

was brought into question by postmodern productions such as the Berlin Schaubühne's *Antiquity Projects* (1974/1980), which defied any conventional form of hermeneutics, and cast doubt upon the endeavour of translation in its entirety, both literally and metaphorically. Yet, as Chapter 9 demonstrates, in post-wall Germany, further new readings of Greek tragedy also emphasised its egalitarian and participatory potential – using migrants or disadvantaged former East-German citizens as amateur chorus members, and '[addressing] the concerns of today's democratic societies without letting audiences forget their original context' (p. 346). All of these developments, F.-L. argues, led to the death of tragedy as a lynchpin of German *bildungsbürgerlich* cultural identity. Instead, in the new millennium, global theatre festivals have universalised European responses to Greek tragedy, such that Germans can no longer claim to possess an exclusive monopoly on its legacy.

F.-L. provides the reader with numerous fascinating insights, which can also shed an oblique, yet highly illuminating, light on more general aspects of German social and cultural history – showing how fruitful and revealing it can be to consider these through a philhellenist lens. From this perspective, her narrative of the complex relationship between the *Bildungsbürgertum* and philhellenism perfectly charts, in the theatrical sphere, the way-stations of the development and demise of philhellenism in Germany, which seminal works by S. Marchand and E.S. Sünderhauf have already postulated in the fields of history of archaeology and history of art respectively. Although, at times, the uneven chapter-weightings within the volume do betray its genesis as a collection of disparate articles, leading to the argument of the monograph as a whole occasionally becoming submerged, and while the later chapters do seem a little weaker in terms of embedded contextualisation, focusing more readily on very detailed descriptions of modern performances (especially those which the author herself attended), such minor criticisms should in no way detract from the overall worth of this engaging and insightful work.

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## CLASSICS AND MODERNISM

GOLDWYN (A.J.), NIKOPOULOS (J.) (edd.) *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Classics in International Modernism and the Avant-Garde*. (Brill's Companions to Classical Reception 9.) Pp. xii + 320, ills. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017. Cased, €126, US\$138. ISBN: 978-90-04-27650-5.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X17002220

Modernism's simultaneous preoccupation with the extremely old and the very new has always been the point at which it seems at its most perverse and paradoxical. 'Make it new', as an imperative, surely depends on what 'it' is; one rather likely answer has always been the European Classical tradition. Brill's new Companion, edited skilfully by G. and N., offers a variety of new perspectives on Classical reception studies and the renovations to it that are presented by writing broadly categorised as modernist, or even more broadly avant-garde, in the wake of the 'new' modernist studies. That said, of course, one of the lessons of this book and modernism's use of Classics in general is that there is not much that is trustworthy about modern writers' use of the word, especially in that

hackneyed slogan, and the collection as a whole does an excellent job of pointing out the ways in which modernism has from its inception been 'about' the tension between contemporary production and the weight of Classical inheritance. Angst around the weight of antiquity is not just a central tension for Classical reception studies, should it need pointing out, but for the very meaning of modernism.

Thus, the editors' excellent and thoughtful introduction aims to describe the state of both modernism and Classical reception studies, and to diagnose the tensions that attend to their intermingling, writing that 'classical reception has done to classics what the "new" modernist studies has done to its field. What once counted as the classics and how one should go about assessing them are now being actively redefined' (p. 6). G. and N. call this Classics' 'democratic turn', a state of affairs which impels us to interrogate the assumptions by which we read the Classics; an interrogation which they parse as 'are these texts as independent from our world as we thought?' (p. 6). As various scholars have pointed out, the partiality and assumptions bound up in the very name of the discipline reinforce our sense that the study of Classics is already defined, and always has been, as a dialogue between ancient and modern. So, the editors lucidly point out, if Classics is already to some extent imbued with notions of 'reception', it becomes a bit more like modernism, defined by its own need to become Janus-faced, to look simultaneously backwards and forwards, and as such they identify it with Eliot's realisation that it is 'how one receives the past in his present which determines one's modernity' (p. 8). Thus perhaps modernism, contrary to some of its claims, represents continuity as much as it does rupture; though, of course, the argument we are used to is that what any avant-garde demands is rupture, and the more radical the better. So Classical reception is (already) about modernity, and modernity is (already) about Classical reception: well and good. Nevertheless, the editors are careful not to elide the distinctions between them and are alert to the possible danger that, in celebrating the porous borders of Classics (or indeed modernism), one might lose a sense of which capacities are specific to it, or indeed a sense of the critical history of the distinct disciplines, thereby running the risk of turning them both rather baggy and nebulous.

It is no coincidence then that the best essays in the collection thematise and theorise their own problems of inclusion and exclusion, canonicity, marginalisation and centrality. In 'The Classical Past and "The History of Ourselves": Laura Riding's Trojan Woman', A. Jessop makes some crucial arguments about the relation of Classical reception to feminist critiques of modernism, as well as providing a cogent overview of a little-known female writer. She shows how Riding's rewriting of female characters from Classical literature represents an intricate reworking of modernist aesthetics while formulating its 'critique of the politics of authorship.' Similarly P. Tambakaki's 'A Modernist Poet Alludes to an Ancient Historian: George Seferis and Thucydides' gives us a nuanced and subtle account of Seferis's use of Thucydides by way of the overlapping notions of C.P. Cavafy's 'historical poet' and T.S. Eliot's 'Historical sense'. Another highlight is the rather wonderful 'Jean Cocteau, *Orphée*, and the Shock of the Old', by D. Hammerbeck. The variety is thus mostly a positive, and there is much pleasure to be had, when reading this Companion, in turning up unexpected juxtapositions; it is hard to imagine the reader who would not be confronted with some entirely new and surprising material here. The choice of T. Fisher and J. Lehtinen's essay, 'The Female Colossus in the New World: Innovations on a Classical Motif in José Martí's *Modernismo*', to begin the collection was clearly an attempt to reorder any readerly assumptions about what is and is not central to either modernism or Classical reception studies. Their engaging essay, while acknowledging that *modernismo* does not translate simply (or perhaps at all) to the English language sense of 'modernism', argues that *modernismo* and modernism share an approach

to Classics; they write, in what is occasionally unwieldy prose, that ‘the key nexus among *modernistas* and international modernists on this point is the way in which they actualized elements of antiquity in a manner which quarried those elements’ inherent tensions’ (p. 35), while suggesting that the figure of the colossal woman, through her ‘surprising vulnerabilities and fruitful ambiguities’ (p. 36), animates the poet’s imaginative capacities in specific, though sometimes indeterminate, ways. The next two chapters take high modernism as their subjects, with illuminating chapters on H. D. (Bryan Brinkman and Bartholomew Brinkman’s ‘Educating the “Perfect Imagist”: Greek Literature and Classical Scholarship in the Poetry of H. D.’) and Ezra Pound (G.’s ‘Creating the Modern Rhapsode: the Classics as World Literature in Ezra Pound’s *The Cantos*’). G.’s essay convincingly argues that to isolate Classical intertexts in Pound’s *Cantos* is to misread both; Classical figures are part of the dense web of allusion that comprises ‘Pound’s vision of world literature’ (p. 66).

The range covered by the collection as a whole is admirably broad, with enlightening essays on the Serbian avant-garde, where B. Jović, in ‘From Ithaca to Magna Graecia, Icaria, Hyperborea – some Aspects of the Classical Tradition on the Serbian Avant-Garde’, shows how Serbian writers (including Crnjanski, Manojlović and Petrović) allude to figures from Classical literature and mythology to variously subvert or reinforce the ideological and aesthetic order of Serbian culture. This essay’s instructive emphasis on the culturally and politically specific meaning of the use of the Classical texts is echoed by other contributors, in particular J. Herrero-Senes’s essay ‘Gods, Heroes, and Myths: the Use of Classical Imagery in Spanish Avant-Garde Prose’, which shows incisively how it was through an adoption of the far past that the writers of the Spanish avant-garde of the early twentieth century managed to articulate a rejection of the near past. In his essay “‘Ulysses’ Island”: *Nóstos* as Exile in Salvatore Quasimodo’s Poetry’, E. Livorni argues for the centrality of the idea of *nóstos* to the Italian Hermetic movement in poetry that flourished between the wars, an idea ‘so prevalent’ (p. 143) among the hermeticists that it must be considered structurally as well as thematically. Similarly, K.D. Jackson’s successful essay on the Classical ideal in writings of Fernando Pessoa argues that Pessoa’s oeuvre eventually represents a refusal to see the use of Classical literature as anything other than ‘aesthetic appropriation and imitation’ (p. 139), and yet it is through Classical philosophy that Pessoa finds the foundation for his version of modernity. Occasionally, though, the editorial Catholicism in its selection – its very generosity – makes one wonder what confluence of ancient and modern would not have fit the bill; C.S. Lewis does not spring to mind either as modernist nor, particularly, an *avant-gardist*. (Regardless of this slight sense of the procrustean, S. Baker’s ‘Platonic *Eros* and Soul-Leading in C. S. Lewis’ is enjoyable and learned.) The collection’s emphasis is mostly on literary modernism, though not entirely; it contains accomplished essays on the Classical tradition in philosophy, namely W.H.F. Altman’s ‘The Heideggerian Origins of a Post-Platonist Plato’, which follows on with some fluency from Baker’s contribution, and an informative essay on Camus, ‘Albert Camus’ Hellenic Heart, between Saint Augustine and Hegel’ by M. Sharpe.

The collection as a whole is successful in its desire to represent canonical figures of both Classics and modernism, as well as lesser-known figures in each. N.’s ‘The Wisdom of Myth: Eliot’s “*Ulysses*, Order and Myth”’ self-consciously ends the book where it might have been expected to begin, with the *ur*-text of modernist Classical reception, Eliot’s iconic essay on mythic structures and their role in shaping the chaotic ‘futility’ of modernity. The essay gives a useful overview of Eliot’s use of myth and his conception of a ‘mythic method’, and describes its subsequent role in providing one of the central tensions in modernism, one that he aligns with the contrast between two of Eliot’s important

source-texts: Fraser's *The Golden Bough* and Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*. When the collection suffers from its dispersed attentions, the critical gap between some essays starts to feel rather wide, but these recurring concerns and arguments – about history and myth, about continuity and rupture, and the global and the particular – mean that this becomes a marker of its ambition; its occasional straining to make its parts cohere is perhaps the only honest response to its vast subject. The editors make clear some of the risks they run in their introduction; as a whole, the dangers of turning Classical reception or modernism into 'weightless concepts' via the expansion of their parameters seem well-avoided. Instead, as N. states in his discussion of Eliot, "antiquity" thus comes across as part and parcel of the experience of "contemporaneity" (p. 295).

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## THE CLASSICAL INFLUENCE ON CUMMINGS

ROSENBLITT (J. A.) *E.E. Cummings' Modernism and the Classics. Each Imperishable Stanza*. Pp. xxii + 370, ill. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2016. Cased, £60, US\$100. ISBN: 978-0-19-876715-2. doi:10.1017/S0009840X17001299

Despite several mini-revivals and publishing events over the years – including last year's newly reset edition of *The Complete Poems* (first published in 1991) – E.E. Cummings has still not garnered the same attention from scholars of modernism as have his slightly older peers, such as James Joyce, Ezra Pound or T.S. Eliot. The most frequently cited reason for this neglect is the popularity Cummings enjoyed during much of his career. His poetry continues to sell well, he is frequently anthologised, and perhaps most prohibitively, late in his career Cummings read to crowds that often numbered in the thousands. This popularity is seen to be at odds with the hermetic difficulty of those other high modernist writers (which perhaps says something about what we talk about when we talk about modernism). This is not to say that Cummings was not experimental or formally innovative or even that he was not difficult and obscure in his own way, as a glance at a page of his poetry will evidence. But these typographical oddities are seen more as playful and populist than forbidding or in need of gloss. In many ways, Cummings's poetry has all the trappings of difficulty without actually being difficult, a kind of would-be high modernism for the masses.

R. seeks to redress this persistent neglect and adjust our perception of Cummings by returning to the site of his apprenticeship, those years he spent at Harvard as an undergraduate (1911–1915) where he first studied the classical literature of Greece and Rome. Recognising this link between the classical tradition and Cummings's own growth as a poet is, for R., key to understanding Cummings as a modernist. As R. points out, 'Modernist literature repeatedly drew authority from its own assertion of ownership of the classical tradition' (p. 239).

Previous scholars have noted the importance of Cummings's debt to classical literature, but none has thus far used this debt to argue so strongly for Cummings's modernist *bona fides*. According to R., the uniqueness and, at times, apparent simplicity of Cummings's verse is belied by a deep engagement with these writers, particularly Sappho, Homer, Aristophanes and, especially, Horace – who, according to R., was 'the author with whom he had the deepest relationship' (p. 41). This engagement ranged from the look of the