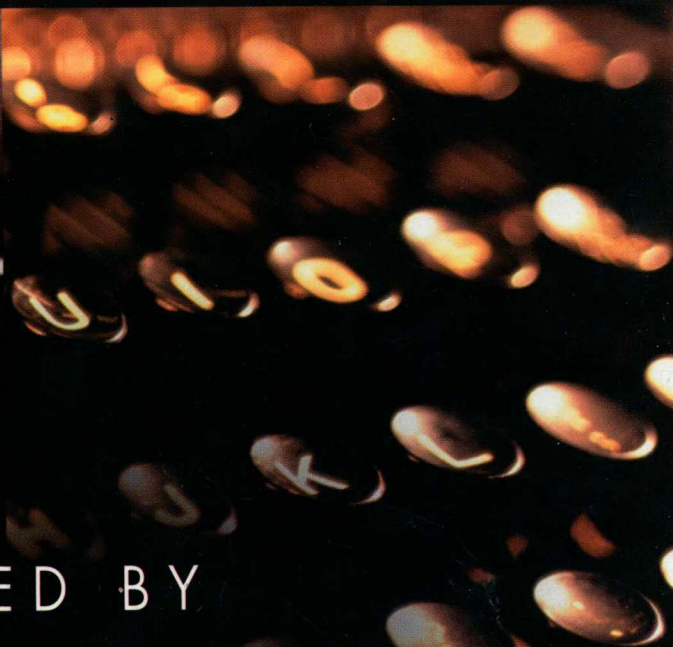




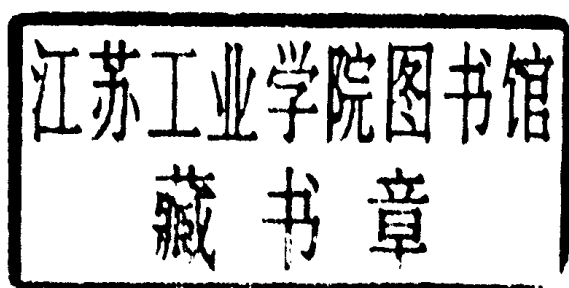
ENCYCLOPEDIA
OF LITERARY
MODERNISM



EDITED BY
PAUL POPLAWSKI

Encyclopedia of Literary Modernism

Edited by
PAUL POPLAWSKI



GREENWOOD PRESS
Westport, Connecticut • London

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Encyclopedia of literary modernism / edited by Paul Poplawski.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-313-31017-3 (alk. paper)

1. Modernism (Literature)—Encyclopedias. I. Poplawski, Paul.

PN56.M54E53 2003

809'.9112—dc21 2003040825

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data is available.

Copyright © 2003 by Paul Poplawski

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, by any process or technique, without the express written consent of the publisher.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2003040825

ISBN: 0-313-31017-3

First published in 2003

Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881

An imprint of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

www.greenwood.com

Printed in the United States of America



The paper used in this book complies with the Permanent Paper Standard issued by the National Information Standards Organization (Z39.48-1984).

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Preface

Scope of This Book

Despite intense critical debate and disagreement over its very name, nature and scope, modernism continues to be widely acknowledged as probably the most important and influential artistic-cultural phenomenon of the twentieth century, whether it is considered primarily as a movement, a period, a genre, a style or an ideology. Within literature and literary studies especially, modernism looms large as an established canonical category, for publishers, readers, critics, students, and scholars alike.

It is surprising therefore to find a relative dearth of ready reference material devoted specifically to literary modernism, especially when there exists such a plethora of handbooks, companions and glossaries on literary topics generally, and a plethora, too, of developed critical scholarship on modernism in the shape of introductory overviews, scholarly monographs, edited essay collections, and anthologies of primary source materials. The classic survey of the field presented in Malcolm Bradbury's and James McFarlane's seminal essay collection, *Modernism 1890–1930* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976; rptd. 1991), and the similar more recent collection edited by Michael Levenson, *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism* (Cambridge UP, 1999), are perhaps the nearest we have to the sort of reference guide I mean here. However, though these are both invaluable sources of information and critical insight, neither of them is specifically designed as a reference book and certainly not as a source of quick reference (though the former contains such elements as a detailed chronology of events, a hundred "Brief Biographies," and an extensive general bibliography).

The present volume, then, has been designed to fill the gap suggested above by providing a comprehensive and accessible source of quick reference to the key authors, works, movements, theories, places and events commonly associated with literary modernism. Written by expert scholars from around the world and covering hundreds of different topics in a clear, incisive and critically informed manner, this *Encyclopedia* presents a unique range of detailed entries—many in the form of mini-essays—mapping out the complex and variegated field of literary modernism in a fresh and original way from an early twenty-first century perspective.

Although the principal focus of the book is on English language literary modernism and the period 1890–1939, many entries extend substantially beyond these loose parameters to include important precursors and successors of modernism, as well as to cover the crucial European and interdisciplinary dimensions of modernism, and to provide complementary comparative perspectives from countries and regions not usually included in traditional accounts of the subject (thus there are entries, for example, on India, Southern Africa, and Hispanic America). Each entry includes a selected bibliography to guide the reader to essential primary and secondary sources, and a simple system of cross-referencing by means of bold type directs the reader to relevant related entries elsewhere in the book. There is also a selected bibliography of useful general works on modernism at the end of the *Encyclopedia*, as well as a comprehensive index. It should be noted that the index clearly highlights all main entries and may therefore be browsed to provide an initial overview of the book's contents. The index will also prove useful for locating discussions of significant authors, movements or topics that do not have their own main entries because of having been incorporated within some of the more substantial synoptic entries, such as those dealing with countries or regions (e.g., France, Spain, Russia), or with art movements (e.g., cubism, impressionism, surrealism), or with general topics (e.g., dance, feminism, film, music, psychoanalysis, thought).

Definitions of Modernism

As I suggested at the start, the field of modernism is a highly complex and hotly contested one, and there is no universal consensus on precisely what constitutes modernism. The name itself remains radically unstable, shifting in meaning according to who uses it, when, where and in what context—to the extent that several critics now prefer to talk of discrete and disparate “modernisms” rather than of one overarching “modernism.” Whether or not this merely multiplies problems of definition is a moot point, but it certainly reflects the dynamically conflicted and heterogeneous nature of our current understanding of modernism.

In addition to its straightforward reference function, therefore, this book has been conceived and developed also to encourage critical reflection on established views of what the term “modernism” means or might mean. In compiling the book, I have taken a very catholic and pragmatic approach as to what falls within its purview, erring purposely on the side of inclusiveness in order implicitly to challenge any narrow or neatly programmatic views of modernism; and I have allowed contributors a free hand to develop their own ideas, in relation to their particular topics, as to what modernism means to them. In this way, I hope to have given clearer definition to shifting conceptions of modernism as they have evolved over time, place, and culture, and to have generated multiple and multifaceted perspectives on modernism which may suggest new ways of conceiving it in the future. The book's twofold aim overall, then, has been to provide comprehensive and reliable factual information on the people, places, principles, and texts normally identified with literary modernism, while also interrogating conventional, canonical conceptions of what, when, why, how and who modernism was (and/or is).

It should be clear from the above why a discrete entry on modernism itself is conspicuously—indeed constitutively—absent from the book; and, for similar reasons, it would be presumptuous of me (and not a little foolhardy) to try to present some sort of ready-made dictionary definition of the term here. Apart from inevitably belying the manifest complexity of modernism, such an attempt would sit uneasily with the intended open-endedness of what might be called the book's "rhizomatic" exploration of modernism—its intention of generating new and unplanned roots/routes of inquiry. However, notwithstanding the difficulties, some initial orientation on the subject may be helpful, if not in the form of a definition, then in that of a brief checklist of some of the key points commonly adduced in discussions of modernism (both within this book and elsewhere).

A certain protean indeterminacy may in fact be self-reflexively appropriate to a phenomenon tellingly described by Bradbury and McFarlane as "an apallingly explosive fusion" of many disparate and often contradictory trends (48). But several more determinate features of modernism can also be identified as part of a fairly common frame of reference within most critical discussions of the topic. To begin with, the emphasis on volatility in Bradbury's and McFarlane's formulation derives quite naturally from what has been probably the most prominent and constant element in definitions of modernism since the term came into regular literary-critical usage in the 1960s: that is, modernism's avant-garde experimentalism and its concern for radical innovation in artistic form, style, content and method. This emphasis, in turn, is linked to what is often seen as the revolutionary dynamic within modernism. On the one hand, we have modernism's literary-aesthetic and epistemological rejection of the conventions, assumptions, procedures, and perceptions of the classical and realist art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—a rejection precipitated by a range of related art movements such as impressionism, imagism, symbolism, futurism, and expressionism. On the other hand, we have its ideological critique—variously radical or conservative—of modernity and of the complex social developments associated with industrialization, urbanization, and democratization. This sense of living through a period of momentous social, political and cultural upheaval can be seen as a key motivating factor in the modernist insistence on an equivalently momentous upheaval in aesthetic practice (itself often seen as fundamentally political).

It can also be seen to motivate another major nexus of modernism: its profound concern with themes of alienation, fragmentation, and the loss of shared values and meanings, and its concomitant search for alternative systems of belief in myth, mysticism, and primitivism—or in art itself, seen by many modernists as a privileged sphere of order and of heightened ephiphanic revelation. Linked to all this, depictions of modernism also typically draw attention to the self-conscious focus in modernist art on the very processes of making meaning and on the difficulties and complexities of representation and perception. Thus, questions of ambiguity, relativity, and subjectivity, along with linguistic experimentation and formal experiments in disordered chronology and shifting points of view, all feature prominently in most discussions of modernism, as does the fundamental importance to modernism of psychology and the elusive workings of the conscious and unconscious mind.

Anyone who comes to this book with little or no previous knowledge of modernism may well be surprised to find that this brief inventory of its commonly assumed features makes it sound remarkably familiar and contemporary. As Bradbury and McFarlane suggest, this is precisely because

Modernism is still, in some fashion, a shaping art behind the art of our own times . . . it still remains integrally woven into our contemporary awareness, still possessing the power to startle and disturb. (12)

What better reason, then, to introduce modernism afresh with this *Encyclopedia* and to continue the task, so ably advanced by Bradbury and McFarlane themselves, of interrogating and reinterpreting for our own generation what they call in the same place “this most living of creative pasts”?

Acknowledgments

My first and main debt of gratitude must be to all the contributors to this volume for their enthusiasm for the project and for their superb professionalism and scholarship in carrying out their commissions—also, for their kind patience in the face of various delays to publication, and for their friendly support and cooperation over the several years it has taken to bring the project to completion. I would like to thank George Butler for commissioning and encouraging the project in the first place; Anne Thompson and the other support staff at Greenwood for their administrative and editorial work on the book; and the team at Impressions for keeping the final production process on such a tight leash. I am grateful to my sister, Alina, for help with the entry on Poland; and, as always, to my wife, Angie, for her unstinting support throughout.

Contents

Preface vii

Acknowledgments xi

Encyclopedia of Literary Modernism 1

Selected Bibliography 477

Index 481

List of Contributors 511

A

Adler, Alfred (1870–1937)

Austrian doctor and originator of Individual Psychology.

See under **Psychoanalysis**.

Africa and the South

Has modernism any relevance to the South of the world? From the perspective of the rich North modernism is a Euro-American reaction to the bourgeois rationalism of urban life. The individual personality—the invention of enlightenment modernity—rebels against the middle-class habit, and the rebellion assumes paradoxical proportions: an avant-garde experimentalism of style, which is attracted to romantic freedom, finds itself checked, painfully, by intimations of a metaphysical abyss, in which the Greco-Roman inheritance sheds the sustenance of myth to be retrievable only in fragments shored against ruin. With glimpses that beneath the confidence of Empire lay a heart of darkness, the condition of Europe suggested both Western decline and revivification in the politics of blood and soil. The social imagination—often damaging in its modernist anti-democratic tendencies—is transmuted through an art religion into a psychological correlative according to which it is not so much Marx, as **Freud**, who lends Euro-American modernism of the years 1880 to 1930 the delineation of its high achieve-

ment. The achievement is embodied in the great art works of the period: artifacts that in a de-familiar style—a style that “makes strange”—signal their autonomy from social dependency.

Such works—**Eliot**’s *The Waste Land* (1922), for example—are, according to mythic predisposition, complex and comprehensive in their grasp of the modern urban scene. Conversely, the social conscience may identify a simplification of the scene. As **Brecht** might have put it, *The Waste Land* understands modernity as a politics of culture rather than a culture of politics. Simultaneously, however, Brecht complicated his own apparently anti-modernist aesthetic. In rejecting the hallmark of Euro-American modernism—romantic symbolism—as an obfuscation of material life, Brecht together with Hanns Eisler offered the *Lehrstücke* (c. 1929), in which the word is stripped of “bourgeois excrescence” in order to communicate meaning in plain speech. This is not entirely unconnected, though, to a key modernist maneuver: that of **imagism**, in which the writer avoids the superfluous word in the realization that the natural object is the adequate symbol. Where Brecht differs from the imagism of **Pound** and **Eliot** is in his skepticism, rather than nostalgia, for the master texts of Western civilization. In ironic modification of the mythic method, in which heritage yearns to be salvation, Brecht’s modernism anticipates **postmodernism**, or at least one ver-

sion of what is another paradoxical concept. While he might have undermined Western culture in forms of pastiche, Brecht would have been out of sympathy with an obverse, but a related, version of the postmodern: the celebration of superfluity in the consumer culture. Given the slipperiness of the definitions, modernism is probably both relevant and irrelevant to the hard life of the South.

It is instructive to consider Césaire's epic of exile and homecoming, *Return to My Native Land* (1939; tr. 1968). Subjecting his French literary education to the negritude mission of restoring identity and pride to the colonized person, Césaire created his poem out of the shards of late nineteenth-century European modernism. Where Césaire rejects the Euro-American model, however, is in his restoration of the African mask—the mask that Picasso had utilized in order to “distort” conventions of classical mimesis—to an African ontology. This is based not on the imitation of reason, but on the expression of vital forces intimately connecting physical and metaphysical aspects of being: an “undistorted” humanity. We are not in the company here of Lawrence's dark gods. Rather, Césaire seeks beneath the surreal for a contract between artist and citizen. It is at this point of human community—usually represented by a gap of incomprehension in Euro-American modernism—that the modernist may begin to inhabit an *Africanicity*.

The Africanicity provides an analogy for a general adaptation of modernism to the condition of the South, whether in Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, or indeed in African American culture. One may turn in illustration to South Africa, where for over 400 years economic and cultural production have experienced a to-and-fro between Africa and the West. A founding text, Van Riebeeck's *Dahgregister* (1652–61; *Journal*), has the Dutch commander at the Cape increasingly frus-

trated in dealing with a trickster Khoikhoi, or Hottentot, who refuses to respect European laws of boundaries and controls. In consolation Van Riebeeck gazes inland dreaming of riches in some mythical hinterland. To the imagination schooled in the modernist manner of unexpected or abrupt juxtaposition, it is almost as if Van Riebeeck had anticipated the hubris not only of Cecil John Rhodes but also a more contemporary buccaneer. Hotel magnate Sol Kerzner has set his extravaganza *The Lost City*—its kitsch is probably postmodernist rather than modernist—amid the poverty of one of apartheid's old dumping grounds, or “homelands.” The point is that the very unevenness of South African modernization in sharp juxtapositions of systems, whether economic, religious, racial, or linguistic, has ensured that the characteristic virtually absent from the literary culture is the empirical **realism** against which Euro-American modernism launched its initial assault.

Instead, one encounters in South Africa simultaneous forms of traditional-oral and contemporary-oral expression. There are the syncretic Christian-African hymns of the early Xhosa convert Ntsikana (c.1820) alongside Thomas Pringle's attempts to transform Scottish border ballads into searing protests against settler encroachment on African ancestral land (1834). There are Olive Schreiner's late nineteenth-century amalgamations of allegory, dream, parody and social indictment as well as Sol T. Plaatje's mingling, in *Mhudi* (1930), of Shakespearean romance and historical prophecy. In *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948) Alan Paton subjects the archetypal journey of innocence and experience to sociological necessity. The Afrikaans Sestigers (novelists of the Sixties) adapt the *nouveau roman* to their rebellions against the Father figures of Afrikaner State Calvinism. J. M. Coetzee has remained committed to the novel as allegory amid the iron laws of history. In

search of a Black Consciousness voice, Soweto poets of the 1970s made impulsive raids on a miscellany of sources including Fanon, Biko, the **Harlem Renaissance**, the projective verse of the Beat generation, and the oral praises to the great Zulu kings. Finally, Nadine Gordimer lends to the Freudian family romance a dialectical political consciousness. If all of this may be characterized broadly as a modernist recognition, either period or single intention clearly cannot bind modernism.

One must be cautious, however, of turning an admittedly elusive concept into a portmanteau term. A salient feature of Euro-American modernism was its self-consciousness as high art. In the South, in contrast, art enclosures are thinly dispersed across societies of thin literary culture and, despite exceptions, writers and artists have not always responded to self-consciously artistic demands. To take the example of Olive Schreiner whose *The Story of an African Farm* (1883) yokes together apparently disparate forms of representation: stories-within-stories veer between realism and allegory while at key points in the narrative Schreiner deserts novelistic conventions altogether in favor of pamphleteering or lyrical-philosophical digressions. In defending the book—is novel the appropriate classification?—against the view that as realism the form is flawed, some critics have described *African Farm* as a proto-modernist work. The counter-argument, however, might refuse to regard Schreiner's plot of comings and goings, of sudden juxtapositions of different planes of experience, as primarily an aesthetic challenge. The style could, instead, reflect a condition of anxiety: in the colony nothing quite satisfies the metropolitan expectation. When one story, or convention, is dropped for another Schreiner is not so much pushing against the boundaries of realist art as registering her own psychic dislocation in colonial or—given the rude intrusion of early South Af-

rican industrialization—postcolonial time and space. Life in the South strikes one as a mutation of romance, even gothic, in which little credence is granted to the domestic middle-class manner.

One could argue here that in matters of style, expression in the South often appears to derive from Euro-American modernism. Accordingly, one might consider the rejection of realism for the fictive mode in a wide variety of writers including Breytenbach, Fugard, Douglas Livingstone, Marechera, Vieira, and Couto (southern Africa); Soyinka, Okigbo, and Okri (West Africa); several Latin American magical realists; Walcott and Harris (the Caribbean); Indian *émigrés* like Rushdie; and of course Achebe in both the parable-like *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and the more postmodern *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). Yet—as in the case of Césaire and Schreiner—these writers are not so much derivative of, as distinct from, the Euro-American tradition. Generally, literary-cultural responses have been invoked by crises imposed from the outside. Individuals have not necessarily felt free to explore their social, let alone psychological choices; action, space, and time do not usually progress in the confidence of autonomous, even semi-autonomous destiny. The narrative may be curtailed, for example, in the episode that is both logically and temporally unrelated to a coherent chronology. Similarly, space may be refracted into multiple aspects that resist being assembled into a unifying picture. To use Eco's words, a "poetics of action" has been supplanted by a "poetics of cross-sections."

What has been described here would strike the South not as a modernist but a post-colonial dilemma. That is not to ignore certain common features. But, at the same time, one may return to the earlier point about human comprehension at the center of the work. Whereas Eliot almost paradoxically revels in impersonality and

incompletion, Rushdie like Achebe and others searches the rim of the world for things that should not be permitted to fall apart. The modernist in the South—if modernism retains the authority of definition—requires the abundance of imagination in the reconstruction of a homeland.

The comparison suggests that one should avoid reducing modernism to a style without a content, or context. Rather, the form of the experience has to be restored to the form of the work. It is then possible, whether in South Africa, Latin America, in the diasporic expression of the Indian *émigré* or the Caribbean Creole, to connect Appiah's contention that Africa is about suffering before it is about the simulacrum to the great contribution of modernism: that beneath the prose of life the imagination explores our capacity for both cruelty and beauty, sin and redemption. Given the nature of such an exploration modernism in the North and modernism in the South refuse cross-cultural conversation at the risk of a mutual reduction of a common humanity. It is a danger not altogether unfamiliar to Euro-American modernism. Perhaps it is appropriate, therefore, that the warning be issued by the more vulnerable South.

Michael Chapman

Selected Bibliography

- Achebe, Chinua. "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart Of Darkness*." 1975. In his *Hopes And Impediments: Selected Essays 1965–87*. London: Heinemann, 1988. 1–13.
- Ahmad, Aijaz. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. London: Verso, 1992.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *In My Father's House: Africa In The Philosophy Of Culture*. London: Methuen, 1992.
- Arnold, James A. *Modernism And Negritude*. Cambridge, Mass.: Princeton UP, 1981.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice In Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Chapman, Michael. *Southern African Literatures*. London: Longman, 1996.

———. "The Aesthetics of Liberation: Reflections from a Southern Perspective." *Current Writing* 10.1 (1998): 1–16.

Fanon, Franz. *The Wretched Of The Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1965.

Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity And Double Consciousness*. London: Verso, 1993.

Mphahlele, Es'kia. *The African Image*. 1962. London: Faber & Faber, 1974.

Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands*. London: Granta Books, 1991.

Soyinka, Wole. *Myth, Literature And The African World*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1976.

Agee, James (1909–1955)

U.S. journalist, poet, novelist, critic and screenwriter. Pulitzer Prizewinner (1958) for posthumous novel *A Death in the Family* (1957).

Agee is best remembered for *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (published 1941, developed 1936–40), a prose account of eight months visiting poor Alabama families in 1936 with photographer Walker Evans, whose pictures are integral to the project. The "sharecropper book," part of a flowering of Southern literature, recalls **William Faulkner's** novels in its dense rhetorical style—part **interior monologue**, part religious oratory—shiftings of chronology and perspective, tragic mood, and social observation (Evans's images almost uncannily illustrate *As I Lay Dying* [1930], a novel that espouses a similar philosophy of language).

Agee is as much concerned with his subjective reactions as he confronts the contradictions of his cultural roots after years in New York—he worked on the 52nd floor of the Chrysler Building—as with his ostensible topic, the daily oppression of dirt farmers. In 1929 Agee had reacted angrily to the unimaginative theatrical use of film soundtracks (see **Film and Modernism**), proposing instead a fusion of images and sounds that would fulfill the visions of William Blake—"great pictures, poetry, color and music"—and the verbal experimentation of **James**

Joyce (letter to Dwight Macdonald, April 24). Blake, in the transparently luminous figures inhabiting his engravings, as well as in his poetry, and Joyce, in his **epiphanies**—when something's "soul, its whatness leaps to us from the vestment of appearance" (*Stephen Hero*)—were both aware of ambiguities in language and appearance, yet convinced of an underlying mystical reality. Also from Joyce, Agee followed Stephen Dedalus's description of the "simplest epical form": "when the artist prolongs and broods upon himself as the centre of an epical event . . . till the centre of gravity is equidistant from the artist himself and from others" (*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*). Having studied with I. A. Richards at Harvard, Agee understood the impossibility of transparent representation.

Agee makes the struggle for expression a major concern. The book has several false beginnings (in fact, never really reaches a beginning) and combines various styles, techniques and genres. The author's centrality as narrating consciousness, free-associating back and forth across his life (in a manner reminiscent of **Proust**), during both the events described and their later recollection, provides a unifying focus. Agee often implies comparisons between his vision and a camera (torn newspaper columns appear verbatim, as fractured poetry), to encourage awareness of the selection through which any account is filtered.

Fortune initially sponsored the project, but withdrew after Agee encountered problems shaping it into a magazine article. His unsuccessful second application for a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1937 listed nearly fifty ventures he wanted to tackle, including "An Alabama Record" to be an exhaustive "reproduction and analysis of personal experience, including the phases and problems of memory and recall and revisitation and the problems of writing and of communication . . . with con-

stant bearing on two points: to tell everything possible as accurately as possible: and to invent nothing." Agee continued writing, but protracted wrangles over alleged obscenity made publication no longer commercially viable. Onset of war changed the political and economic circumstances that supported proletarian fiction which Agee's subject resembled (although not its form).

The book's comprehensiveness, ambiguity, abstract symphonic structure, epic scale, poetical language, idiosyncratic punctuation, mysticism, and ultimate grounding in naturalistic realism—in a word, its excess—have led some critics to liken it to Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851). Others, especially early reviewers, have been affronted by its egocentricity, obliqueness, and complexity. It went out of print (remaindered, by some accounts) but enjoyed a revival in the 1960s when Agee, seen as both rebel-victim and champion of the dispossessed, became something of a cult figure.

Agee's influential film criticism, informed by the same attitudes toward realism, led to his writing seven screenplays including *The African Queen* (co-screenplay with director John Huston, 1951) and *The Night of the Hunter* (Charles Laughton, 1955). The film writings are collected in two volumes, *Agee on Film* (1958, 1960). Also published are a volume of poems, *Permit Me Voyage* (1934); the *Letters of James Agee to Father Flye* (1962), his former teacher; and another novel, *The Morning Watch* (1951). Controversy over the status of Agee's work continues. It has generated considerable academic attention, including over forty doctoral dissertations.

Nigel Morris

Selected Bibliography

- Barson, Alfred T. *A Way of Seeing*. University of Massachusetts Press, 1972.
- Huse, Nancy Lyman. *John Hersey and James Agee: A Reference Guide*. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co, 1978.

Kramer, Victor A. *James Agee*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975.

———. *Agee and Actuality: Artistic Vision in His Work*. Troy, N.Y.: The Whitston Publishing Company, 1991.

———(ed.). *Agee: Selected Literary Documents*. Troy, N.Y.: The Whitston Publishing Company, 1996.

Larsen, Erling. *James Agee*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers, no.95, 1971.

Aldington, Richard (1892–1961)

English poet, novelist, biographer, translator, essayist and editor.

Born in Hampshire and educated at Dover College, Aldington grew up in a rural area near the sea, a geography he thoroughly enjoyed and sought throughout his life. He attended University College, London, for one year (1910–1911), but was forced to leave because of his father's financial misfortunes. Having resolved to be a poet, he refused to clerk in the city and supported himself briefly as a sports journalist. From 1912 through the 1920s, he earned a modest income from reviewing as well as from his more literary work, but except during the period of his military service, he lived entirely on the revenues of his writing.

In late 1911, Aldington met **Ezra Pound** and, through him, **Hilda Doolittle (H. D.)**, whom he married in 1913. With a common interest in the ancient world, Aldington and H. D. worked together on translations from *The Greek Anthology*. During the summer of 1912, which they spent in Paris, they wrote poems jointly and separately in response to their reading of Greek sources. When they returned to London in the autumn of 1912, Pound was very impressed with the results. In order to launch the careers of his two friends, he sent their work to Harriet Monroe at *Poetry Magazine* in Chicago, hailing their poems as evidence of a new literary movement he now labeled "imagisme."

Through Pound, Aldington became literary editor of *The Egoist*, the small but influential literary journal edited by Dora Marsden and Harriet Shaw Weaver. Through his auspices and those of his friends (Pound, H. D., F. S. Flint, John Cournos, John Gould Fletcher, **Ford Madox Ford**, **Wyndham Lewis**, Amy Lowell, **D. H. Lawrence** and others), Aldington championed the cause of modernism by publishing the work of his avant-garde contemporaries (not only poetry and prose by his friends but also work by such writers as **James Joyce**, Remy de Gourmont and Storm Jameson). Aldington also fostered interest in modernism through reviews of books, musical and dramatic performances, and art exhibitions. His own poetry and essays, whether in the form of reviews or more broadly as reflections on contemporary art and culture, reveal his engagement with modernist ideas and his struggle to define a mode of modernism that, while contemporary, would preserve what he saw as the best elements of the past. A scholarly and independently educated man, Aldington's familiarity with classical and European languages (especially French and Italian) as well as his wide knowledge of European literature and history made him reluctant to follow Pound's interest in **vorticism** and other new movements. Like H. D., Aldington sought a modernism distinct from the immediate and conventional past, while he celebrated not only Greek literature but the literature and art particularly of the middle ages, the early renaissance and eighteenth-century **France**. His first collection of verse, *Images*, appeared in 1915.

Aldington enlisted in the British army in June of 1916, served as a corporal in a pioneer battalion in France, became a lieutenant in the Signal Corps in 1917, and was demobilized as an acting captain in February of 1919. Having shared editorial duties at *The Egoist* with H. D. during his first year in the army, he gave over this post

to T. S. Eliot soon after his return to France as an officer in 1918. Aldington's marriage to H. D. did not survive the stresses of these years, and his next two volumes of poetry, *Images of War* and *Images of Desire*, both published in 1919, attest to the effects of the war on his life and imagination.

Aldington continued to write poetry during the 1920s, but he also turned to translations and took on the position of French Reviewer for *The Times Literary Supplement*, thus offering British readers a particular angle on modern French culture throughout the decade. His translation of Laclos' *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, for example, appeared in 1924, followed by Voltaire's *Candide* in 1927. As well as his own long war poem *A Fool in the Forest* (1924), this very productive period included Aldington's first biographical studies—of Voltaire (1925) and de Gourmont (1928).

In 1929, Aldington published *Death of a Hero*, his famous war novel, the first of a host of important war fictions by such writers as Robert Graves and Frederic Manning. Aldington called his modernist book a "jazz" novel, and its powerful blend of numerous genres (among them social satire, burlesque, memoir, and threnody) heralded a major shift in Aldington's career from poetry to fiction. He followed this best-selling book with two collections of short stories and six subsequent novels published between 1930 and 1939.

During World War II, Aldington, who had left England for the south of France in 1928, moved to the United States, first to Florida and then to California. He published his memoir *Life for Life's Sake* in 1941. In 1946 he returned to France, and his *Complete Poems* appeared in 1948. The 1950s were characterized chiefly by significant biographies: *Portrait of a Genius, But . . .*, the first full-length biography of D. H. Lawrence, appeared in 1950, followed by *Pinorman* (1954), a biography

of Norman Douglas, and a controversial first biography of T. E. Lawrence, *Lawrence of Arabia: A Biographical Inquiry* (1955), in which Aldington revealed his subject's illegitimacy and questioned his status as a war hero. The furor which greeted this book even before its publication effectively ended Aldington's literary career, reducing him to penury as a result of legal fees and loss of reputation.

Unfairly branded as difficult, unkind, and angry, Aldington was a shy, sensitive, honest, and skeptical man who struggled with and was shaped by the intellectual movements and the traumas of his age. His writing in an impressive variety of genres bears re-reading not only for what it reveals about the development of literary modernism but in its own right as an eloquent, perceptive and neglected modernist voice.

Caroline Zilboorg

Selected Bibliography

- Cecil, Hugh. *The Flower of Battle: British Fiction Writers of the First World War*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1995.
- Crawford, Fred D. *Richard Aldington and Lawrence of Arabia: A Cautionary Tale*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1998.
- Doyle, Charles. *Richard Aldington: A Biography*. London: Macmillan, 1989.
- Gates, Norman T., ed. *Richard Aldington: An Autobiography in Letters*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1992.
- Gates, Norman T. *The Poetry of Richard Aldington: A Critical Evaluation and an Anthology of Uncollected Poems*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1974.
- Gregory, Eileen. *H. D. and Hellenism: Classic Lines*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1977.
- Kershaw, Alister, and F.-J. Temple. *Richard Aldington: An Intimate Portrait*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1965.
- Laity, Cassandra. *H. D. and the Victorian Fin de Siècle: Gender, Modernism, Decadence*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.
- MacGreevy, Thomas. *Richard Aldington: An Englishman*. London: Chatto, 1931.
- Zilboorg, Caroline, ed. *Richard Aldington and H. D.: The Early Years in Letters*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1992.

Zilboorg, Caroline, ed. *Richard Aldington and H. D.: The Later Years in Letters*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1995.

Anderson, Sherwood (1876–1941)

Like Theodore Dreiser (1871–1945), Edgar Lee Masters (1869–1950), Carl Sandburg (1878–1967), Vachel Lindsay (1879–1931) and a little later **Ezra Pound** and **T. S. Eliot**, Sherwood Anderson was a child of the American Midwest. But his advent as a writer was particularly unpredictable. Born in the small town of Camden, Ohio, of parents who had little money and many children, he received limited formal education and worked from an early age, yet went on to become, at forty, a published author hailed by critics of the east coast like Waldo Frank as a new voice in American literature. Sherwood Anderson had first come to Chicago in early youth and had developed an interest in writing poetry and prose. Then, after running a small business in Elyria, Ohio, while he wrote, he broke down in 1912, dramatically left the town, his family and his firm, and fashioned his soon-to-be mythical image of the man who had sacrificed everything to his artistic calling.

He returned to Chicago in time to participate in the Chicago Renaissance, which began around 1912 and outlived World War I by a few years. In 1914, the first issue of *The Little Review* featured his call for a new sense of craft and greater artistic freedom entitled “The New Note.” From then on, Sherwood Anderson was encouraged by magazine editors who published his stories, while influential east coast critics like Paul Rosenfeld, Van Wyck Brooks and Henry Mencken praised him. He made two trips to Paris, where he won the respect of Eugene Jolas, the founder of *transition*, and began a lifelong friendship with **Gertrude Stein**, whose passion for the word was illuminating to him and who advised

him and supported his work from then on. Sherwood Anderson also appeared in translation in French literary reviews, then in several books during the twenties. He was acknowledged by French critics, soon to be followed by Cesare Pavese in **Italy**, as a representative of the new American literature.

Although he shared a number of aesthetic reactions and strivings with some modernists, his work was intensely personal and local at the same time. He sought his own idiom experimentally and with reference to principles and ideals we can trace back to the British and American Romantics and forward to “the revolution of the word” (*transition* manifesto, June 1929), drawing also on Midwestern cadences of speech. The most distinctive “stories” of this self-proclaimed “story-teller” are about the difficulties of telling.

Between 1913 and 1941, Anderson published essays, poetry, short stories, a short-story cycle, a few plays, several novels (one autobiographical), and an autobiography of his youth. He left hundreds of letters, several unfinished novels, and unfinished memoirs.

His two volumes of verse bear significant titles: *Mid American Chants* (1918) and *A New Testament* (1927). Closer to **Whitman** and to Biblical **rhythm** and tone than to the work of the imagists, the poems of these collections are interesting to Anderson scholars because they bluntly reveal his obsessions, but they do not represent his breakthrough. His first two novels, *Windy McPherson’s Son* (1916/1922) and *Marching Men* (1917), were bolder in their thematic development than in their writing. Both were rightly read as allegorical visions of America. Indeed, Anderson would always link the individual self with a reflection on America and its changes, for instance from a rural to an industrial society in *Poor White* (1920). His later novels are uneven. The most successful, *Dark Laughter* (1925), was the weakest. In