



A HISTORY OF MODERNIST POETRY

Edited by
ALEX DAVIS and LEE M. JENKINS

A History of Modernist Poetry examines innovative anglophone poetries from decadence to the post-war period. The first of its three parts considers formal and contextual issues, including myth, politics, gender, and race, while the second and third parts discuss a wide range of individual poets, including Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats, Mina Loy, Gertrude Stein, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, and Marianne Moore, as well as key movements such as Imagism, Objectivism, and the Harlem Renaissance. This book also addresses the impact of both world wars on experimental poetries and the crucial role of magazines in disseminating and proselytising on behalf of poetic modernism. The collection concludes with a wide-ranging discussion of the inheritance of modernism in recent writing on both sides of the Atlantic.

Alex Davis is Professor of English at University College Cork, Ireland. He is the author of *A Broken Line: Denis Devlin and Irish Poetic Modernism* (2000) and many essays on anglophone poetry from decadence to the present day. He is co-editor, with Lee M. Jenkins, of *Locations of Literary Modernism: Region and Nation in British and American Modernist Poetry* (2000) and *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Poetry* (2007) and, with Patricia Coughlan, of *Modernism and Ireland: The Poetry of the 1930s* (1995).

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS
www.cambridge.org

ISBN 978-1-107-03867-7



9 781107 038677 >

Cover image: *The Seasons: Winter*, 1987 (colour etching & aquatint) (see also 710809-12), Jasper Johns (b.1930) / Private Collection / Photo © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images.

Cover design: Newgen Knowledge Works Pvt Ltd

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32 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10013-2473, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107038677

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First published 2015

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

A History of modernist poetry / [edited by] Alex Davis, University College Cork, Ireland [and] Lee M. Jenkins, University College Cork, Ireland.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

PR605.M63H57 2015

821'.9109112-dc23 2014048588

ISBN 978-1-107-03867-7 Hardback

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Preface

A History of Modernist Poetry provides a survey of anglophone poetic modernisms, from the 1890s to the 1940s and beyond. The volume takes cognisance of the renaissance in the study of modernisms that has been underway since the late 1990s, reflecting and contributing to the sea change in the discipline brought about by the New Modernist Studies: the opening-up of the canon to include modernist poets who, whether on grounds of gender, ethnicity, or poetic praxis, were marginalised within earlier understandings of modernism; and the extension of the chronology of modernism to the Second World War and the decolonising era of the 1960s, in which the legacies of the modernists were creatively re-interpreted by poets according to their own agendas. At the same time, however, the present *History* acknowledges the profound and inescapable contribution to poetic modernism of, for example, Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot, poets long recognised as canonical. While *A History of Modernist Poetry* registers recent developments in scholarship, it also recognises that a literary history is, by definition, distinct from the often enabling 'turf wars' of literary criticism, in that it must provide, as far as is possible, an 'objective' and accurate perspective on modernist poetry in history.

This *History* offers, in one volume, a comprehensive resource which encompasses detailed readings and historical contextualisations of major modernist poets, movements and schools within poetic modernism, and discussion of the origins, formal innovations and thematic, political, racialised, and gendered preoccupations of modernist poetry, from the *fin de siècle*

to the post-Second World War period. Owing to its subject area's relatively recent periodisation, there is a pressing need for a history of a genre which pays attention to the large array of innovative, lasting, and influential works of the modernist era — works increasingly recognised as comparable to the major poetic texts of the early modern and romantic periods.

At Cambridge University Press, we would like to thank our editor, Dr Ray Ryan, and editorial assistant, Caitlin Gallagher; our Senior Project Manager, Sathish Kumar; and the anonymous readers for the Press. Thanks, too, to Claire Connolly and colleagues in the School of English and the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences at University College Cork, and to Sarah Hayden, who compiled the Chronology.