MODERNISM

by Stephen Kern

INTRODUCTION

Modernism refers to the culture of the Western world from around 1890 to 1930 when there was dramatic change in the basic concepts of psychology and philosophy as well as in basic conventions of literature and art. These developments were shaped by new technologies that revolutionized transportation (automobile and airplane), communication (telephone and cinema), and social organization (urbanization and assembly line production). These technologies also affected family and social life as well as diplomacy and war, generating a revolution in Western culture.

One of the most important aspects of modernism is the way novelists turned against plots and painters turned against narrative art. Nineteenth-century novels had strong plots or narratives that held them together. Their key features were a clear beginning, the regular movement of time from beginning to end, action in a clearly identified public space, and a concluding distribution of just rewards and punishment for good and evil characters. These novels also affirmed the values of a Christian, nationalist, patriarchal, bourgeois society. In contrast, modern novels rejected these literary conventions and social values. They had ambiguous starting points and jumped around in time. The new stream of consciousness technique enabled them to explore not just the external world but the inner workings of consciousness, as shown in the selection from James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The conclusions of modernist novels were typically unresolved and lacked moral certainty.

Nineteenth-century artists produced strong narrative art that illustrated stories from the Bible, literature, mythology, and history, or scenes from everyday life. Some began their careers by actually illustrating novels. In contrast, modern artists rejected the narrative function of art in declaring their independence from literary texts. They insisted that art has its own techniques and ought not to be subservient to story-telling; therefore, their art became increasingly concerned with color, line, and form, as is evident in the methodological statement and the art of Wassily Kandinsky included in this module. Similar to modern literature, which increasingly focused on the process of writing, modern painting was also more about the creative process itself and no longer attempted to hide the canvas, paint, and brush strokes.

Thus, modern novelists and painters rejected narrative conventions that had for centuries structured their respective art forms. Those revolutionary changes offer a key to the historical significance of modernism. For that reason the rejection of literary plots and narrative art will be the focus of this module. The primary, secondary, and visual sources in this module all document those revolutionary changes. The secondary sources also document how modernism was shaped by concrete historical developments such as urbanism, World War I, and technologies of transportation and communication.

The social sciences also questioned conventional narratives for the individual and history. Although this module has no selections from them, they should be mentioned by way of introduction. In psychology Sigmund Freud argued that we cannot know the ultimate truths about our own mind, which is structured originally by child sexual experiences, sometimes traumatic ones, and then shaped over the years by unconscious processes that hide the truth about ourselves. He developed the method of psychoanalytic psychiatry to help his patients make a coherent story out of the chaotic jumble of their lives as part of the treatment of their mental illness. Sociologists and anthropologists showed that concepts such as time and space, which ground all narratives, are not universal but rather socially constructed and therefore variable. They also argued that family life and social institutions along with moral systems and religious beliefs are culturally variable, thereby exposing the cultural biases of Western civilization. These social thinkers also questioned the defining narratives of the Western world, such as the progress of science and technology, the march of justice and liberal democracy, and the triumph of Christian religion and morality.

The rejection of narrative, however, was not merely negative but rather a preliminary clearing away in preparation for positive affirmations of new forms of literature and art. An example of the rejection of earlier values as a precondition for affirming new ones is the work of Friedrich Nietzsche. His announcement that "God is dead" drew attention to the shakiness of the grounding values and narratives of Western culture, beginning with the story of God's sacrifice of his son to save man, who was created in God's own image. Nietzsche argued that modern individuals want to believe this narrative and the morality it supports but find it increasingly difficult to do so. Because of the nihilism (the denial of all moral values) that the rise of science and the decline of religion bring about, they retreat to a religion of socially orchestrated rituals. In place of that religion Nietzsche offered a way to a more meaningful life with his philosophy of the Overmen. Overmen are unique individuals who have gone beyond the reigning values. They accomplish this transcendence in three stages: first they accept the discipline and duties of Christian morality, then they say "no" to its life-denying focus on sin, and then they ultimately learn to embrace life according to more positive values. This philosophy of the way to the Overman offers a way to the search for greater meaning and fullness in life.

Primary Sources

Modernist writers and artists revolutionized thinking about the organizing principles of their respective art forms. These related developments centered on the role of plot in the novel and on the convention of narrative art that was supposed to depict a moment out of a clearly recognized story. Modernists replaced these conventions with new ways of creating unity and meaning in literature and art. Virginia Woolf challenged the necessity of providing plots and urged novelists to focus on the small events of everyday life that are more meaningful than the high drama of conventional novels. James Joyce constructed a flawed but powerful love story as it streams through the mind of one character. Friedrich Nietzsche sketched the way to a more meaningful life with his parable of the three metamorphoses. Wassily Kandinsky appealed for a more spiritual art that depicts neither clearly recognizable material objects nor events from literature or everyday life but rather evokes the spirit directly with colors, lines, and forms.

On Modern Fiction

Virginia Woolf

Virginia Woolf was a major British writer whose novels had simple, almost nonexistent plots. In To the Lighthouse *(1927), the action centers on a family planning a trip that is frustrated by weather but that is finally accomplished after a ten-year interruption. The strength of this modernist classic is Woolf's exploration of the inner life of characters, which also becomes a commentary on love, marriage, and art. This selection from her essay on modern fiction, published in 1925, attacks the realist novels of H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, and John Galsworthy and by contrast outlines the qualities that she believes modern fiction ought to embody.*

Why did the Victorian novelists Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy disappoint Woolf? What does Woolf believe novelists ought to write about if they give up the strong plots of traditional comedies and tragedies? What does she admire in James Joyce?

*Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Galsworthy have excited so many hopes and disappointed them so persistently that our gratitude largely takes the form of thanking them for having shown us what they might have done but have not done. . . . If we tried to formulate our meaning in one word we should say that these three writers are materialists. It is because they are concerned not with the spirit but with the body that they have disappointed us, and left us with the feeling that the sooner English fiction turns its back upon them, as politely as may be, and marches, if only into the desert, the better for its soul. . . .

If we fasten, then, one label on all these books, . . . [that they are] materialists, we mean by it that they write of unimportant things; that they spend immense skill and immense industry making the trivial and the transitory appear the true and the enduring. . . .

. . . [F]or us at this moment the form of fiction most in vogue more often misses than secures the thing we seek. . . . The writer seems constrained, not by his own free will but by some powerful and unscrupulous tyrant who has him in thrall to provide a plot, to provide comedy, tragedy, love interest, and an air of probability embalming the whole so impeccably that if all his figures were to come to life they would find themselves dressed down to the last button of their coats in the fashion of the hour. The tyrant is obeyed; the novel is done to a turn. But sometimes, more and more often as time goes by, we suspect a momentary doubt, a spasm of rebellion, as the pages fill themselves in the customary way. Is life like this? Must novels be like this?

Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being "like this." Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions—trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. . . . [I]f a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style, and perhaps not a single button sewn on as the Bond Street tailors would have it. Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; but a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? . . .

It is, at any rate, in some such fashion as this that we seek to define the quality which distinguishes the work of several young writers, among whom Mr. James Joyce is the most notable, from that of their predecessors. They attempt to come closer to life, and to preserve more sincerely and exactly what interests and moves them, even if to do so they must discard most of the conventions which are com-

*Excerpted from Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction," in *The Common Reader: First Series* (New York, 1953), 151, 152, 153–55.

monly observed by the novelist. Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness. Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small. . . . In contrast with those whom we have called materialists Mr. Joyce is spiritual; he is concerned at all costs to reveal the flickerings of that innermost flame which flashes its messages through the brain, and in order to preserve it he disregards with complete courage whatever seems to him adventitious, whether it be probability, or coherence or any other of these signposts which for generations have served to support the imagination of a reader when called upon to imagine what he can neither touch nor see. The scene in the cemetery [from *Ulysses*], for instance, with its brilliancy, its sordidity, its incoherence, its sudden lightning flashes of significance, does undoubtedly come so close to the quick of the mind that, on a first reading at any rate, it is difficult not to acclaim a masterpiece. If we want life itself here, surely we have it.

Molly's Stream of Consciousness from *Ulysses*

James Joyce

Joyce's Ulysses *(1922), the quintessential novel of literary modernism, subverts numerous conventional narrative strategies. It takes place during one day, 16 June 1904, but the action spreads out in time through characters' thoughts that are explored by using interior monologues such as Molly's in this selection, which reverts back to when she first met her husband Leopold and gave herself to him sexually sixteen years earlier. This passage, the final lines of the novel, is a streaming of her inner thoughts and feelings, which takes place while she lies next to him in bed as he sleeps. It does not introduce her thoughts with phrases such as "she thought," but gives them directly as they stream through her consciousness. It also skips around in time and space with no explanations for the reader. Memories, thoughts, spoken words, and physical sensations are run together in the text, which is not presented in sentences and so lacks capitalized first words and concluding periods as well as quotation marks around speech. The novel also violates conventional notions about romantic love, because it presents the relationship between Molly and Leopold as a deep love even though they have not had sex in ten years and even though Molly has just had sex with another man earlier that day in the same bed in which she and Leopold are lying. Thus Joyce's radical challenge to conventional ideas about love based on fidelity is dramatized in a text that offers an equally radical challenge to literary style. In this way Joyce sought to come closer to the way people experience love with all its flaws. He also attempted to come closer to the way the mind actually works, jumping about in space and time, mixing up actions near and far, running together memories of the past and hopes for the*

future with current physical sensations and emotions while also violating conventional sexual mores and ethical codes.

The conventional love story has lovers meet, fall in love, overcome obstacles, and in the end unite with one another either in marriage (comedy) or in death (tragedy). How does the concluding passage break out of that convention? What evidence can you find in the passage to support Woolf's claim that Joyce's style comes "closer to life" and preserves "more sincerely and exactly what interests and moves" people? How does jumping about in time and space enable Joyce to jump over (transcend) conventional ideas about love?

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*the sun shines for you he said the day we were lying among the rhododendrons on Howth head in the grey tweed suit and his straw hat the day I got him to propose to me yes first I gave him the bit of seedcake out of my mouth and it was leapyear like now yes 16 years ago my God after that long kiss I near lost my breath yes he said I was a flower of the mountain yes so we are flowers all a womans body yes that was one true thing he said in his life and the sun shines for you today yes that was why I liked him because I saw he understood or felt what a woman is and I knew I could always get round him and I gave him all the pleasure I could leading him on till he asked me to say yes and I wouldnt answer first only looked out over the sea and the sky I was thinking of so many things he didnt know of Mulvey and Mr Stanhope and Hester and father and old captain Groves and the sailors playing all birds fly and I say stoop and washing up dishes they called it on the pier and the sentry in front of the governors house with the thing round his white helmet poor devil half roasted and the Spanish girls laughing in their shawls and their tall combs and the auctions in the morning the Greeks and the jews and the Arabs and the devil knows who else from all the ends of Europe and Duke street and the fowl market all clucking outside Larby Sharons and the poor donkeys slipping half asleep and the vague fellows in the cloaks asleep in the shade on the steps and the big wheels of the carts of the bulls and the old castle thousands of years old yes and those handsome Moors all in white and turbans like kings asking you to sit down in their little bit of a shop and Ronda with the old windows of the posadas glancing eyes a lattice hid for her lover to kiss the iron and the wineshops half open at night and the castanets and the night we missed the boat at Algeciras the watchman going about serene with his lamp and O that awful deepdown torrent O and the sea the sea crimson sometimes like fire and the glorious sunsets and the figtrees in the Alameda gardens yes and all the queer little streets and pink and blue and yellow houses and the rosegardens and the jessamine and geraniums and cactuses and Gibraltar as a girl

*Excerpted from James Joyce, *Ulysses* (New York,1961), 782–83.

where I was a Flower of the mountain yes when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used or shall I wear a red yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes.

Zarathustra's Speeches: On the Three Metamorphoses

Friedrich Nietzsche

Nietzsche was an elitist who wanted the best from people and offered scathing criticism of ideas and institutions that cultivated mediocrity. He is famous for his passionate assaults on Christianity, democracy, socialism, nationalism, utilitarianism, egalitarianism, and nihilism, but the main purpose of his writing was not negative. He sought to develop a positive philosophy of life, which was a way to becoming an Overman. He did not endorse social snobbery, national chauvinism, or religious intolerance, at least not one religion in favor of any other. He wanted people to exercise their "will to power," but by that misunderstood phrase he meant a will to cultivate strength and greatness, not a crushing of the weak and certainly not exploitation of other classes or conquest of other countries. He called for a new nobility: not a nobility of birth, but rather a group of individuals who had achieved greatness in some way. When he announced that one must go "beyond good and evil," he did not mean that one should act immorally. He meant rather that one should find a more profound philosophical distinction to evaluate the fullness of human life beyond the good/evil moral distinction of the Christian world, a distinction even broader than the aesthetic distinction of beautiful and ugly that grounds artistic judgments: a distinction between meaningful and meaningless lives. His philosophy of how to lead a more meaningful existence has made him the principal late nineteenth-century source for modern existentialism.

The following selection is from Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra *(1883). Zarathustra was an ancient Persian prophet, but in this work he is a spokesman for Nietzsche. Zarathustra arrives in a town and announces that God is dead, that people are unable to believe, and that they themselves have killed him. The people mock him, and he begins wandering and speaking to whomever will listen, trying to teach his philosophy—the way to becoming an Overman. That way is not a clear path and is not the same for everyone; it is rather a way of thinking critically and creatively about life and learning to live it courageously. The selection outlines that way in a parable of three metamorphoses—first becoming like a camel, then like a lion, and lastly like a child. The first metamorphosis teaches obedience, the second cultivates a spirit of revolt, and the third makes possible a new, more meaningful, and fuller affirmation of life.*

What would it be like to go through these three metamorphoses as an American citizen—that is, first to do one's duty to one's country, then to say "no" to that duty, and finally to reaffirm one's obligation at a higher level? How does the narrative of the three metamorphoses contradict the narrative of Western history as a story of the progress of democracy and equality? If one says "no" to the dragon of "thou shalt" provided by conventional religions and codes of law, then what is the foundation for direction in life, or for art and literature? Can there be anything "beyond good and evil" but nihilism and anarchy?

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*Of the three metamorphoses of the spirit I tell you: how the spirit becomes a camel; and the camel, a lion; and the lion, finally, a child.

There is much that is difficult for the spirit, the strong reverent spirit that would bear much: but the difficult and the most difficult are what its strength demands.

What is difficult? Asks the spirit that would bear much, and kneels down like a camel wanting to be well loaded. What is most difficult, O heroes, asks the spirit that would bear much, that I may take it upon myself and exult in my strength? Is it not humbling oneself to wound one's haughtiness? Letting one's folly shine to mock one's wisdom?

Or is it this: parting from our cause when it triumphs? Climbing high mountains to tempt the tempter?

Or is it this: feeding on the acorns and grass of knowledge and, for the sake of the truth, suffering hunger in one's soul?

Or is it this: being sick and sending home the comforters and making friends with the deaf, who never hear what you want? . . .

Or is it this: loving those who despise us and offering a hand to the ghost that would frighten us?

All these most difficult things the spirit that would bear much takes upon itself: like the camel that, burdened, speeds into the desert, thus the spirit speeds into its desert.

In the loneliest desert, however, the second metamorphosis occurs: here the spirit becomes a lion who would conquer his freedom and be master in his own desert. Here he seeks out his last master: he wants to fight him and his last god; for ultimate victory he wants to fight with the great dragon.

Who is the great dragon whom the spirit will no longer call lord and god? "Thou shalt" is the name of the great dragon. But the spirit of the lion says, "I will." "Thou shalt" lies in his way, sparkling like gold, an animal covered with scales; and on every scale shines a golden "thou shalt."

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*Excerpted from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York, 1978), 25–27.

Values, thousands of years old, shine on these scales; and thus speaks the mightiest of all dragons: "All value of all things shines on me. All value has long been created, and I am all created value. Verily, there shall be no more 'I will.'" Thus speaks the dragon.

My brothers, why is there a need in the spirit for the lion? Why is not the beast of burden, which renounces and is reverent, enough?

To create new values—that even the lion cannot do; but the creation of freedom for oneself for new creation—that is within the power of the lion. The creation of freedom for oneself and a sacred "No" even to duty—for that, my brothers, the lion is needed. . . .

But say, my brothers, what can the child do that even the lion could not do? Why must the preying lion still become a child? The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred "Yes." For the game of creation, my brothers, a sacred "Yes" is needed: the spirit now wills his own will, and he who had been lost to the world now conquers his own world.

Of the three metamorphoses of the spirit I have told you: how the spirit became a camel; and the camel, a lion; and the lion, finally, a child.

Concerning the Spiritual in Art

Wassily Kandinsky

In a "Self-Characterization" of 1919, Wassily Kandinsky claimed that he was "the first painter to base painting upon purely pictorial means of expression and abandon objects in his pictures." He dated his first abstraction to 1911. Art historians have documented others who worked toward abstraction: Impressionists in the 1870s, Symbolists in the 1880s, Post-Impressionists of the 1890s, and Cubists beginning in 1907, but Kandinsky made abstraction the focus of his art and is generally credited with being the first artist to go completely abstract. In the decade leading up to 1911, artists and intellectuals became increasingly doubtful about the reality, solidity, and meaning of the visible world. They could no longer rely on their senses after modern atomic physicists demonstrated that matter was largely empty space and after new technologies such as the x-ray allowed people to see beneath the surface of the human body. But Kandinsky took abstraction further than other artists of his time, and over a few months in 1911, he progressively purged all traces of recognizable objects out of his paintings from the forms depicted in them to their abstract titles such as "Improvisation 30" and "Composition 4."

In the excerpted passage materialism refers to a belief in the reality of material objects and their role in human actions that are driven by strong emotions. Kandinsky sees that belief as the main obstacle to a superior art that conveys the spirit directly and not embedded in material things.

Why does Kandinsky turn away from the age-old artistic functions of illustrating moments in a clearly recognizable story and from depicting recognizable material objects? What does Kandinsky intend to depict in place of stories and objects? How does this artistic development relate to the decline of plot in novels, and what do both movements imply about the major historical narratives of modern Western history: the progress of science and technology, the march of justice and liberal democracy, or the triumph of Christian religion and morality?

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*Our minds, which are even now only just awakening after years of materialism, are infected with the despair of unbelief, of lack of purpose and ideal. The nightmare of materialism, which has turned the life of the universe into an evil, useless game, is not yet past. . . .

. . . After the period of materialist effort, which held the soul in check until it was shaken off as evil, the soul is emerging, purged by trials and sufferings. Shapeless emotions such as fear, joy, grief, etc., which belonged to this time of effort, will no longer greatly attract the artist. He will endeavour to awake subtler emotions, as yet unnamed. Living himself a complicated and comparatively subtle life, his work will give to those observers capable of feeling them lofty emotions beyond the reach of words. . . .

. . . Literature, music and art are the first and most sensitive spheres in which this spiritual revolution makes itself felt. . . . [T]hey turn away from the soulless life of the present towards those substances and ideas which give free scope to the non-material strivings of the soul.

A poet of this kind in the realm of literature is [Maurice] Maeterlinck. He takes us into a world which, rightly or wrongly, we term supernatural. . . .

This atmosphere Maeterlinck creates principally by purely artistic means. His material machinery (gloomy mountains, moonlight, marshes, wind, the cries of owls, etc.) plays really a symbolic role and helps to give the inner note. Maeterlinck's principal technical weapon is his use of words. The word may express an inner harmony. This inner harmony springs partly, perhaps principally, from the object which it names. But if the object is not itself seen, but only its name heard, the *mind* of the hearer receives an abstract impression only, that is to say as of the object dematerialized, and a corresponding vibration is immediately set up in the *heart*. . . .

By another road, and one more purely artistic, the great seeker after a new sense of form approached the same problem. Cézanne made a living thing out of a teacup, or rather in a teacup he realized the existence of something alive. He raised still life to such a point that it ceased to be inanimate.

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*Excerpted from Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, trans. M. T. H. Sadler (New York, 1977), 1–2, 14–15, 17, 19, 24, 25, 26, 28, 50, 51.

He painted these things as he painted human beings, because he was endowed with the gift of divining the inner life in everything. . . .

And so at different points along the road are the different arts, saying what they are best able to say, and in the language which is peculiarly their own. Despite, or perhaps thanks to, the differences between them, there has never been a time when the arts approached each other more nearly than they do today, in this later phase of spiritual development.

In each manifestation is the seed of a striving towards the abstract, the non-material. . . . Consciously or unconsciously artists are studying and proving their material, setting in the balance the spiritual value of those elements, with which it is their several privilege to work.

And the natural result of this striving is that the various arts are drawing together. They are finding in Music the best teacher. With few exceptions music has been for some centuries the art which has devoted itself not to the reproduction of natural phenomena, but rather to the expression of the artist's soul, in musical sound.

A painter, who finds no satisfaction in mere representation, however artistic, in his longing to express his inner life, cannot but envy the ease with which music, the most non-material of the arts today, achieves this end. He naturally seeks to apply the methods of music to his own art. And from this results that modern desire for rhythm in painting, for mathematical, abstract construction, for repeated notes of colour, for setting colour in motion. . . .

. . . [Colours] produce a corresponding spiritual vibration, and it is only as a step towards this spiritual vibration that the elementary physical impression is of importance.

. . . Many colours have been described as rough or sticky, others as smooth and uniform. . . . Some colours appear soft (rose madder), others hard (cobalt green). . . .

The expression "scented colours" is frequently met with. . . . [R]ed light stimulates and excites the heart, while blue light can cause temporary paralysis. . . .

. . . *[C]olour harmony must rest only on a corresponding vibration in the human soul; and this is one of the guiding principles of the inner need* [the impulse felt by the artist for spiritual expression]. . . .

. . . Form alone, even though totally abstract and geometrical, has a power of inner suggestion. A triangle . . . has a spiritual value of its own. . . .

The tendency of a work of art may be very simple, but provided it is not dictated by any external motive and provided it is not working to any material end, the harmony will be pure. The most ordinary action—for example, preparation for lifting a heavy weight—becomes mysterious and dramatic when its actual purpose is not revealed. We stand and gaze fascinated, till of a sudden the explanation bursts suddenly upon us. It is the conviction that nothing mysterious can ever happen in our everyday life that has destroyed the joy of abstract thought. Practical considerations have ousted all else. It is with this fact in view that the new dancing is being evolved —as, that is to say, the only means of giving in terms of time and space the real inner meaning of motion. . . .

. . . Conventional beauty must go by the board and the literary element of "story-telling" or "anecdote" must be abandoned as useless. Both arts must learn from music that every harmony and every discord which springs from the inner spirit is beautiful, but that it is essential that they should spring from the inner spirit and from that alone.

Primary Source Questions

1. What conventions and values are these writers challenging and what new conventions and values are they putting in their place?
2. The rejection of strong plots by novelists and the rejection of story-telling by artists are at the heart of modernism. Why might these two developments in literature and art influence historians to reject traditional approaches to history and to question whether history was a story of progress?
3. Nietzsche urged a radical break with the Judeo-Christian morality (the dragon of "thou shalt") that guided Western civilization. In what way might this break support the kinds of artistic breaks made by modernist novelists and painters? Must such art be immoral?
4. Some argue that any art that preaches a social, moral, or political cause is not art at all, but mere propaganda. What do you think?

Secondary Sources

Scholars debate the beginning and ending dates for the modernist movement. Nietzsche launches his assault on conventional values in the 1880s; literary critics identify a new literary modernism in the 1890s; Freud's psychoanalysis and Einstein's relativity theory emerge between 1895 and 1905; art is revolutionized between 1907, when Pablo Picasso exhibits the cubist manifesto *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, and 1911, when Wassily Kandinsky exhibits his first completely non-representational paintings. The two most important English literary works appear in 1922: James Joyce's *Ulysses* and T. S. Eliot's poem *The Wasteland*. Virginia Woolf's modernist classics *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* appear in the mid-1920s. Some see modernism ending with the Depression and rise of fascism in the early 1930s, while others see it persisting until World War II and ending with Germany's invasion of Poland, the Holocaust, or the dropping of two atomic bombs on Japan.

Scholars also debate the value of modernism's focus on the inner self and on formal artistic concerns at the expense of social and political issues. Another debate concerns the difficulty of modernism. Although modernist literature and art became increasingly inaccessible to the average reader and viewer, they still reflect changing historical reality—particularly new technologies, urbanism, feminism, a relaxation of Victorian sexual attitudes, and World War I. A final major debate concerns the impact of that war. While it is tempting to see it as having a major influence on modernism, most of the revolutionary methodological and formal developments that make it up were in place before 1914—the stream of consciousness novel, psychoanalysis, relativity theory, cubism, futurism, expressionism, atonal music, and cinema. Nevertheless, the war did determine concrete historical developments in the way people experienced and thought about love, marriage, politics, history, morality, nationalism, and war, and it also provided concrete problems that triggered new modernist works among artists and writers.

The following sources concern the new form and content of modernism. The new form is the subversion of narrative. The substantive development is the impact of technologies, urbanism, and World War I. While reading, pay attention to these changes and find ways they may be related. Although some critics emphasize these new forms in modernism, no definition of it can be complete without an account of the new substantive concerns of the many arts, sciences, and systems of thought.

The Novel and the Modern World

David Daiches

David Daiches was a British literary critic and professor of English at Cambridge University. The book from which this excerpt is taken shows how the novels of Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, and Virginia Woolf reflect the modern world. So he focuses on the impact of imperialism, urbanization, industrialization, and World War I and views many of the innovative formal aspects of the modern novels as serving to capture these changing social, economic, and political realities.

What are the defining features of the Victorian novel and how do they reflect Victorian life? What are the defining features of the modernist novel and how do they reflect modern life? How specifically might the traditional view of Western history as a story of the progress of civilization that is accessible to all be undermined by the defining features of the modernist novel?

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*The changes that came over the English novel in the first half of the twentieth century—changes in technique, in point of view, in the whole relation between the author and his subject—represent something different from the changes to be expected in the development of an established art-form toward greater maturity, greater sophistication, or a more complex handling of the medium, or in its decline into decadence. In the most significant novelists of this period there took place, either implicitly or explicitly, a radical redefinition of the nature and function of fiction. The English novel, from its beginnings in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries to its great popular flowering in the nineteenth, had been essentially what might be called a "public instrument," basing its view of what was significant in human affairs on a generally agreed standard. Its plot patterns were constructed out of incidents and situations which were seen to matter in human affairs equally by writer and reader. Changes in social or economic position or in marital situation were obvious and agreed indications of a significant alteration in a character's state, and such changes marked the crises of virtually all eighteenth- and nineteenth-century plots. The author's attitude to his characters was essentially one of observer; anything significant in his characters' behavior was at once indicated by a publicly observable movement toward some shift in status or fortune. . . . The correlation between internal and external, between moral or intellectual development and appropriate observable action or inaction, was taken for granted. And society was

*Excerpted from David Daiches, *The Novel and the Modern World* (Chicago, 1960), 1–2, 4, 5–6, 25–27.

taken for granted. Men lived in a social and economic world which was real, and the most real part of their behavior was that which changed or in some way determined their position in that world. . . .

. . . [T]he norms underlying Victorian plot-patterns remained public, and anything significant that occurred to a character was symbolized by change in fortune or status. Selection was still based on a criterion shared by reader and writer. It was clearly more significant for a character to run off with somebody else's wife than to drink a cup of tea [Marcel Proust] or to suffer some inward shift in sensibility manifested by the merest flicker of an eyelid [Henry James] or perhaps by no outward sign at all. Human relationships were determined by human institutions, and the contact between people which those institutions made possible was real and satisfactory. In the modern novel . . . the novelist may have no assurance that it is the outward action which reveals the significant fact about his character, nor is he convinced that the public gestures provided by society—even by language, the most basic of all social instruments—can ever achieve real communication between individuals. . . .

. . . The modern novelist is born when that publicly shared principle of selection and significance is no longer felt to exist, can no longer be depended on. The reasons for this breakdown of the public background of belief are related to new ideas in ethics [Nietzsche], psychology [Freud], and many other matters as well as to social and economic factors. The relative stability of the Victorian world gave way to something much more confused and uncertain, and the shock to all established ideas provided by the First World War and the revelation of its horrors and futility helped to "carry alive into the heart by passion" (in Wordsworth's phrase) the sense of this breakdown. Of course, most ordinary people went on living their lives in accordance with the traditional morality and conventions of their fathers. It was only the sensitive *avant garde* who responded to this new feeling in the air and who believed, with Virginia Woolf, that they could no longer take it for granted that their impressions held good for others.

. . . Some, like Virginia Woolf, tried to make a personal sense of belief persuasive to the reader while he read by adopting some of the techniques of lyric poetry and building up a pattern of highly charged symbolic events and reveries told in a prose whose suggestive overtones and rhythmic compulsions worked on the experienced reader to reproduce in him the sense of significance out of which the author's vision arose. James Joyce, in his most characteristic work, sought for technical devices which would enable him to present all possible points of view simultaneously, showing the same persons and events as at once heroic and trivial, splendid and silly, important and unimportant. Joseph Conrad multiplied points of view in the telling of a story so that the tentativeness of all patterns of significance was established and the lonely truth at the heart of individual experience remained teasingly mysterious. D. H. Lawrence constructed his plots in such a way as to use social institutions as devices for probing the difficulties which lie in the way of proper human relationships. . . .

The nineteenth-century novel was anchored in a world of public value agreed on by reader and writer, and its plot-pattern was determined by changes in fortune and

status on the part of the principal characters. Such changes combined public and private significance. This does not mean that nineteenth-century novelists equated social esteem with individual moral worth: on the contrary, the commonest theme of the Victorian novel is the disparity between gentility and morality, between the claims of society and the claims of genuine personal integrity: this is the theme of Dickens' *Great Expectations* as it is of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*. But, however much the Victorian novelist may criticize the society of his time, his war with society is never radical enough to sweep away public criteria of what is significant in human action. George Eliot's *Middlemarch* presents a complexly critical picture of Victorian provincial society at work, and this picture both provides the context for and is reinforced by the individual moral and psychological problems with which her characters are involved; but the pattern is woven throughout from public symbols—marriage, gain or loss of money, gain or loss of public reputation. Public reaction to individual behavior might be wrong, but it is not wrongly directed—i.e., it is concerned with the things that it ought to be concerned about even where it takes a position shown by the author to be an improper one. Even Hardy, a novelist devastatingly critical of the assumptions of his age, carries his plots forward by public symbols, and it is worth considering the parts played in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and *Jude the Obscure* by marrying and giving in marriage, gain or loss of fortune, failure or success in social ambition. The modern novelist . . . is born when such public machinery is no longer used in order to achieve the plot-pattern, and the true inwardness of a character's moral and psychological problems can be revealed only by removing him from the distorting mirror of a public sense of significance and exploring the truth about him in an isolation either real or symbolic. Are human relations really possible, or is every individual condemned ultimately to remain in the prison of his own incorrigibly private consciousness? The "great society" is not a real society but only a mechanical ritual of empty gesturing; at most, only the "little society" can produce and reflect value, the communion of friends acting out a ritual that will shore them against the ruins of a world whose slogans have become merely verbal [Hemingway], the discovery through sex of the otherness of the beloved and the realization that in the awareness of true otherness rather than in merging lies true love [Lawrence], even the dissolution of personality through the willed immersion in the flux of time or the deliberate identification of the subjective vision with the whole of reality [Woolf]—characteristic responses of, respectively, Hemingway, Lawrence, and Virginia Woolf.

It is in this sense that Joseph Conrad is the first important modern novelist in English: his finest novels and stories are all concerned, directly or obliquely, with situations to which public codes—*any* public codes—are inapplicable, situations which yield a dark and disturbing insight which cannot be related to any of the beliefs or rules which makes human society possible.

Modernist Fiction

Randall Stevenson

Randall Stevenson is a lecturer in English literature at the University of Edinburgh. The book from which this selection comes explores modernism in the English novel, focusing on its rendering of space, time, and art. It also analyzes the impact of new technologies of transportation and communication on how people experience time and space as well as the impact of World War I on life and thought.

How did each technology change the way life was actually experienced? Specifically how did technology shape the way people experienced time (the pace of life), space (what is near and what is far, or what is open and what is closed), and information (its senders, receivers, and content)? What do you think Virginia Woolf might have meant when she wrote, "on or about December, 1910, human character changed"?

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*If not totally new in kind, modernist innovation *was* spectacularly, inescapably new in extent. Thomas Hardy was by no means the only critic who recognized a contemporary urge not just for change, but to 'change everything'. Herbert Read, for example, remarks in *Art Now* (1933) that

> there have of course been revolutions in the history of art before today. . . . But I do think we can already discern a difference of kind in the contemporary revolution: it is not so much a revolution, which implies a turning-over, even a turning-back, but rather a break-up, a devolution, some would say a dissolution. Its character is catastrophic. . .
>
> The aim of five centuries of European effort is openly abandoned.

As Read suggests, innovations in contemporary fiction were only one aspect of a radical change apparent in the period's artistic sensibility as a whole, and reflected in ways confined neither to the novel genre nor to writing in Britain. Fiction by Marcel Proust or André Gide in French, for example, or by Thomas Mann or Franz Kafka in German, shares many of the characteristics of the new forms appearing in the novel in English. T. S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* (1922) marked an analogous revolution. . . . Ezra Pound's determination to 'make it new' and his memorably simple demand 'I want a new civilisation' are likewise reflected in his own poetry. . . .

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*Excerpted from Randall Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction* (Hemel Hempstead, England, 1992), 5–7, 8–10, 11.

. . . Equally radical changes were introduced to the structural constitution of contemporary music, for example. The conventional structuring of tones in Western composition, the diatonic scale, was replaced in 1908, by Arnold Schoenberg, with a free a-tonality—a kind of creative anarchy of semi-tones—which he organized around 1920 into a new serial arrangement of twelve tones, interrelated independently of traditional systems. . . .

This kind of 'dissolution' is equally clear in contemporary European painting. As in modernist fiction, artists made changes not necessarily in their subject or theme, nor in the nature of what was represented, but in the form and structure of the representation, the style and strategy of the art itself. Pablo Picasso's early Cubist painting *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1906–7) [see Visual Sources section] still—more or less—represents human forms, though the means by which it does so are changed so radically that even this apparent depiction of reality is not wholly convincing or clear. Picasso abandons the unitary perspective of painting, the tradition of seeing things from a single point in space, in favour of an apparent multiplication of points of view which allows him to present opposite sides of a face together in the same picture. Such fundamental changes in the conventions of art greatly astonished the British public when they appeared in the exhibition of Post-Impressionist painting organised by Roger Fry in London, late in 1910. This is usually thought to account for Virginia Woolf's choice, in her essay 'Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown', of December 1910 as an especially revolutionary time for the contemporary sensibility; a moment when, she suggests, 'human character changed'. . . .

. . . Along with so much contemporary art, modernist fiction changed radically in structure and style because the world it envisaged changed radically at the time, as indeed did means of envisaging it. Analogous innovations in so many contemporary art-forms may have arisen not from mutual influence—Joyce did not restructure his work because contemporary painters had done so, nor vice versa—but from common apprehension of the shifting nature of life, and methods of perceiving it, in the early twentieth century. . . .

. . . Many contemporary commentators confirm the extent of new challenges to the period's life and thinking, and indicate how inescapable their effects seemed at the time. As early as 1880 the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche was suggesting of the 'Premises of the Machine Age' that 'The press, the machine, the railway, the telegraph are premises whose thousand-year conclusion no one has yet dared to draw'. Over the next thirty years very many new forms of technology and other related changes further impinged greatly on everyday life. Dedicated to the celebration of new technologies and the excitement of an accelerated pace of life and change, the Italian Futurist F. T. Marinetti was talking by 1913 of

> the complete renewal of human sensibility brought about by the great discoveries of science. Those people who today make use of the telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph, the train, the bicycle, the motorcycle, the automobile, the ocean liner, the dirigible, the aeroplane, the cinema, the great newspaper (synthesis of a day in the world's life) do not realize that the various means of communication, transportation and information have a decisive influence on the psyche.

By the early twentieth century, even before the First World War, the 'thousand-year conclusions' Nietzsche saw in the machine age had been many times multiplied, with decisive effects, whether realised or not, on the contemporary psyche.

Such effects were probably further heightened, and certainly clearly expressed, by philosophy and other forms of systematic thinking at the time. Elsewhere in his Futurist Manifestos, Marinetti writes of 'The earth shrunk by speed' and suggests 'Time and Space died yesterday . . . because we have created eternal, omnipresent speed'. As he indicates, technological change inevitably also became conceptual and philosophic: new speeds, a new pace of life created new conceptions of the fundamental coordinates of experience, space and time. . . .

. . . [P]hilosophers such as Bergson, Nietzsche and William James all suggest a change in something as fundamental as the relation of mind and world—a kind of epistemological shift, from relative confidence towards a sense of increased unreliability and uncertainty in the means by which reality is apprehended in thought. Reflecting this general shift, the work of such thinkers helps confirm the opening decades of the century as a time of change as revolutionary in philosophy—and in the outlook of the age as a whole—as in art.

Modernist Art

Stephen Kern

Stephen Kern is a professor of history at The Ohio State University. The book from which this selection comes is a cultural history of love, documented with literature and art, that interprets a gradual shift from Victorian to Modernist modes of loving. It argues that while Victorian artists approached love as it was implied by love stories, some modernist artists sought to capture the way colors and forms relate in exclusively artistic ways. An early statement of this goal is Van Gogh's remark that he sought "to express the love of two lovers by a wedding of two complementary colors, their mingling and their oppositions, the mysterious vibrations of kindred tones." Thus, while Victorians depicted actual weddings in churches, moderns depicted the wedding of colors and forms on a flat surface. The following selection tracks this history from the English Victorian painter John Millais through a transitional image by the Norwegian expressionist Edvard Munch to the Russian modernist Wassily Kandinsky.

What are the defining features of Victorian art and how do they reflect Victorian ideas about love? What are the defining features of modernist art and how do they reflect modern ideas about love? What happens to the narrative function of art from the Victorians to the moderns?

*[From the Victorian to the modern period a]rtists stopped trying to depict some pivotal moment in a story of particular lovers and instead sought to paint [purely artistic] aspects of human relatedness, which included deficient aspects of love as well as the constitutive function of the space between lovers.

These related changes can be seen most sharply in contrast with the nineteenth-century background, which is palpably manifest in John Millais's painting of the parting of two lovers. His full title is packed with narrative: *A Huguenot, on St. Bartholomew's Day, Refusing to Shield Himself from Danger by Wearing the Roman Catholic Badge* [see Visual Sources section]. The painting was exhibited accompanied by a quotation from an edict warning that when the bell sounds at daybreak all Catholics must have a strip of white linen bound around their arm; the woman is attempting to tie one on the Huguenot's sleeve to save his life, while he, who holds integrity and religious loyalty above life (and love), gently refuses. The dominance of narrative conventions in art is evident in Holman Hunt's objection to a sketch of an earlier version of this painting, which showed an unidentifiable couple saying farewell. Hunt told Millais that "a simple pair of lovers without any powerful story, dramatic or historical, attaching to the meeting was not sufficiently important." Millais complied. In addition to relocating the couple in a precise historical moment, he clarified the significance of the moment by using conventional symbols. The clinging ivy symbolizes the fidelity and longevity of their love; the yellow nasturtiums symbolize the sorrow of departure and unfulfilled love; the bells on the picture's original frame (not shown) symbolize the tolling at daybreak, the imminence of the disruptive, external forces of history; and the wall symbolizes the solidity of their love.

Most [Victorian] artists inspired to paint something "about" love would do so in a narrative context inspired by a significant literary source, usually the Bible, mythology, fiction, or, as in *A Huguenot*, history. They would select some pivotal moment to indicate the past and future of the story, one that a viewer could readily comprehend but which might also be clarified by a narrative title or accompanying quotation, both used by Millais. The setting would correspond to the narrative source and might be painted before the couple was placed in it (Millais painted his ivy-covered wall first). The artist would select beautiful, young models posed to accent a peak moment of longing. . . . The artistic technique would obscure the paint, the picture surface, and the artistic process to make viewers believe that they were actually observing a moment of elevated morality. . . .

A Huguenot exhibits three stereotypical characteristics of love in mid-nineteenth-century art. First, it is emphatically narrative. Its exquisite lovers exchanging intense gazes are posed to emphasize the poignancy of this particular moment on the eve of a massacre [of French Protestants] which actually took place in Paris on August 24,

*Excerpted from Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Love: Victorians to Moderns* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), 51–53, 54–59. Modified by author.

1572, and which promises to end the man's life. Secondly, the danger to love comes from without, as Millais literally explains with his title. It is caused by the confrontation of pure and conflicting virtues—love of another person and love of God—not from any limitations in or conflict between the lovers themselves. The implied moral is that love would reign supreme if only the external obstacles of history, religion, or society could be surmounted. There is no hint of the deficient modes of love emanating from within that deepen the critical moments as interpreted by later painters. Thirdly, there is no pictorial significance attaching to "the between," the space between the [two] lovers. It is, in the language of art criticism, "negative space," incidental to the relationship between the lovers.

The [depiction] of deficient modes [of loving], the decline of narrative, and the affirmation of the positive function of the space between lovers begin to appear in art of the 1890s. . . .

[A] transitional painting [between Victorians and moderns] is Edvard Munch's *Eye in Eye* [see Visual Sources section]. The narrative content of this image is negligible, although . . . [there is] a suggestion of a story line with the house and magnetic force-lines of the woman's hair—both of which symbolize entanglements of home, sex, and reproduction—drawing the man to her. To accentuate the couple's reciprocal gaze Munch has exaggerated the size and fixed openness of their eyes while muting other features of their faces. Deficiency is internal to this pair, isolated from the pressures of history and from observation by others and yet apparently unable to see each other even though staring directly at one another. Far from Millais's couple who, his painting seems to cry out, "could love so wonderfully if only . . . ," Munch suggests that even if all external obstacles were removed, the man and woman would confront one another across vast stretches of lived space which compromise understanding and love.

Munch's rendering of "the between" by a tree must be interpreted in the context of a distinctive feature of modern art: the replacement of narrative themes by creative process, a replacement that signifies a shift from love *in* art to love *as* art. The tree is an updating of the Edenic tree of knowledge, but it is more importantly a symbol of the art that grows out of death through love. . . . The tree that separates the couple in *Eye in Eye* is one more symbol of love and art, which energize each other. Munch expresses the deficiency of both with the severed lowest branch. As an early offshoot, it may represent primal separation, castration, self-denial, or the intrusion of the creative artist into untrammelled nature. Art is a series of first cuts.

Wassily Kandinsky provides the most explicit theorizing about the artistic rendering of [love]. In 1911 he published *On the Spiritual in Art*, which proposed that artists replace representation with a combination of abstract and semi-abstract forms to render as directly as possible the spiritual nature of human existence. Only by moving away from the particularity of material objects could artists get away from a deadly mechanical imitation of the material world. The dynamic, constitutive function of space must also be given expression, and he depicted, among many other spaces, the space between lovers.

. . . In 1934 he painted . . . *Between Two* [see Visual Sources section]. The helmeted male form on the left of *Between Two* faces a female whose "face" is actually a black fetus in an enlarged crescent-shaped uterus. . . . "A composition," he wrote, is an "organization of the vital forces which, in the form of tensions, are shut up within the elements." Such compositions are made of forms created by lines, each of which has a specific meaning. A curved line is a straight line that has come to "maturity" by outward pressure from within; the more complex the curvature the more "self-conscious" these maturing processes of tension and release. . . . Complex curves indicate an "especially temperamental struggle between the two forces," which in *Between Two* takes place between the male and female forms. "Approaching-of-the-boundary" indicates intense interaction. In this painting the protruding curves of the male and female forms closely approach one another's boundaries, indicating the powerful attractive and repulsive forces between them. . . .

With the title of the painting Kandinsky drew attention to what is happening *between* the two forms. On the picture surface he evoked the substantiality of that relatedness with a space that is filled with variously colored dots. . . . Most of the dots are white and empty, suggesting abundant male sperm, while a few have variously colored centers indicating unfertilized eggs. Together these sexual products swim in semen, itself a bubbly fluid that is the medium of sexual reproduction. . . . Kandinsky limited his theory to the spirit evoked by lines, forms, and colors. My interpretation goes beyond that by including some other possible and more specific meanings which span the scenario of the relatedness of sexual loving from desire and attraction to conception and birth.

The contrast between Millais's particular persons and Kandinsky's semi-abstract forms embodies the emergence of modern art. Millais illustrates what one man and one woman did and how they felt about one another under specific historical circumstances. Kandinsky shows how two artistic forms relate on the picture surface in a timeless moment. The difference also appears in the space between the two couples. Millais presents it as a skillfully executed but clichéd patch of ivy . . . peeking through the negative and meaningless air space between the two lovers. Kandinsky gives it a vibrant color filled with dynamic activity of several possible interpretations, which imply that it is equally significant as the forms it separates. His space provides an emphatically non-literary and distinctively artistic vision of ways men and women relate. With line, form, and color and with a minimal narrative suggested by barely identifiable male and female forms, he creates a historically unprecedented artistic rendering of [human relatedness].

Secondary Source Questions

1. What evidence is there that World War I did, or did not, influence the emergence of modernism?
2. Which technologies played the most important role in the emergence of modernism in literature and art?
3. What were the major stylistic changes of modernist literature and art, and what was their new subject matter?
4. How might any of the major stylistic features of modernism be related to its new subject matter? For example, how might Picasso's use of multiple perspective (a stylistic development) relate to the rise of democracy (the major political development of the period), which allowed more people from different classes, areas, and sexes to offer a perspective on governance and play a role in it?
5. Why might novelists resist strong plots, painters resist illustrating important stories, and composers eliminate expressive melodies from their compositions, and what might these defining features of modernism say about how the modern world views what is meaningful and what is beautiful?

Visual Sources

Between 1885 (Post-Impressionism) and 1925 (Surrealism) a revolution occurred in art as historical and literary themes lost their authority. Traditional painters made storytelling a key component of their visual art; paintings that aimed to tell such stories are known as narrative art. Narrative art continued in subtle ways, but slavish obedience to narrative conventions in which "every picture tells a story" became outmoded. Rather than telling a story, modern artists tried to explore the impact of abstract imagery and stressed color, line, and form. The first three images illustrate this development as treated in the Secondary Source selection from Stephen Kern.

To access the visual sources, log on to: http://custom.cengage.com/etep

For Further Investigation

On the historical and biographical circumstances that led up to Picasso's final version of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* see William Rubin, "The Genesis of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*," in *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (New York, 1994), 13–144. For Kandinsky's method of veiling and stripping narrative content see Rose Carol Washton-Long, *Kandinsky: The Development of an Abstract Style* (Oxford, 1980). See also Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, eds., *Modernism: 1890–1930* (New York, 1976); Carl E. Schorske, *Fin de Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York, 1980); Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880–1918* (Cambridge, MA, 1983); Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: the Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (New York, 1989); and Robert Hughes, *The Shock of the New* (New York, 1982). Links to modernist studies on the internet can be found at the web site for the Modernist Studies Association, http://msa.press.jhu.edu/index.htm and at Brown University's web page for modernist studies, http://www.modjourn.brown.edu/.