

The Modernist Era (1914-1939)

"Romanticism and Classicism" (1924)
T.E. Hulme

pg. 2059

"I want to maintain that after a hundred years of romanticism, we are in for a classical revival..."

"If you asked a man of a certain set whether he preferred the classics or the romantics, you could deduce from that what his politics were."

Romanticists	"Classicists" / Modernists

IMAGISME
an interview from *Poetry* magazine, March 1913

pg. 2064

F.S. Flint

1. Direct treatment of the "thing," whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that did not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome.

By these standards they judged all poetry, and found most of it wanting.

The devices whereby they persuaded approaching poetasters to attend their instruction were:

1. They showed him his own thought already splendidly expressed in some classic.
2. They re-wrote, his verses before his eyes, using about ten words to his fifty.

vers libre: free verse (freedom from rigid rhyme and meter)

"A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste"
Ezra Pound

pg. 2065

It is better to present one Image in a lifetime than to produce voluminous works.

-
-
-
-

"MAKE IT NEW."

Ideogrammic Method (Ezra Pound, Ernest Fenollosa)

Imagists prefer adherence to the object. But how, then, do we deal with abstraction?

How should one read an Imagist “cluster”?

- by considering the “superimposed”
- model of the Chinese ideogram
- approach abstract concepts/experiences through concrete objects and images

What is a manifesto? What do you notice about the genre?

Methods of **JUXTAPOSING / SUPERPOSING** multiple images and objects to express an abstract, complex idea or experience. This is how we read poems in the “Imagist Cluster”

The Chinese still use abbreviated pictures AS pictures, that is to say, Chinese ideogram does not try to be the picture of a sound, or to be a written sign recalling a sound, but it is still the picture of a thing; of a thing in a given position or relation, or of a combination of things. It means the thing or the action or situation, or quality germane to the several things that it pictures. . . . when the Chinaman wanted to make a picture of something more complicated, or of a general idea, how did he go about it?

He is to define **red**. How can he do it in a picture that isn't painted in **red** paint?

He puts (or his ancestor put) together the abbreviated pictures of

ROSE

CHERRY

IRON **RUST**

FLAMINGO

That, you see, is very much the kind of thing a biologist does . . . when he gets together a few hundred or thousand slides, and picks out what is necessary for his general statement. Something that fits the case, that applies in all of the cases.

The Chinese “word” or ideogram for **red** is based on something everyone KNOWS. . . .

Fenollosa was telling how and why a language written in this way simply **HAD TO STAY POETIC**; simply couldn't help being and staying poetic in a way that a column of English type might very well not stay poetic.¹⁷

VORTICISM

- Movement centered in London
- members: Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis (writer & painter), Gaudier-Brzeska (sculptor)
- VORTEX = the point of maximum energy

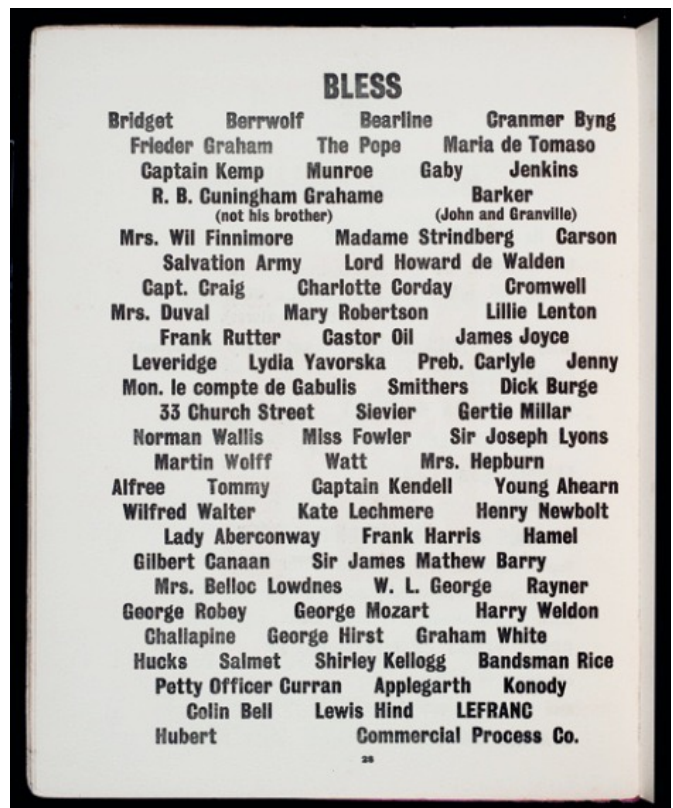
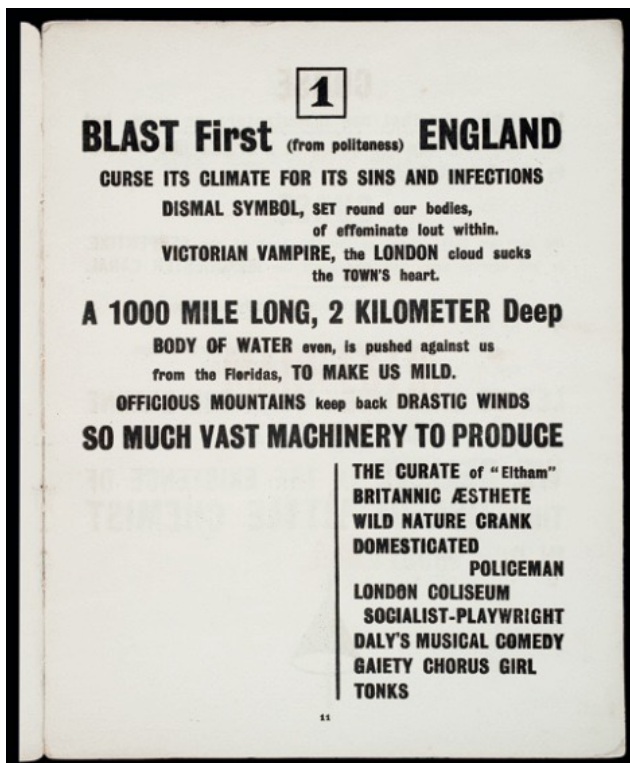
“the blowing away of dead ideas and worn-out notions”

BLAST

a battering ram fire explosion “damn!”

- abandoned static images for violence
- typographical dynamism
- geometric forms, sharp lines and angles, dynamic movement

BLESS	BLAST



FUTURISM

F.T. Marinetti

The Futurist Manifesto, 1909

Museums, cemeteries! Truly identical in their sinister juxtaposition of bodies that do not know each other. Public dormitories where you sleep side by side for ever with beings you hate or do not know. Reciprocal ferocity of the painters and sculptors who murder each other in the same museum with blows of line and color. To make a visit once a year, as one goes to see the graves of our dead once a year, that we could allow! We can even imagine placing flowers once a year at the feet of the Gioconda! But to take our sadness, our fragile courage and our anxiety to the museum every day, that we cannot admit! Do you want to poison yourselves? Do you want to rot?

To admire an old picture is to pour our sensibility into a funeral urn instead of casting it forward with violent spurts of creation and action. Do you want to waste the best part of your strength in a useless admiration of the past, from which you will emerge exhausted, diminished, trampled on?

Painting by Giulio D'Anna



Speed
modernization
the machine
cars, airplanes
the industrialized city
youth
violence

museums
libraries
bastions of the past



Marcel Duchamp, "Fountain" (1917)

WWI POETRY:

World War I: 1914-1918. *The single most important historical influence that shaped the ideals and drives of Modernism.*

- artillery, machine guns
- poison gas
- trench warfare -> "a living hell"
- shell shock / trauma / disillusionment
- Battle of the Somme: 420,000 British soldiers killed in a single battle
- 9 million soldiers and 7 million civilians killed overall

WWI contributed to the development of Imagism, Vorticism & Futurism

- loss of faith in humanity and society
- prevalence of the machine
- failures of capitalism
- > disillusionment
- PTSD (post-traumatic shock disorder) or "shell shock"
- It became difficult for modernists to think of mankind optimistically as a "well" rather than a "bucket," or as an intrinsically good being capable of the infinite (Romantic notions of mankind) when they witnessed all the destruction that mankind wrought upon itself.

Wilfred Owen, "Dolce Et Decorum Est": How sweet and fitting it is (to die for your country).
Siegfried Sassoon, "Glory of Women"
Issac Rosenberg, "Dead Man's Dump"

COLONIAL LITERATURE:

Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden"

Questions:

What are the qualities needed of a successful colonist / colonizer?

What are the costs of imperialization for England and its citizens?

What do the British offer to the colonized?

George Orwell, Shooting an Elephant

What is the experience of colonization? What maintains it?

-arbitrary acts of violence and decision-making

-large generalities like "empire" are upheld by minute, momentary details wi

The Modernist Novel

THE BLOOMSBURY GROUP

Anti-Victorian ideals, interest in personal experience and pleasure over the institution or achievement; ideas of polyamory (free to take multiple lovers). Friends from Cambridge, upper-middle class intellectual coterie.
Woolf and the Hogarth Press

1922: James Joyce, *Ulysses* - (epic) novel
1925: Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* - novel
1929: Virginia Woolf, "A Room of One's Own" - essay
1957: E.M. Forster, "The Other Boat" - short story

Mrs. Dalloway

- “an ordinary mind on an ordinary day”
- interior monologue/stream of consciousness (run-ons)
- the mundane: everyday minds, but full of extraordinary impressions
- double: Septimus (WW1 PTSD veteran)
- use of parentheses
- free indirect discourse
- passage of time
- free association (London vs. Bourton memories)
- commentary on class; social strata

“A Room of One’s Own”

- Judith Shakespeare
- a hypothetical thought experiment
- a successful woman writer (of a particularly bourgeoisie background) needs a room of her own, privacy, and enough funds
- imagined outcomes of a female writer whose literary genius is unrealized or

Woolf on consciousness:

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. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old....Life is not a series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged; life is 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...with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? We are not pleading merely for courage and sincerity; we are suggesting that the proper stuff of fiction is a little other than custom would have us believe it.

("Modern Fiction," Collected Essays, vol. II, pp. 106-7)

“Penelope” from *Ulysses*

- Molly Bloom; 8 sentences
- stream of consciousness
- few breaks or punctuation
- non-Victorian subject matter; a cascading of past memories and associations; a meditation on sexual impotence, unhappiness in marriage, memories of her marriage proposal "Yes I said yes I said yes"
- one day in Dublin
- 18 episodes total in *Ulysses*
- Bloomsday = June 16, 1904

[illegible]

FREE INDIRECT SPEECH / FREE INDIRECT DISCOURSE (FID)

In free indirect speech, the narrator momentarily takes on the personality or psyche of the character (embodies them, as if possessed, or gets into their head).

Direct speech:

"I can't join you for drinks tonight," Morgan Freeman said.

Indirect speech:

Morgan Freeman said he could not join us for drinks tonight.
(Does not use quotation marks)

Free indirect discourse speech:

Mr. Freeman announced that there was absolutely no possibility of his joining us for drinks that evening.

FID allows for fluid shifts between thought and speech.

"Turnstile effect": makes such critiques socially possible.

But FID is also messy! It's impossible to clearly delineate who these thoughts belong to or whose voice they take on.

In free indirect style...narration comes as near to a character's psychic and linguistic reality as it can get without collapsing into it...and the character does as much of the work of narration as she may without acquiring its authority. (D.A. Miller, *Jane Austen, Or, The Secret of Style*, 2003)

• -----

MODERNIST POETRY

T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

W.H. Auden, "Musée des Beaux Arts"

• -----

Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (play) (written 1948, premiered 1953)

- absurdist play; Theater of the Absurd
- tragicomedy (tragedy + comedy)
- breakdown of syntax in Lucky's speech: like an excerpt of a modern novel
- a commentary / homage to Joyce / satire of Joyce?
- futility / anarchy / arbitrariness of human history
- making sense of a broken world (rubble, dead symbols, bare, desert-like setting)

1970s: Philip Larkin, "High Windows," "This Be The Verse"

MODERNISM

The best way to study for passage IDs is to be able to fill out this entire table or talk through it, looking through key passages that we went over in class and commenting on 1) notable, recognizable aspects of form that will help you recognize the lines if you see them 2) themes and significances as they relate to the concepts and literary movements on our syllabus. Jot down famous lines or phrases so they are at your fingertips.

Author	Titles	Genre / Form	Important passages	Significance
T.E. Hulme	"Romanticism and Classicism"	essay, criticism		
F.S. Flint and Ezra Pound	"Imagisme"	published interview / rules		
Ezra Pound	"A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste"	manifesto / list, rules		
F.T. Marinetti	"The Futurist Manifesto"	manifesto / list		
T.E. Hulme	"Autumn"	poem		
H.D. (Hilda Doolittle)	Oread / HD: Sea Rose	poem		
Ezra Pound	"In a Station of the Metro"	poem - loose haiku		
Imagists	<i>BLAST</i>	journal		
T.S. Eliot	"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"	poem (love poem)		
Wilfred Owen	"Dulce Et Decorum Est"	WWI poem		
Siegfried Sassoon	"Glory of Women"	WWI poem		
Isaac Rosenberg	"Dead Man's Dump"	WWI poem		
George Orwell	"Shooting an Elephant"	essay (colonialism)		
Rudyard Kipling	"The White Man's Burden"	poem (colonialist / patriotic poem)		
Virginia Woolf	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>	modernist novel		
James Joyce	<i>Ulysses</i> (last episode: "Penelope")	episode (chapter) from a modernist epic novel		
Samuel Beckett	<i>Waiting for Godot</i>	play		
W.H. Auden	"Musée des Beaux Arts"	poem		
Philip Larkin	"High Windows"; "This Be The Verse"	poem		

Themes and terms:

Romanticism vs. Classicism

well vs. bucket

vers libre

“make it new”

ideogram

Imagisme

Vorticism

Futurism

manifesto

blast

blast

shell shock

Bloomsbury Group

Bloomsday

quaquaquaqua

White Man's Burden

interior monologue / stream of consciousness

free indirect discourse