A Concise Companion to Modernism
The aim of this series is to provide accessible, innovative approaches to major areas of literary study. Ranging from between ten and twelve newly commissioned chapters, the volumes provide an indispensable companion for anyone wishing to gain an authoritative understanding of a given period or movement’s intellectual character and contexts.

Modernism  Edited by David Bradshaw
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A Concise Companion to Modernism

Edited by David Bradshaw
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Notes on Contributors

Tim Armstrong is a Reader in Modern English and American Literature at Royal Holloway, University of London. His publications include *Modernism, Technology and the Body: A Cultural Study* (1998) and *Haunted Hardy: Poetry, Memory, History* (2000), as well as the edited volumes *American Bodies* (1996) and (co-edited) *Beyond the Pleasure Dome: Writing and Addiction from the Romantics* (1993), and a selection of Hardy’s poetry for Longman Annotated Texts.

Todd Avery is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, where he teaches late-Victorian and twentieth-century British literature and culture. He has published essays on Virginia Woolf, the Bloomsbury Group, and Victorian ethics, and a monograph, *Close and Affectionate Friends: Desmond and Molly MacCarthy and the Bloomsbury Group* (1999). His current research projects include books on Bloomsbury’s ethics and British modernists’ involvement with the BBC.

Michael Bell is Professor of English and Comparative Literary Studies at the University of Warwick. He has taught in France, Germany, Canada and the USA and writes mainly on modernism, European fiction since Cervantes, and philosophical themes such a primitivism, myth, and the history of sentiment. His books include *D. H. Lawrence: Language and Being* (1992), *Modernism and Myth* (1997), and *Sentimentalism, Ethics and the Culture of Feeling* (2000). He is currently working on a study of the theme of *Bildung* in Rousseau, Goethe, and Nietzsche.
Notes on Contributors

Patrick Brantlinger is Rudy Professor of English at Indiana University. He served as Editor of *Victorian Studies* from 1980 to 1990 and his most recent books are *The Reading Lesson* (1998) and *Who Killed Shakespeare? What’s Happened to English since the Radical Sixties* (2001).


Stephen Frosh is Professor of Psychology and Director of the Centre for Psychosocial Studies in the School of Psychology at Birkbeck College, University of London. His numerous academic publications include *For and Against Psychoanalysis* (1997), *Sexual Difference* (1994), *Identity Crisis* (1991), and *The Politics of Psychoanalysis* (2nd edn 1999). His most recent books are *Young Masculinities* (with Ann Phoenix and Rob Pattman, 2002) and *After Words* (2002).

Mary Ann Gillies is an Associate Professor of English at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada. Her main areas of interest are Anglo-American modernism and cultural studies. She is the author of *Henri Bergson and British Modernism* (1996), has recently completed a book on the literary agent in Britain, 1880—1920, and is currently at work on a project that investigates the ways in which literary reputations were constructed (and destroyed) in the first half of the twentieth century.

Peter D. McDonald is a Fellow of St Hugh’s College and a Lecturer in English at the University of Oxford. He is the author of *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice* (1997) and the co-editor of *Making Meaning: “Printers of the Mind” and Other Essays by D. F. McKenzie* (2002).

Jeremy MacClancy is a Professor of Social Anthropology at Oxford Brookes University. He has carried out fieldwork in the Southwest Pacific, Basque Spain, Nigeria, and the London auction rooms. His most recent books are *The Decline of Carlism* (2000) and *Exotic No More: Anthropology Today* (2002). Besides teaching the anthropologies of art, food, and Europe, he has a particular interest in the history of British social anthropology and its interfaces with writers and the public.
April McMahon is Professor of English Language and Linguistics at the University of Sheffield. Her main research interests involve language classification; the contribution phonological theories can make to explaining sound change; and the history of English, especially Scots. She is the author of *Understanding Language Change* (1994), *Lexical Phonology and the History of English* (2000), *Change, Chance, and Optimality* (2000), and *An Introduction to English Phonology* (2001).

Angelique Richardson is a Lecturer in Victorian Literature and Culture at the University of Exeter. She is the author of *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Science, Fiction, and Rational Reproduction* (2003), editor of *Women Who Did: Stories by Men and Women 1890–1914* (2002), and co-editor of *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact: Fin-de-Siècle Feminisms* (2001). She is a contributing editor of *Critical Quarterly*.

Michael H. Whitworth is a Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Wales, Bangor, and is the author of *Einstein’s Wake: Relativity, Metaphor, and Modernist Literature* (2001). He is currently writing a book on Virginia Woolf and her socio-political contexts, and is editing an anthology on modernism.

Sarah Wilkinson completed her D.Phil. thesis, “Perceptions of Public Opinion in British Foreign Policy-Making about Nazi Germany, 1933—1938,” in 2000. She has taught British and international history at Oxford and Reading universities but is currently training to become a barrister. She is a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.
Chronology


1880
- Gilbert and Sullivan, *The Pirates of Penzance.*
- Meredith, *The Tragic Comedians.*
- Hardy, *The Trumpet-Major.*
- Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov.*

1881
- Gilbert and Sullivan, *Patience.*
- James, *The Portrait of a Lady; Washington Square.*
- D. G. Rossetti, *Ballads and Sonnets.*
- Shaw, *Love Among the Artists.*
- Wilde, *Poems.*
- Ibsen, *Ghosts.*

Death of Darwin. Death of Emerson. Death of D. G.

1882
- Froude, *History of the First Forty Years of Carlyle’s Life.*
Chronology

Rossetti. Death of Trollope.  
Death of James Thomson.  
Birth of Virginia Woolf.  
Second Married Women’s Property Act.


1883  
Carpenter, Towards Democracy.  
Shaw, An Unsocial Socialist.  
Schreiner, The Story of an African Farm.


1884  
The Century Guild Hobby Horse (1884–92).  
Gilbert and Sullivan, Princess Ida.  
Gissing, The Unclassed.  
Twain, Huckleberry Finn.  
Ruskin, The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century.  
Huysmans, A Rebours.

Death of Hugo. Birth of Pound.  
Birth of D. H. Lawrence.  
Radio waves discovered.  
Internal combustion engine invented.  

1885  
Jefferies, After London.  
Gilbert and Sullivan, The Mikado.  
Meredith, Diana of the Crossways.  
Pater, Marius the Epicurean.  
Ruskin, Praeterita (1885–9).  
Zola, Germinal.

Defeat of Gladstone’s first Irish Home Rule Bill.  

1886  
Gissing, Demos.  
Rider Haggard, King Solomon’s Mines.  
James, The Bostonians, The Princess Casamassima.
Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee.

1887

Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet.*
Frazer, *Totemism.*
Gilbert and Sullivan, *Ruddigore.*
Rider Haggard, *Allan Quatermain, She.*
Hardy, *The Woodlanders.*
Pater, *Imaginary Portraits.*
“Mark Rutherford,” *The Revolution in Tanner’s Lane.*
Stevenson, *Underwoods.*
Verdi, *Otello.*

Death of Matthew Arnold.
Birth of T. S. Eliot.

1888

Kipling, *Plain Tales from the Hills.*
Moore, *Confessions of a Young Man.*
Morris, *Signs of Change, A Dream of John Ball.*

Death of Robert Browning.
Death of Wilkie Collins.
Death of Gerard Manley Hopkins.
Birth of Hitler.

1889

Pater, *Appreciations.*
Death of Newman.
Death of van Gogh.
Fall of Parnell.

1890
Morris, News from Nowhere.
Ibsen, Hedda Gabler.

Death of Rimbaud.
Death of Melville.
Birth of Prokofiev.

1891
Gissing, New Grub Street.
Hardy, Tess of the D’Urbervilles.
Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray.

Death of Tennyson.
Birth of Ivy Compton-Burnett.
Birth of Vita Sackville-West.

1892
First English translation of Ibsen, Peer Gynt.
First English translation of Zola’s works.
Gissing, Born in Exile.
Kipling, Barrack-Room Ballads.
Yeats, The Countess Cathleen.

Death of Maupassant.
Second Irish Home Rule Bill rejected.

1893
Pinero, The Second Mrs. Tanqueray.
Shaw, Mrs. Warren’s Profession.

Death of Stevenson.
Death of Pater.
Death of Christina Rossetti.
Birth of Aldous Huxley.
Trial and conviction of Dreyfus.

1894
The Yellow Book (–1897).
Moore, Esther Waters.
Shaw, Arms and the Man.
Debussy, L’après-midi d’un faune.
Chronology

Death of T. H. Huxley.
Trials and conviction of Oscar Wilde.
Röntgen’s discovery of X-rays.
Marconi invents wireless telegraphy.
Invention of the cinematograph.

Death of William Morris.
Death of Verlaine.
Birth of F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee.

Death of Mallarmé.
Death of Gladstone.
Death of “Lewis Carroll”.
Birth of Hemingway.
The Curies discover radium and plutonium.

Birth of Nabokov.
Second Anglo-Boer War (–1902).

Death of Nietzsche.
Death of Wilde.
Death of Ruskin.
Boxer Rebellion (–1901).
Relief of Mafeking.

1895 Wilde, The Importance of Being Earnest.
Wells, The Time Machine.
Hardy, Jude the Obscure.
Chekhov, The Seagull.
Conrad, Almayer’s Folly.

1896 Housman, A Shropshire Lad.
Daily Mail founded.
Puccini, La Bohème.
Wells, The Island of Dr. Moreau.

1897 Conrad, Tales of Unrest.
Stoker, Dracula.
James, What Maisie Knew.
Shaw, Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant.
Wells, The Invisible Man.

1898 Hardy, Wessex Poems.
Wells, The War of the Worlds.
Wilde, The Ballad of Reading Gaol.

1899 Yeats, The Wind among the Reeds.
Tolstoy, Resurrection.

1900 Daily Express founded.
Conrad, Lord Jim.
Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams.
## Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1901 | Death of Queen Victoria; accession of Edward VII.  
      | Mann, *Buddenbrooks*.  
      | Strindberg, *Dance of Death*.  
      | Kipling, *Kim*. |
| 1902 | Death of Zola.  
      | Bennett, *Anna of the Five Towns*.  
      | Gide, *The Immoralist*.  
      | Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*.  
      | Hobson, *Imperialism*.  
      | James, *The Wings of the Dove*.  
      | William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*.  
      | *Times Literary Supplement (TLS)* founded. |
| 1903 | Death of Whistler.  
      | Death of Gauguin.  
      | Death of Gissing.  
      | Death of Herbert Spencer.  
      | Birth of “George Orwell”.  
      | Birth of Waugh.  
      | First aeroplane flight.  
      | Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) founded by Emmeline Pankhurst. |
| 1904 | Death of Chekhov.  
      | Death of Leslie Stephen.  
      | Franco-British Entente.  
      | Russo-Japanese War (–1905).  
      | Synge, *Riders to the Sea*.  
      | Chekhov, *The Cherry Orchard*.  
      | James, *The Golden Bowl*.  
      | Conrad, *Nostromo*.  
      | Hardy, *The Dynasts* (–1908).  
      | Puccini, *Madame Butterfly*. |
| 1905 | Birth of Sartre.  
      | Special Theory of Relativity.  
      | Sinn Fein founded in Dublin.  
      | Richard Strauss, *Salomé*.  
      | Wilde, *De Profundis*.  
      | Wharton, *The House of Mirth*.  
      | Forster, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. |
| 1906 | Death of Ibsen.  
      | Galsworthy, *The Man of* |
Death of Cézanne.  
Birth of Beckett.  
Liberal Government elected.

Death of Huysmans.  
Birth of Auden.  
Cubist exhibition, Paris.  

1907  
Conrad, *The Secret Agent*.  
Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World*.  
Forster, *The Longest Journey*.  
Bergson, *L’Evolution créatrice*.  

Old Age Pensions Act.  

1908  
Stein, *Three Lives*.  
Bennett, *The Old Wives’ Tale*.  
Forster, *A Room with a View*.  
Pound, *A Lume Spento*.  
Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*.  
Elgar, *First Symphony*.  
Bartók, *First String Quartet*.  

Death of Meredith.  
Death of Swinburne.  
Blériot flies across English Channel.  
Freud lectures on psychoanalysis in the USA.

1909  
Marinetti, *Futurist Manifesto*.  
Mahler, *Ninth Symphony*.  
Matisse, *The Dance*.  
Frank Lloyd Wright, *Robie House*.  
Pound, *Personae*.  
Schoenberg, *Five Orchestral Pieces*.  
Wells, *Tono-Bungay*.  

Death of Edward VII; accession of George V.  
Death of Twain.  
Death of Tolstoy.  
Death of Florence Nightingale.  
First Post-Impressionist Exhibition, London.  

1910  
Stravinsky, *The Firebird*.  
Forster, *Howards End*.  
Wells, *The History of Mr. Polly*.  
Chronology

Death of Galton.
Death of Gilbert.
Death of Mahler.
Suffragette agitation.

Death of Scott of the Antarctic.
Birth of Pollock.
Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition, London.
National Dock Strike.
Sinking of the Titanic.

Second Rejection of Irish Home Rule Bill by Lords.
Suffragette demonstrations, London.

Birth of Dylan Thomas.
Irish Home Rule Bill passed by Parliament.
Outbreak of World War I.

Sinking of SS Lusitania.
General Theory of Relativity.
Air attacks on London.

1911 Beerbohm, Zuleika Dobson.
Bennett, Hilda Lessways.
Conrad, Under Western Eyes.
Douglas, Siren Land.
Lawrence, The White Peacock.
“Mansfield”, In a German Pension.
Pound, Canzoni.
Wells, The New Machiavelli.
Wharton, Ethan Frome.

1912 Pound, Ripostes.
Daily Herald founded.
Mann, Death in Venice.
Marcel Duchamp, Nude Descending a Staircase.
Shaw, Pygmalion.
Schoenberg, Pierrot Lunaire.

1913 New Statesman founded.
Cather, O Pioneers!
Lawrence, Sons and Lovers.
Frost, A Boy’s Will.
Proust, A la recherche du temps perdu (–1927).
Stravinsky, Le Sacre du printemps.
Husserl, Phenomenology.

1914 Joyce, Dubliners.
Conrad, Chance.
Bell, Art.
Frost, North of Boston.
Founding of BLAST.

1915 Woolf, The Voyage Out.
Lawrence, The Rainbow.
Maugham, Of Human Bondage.
Pound, Cathay.
Ford, The Good Soldier.
Chronology

1916
Richardson, *Pointed Roofs*.
D. W. Griffith, *Birth of a Nation*.
Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.
Pound, *Lustra*.

1917
Eliot, *Prufrock and Other Observations*.
Valéry, *La Jeune parque*.
Lowell, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry*.
Jung, *The Unconscious*.
Yeats, *The Wild Swans at Coole*.

1918
Joyce, *Exiles*.
Lewis, *Tarr*.
Strachey, *Eminent Victorians*.
West, *The Return of the Soldier*.
Hopkins, *Poems*.
Paul Klee, *Gartenplan*.

1919
Picasso, *Pierrot and Harlequin*.
Hardy, *Collected Poems*.
Sinclair, *Mary Olivier*.
Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*.
Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*.
Mencken, *The American Language*.
Woollf, *Night and Day*.

1920
Lawrence, *Women in Love*.

Death of Henry James.
First Battle of the Somme (July–November).
Easter Rising in Dublin.
Gallipoli.
Lloyd George Prime Minister.
Dada.

Passchendaele (July–November).
USA enters War.
Balfour Declaration.
Russian Revolution.

Death of Owen.
Armistice (11 Nov.).
Influenza pandemic (~1919).
Votes for women aged thirty and over in Britain.

Bauhaus founded at Weimar by Walter Gropius.
Treaty of Versailles.
Atlantic flown by Alcock and Brown.
Relativity scientifically proved.
First woman MP elected (Nancy Astor).

League of Nations established.
Chronology

American women achieve the vote.

Eliot, The Sacred Wood.
Shaw, Heartbreak House.
Wharton, The Age of Innocence.
Pound, Hugh Selwyn Mauberley.
“Mansfield”, Bliss and Other Stories.
Lewis, Main Street.
O’Neill, The Emperor Jones.
Fry, Vision and Design.
Matisse, L’Odalisque.

Irish Free State established.

Pirandello, Six Characters in Search of an Author.
Dos Passos, Three Soldiers.
Huxley, Crome Yellow.
Picasso, Three Musicians.
Munch, The Kiss.

Death of Proust.
Birth of Larkin.
Fascists in power in Italy.
Founding of the British Broadcasting Company (BBC).

Joyce, Ulysses.
Woolf, Jacob’s Room.
Lewis, Babbit.
Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.
Fritz Lang, Dr. Mabuse.
Friedrich Murnau, Nosferatu.
Criterion founded.

Death of “Mansfield”.
BBC radio begins transmission.
President Coolidge elected.

Huxley, Antic Hay.
Lawrence, Kangaroo.
Macaulay, Told by an Idiot.
Stevens, Harmonium.

Death of Lenin.
Death of Kafka.
Death of Conrad.
First Labour Government.
Surrealist Manifesto.

Forster, A Passage to India.
Mann, The Magic Mountain.
O’Casey, Juno and the Paycock.
Ford, Some Do Not.
Cecil B. de Mille, The Ten Commandments.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Death of Rilke. General Strike (Britain, May 3–12).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Death of Hardy. Yeats, <em>The Tower</em>.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chronology

Women’s suffrage extended to women over 21 in Britain. Bell, Civilization.
Lawrence, Lady Chatterley’s Lover.
Huxley, Point Counter Point. Waugh, Decline and Fall. Woolf, Orlando.

Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury.
Graves, Goodbye to All That. Hitchcock, Blackmail.
Woolf, A Room of One’s Own.

Death of Lawrence. Death of Conan Doyle. Global Depression. Television begins in USA. Photo flashbulb invented. 1930
Auden, Poems.
Eliot, Ash Wednesday.
Crane, The Bridge.
Faulkner, As I Lay Dying.
Lewis, Apes of God.
Waugh, Vile Bodies.
Leavis, Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture.
Freud, Civilisation and its Discontents.

O’Neill, Mourning Becomes Electra.
Matisse, The Dance. Fritz Lang, M.

President Roosevelt elected. 1932
Scrutiny started.
Brecht, The Mother.
Céline, Voyage au bout de la nuit.
### Chronology

**1933**

- Malraux, *La Condition humaine.*
- Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism.*
- Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London.*
- Wells, *The Shape of Things to Come.*
- Yeats, *Collected Poems.*

**1934**

- Fitzgerald, *Tender is the Night.*
- Pound, *ABC of Reading.*

**1935**

- Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral.*
- Auden and Isherwood, *The Dog Beneath the Skin.*
- Isherwood, *Mr. Norris Changes Trains.*
- Gershwin, *Porgy and Bess.*
- Dali, *Giraffe on Fire.*
- Shostakovich, *First Symphony.*
- Odets, *Waiting for Lefty.*

**1936**

- Auden, *Look, Stranger!*
- Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*
- Thomas, *Twenty-five Poems.*
- Smith, *Novel on Yellow Paper.*
- Mondrian, *Composition in Red and Blue.*
Chronology

Death of Kipling.
Spanish Civil War (–1939).
Moscow Show Trials.
BBC Television begins (Nov).

Death of Barrie.
Death of Wharton.
Chamberlain Prime Minister.
Destruction of Guernica, Spain.

Munich agreement (Sept 30).
First jet engine.

Death of Freud.
Death of Yeats.
Death of Ford.
Russo-German Pact.
Beginning of World War II (Sept 3).

1937
Jones, In Parenthesis.
Orwell, The Road to Wigan Pier.
Woolf, The Years.
Tolkien, The Hobbit.
Picasso, Guernica.
Steinbeck, Of Mice and Men.

1938
Beckett, Murphy.
Bowen, The Death of the Heart.
Green, Brighton Rock.
Mumford, The Culture of Cities.
Orwell, Homage to Catalonia.
Dos Passos, U.S.A.
Picasso, Woman in Easy Chair.
Bartók, Violin Concerto.
Yeats, New Poems.
Picture Post begins.

1939
Joyce, Finnegans Wake.
MacNeice, Autumn Journal.
Orwell, Coming Up for Air.
Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath.
Isherwood, Goodbye to Berlin.
Picasso, Night Fishing at Antibes.
Yeats, Last Poems and Two Plays.
This innovative collection of specially commissioned essays is essential reading for anyone wishing to come to terms with the intellectual matrix of Anglo-American literary modernism. In making available to non-specialist readers twelve expert overviews of some of the most significant fields and phenomena – such as physics, anthropology, psychoanalysis, and Nietzscheanism – which impacted on the “revolution of the word” between (roughly) 1880 and 1939, the companion provides both a range of contexts for modernist literature and a series of essays which are accessible and authoritative in their own right. Together they comprise the story of an age.

For the first time, material condensed from a formidable array of technical books and learned articles has been brought together in a single volume, and while the companion’s main target reader is the literary student, it is anticipated that its scope and reach will also appeal to specialists in a number of other disciplines and, indeed, to any general reader with an interest in discovering more about the remarkable intellectual milieu of an extraordinary cultural epoch.

An enhanced awareness of the efflorescence of ideas which occurred in twelve major fields in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can only intensify the reader’s appreciation of the radical and iconoclastic environment in which literary modernism emerged and flourished. Most of the essays foreground individual modernist writers who registered the contiguous upheavals in science, philosophy, and language with particular vividness and relish, and in all the chapters the stress falls on the effects which specific breakthroughs, concepts, and paradigm shifts had on the
wider intellectual community rather than on a more narrow and insular account of the specialist topic in question.

If contextual knowledge can release textual meanings, none of the authors of this compilation would wish to claim that the relationship between imaginative writing and the ideas it embodies, shadows, or kicks against is anything but complex, multiplex, and sensitive. However, there are so many instances of modernist writers appropriating aspects of and even whole areas of specialist knowledge which in turn transformed the shape and tenor of their work – Yeats and eugenics, H. D. and psychoanalysis, Graves and myth, are obvious examples – that this collection needs no more justification, perhaps, than that it will undoubtedly further an understanding of such modernist bending, borrowing, and bricolage. Among other things, these essays will reinvigorate the reader’s thinking about such core issues as the Nietzschean inflection of modernism, the advent and appeal of Bergsonism, the modernist state, publishing and the modernist reader, the interface between technology and modernism, eugenics and the life sciences, the institutions and market conditions of modernism, and that more precise revolution of the word instigated by Saussure, Bloomfield, and their fellow-linguists.

It is now universally accepted that the Anglo-American modernist movement comprised much more than a largely white, male avant-garde conscientiously detached from and contemptuous of both the literary mainstream and modernity at large. We also know that human character did not change in 1910 (despite Virginia Woolf’s claim that it did), just as a decade earlier (despite the death of Nietzsche) the new century had dawned without incident, culturally speaking, apart from the appearance (in German) of Freud’s Interpretation of Dreams. Indeed, critical speculation about when, precisely, modernism burst forth and when it ptered out looks more and more futile as time goes on: no period of cultural activity is airtight and all watersheds form part of more extensive upland systems that are fed by rain carried from far away. This volume’s attempt to isolate and elucidate the major intellectual developments which assumed importance for modernist writers has been made with an acute awareness that the temper of a historical period is always and inevitably continuous with the past as well as being fissiparous, contradictory, manifold, and fugitive. Preoccupations which appear to have colonized the mind of one writer show no sign of having had any influence at all on the vast majority of his or her contemporaries, making any attempt to capture an era’s “turn of mind” or “climate of opinion” all the more fraught with conceptual, procedural, and terminological difficulty. Like Patricia Waugh, the authors of
these essays would forcefully reject “the notion of Zeitgeist as a seamless and overarching historical unity binding literature to philosophy and scientific discovery in a straightforward reflectionist chain” (Waugh 1997: 6). But, to a greater or lesser extent, they all share a conviction that it can only benefit students of the period in general, and students of its literature in particular, to become more familiar with specialist fields of knowledge which are patently in play, one way or another, in the diverse writings of the modernist age, a remarkably distinct, though far from stand-alone cultural era.

If each of these essays is concerned to facilitate the reading of modernist texts by bringing on the reader’s receptivity to what they may enclose, an even greater aspiration of the volume is to be dependable without being reductive. Background or contextual knowledge may amplify our understanding of a text by indicating new possibilities of interpretation, but contexts must never be configured as cordons beyond which contextually “unauthorized” readings are barred from progressing. This companion is conceived as a guidebook, not a code book, and its chief aim is to provide a free-standing, probing, and reliable supplement to modernism which avoids the pitfalls of superficiality, over-prescriptiveness, and oversimplification.

Neither the editor nor any of the contributors would wish to argue that the twelve topics covered by the essays are the only modernist preoccupations which the reader should consider. Another, longer book might have contained additional essays on, among other things, the occult, social credit, aviation, race, historiography, skyscrapers, dance, censorship, Russia, America, rejuvenation, cinematography, telephony, music hall, and ecology, yet even so it would have been hardly less selective for all its extra bulk. Taken together, these twelve new essays explore what are probably the most significant of the ideas which were “in the air” (to borrow a phrase of Grant Allen’s quoted in Angelique Richardson’s chapter) during the modernist epoch. However, the mentality of modernism was so thick with novelty and discovery that it would be unwise to be too categorical about this. Moreover, there have already been numerous studies of the great structural issues which spanned the period, such as feminism, imperialism, and war, and this is the only reason why chapters have not been dedicated to those key concerns in this volume.

One of the most interesting aspects of the book, perhaps, is the way it will help promote an understanding of the cross-fertilization of ideas in the period. The eugenist R. A. Fisher, for example, “one of the most important and productive thinkers in statistics of [the twentieth] century”
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(Mazumdar 1991: 96), was also deeply read in Nietzsche. “An interest in Nietzsche,” indeed:

was not uncommon among the eugenists. Maximilian Mügge . . . who occasionally lectured for the Eugenics Education Society, wrote in 1909 in the first volume of the *Eugenics Review* that Galton had founded a racial religion: the ideal of the super-man would supply the religious feeling of responsibility which would give the science its popular support. Havelock Ellis, another founding member of the [Eugenics Education] Society, was also one of Nietzsche’s most prolific exponents in English . . . . The commentators at this time generally saw Nietzsche as the philosopher of Darwinism and evolution whose *Übermensch* was the forerunner of a new human race, a master race. (Mazumdar 1991: 104)

Similarly, Oscar Levy, the man responsible for the first complete and authorized translation of the works of Nietzsche into English, was also a degenerationist and dedicated eugenist, as was his fellow Nietzschean, the anti-democrat and misogynist Anthony Ludovici (for more on both of them see Michael Bell’s chapter on Nietzscheanism). The reader of the first three chapters of this collection, therefore, will have been introduced to the mindset of a common intellectual type in the modernist period, the post-Darwinian, Nietzschean, eugenist and elitist, and it is hoped that other chapter clusters will offer similar insights. Equally valuable is the way in which the essays will encourage the reader to look at the same text from a number of perspectives: for example, *The Waste Land* as seen through the eyes of Jeremy MacClancy, Mary Ann Gillies, Stephen Frosh, and myself.

“Literature undeniably reflects in some sense the life and thought of its time,” Michael Bell began his Introduction to the 1900–1930 volume of “The Context of English Literature” series in 1980, “but to determine how it does so is the delicate and continuing function of criticism.” He continued:

It may address itself to “life” in a greater or lesser degree but its value as literature is not in any simple sense contingent on such a criterion. The vitality or meaningfulness of literature hinges on its internal intensity rather than the quantity of historical information in a factual sense that it may include. It is a delicate matter, therefore, to mediate pertinently between literary experience and its putative contexts; to discuss “influences” and preoccupations without collapsing the tension of this vital heterogeneity. (1980: 1)

These cautionary words are as relevant today as they were when Michael