unavoidably raised, I will suggest that the incomplete and partial nature of the British Marxist critique of modernism allowed space for important moments of intellectual and creative possibility, but also generated contradictions that intensified as fascism advanced.

Michael Jolliffe (Leicester), ‘Forgotten Radicals: Recovering the Anarcho-Syndicalist Modernism of the soversivi’
The subject of this paper is a group of Italian American writers who have yet to be recognised as a distinctive network of ethnic literary modernists. The sovversivi (subversives) was an organic movement of revolutionary intellectual and self-educated Italian American workers. The literary figureheads of the sovversivi were Arturo Giovannitti, a celebrated poet and labour union leader of the 1910s, and Carlo Tresca, a crucial figure in the anti-fascist Italian American publishing culture of 1920s New York. As the chronology of the movement unfolds, its texts offer the opportunity to consider intersections between Italian American writing and modernist theory within a range of current debates. First, the poems of Arturo Giovannitti and Francesca Vinciguerra (later known as Frances Winwar) were based on a deeply utopian, radical socialist vision. Second, the sovversivi was a transnational movement with a significant presence not only in the Italian immigrant community but also the American left until the Second World War. Finally, the sovversivi engaged with modernist periodicals as poets, essayists, cartoonists, advertisers and editors and were founders of their own extensive range of radical literary publications; the absence of research on Italian American contributions to modernist magazines remains a significant one both textually and theoretically. The sovversivi related to modernism as a literary-historical convergence by way of a diverse range of formal and aesthetic responses to industrial modernity. The aim of this paper is to outline how these responses might stand alone as a new and distinctive field of modernist study.

67. Geographies of Modernism 2: Greece and Portugal (Room 261)

Avgi Lilli (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens), ‘Alexandros Kotzias’s Fantastic Adventure: Revisiting and Reinventing Greek Modernism’

In 2012, 20 years after the death of postwar writer and critic Alexandros Kotzias (1926-1992), his novel Fantastic Adventure (1985) is being republished; ironically, at a time when the artfully criticised in it era, “Metapolitefsi”, visibly declines. The novel follows a day at a pivotal moment in the life of main character Alexandros Kapandais, a moderate writer who unapologetically dismisses Cavafy, Seferis and Tsirkas, while ignoring the work of Solomos. Kotzias’s critically acclaimed novel, arguably, raises various controversial issues concerning the misreception of Modern Greek literature and the renouncement of outstanding works by numerous critics, owing to the wide influence of the “Generation of the 1930s” as well as to non-artistic criteria. This paper aims to depict how Fantastic Adventure remains to date equally relevant and innovative, as in its pages one can identify the conditions for a genuine novel that the author himself demarcated as a critic: verisimilar characters with distinctive style and action framed within a “pseudorealistic”, as the writer himself defined, spatiotemporal context. A pinnacle of the above is the appearance of a character named Alexandros Kotzias, who ignores the already annoyed by his presence Alexandros Kapandais, at a literary meeting on Flaubert’s “Madame Bovary s’est moi”. Kotzias’s novel emerges as a daring work not only for its exemplary polyphonic character, but also for its magnificent amalgamation of the method of a conscientious novelist and the theory of a consistent critic, which ultimately challenges what has been established as Greek Modernism, while simultaneously reinventing it.

Panagiotis Antonopoulos (Crete), ‘“Burning Sappho”: Initiating Lesbianism in Modern Greek Poetry’
The reception of Sappho in modern Greek letters trails the evolution of erotic literature, since the model of the ancient poetess encompasses all the fundamental incarnations of woman in poetry: Teacher, muse or goddess, these are all roles assumed by Sappho over time, until the emergence of the lesbian Sappho also in modern Greek literature, breaking with the traditional models of the past. The birth of a literature that challenges established morals and advances the principles of an erotic speech that, on the one hand, explores new modes of expression of erotic desire and, on the other hand, outlines, whether explicitly or implicitly, provocative sexual experiences, would inevitably lead to an original reading of Sappho’s erotic fragments. Thus, in the early 20th century the ancient poetess started to integrate gradually into Greek modernism, which managed not only to overcome the aesthetic and moral prejudices of the 19th century, but also to creatively assimilate radical literary trends that had already become established in European letters a long time ago. In this presentation I will focus on the first modern Greek male lesbian poem by Kostas Varnalis (1911), in an effort to highlight two basic aspects: First, the originality of the modern poet’s integration of Sappho’s teachings into his work, keeping their lesbian imprint intact. Second, the cultural context in which Varnalis manages to publish his pioneering poetry, surrounded by a vivid group of Greek aesthetes of cosmopolitan Alexandria in the early 20th century, who are free to act, safely away from the conservative metropolitan centre of Athens.

Patricia Silva McNeill (Coimbra), ‘Resisting Cultural Hegemony through the Modernist Magazine: Vorticism and Sensacionismo’

This paper examines the crucial role played by cultural magazines in ushering in two European avant-garde movements that emerged at the outbreak of WWI in Britain and Portugal, respectively Vorticism and Sensacionismo. It will trace the development of these movements by analysing the content of the contemporary modernist magazines Blast (1914-1915), Orpheu (1915), and manifestos that complement the latter magazine in Portugal Futurista (1917). Since the leading figure of Portuguese Modernism, Fernando Pessoa, had copies of the two issues of Blast, its potential impact on the second issue of Orpheu (mostly edited by him) will be considered.

The paper will focus on the ways in which the magazines enabled the articulation of comparable aesthetics of resistance to a perceived uneven development in the cultural sphere by the leading figures associated with the magazines, notably Lewis, Pound, and Pessoa. It will scrutinize the critique of hegemonic international cubism and futurism in these magazines despite some vestiges of cubist and futurist influence, and the contributors’ attempt to overcome this influence through the development of a syncretic aesthetic. It will also examine comparatively the cosmopolitan nationalism that underpins the authoritarian, reactionary rhetoric of the manifestos in the magazines in an attempt to redress their perceived marginal cultural position and as a reflection of the recrudescence of nationalist and imperialist discourses in the European international nation-state system at the outbreak of WWI. The latter was accompanied by a project to reform the English and the Portuguese culture and character shared by these avant-garde movements.

Steffen Dix (Catholic University of Lisbon), “‘Be plural, like the universe!’ – Fernando Pessoa’s Sensationism’
In 1915, a rather disenchantment Fernando Pessoa declared with regard to the anonymousness of his own Sensationism: “Cubism, futurism and other lesser isms have become well-known and far-talked, because they have originated in the admitted centres of European culture. Sensationism, which is far more interesting, a far more original and a far more attractive movement than those, remains unknown because it was born far from those centres.”

Although Pessoa is seen nowadays as one of the key figures of European modernism, critical reaction to his theoretical work has been slow-coming and irregular, and his self-styled Sensationism remains almost unknown in the non-Portuguese-speaking world. This is somewhat surprising, bearing in mind that Pessoa’s Sensationism is deeply linked with the creation of his heteronyms, and more generally with his multiplication of personalities and styles. In this sense, Sensationism not only means the creation of an exclusively Portuguese avant-garde aesthetic but also the affirmative inclusion of the greatest possible number of aesthetic and artistic traditions in order to increase human self-awareness. Sensationism coincides with the publication of the two issues of ORPHEU, the most important Portuguese modernist magazine, and should be viewed as a kind of active reflection of a world that was continuously growing more plural. Sensationism, by its very nature, can be seen as a plural modernism par excellence. This paper focuses on the specific socio-cultural context of Pessoa’s Sensationism and tries to shed some light on its philosophical and aesthetical meaning.

68. Vernacular Avant-gardes (Room 264)
Irene Gammel (Ryerson) and John Wrighton (Brighton), ‘Poetic Ecologies in New York Dada: A Case Study in Modernism’s Urban Avant-garde’

Imagine this unique ecosystem in New York, 1918: in a cold-water tenement on Fourteenth Street near the Hudson River, the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven (1874-1927), a German emigré Dada poet, had translated her “house” into a functional Dada-ecosystem. She was living with an assortment of animals, feeding even on rats, and a birdcage with her canary hung from the ceiling, just as Duchamp hung his snow shovel from the ceiling as a readymade. Her home exhibited ecological principles that she would also deploy throughout her poetry. Beginning with the lines, “City stir – wind on eardrum” (103), her New York poem “Appalling Heart” is a radically experimental space of home-making which reconfigures dwelling within the writing of the metropolis as a transcultural interzone, or what Stacy Alaimo terms a zone of “trans-corporeality, in which the human is always intermeshed with the more-than-human world” (2). The poem evokes a mobile space of marginalized bodies traversing different sites such as the “tin-foil river,” alluding to the sonic technology of the era. The Baroness’s poetics abandons a vision of nature rendered defunct by WWI and in turn adopts the new vitalities of the body, a desacralized biosphere onto which the technological anxieties of modern (and postmodern) subjects could be mapped. By exploring the Baroness’s evocative environment poems, such as “Appalling Heart,” “Tryst,” and “Orchard Farming,” and by applying a methodology of postmodern theories of ecology (Alaimo, Latour, Morton, Westling), this paper reconfigures and expands the notions of “nature poetry” and the lyrical subject to formulate a Dada ecopoetics. Radically dismantling the boundaries between natural and urban, organic and technological, this paper argues that the Baroness’s work exemplifies a presciently contemporary spatial politics that is influential in modernism today.
Jason Wang (York, Canada), ‘Baroness Elsa and Her Anti-chic Dada: Locating Anarchist Fashion in Modernist Aesthetics’

Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven (1874 –1927), born Else Plötz in Germany who settled in Greenwich Village in 1913, is considered to be the mother of Dada and the first female proto-Dadaist to set foot on American territory (Gammel). Using fashion within modernist aesthetics as the focal point, this paper delves into how the Baroness recasts a sexual politics of radical style, which is situated in opposition to urban chic as a by-product of the capitalist and bourgeois metropolis. The Baroness’s ten-year New York dwelling is distinguished by her experimental and outrageous literary and visual performance under the rubric of modernist avant-garde. Through her astounding artistic practices in everyday life — shaved head, black lipstick, tomato can bra, teaspoon earrings, and other unconventional adornments — for the Baroness, fashion became a conscious and necessary choice; a conscious act of self-fashioning or a manifestation of artistic expression of self. Her ambiguity as living work of art and performing irrationality (Jones; Wilson) formulates an anarchist subject who uses and subverts her corporal body as a spectacular revolt. She eventually delivers a cultural battle to fight against dominant elitist and masculinist urban aesthetics in the context of New York Dada in the early twentieth century. Using theories of fashion and the avant-garde, this paper argues that the Baroness’s performative self-fashioning enables her body to become a gendered physical configuration that is both astonishing performance and politicized embodiment. Ultimately, her anti-chic maneuvers destabilize the mainstream bourgeois aesthetics of urban modernism.

Anna Elena Torres (Berkeley), ‘“Tseshpilyet Hemd” (The Torn Shirt): Anarchist Modernism in Yiddish Poetry’

Yiddish anarchist poetry is often perceived as being confined to the work of the “svetshop (sweatshop) poets,” who remained aesthetically similar to 19th Century romantic verse. Such labor-focused poetry differed considerably from the Yiddish modernist avant-garde which followed, and whose literary innovations engaged with international Expressionism and Futurism. However, the svetshop poets’ critique of the state and their call for an ecstatic embodiment of the present persisted through the more linguistically experimental work of Moyshe-Leyb Halpern and Perets Markish, as shown in Markish’s strongly Futurist “VeyS Ikhn Nis Tsi Kh’bin in D’reym (Don’t Know if I’m at Home)” (1919) and Halpern’s “Sacco and Vanzetti” (1927). The development of Yiddish modernist poetry was further supported and popularized by the anarchist press, especially Fraye Arbeter Shtime (Free Voice of Labor), which was printed from 1890 to 1977 with a circulation peak of 30,000 in 1914.

While anarchism as political philosophy emerged in response to the rise of the nation-state in Europe, Yiddish anarchism articulated a critique of nationalism from the position of statelessness and refugee experience that far predated the 19th Century. Through close readings of two poets, Moyshe-Leyb Halpern and Perets Markish, and with attention to the historical significance of the anarchist press, this paper examines the development of Yiddish “anarchist modernism” as both an aesthetic and as an ethos of sociality.

69. Scholarship, Archives and the Production of Knowledge (Room 246)
Michael McCluskey (UCL), ‘Building Pandaemonium: Humphrey Jennings and Modernist Production of Knowledge’

Pandaemonium is Humphrey Jennings’s history of the Industrial Revolution told through a searchable collection of extracts and images from novels, letters, scientific studies, and private diaries. Jennings’s intent was to allow readers to use these extracts in multiple ways: to read them straight through chronologically, to focus on a specific place or period of time, or to gather together extracts about a single topic (‘railways’, for example, or ‘architecture’). The expansive project, begun in 1937 and only published posthumously in a drastically edited edition, reflects the associative style of editing seen in Jennings’s films as well as modernist ideas of collage and montage as generative processes—Michael Saler considers Pandaemonium a form of ‘surrealist history’. But Jennings’s work—his insistence on multiple access points, keywords, and user-directed experience—also aligns with more recent studies of the production of knowledge through digital platforms (Schnapp et al 2012; Hirsch 2012; Cohen and Scheinfeldt 2013). Drawing on the entire unpublished project, this paper looks at Pandaemonium to consider Jennings’s ideas about knowledge production—ideas shaped by modernist practices of fragmentation and juxtaposition—and ideas that continue to circulate today: ‘how to juxtapose and integrate words and images, create hierarchies of reading, forge pathways of understanding, develop navigational schemata that guide and produce meaningful interactions’. (Schnapp et al, 13) I argue that this current research can help us to broaden our understanding of the applications of such collage texts (including Walter Benjamin’s nearly contemporary Arcades Project) and that these earlier modernist experiments put into practice much of the thinking that surrounds humanities teaching and research in the digital age.

Leah Culligan Flack (Marquette), ‘The Virtual Reality of Mandelstam’s Posthumous Poetics’

In 1928, Osip Mandelstam wrote, “I am not afraid of incoherence and gaps. . . . A manuscript is always a storm, worn to rags, torn by beaks.” Then in the middle of a five-year period of poetic silence, Mandelstam sought to articulate a model of poetry that contended with the incoherence and gaps that seemed inevitable for poets in Stalin’s Russia. He returned to composing poems orally in 1930, eight years before he died en route to a gulag. In these final poems, Mandelstam is intensely preoccupied with the posthumous fate of his works, as he attempts to envision the terms by which they might survive an era of totalitarianism, persecution, and censorship. His final poems are replete with images of his living voice that envision a model of poetry liberated from the materiality of the written word. This model has been fulfilled in an unexpected way by the digital archives of his poems slowly emerging in Russia, Europe, and the United States.

This paper will analyze the implications of Mandelstam’s posthumous poetics for modernist studies, particularly given the critical attention that has been directed toward archival studies and textual and genetic criticism. In particular, I will analyze the digital archive that recently went live at Princeton University’s Firestone Library, which contains the manuscripts carried on foot out of Voronezh when it was under siege in World War II and that were eventually smuggled to New York. This archive confronts us with a virtual space of not only recovery and preservation but also of unmediated loss. As such, it presents a productive challenge for thinking about the possibilities and limits of our attempts to recover not only Mandelstam’s history, but other modernist histories more generally.
Andrew Atherton (Kent), ‘[Citation Needed]: The Role of Annotation in the Poetry of David Jones’

By paying close attention to the use of notes in David Jones’s In Parenthesis and The Anathemata this paper seeks to dispel the entrenched critical view that his poetry is allusive, elliptical and labyrinthine. In his 2008 Reading David Jones, for example, Thomas Dilworth says of In Parenthesis that ‘if the slipperiness of the poem is difficult and disorientating then you are reading well’. Similarly, Elizabeth Judge describes The Anathemata as a ‘labyrinthine text’ with ‘intricate allusions’. Tom Goldpaugh’s 1999 ‘Mapping the Labyrinth: The ur-Anathemata of David Jones’ is yet another case in point. Whilst these claims are certainly true of Jones’s verse they are not accurate when one looks at In Parenthesis or The Anathemata in its entirety, which includes Jones’s hundreds of notes: it is a major methodological error, I will argue, to label Jones’s poetry allusive or labyrinthine when there is included a set of detailed and explicit notes. Prompted by the metaphor of a labyrinth, this paper will argue that the notes function as a map: they push the reader down certain prescribed analytical paths, a strategy that this paper will label ‘interpretative order’. In attempting to understand why Jones annotates his work in this manner, particular attention will be paid to the cultural crisis that Jones named ‘The Break’. The paper will conclude by considering Jones’s annotation in relation to other modernist note-takers, such as, TS Eliot and Ezra Pound.

70. Later than Late: Modernist Poetry after 1945 (Court Room)
Alex Latter (Birkbeck), ‘From Origin to a Various Art: Centre and Controversy in Late Modernist Poetry’

In the foreword to A Various Art, Andrew Crozier described the poets gathered therein as loosely constellated around a modernist tradition of ‘Pound and Williams’, rather than ‘Pound and Eliot’. This paper considers what this meant both for the work collected in the anthology, and also for the continued negotiation of the modernist poetry after the Second World War. I trace Crozier’s description back to a catalysing moment in the early 1950s, with the inception of the journals Origin and The Black Mountain Review. I draw on Robert Creeley’s correspondence with both Pound and Carlos Williams, relating their advice to him about the ideal function of a modernist magazine through the practice of those publications, with particular attention to Pound’s insistence that such publications should be ‘a centre around which, not a box within which’. I work this out into the broader context of poetic correspondence, both in terms of Creeley’s deeply involved exchanges with Charles Olson, and also the epistemic, lexical and prosodic correspondence that inheres in Pound and Fenellosa’s treatise on the Chinese written character; through this, I move towards an account of the relationship between language and community in late modernist poetics. This paper then maps the dynamics of this relationship onto the contact in the 1960s between the American poets associated with these publications, and a number of younger British poets, arguing that, although this contact initially engendered a desire to replicate the conditions of a post-Poundian active centre, the terms on which such conditions were predicated became increasingly antagonised to the point of a breakdown. The consequences of this rupture implicated both late modernist institutions and prosody, the focus of which moved away from the redemptive centre towards an embattled edge of hurt.
Daniel Eltringham (Birkbeck), “‘our metric of repetition’: J. H. Prynne’s Transatlantic Late Modernism and the English (Open) Field’

British late modernist poet J. H. Prynne wrote to his transatlantic correspondent, North American poet Charles Olson in August 1966, ‘tillage is part of the language, our metric of repetition.’ Drawing on this correspondence, this paper explores Prynne’s adaptation of a North American modernist form – open field or ‘Projective Verse’ as defined in Olson’s classic essay of 1950 – to the ‘tillage’ of British agrarian history, constituting in the process a late modernist British poetics tightly bound to the land’s topographical and human history.

Such a reading is made possible by grounding the ‘open field’ of pluralised meaning described by Olson in the physical field-spaces of Midland open field villages, spaces of labour with real spatial and affective properties, mostly enclosed in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Olson’s plea in his essay ‘The Human Universe’ ‘not be led to partition reality’ has a distinct meaning in the British landscape, with its long history of enclosure. Prynne’s work of the 1960s is steeped in British landscape history, influenced by books like W. G. Hoskins’ The Making of the English Landscape (1955), which he also read in 1966. His engagement with such material at the key moment of contact with Olson’s ideas can be read, this paper posits, as the reformulation of a British late modernism at once expansively transatlantic, in dialogue with Olson’s spatial innovations, yet calibrated by the local conditions of the English open field and other landscape traits, such as the ridge and furrow traces guiding verse lines, ‘our metric of repetition.’

Matthew Sperling (Reading), ‘Publishing Late Modernism: Cape Goliard Press, Fulcrum Press and the New American Poetry in England’

The lustrum 1965-70 now looks like a golden age for the publishing of avant-garde poetry in England. Key texts by senior figures such as Basil Bunting, Charles Olson and Louis Zukofsky, along with the early work of younger writers influenced by them, such as Edward Dorn, J.H. Prynne and Tom Raworth, were issued in sumptuous editions, skilfully designed and printed, often with contributions by leading visual artists (such as R.B. Kitaj, Richard Hamilton, Jim Dine), and backed up by considerable distribution capabilities. This paper will look at the two key publishing enterprises that flourished in those years, recovering this lost moment in literary history through bibliographic and archival research. Cape Goliard Press represented a unique experiment, whereby Jonathan Cape Ltd incorporated the Goliard Press into a new subsidiary imprint that represented “a little press within a large publishing house”, in the words of Nathaniel Tarn, whose idea it was. Like Cape Goliard, Fulcrum Press attempted to radicalize mainstream literary culture and challenge the dominance of Faber and Faber by producing elegant hardbacks in large print runs which would give the impression of coming from an “established” publishing house, while carrying texts of considerable innovation, informed by Bunting’s re-emergence and the influence of the New American Poetry (as gathered in Donald Allen’s flagship anthology of 1960). My paper will analyse these publishing ventures as a crucial marker in the history of modernism in England – a moment propelled by a dialectic of the utopian hope for a radical transformation of stilted, insular English culture and the elegiac sense that such an attempt, as a replaying of earlier modernist ventures and a try-hard emulation of dominant American models, was already haunted by knowledge of its own belatedness and likely failure. The bowing-out of these two publishers in the early 1970s,
I will argue, represents the end of the cultural optimism of the long 1960s and the death of countercultural hopes.

Vicky Sparrow (Birkbeck), ‘The Angry Brigade: Anna Mendelssohn, Activism and Late Modernist Poetics’

Of the many poets whose work spans the challenging complex of modernist literary production and active political engagement, one who perhaps epitomises this problematic in the late twentieth century is Anna Mendelssohn (1948-2009). Mendelssohn, who also published under the name Grace Lake, pursued a sustained poetic encounter with the outer limits of language’s reach, resulting in a work which is difficult, explosive and always politically uncompromising. Mendelssohn’s political activity in life was just as uncompromising, and she began a five year long incarceration in 1972 after being found guilty of ‘conspiracy to cause explosions’ for her involvement in a series of politically motivated bomb attacks around the UK. Mendelssohn’s biography inevitably influences the way her poetry is received and has led some to characterise her mode of writing as a ‘poetics of resistance’.

This paper calls for a sustained engagement with Mendelssohn’s poetics as a way of thinking the place of the political in the aesthetic, asking whether we can position the spectre of the law in aesthetic production and how we can think about the creative subject(ivity) under conditions of legal and political foreclosure. This will involve close readings of Mendelssohn’s poetry in order to interrogate how her poetic method worked against and through dominant modes of linguistic representation, including a fraught negotiation with modernism. Questioning, accusatory, restless, shot through with bathos, self-interruption, and preoccupied with the politics of reading and the conditions of writing – Mendelssohn’s poetry and poetic methods enacts a modernism that offers no answers and forcibly resists integration, like active struggle.