Modernist centenaries, anniversaries and commemorations

Introduction

By Andrew Frayn

On January 24, 1922, in a series of correspondence about the edits to *The Waste Land*, just over a week before James Joyce's *Ulysses* would be published, Ezra Pound wrote from Paris to T. S. Eliot that "It is after all a grrrreat littttterary period."[1] 2022 has been a year of commemoration in modernist studies, looking back at the key works of high modernism's *annus mirabilis* from their centenaries. As we progress through another twenties coping with and coming out of a global pandemic, troubled by global conflict, labor issues and financial depression, our professional lives in modernist studies will be shaped by anniversaries and commemoration, particularly centenaries. These are likely to become repetitious, overwhelming, merely interesting (to follow Sianne Ngai). What role do commemorative practices play in shaping the way that we read and understand modernist literatures? Is a critical commemoration possible, and what might it look like? This cluster interrogates commemoration, its boundedness by cultural, social, scholarly and political structures, and the possibility for subverting them. Its essays deliberately look away from the men of 1914 and the canonical authors of 1922, looking anew, again and askew at detective fiction, camp, the Harlem renaissance, and late modernist reminiscence.

The possibility and problem of the anniversary is that there is always another one. The facility of round numbers, along with the many potential objects of commemoration, permits an almost perpetual celebration of the same people, works and things, if required: 5, 10, 20, 25, 50, 75, 100, 150, 200 years; births, deaths, meetings, events, publications, time spent in particular locations. Anniversaries, in their various contexts, contain the potential for bringing

works to cultural prominence. They are flexible mnemonic devices, but their flexibility means that they tend towards repetition and familiarity. The first wave of commemoration in modernist studies was evidenced by a series of essay volumes from the 1960s through the 1980s marking a hundred years since the births of, for example, W. B. Yeats, Stephen Crane, E. M. Forster, Seán O'Casey, Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, and D. H. Lawrence.[2] Centenary volumes have proliferated in the last twenty-five years, and their scope has broadened to include individual works such as Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier* and Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*; concepts, such as the "stream of consciousness"; the earliest volume commemorating the centenary of a death appears to be for Matthew Arnold.[3] Beyond our own subfield, there have in the last decade been commemorations of the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, 250 years since the birth of James Hogg, the bicentenary of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and of the deaths of Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats, to name just a few.

While commemoration can be generated locally and/or performed critically, it is most commonly attached to institutions with substantial cultural, social and political capital. In 2022, the UK's national broadcaster the BBC had a series of activities, programmes and publications to commemorate the centenary of its formation on 18 October 1922, including David Hendy's excellent history of the organisation.[4] Coordinated by its government, Ireland has a "decade of centenaries" in process leading up to and beyond the establishment of the Free State on December 6, 1922.[5] An extensive celebration of the Semana de Arte Moderna (Week of Modern Art), held in São Paulo, Brazil, from February 10–17, 1922, is being commemorated by an eighteen-month-long programme of events co-ordinated by the São Paulo state government (that's temporal inflation), and its dominance was critiqued before

those celebrations started.[6] The centenary of Lu Xun's "The True Story of Ah Q," a pivotal moment in modern Chinese literature for its use of the vernacular, has also been marked.[7] All of these organizations, events and works might justifiably be considered pivotal to the cultural histories of their nations. Are centenaries and anniversaries necessarily a tyranny of the familiar? It is unsurprising, at a moment of right-wing dominance of the public sphere, that commemorative work seems to be intensifying again, as it did in the late 1980s, as national myths are made to work ever-harder in the face of material hardships for many.

Canonical modernisms have been prominent in modernist commemorations in general, and this year's celebrations in particular. The setting of several key works on a single day facilitates anniversary activity, notably 16 June: Bloomsday. James Joyce has been the subject of the most consistent modernist programme of commemorative activity over the last forty years, notably at the centenary of his birth in 1982 (two volumes of essays, a continuous 30-hour radio dramatization of *Ulysses* by Irish state broadcaster RTÉ) and the Bloomsday centenary in 2004 (a festival, ReJoyce Dublin 2004 ran for five months).[8] The International James Joyce Foundation's 2016 meeting was on 'Anniversary Joyce', and Wim van Mierlo's introduction to the ensuing special issue of *James Joyce Quarterly* makes clear the manifold commemorative dimensions of Joyce's work.[9] There has been a steady rumble of activity around the centenary of the publication of *Ulysses*, itself marking Joyce's fortieth birthday on 2 February 1922: the centenary has seen a new edition, special issue, monograph, events, and campaign to repatriate Joyce's remains to Ireland.[10] The novel is iconic in literary modernism and the construction of Irish identity, its first publication coming in the same year as the founding of the Irish Free State. Heather Laird suggests that the passage early in the Nestor episode which wonders about "the room of the infinite possibilities [which have been] ousted" offers us a way of thinking alternatively about commemoration.[11] She asks: "what if

we approached the past differently? What if we viewed each moment in time as a moment of possibility, while recognising that some time periods are particularly potent with possibility?"[12] Laird's point, that we must rediscover roads not taken to reconceive both the past and the future, is well taken, and Joyce's image is evocatively phrased. Indeed, we would have a very different discipline if reconsideration and plurality were not central to it. However, for me the example fails as praxis. Can we really construct "An historical framework that decenters familiar notions of power and the political and, consequently, expands the category of the historically relevant," as Laird asks, by reading anew works whose cultural capital is established (*Commemoration*, 18)? Can a critical commemoration take place in the cultural and political center?

National identity figures prominently in commemoration.[13] In recent years, and in looking back to the early twentieth century, Ireland's "Decade of Centenaries" has inevitably precipitated scholarship on memory and commemoration. Before it started, Roisín Higgins looked back to the shaping of the memory of the Easter Rising at its fiftieth anniversary in 1966, arguing that those anniversary narratives were as much about the contemporary modernization program of the Irish government as remembering the past (Laird, *Commemoration*, 22–23).[14] Anthony McIntyre acknowledges the issues of remembering a revolution that has become constitutionalized.[15] Among the current commemorations, Mike Cronin praises the large-scale digitization projects which democratize access to historical records, and notes the shift of digitization agendas from scholarship to public interest.[16] While this is an undoubted good, it means that projects tend to constellate around established figures and moments. As with the hopes for social media inculcated in the Arab Spring, the possibility of the archive's expansion seems also to forestall it.[17] Laird points out the selectiveness of commemoration in Ireland, its role in national development, and that in

general it "reinforces the dominant form taken by mainstream historical narratives" (*Commemoration*, 13). Looking beyond the national to the literary and cultural, in modernist studies in the 2020s we will need to consider how we develop some of the practices outlined in this cluster, not only allowing ourselves the pleasure of celebrating the familiar, but pushing ourselves to the different pleasures of reconsideration, recuperation and discovery.

Memory studies has developed apace over the last three decades. However, while there is a body of scholarship on commemoration, little specifically addresses the meaning of anniversaries and centenaries and their role in the accumulation of cultural narratives and metanarratives.[18] While the terms clearly intersect, here I take commemoration as ongoing, regular, either or both figuratively or literally monumentalized, and anniversaries as primarily occasional, the centenary being an obvious example. Only two articles in *Memory Studies* explicitly address anniversaries, both focusing on responses to moments of national crisis.[19] Sue Robinson argues that, despite the superficially divergent narratives in national and local press, coverage of Hurricane Katrina "sought to restore faith in American redemption, collectively, at a time of national unrest."[20] Robinson argues that it exemplifies "how collective memory is formed according to national ideals and local interests […,] the tension between dominant institutions, how authority is asserted and the process by which all of this plays out in the press" ("'We were all there,'" 236). Donna Chu's work on representations in Hong Kong of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre uses the lenses of collective memory and forgetting, drawing on the foundational interwar work of Maurice Halbwachs, recuperated in the late twentieth century. Both Robinson and Chu focus on instances where official responses were found wanting, on critique; official commemoration is usually seen as unexceptional. If, for Chu, anniversary journalism "reveals deep-seated assumptions about what a society should care about" in an historical context, anniversary literary scholarship

tends to do something similar in terms of literary value.[21] The stakes are very different in marking conflicts and deaths as opposed to cultural events and works, but the underlying structures of power remain.

What might a critical commemoration look like? The term is in circulation, including in discussions of Ireland's "Decade of Centenaries," but it has not yet been substantially theorized in print.[22] Philosopher Dana Francisco Miranda draws on Friedrich Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations* to ask for the construction of a critical history and, ergo, a critical commemoration. In focusing primarily on canonical works we focus on what Miranda terms "cold" monuments, that "elicit no conflicting, emotional reactions precisely because their meanings are widely shared by a populace [….] The neutrality of such a monument lies precisely in many people having a positive evaluation about the figure, event, or memory."[23] We still focus on Joyce, Woolf, Eliot in commemoration, sharing the understanding that, for better or for worse, these figures are important in, and for most central to, our field. Some recent scholarship, including Miranda's, responding to situations such as the #RhodesMustFall campaign in Oxford and legacies of the confederacy in the United States, has offered cautious defences of vandalism and "unauthorized deaccession" as a publicly-engaged response of last resort to official intransigence (Miranda, "Critical Commemorations," 428–29). I am not, of course, aligning high modernists directly with such egregious aspects of history, or even suggesting that we should consider them 'tainted', to use the critical language on which Miranda draws for part of that defense ("Critical Commemorations," 428–29).[24] However, it behoves us to think about how we treat our own processes of monumentalization. If the elegant euphemism "unauthorized deaccession" is not possible as such in terms of thinking about literary objects and cultural value, how might we productively vandalise the public space of modernist studies?

The wide-ranging examples discussed so far highlight the flexibility of anniversaries as mnemonic devices, their ability to solidify existing cultural hierarchies, and the key role of memorialisation in the construction of national and other official identities. Indeed, in first typing this paragraph, I typed "hierarchives," which seems a good term to describe what we are often reinforcing in the process of commemoration: archives, or canons, which are constituted by existing cultural and/or political value, participate actively in their reinscription and consolidation, and offer limited opportunities for their reshaping. Finn Fordham, in discussing the establishment of The (British) National Archives, argues that:

> As a symptom and an engine of modernity, what the archive as a metaphor gathers together includes inscription and architecture, governance and centralization, and a surplus of wealth that an institution considers sufficient for investing in the storage of information. […] They come to be seen as the source of truths, knowledge, power, but may also contain records of elements that have been repressed.[25]

The archive is always-already populated by people and institutions considered worth saving, in the contexts of finite space (even digitally) and interest value (perhaps particularly digitally). Critical histories, even unlikely ones, are consequently often co-opted into national projects. Laird gives the example of the radical republican James Connolly, who "is central to the decade of centenaries, but his celebration of disparaged ways of thinking and being has garnered no attention in the official programme of commemorations. In a radical, critical commemorative process that seeks to reanimate the social imagination by 'remembering' ideas and practices that challenge current orthodoxies, this aspect […] would be key" (Laird, *Commemoration*, 46). It is this desire for a "radical, critical commemorative process" that I want to encourage in modernist studies' own "decade of centenaries." Can we take up the

challenge not only to look in different ways, but at different objects, to recover forgotten texts and recognize lost radicalisms?

The swelling of the digital archive expands possibilities but simultaneously weakens shared points of connection, leading to retrenchment around high modernist examples. Fordham argues that "the fixation on the archive comes from attempts to deal with an increasing accessibility to a field of information which swells before our eyes just as it swells beyond our field of perception" (Fordham, "Modernist Archive," 46). Claire Battershill and her colleagues on the Modernist Archives Publishing Project discuss these issues sensitively, highlighting the hopes for democratisation attenuated by the lack of shared formats, paywalls, a lack of legacy planning for non-commercial digital archives, and squeezed public funding. Their concept of the "critical digital archive" emphasises criticism and reconsideration:

> The adjective 'critical' signals our desire to make MAPP's craftedness obvious to our users, so that they can identify the inevitable blind spots in our work. 'Critical' implies that we have some theoretical backing for our decisions, from choice of software and data model to our collecting principles.[26]

MAPP operates at the intersection of archive and commemoration, linked to the centenary of the founding of the Hogarth Press in 1917. (Woolfian commemoration has also been prominent in 2022.[27]) It also highlights the tensions of critical projects: valuable information is made accessible, and knowledge broadened, but high modernism is still centered. This is not to criticize the project, which makes visible ephemera and marginal figures in this particular story, but to highlight the constraints under which we work in literary studies, broadly conceived, in the humanities and, to some extent, in universities more generally.

Tighter control of funding and its ever-closer ties to centers of power makes radical work increasingly difficult, and the commemorative imperative is a key factor in this.

How, then, can we enter the lower reaches of the hierarchive, and what can the works we find there do for us? One answer is by engaging with those works which are often dismissed as having only "sociological" value, but which reward close reading in just the same way as those works whose literary value we take for granted. They have aesthetic value; their narrative choices impact on their readerships; they take on the issues of the day, and their very contemporaneity should make us take them more seriously. Michael North points out the diversity of cultural production in his seminal *Reading 1922* (1999). In that year one of the dominant publishing successes in the UK was Ernest Raymond's saccharine, sentimental First World War novel *Tell England*, which tells us that the First World War was still largely remembered by association with those "big words" which Ernest Hemingway would later disparage. In the USA, according to the *Publishers' Weekly* bestseller list, resolutely non-canonical novels such as A. S. M. Hutchinson's staid, solemn *If Winter Comes* (1921) and E. M. Hull's racy, racist *The Sheik* (1919) continued to be prominent, sitting among other largely-forgotten bestsellers.[28] Hutchinson's and Hull's novels demonstrate the push and pull of progress, the former's high moral idealism and sympathy for First World War veterans and bereaved counterbalancing its relatively progressive views on single motherhood, and the latter's support for female independence violently co-opted into submissive domesticity. To return to 1922 must be to recognise the terrain of popular culture among, and often against which, the iconic works of that year sit. The dismissal of such works on aesthetic grounds misses, or at best misplaces, their value, and two of the essays in this cluster return to popular postwar novels.

What possibilities, then, do anniversaries and centenaries offer for recuperation? One alternative lies in organizational histories. Around the turn of the twenty-first century, at a moment of dwindling living memories of the organisations' early years, and of existential threat to labor organizations, centenary volumes were published on the Workers' Educational Association (founded 1903) and Dorothy Day (born 1897) and the Catholic Worker Movement.[29] Both organizations emerged from within the labor movement in the first half of the twentieth century in reaction to rapid industrial development and mechanisation, the centenary volumes published against the grain of neoliberal hegemony. These histories of labor and class struggle are often drowned out by official commemorations: Laird points to the overpowering of commemoration of the 1913 Dublin Lock-out, in which James Connolly was a key figure, by the "Decade of Centenaries" as a salutary example (*Commemoration*, 11–13). The hierarchive is not only organized by cultural and political value, but also by capital and labor politics.

There are recuperative acts of commemoration for less familiar and non-canonical authors and cultural figures, too, even if they need to be worked for harder, agitated for more strongly, or funded more creatively. To take one example local to me, in 2019 the Edinburgh Writers' Museum had a six-month exhibit on the Scottish novelist Christine Orr's *The Glorious Thing* (1919), which she published at the age of nineteen. It is a novel in which the present is full of the future, a compelling text in writing the often-forgotten maelstrom which immediately followed the First World War, before narratives of commemoration were solidified.[30] Orr was a successful novelist until after the Second World War, active across prose, poetry, drama, and radio, and her Christine Orr Players participants in 1947 in what would later become recognized as the first Edinburgh Festival Fringe. 1922 was a significant

year for Scottish Literature, too: C.M. Grieve's taking of the name Hugh MacDiarmid for the first time has been commemorated, marking his turn towards use of Scots for serious literary endeavour, and the beginning – at least in MacDiarmid's view – of attempts at a Scottish Literary Renaissance.[31] Alongside familiar names such as Lawrence, Woolf and Joyce, Domonique Davies and Benjamin Bruce's special issue of *The Modernist Review* offers a pleasingly wide-ranging view of the year, including essays on the popular novelist Beverley Nichols, the crossword puzzle, bookshops, and *Good Housekeeping*.[32] On a larger scale, the BBC's flagship radio series reflecting this year on 1922 and modernism broadened the terms, including spiritualism, African modernism, and engaging with less familiar authors.[33] These examples remind us that commemoration can be recuperative, and that looking beyond the old canon can help us understand better the social and political dynamics of the literary-/historical moment, the push and pull of the relationship between the avant-garde and the popular, the conservative and the progressive.

The essays in this cluster ask not only about 1922, but other intersecting commemorations. The first two essays address the literary commemoration of the First World War in 1922. Indeed, the history of the First World War is a lesson in the power of the anniversary: the fiftieth anniversary came at a moment when the shifting social currents of the post-Second World War UK (it was also twenty-five years since that conflict's beginning) led to critiques such as Theatre Workshop's iconic *Oh What a Lovely War* (1963) as well as the ground-breaking BBC documentary series *The Great War* (1964). That documentary took a more measured view of the War, drawing extensively on the testimony of veterans at a moment when, as Dan Todman argues, many were still hale enough to participate actively in memorialization.[34] A 2014 documentary returned to the original footage to mark both the fiftieth anniversary of the programme and the hundredth of the outbreak of the First World

War.[35] The BBC's prime time documentary fronted by Jeremy Paxman was good within its remit, and its title, *Britain's Great War*, nodded to the 1964 series.[36] The First World War and Second World War figured prominently in Margaret Thatcher's attempts to shore up her Conservative government in the late 1980s, and would be equally prominent in public discourse in debates around the referendums on Scottish independence (2014) and Britain's relationship with the EU (2016).[37] Conflicts inevitably invite us to return anew to previous ones: the 1960s works about the First World War are viewed through the lenses of the Second World War and the ongoing Cold War; one of the contributors to this cluster, Jessica Gildersleeve, has written about the impact of 9/11 on understandings of the First World War.[38]

As with 1922–2022, these recent centenaries highlight the possibilities and difficulties of commemoration. There was a wealth of academic and public activity from 2014 to 2018, the mnemonic significance unavoidable. New stories were undoubtedly uncovered within and beyond the academy, with important work on colonial soldiers, otherness and disability.[39] In the USA, a National World War I Memorial was built in Washington, D.C.[40] However, we might also ask what was drowned out by the commemorations of the First World War. There was little attention to the centenary of the UK's Representation of the People Act, for example, whose consequences were far-reaching; a statue was unveiled of Millicent Fawcett, but the commemoration of individuals, individual moments, and events struggled to be heard above the ongoing bombardment of First World War commemorative activities. [41]

To return to the interwar period, and particularly 1922, commemoration was inevitably highly visible. As Alice Kelly argues in *Commemorative Modernisms* (2020), commemoration

shaped the age, and "modernist culture in the heart of the modern period [… was] inherently a war culture."[42] Literary and cultural works can also be commemorations in and of themselves, as the essays by Gildersleeve and Allan Pero in this cluster illustrate, looking away from modernist works of 1922 about the First World War such as Woolf's *Jacob's Room*, Lawrence's *England, My England and Other Stories*, e.e. cummings's *The Enormous Room* and Willa Cather's *One of Ours*, and away from canonical soldier-poets. Gildersleeve looks back to 1922 through the prism of "Golden Age" detective fiction, arguing that Agatha Christie's *The Secret Adversary* and A.A. Milne's *The Red House Mystery* are narratives which keep secret the traumas of the First World War, avoiding graphic or explicit depictions of violence and death even as its plots are primarily connected with murder. The First World War stimulated acute anxieties about both masculinity and the relationship between present and past. Gildersleeve asks: what does it mean to commemorate forgetting? "Forgetting is not always a failure," as Paul Connerton pointed out in the first issue of *Memory Studies*.[43] In the post-war world the possibility of filling those blanks was omnipresent as war illness and deaths continued to be visible in disabled and unemployed veterans, as well as the proliferation of memorials. Forgetting can be meaningful and constitutive, necessary for looking forward beyond traumatic events, as Gildersleeve reminds us.

Remembering can be playful, fun, provocative, even barbed. Pero argues that "With its profoundly historical and histrionic taste for the obscure, the forgotten, the passé, camp was already engaged in rituals of remembrance in Modernism's name." Remembrance in the texts which Pero analyses is very different to Gildersleeve's: not obscuring, but obscure. Both, in their different ways, are productive ways of thinking again. The excesses and eruptions of camp, for Pero, demonstrate the failure of seriousness—difficult to argue against in the aftermath of the First World War. One value of camp is its challenge to authority, a pricking

of the bubble of convention and pomposity, and pompous conventionality. For Susan Sontag, it is unnatural, exaggerated, esoteric, alluring, distancing, innocent, offensive.[44] Camp reminds us that received narratives and formations are always there to be challenged, which we might take into the project of critical commemoration. Pero's reading of camp offers us the possibility of continuing the break from the "men of 1914" notion of modernism, arraigning masculinity, monumentalisation, and their myths.

Zoë Henry situates the beginnings of Langston Hughes's "The Weary Blues" in the winter of 1922, with its author "a mess boy on a boat bound for nowhere." While Hughes and the Harlem Renaissance are recovered to the critical discussion, Henry asks us to go beyond this and take up new ways of reading: "how we might syncopate our conception of Hughes' legacy—hearing him as a co-creator of modernism, *and* a critic of those very forms he engendered—at the centenary of the publication of his earliest poems." As with all of these essays, re-reading, looking and listening again are vital to Henry's work, and criticality is central to this form of commemoration. She asks: "might re-reading white canonical authors according to the many and contradictory frameworks of Black artistry, themselves encapsulated by the call and jerk back of the Blues, have the potential to reconcile what only seemed to be fundamental differences?" While there has undoubtedly been progress in terms of diversifying modernist studies in recent volumes which focus on global modernisms and bring into the picture less familiar authors and sites of modernism, there is still work to do to truly decolonize the field, and to address a sense of subfield imperialism.[45]

In the final article of this cluster, Jade French addresses lateness in her discussion of Mina Loy's commemorations of James Joyce's *Ulysses*.This is the only essay of the cluster to

address one of the canonical works of 1922 by the men of 1914, and it deliberately does so obliquely. When asked for her recollections of being among the modernists, in a 1965 interview in her then-home Aspen with Black Mountain College associate Paul Blackburn, Loy refuses to go along with an account of the period that centres canonical male authors. French explores the tensions between Loy's commemoration as a witness to that historical moment and her resistance of linearity and familiarity. In her focus on Loy, French points to the possibilities for recuperative work: a voice written back into the critical conversation, noted for a manifesto not published until almost seventy years after its composition, struggling at the time of this interview to assert a place for herself as an artist. Loy is a modernist who is, in a sense, both lost and recovered, yet also central in the poetics and politics of 1922. Loy states in the "Feminist Manifesto" that "Woman must destroy in herself the desire to be loved," and "Woman must retain her deceptive fragility of appearance, combined with indomitable will, irreducible courage, abundant health and sound nerves."[46] Here, Loy demonstrates these values in a principled performance of herself which refuses the centrality of masculine modernisms past and asserts her own position. "In the interview," French argues, "Loy is saying 'this is me' by telling them about 'irrelevant' information from her *personal* past but the interviewers impose a narrative, saying 'no, *this* is you' by focusing on her *literary* past." Loy's disavowal of 1922 memories offers us a methodology for doing and undoing – or perhaps doing *in* undoing? – commemoration, and reshaping conversations around literary value. If, in the poem which Loy resists reading in this interview, her "Joyce's *Ulysses*," she sees him as "the / rejector—recreator,"[47] here she is rejecting and recreating Joyce, *Ulysses*, and in the end working towards a reshaping on the modernist canon in which discussion is not always directed towards those ubiquitous, canonical works.

Modernist commemoration today

What does commemoration mean in modernist studies today? There is no escaping the connection between commemoration, anniversaries, and the institutional structures in which we operate. Whether at the level of the individual, the scholarly organization, the publisher, the higher educational institution, or the governmental and quasi-governmental, money and resources are finite, and the visibility of anniversaries is a valuable currency – or, perhaps, valuable in facilitating access to currency. We can see the value of commemoration in its everyday artefacts: the souvenir plate or tea towel, the gold watch for long service or retirement, the chunk of the Berlin Wall, even the religious relic. Success in the profession as it stands is bound up with this kind of visibility, production, and capital.

The danger becomes that commemoration is instrumentalised, constantly drawn on for the power that derives from its ability to burnish reputations – personal, institutional, national. It's difficult to avoid complicity in this: I say this in full consciousness that I am a First World War scholar who was very busy from 2014–2018, has been Chair of the British Association for Modernist Studies in 2022, and has published this cluster (even if my aim is critical). The requirement to make scholarship visible (a part, for example, of the UK's so-called Research Excellence Framework assessment system) is not, of course, a bad thing in itself; however, the instrumentalization of the process results almost in a commemorative imperative, a need to address topics with which the public can easily connect. There is a danger that scholarship is driven by commemoration, and it is a concern for integrity and continuity that we do not end up with a series of scholarship bubbles that burst as soon as a fortuitous moment has passed. While this has not been bureaucratised in the same national way in the US, these pressures undoubtedly exist in other ways – as in the UK, in the pressures of the "'job' 'market'", and in working towards tenure and promotion.

To be clear, I am not criticizing commemorative, and particularly centenary, activity *per se*. However, considered reflection on what we do when we commemorate is vital, as is encouraging a broad view of our interventions into the field and suggesting a broadening imperative. Further work is needed on the relationship between commemoration and broader processes of disciplinarity and canonicity. That anniversaries are a useful tool for marketing and promotion is a double-edged sword, offering opportunities for promoting, self-promoting, recuperation, revision, and retrenchment. There is undoubtedly an intellectual component to the value of anniversaries, a conflicted and contested one which exemplifies and perhaps accentuates the broader trends in the field (and indeed in subfields more generally). The concern with the prevalence of commemoration is always, for me, that it reinscribes the importance of that which is already marked as central, canonical; even challenges to the authority of central figures invariably work to buttress their continuing significance by using them as touchstones. While retrospectively-constructed cultural moments and large-scale world events contain within them the possibility for alternative and subaltern stories to be brought into the conversation a concern is that the instrumental constellation of scholarship around the anniversaries of figures, moments and events means that other less marketable but perhaps otherwise valuable scholarship simply doesn't get done. If 2022 has perhaps primarily been a year of the familiar, a year of the Semana de Arte Moderna, Lu, Eliot, Woolf, and Joyce, perhaps in the inevitable run of modernist centenaries that will continue to take place during the 2020s, we can begin to look in more playful ways at those authors, and to look beyond them.

Notes

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[1] Ezra Pound, Letter to T. S. Eliot from January 24, 1922, in *The Letters of T.S. Eliot. Volume 1: 1898–1922*, ed. Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton, rev. ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), 628.

[2] D. E. S. Maxwell and S. B. Bushrui, ed., *W.B. Yeats, 1865–1965: Centenary essays on the art of W.B. Yeats* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press, 1965); Robin Skelton and Ann Saddlemyer, ed., *The World of W. B. Yeats: Essays in perspective* (Victoria, BC: University of Victoria, 1965); Joseph Katz, ed., *Stephen Crane in Transition: Centenary Essays* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1972); G. K. Das and John Beer, ed., *E. M. Forster: A Human Exploration: Centenary Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1979); David Krause and Robert G. Lowery, *Sean O'Casey: Centenary Essays* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1981); Eric Warner, ed., *Virginia Woolf: A Centenary Perspective* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1984); Shyamal Bagchee, ed., *T.S. Eliot: A Voice Descanting: Centenary Essays* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990); Mara Kalnins, ed., *D.H. Lawrence: Centenary Essays* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1986). The earliest centenary volume I can identify in the British Library catalogue is a 1945 volume commemorating the departure of John Henry Newman from the Church of England to begin the Oxford Movement, connecting us back to the sense of canonical from which literary studies takes its meaning. *John Henry Newman: Centenary Essays*, intro. Henry Tristram (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1945).

[3] William H. Swatos, Jr. and Lutz Kaelber, eds, *The Protestant Ethic Turns 100: Essays on the Centenary of the Weber Thesis* (London: Paradigm, 2005); Max Saunders and Sara Haslam, eds., *Ford Madox Ford's The Good Soldier: Centenary Essays* (Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2015); and Arielle Zibrak, ed., *Edith Wharton's The Age of Innocence: New Centenary Essays* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020). See also Gerri Kimber and Janet Wilson, eds., *Celebrating Katherine Mansfield: A Centenary Volume of Essays* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), which marks the centenary of Mansfield's first publication, but does not focus on that volume; Rebecca Bowler and Claire Drewery, eds., "One Hundred Years of the Stream of Consciousness," special issue, *Literature Compass* 17, no. 6 (2020); and Clinton Machann and Forrest D. Burt, eds., *Matthew Arnold in His Time and Ours: Centenary Essays* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1988).

[4] David Hendy, *The BBC: A People's History* (London: Profile, 2022). See John Mullen and David Hendy, "Interview with David Hendy: Writing an Official History of the BBC in 2020," *Revue Française de Civilisation Britannique* / *French Journal of British Studies*, doi.org/10.4000/rfcb.7628.

[5] "Decade of Centenaries," *Decade of Centenaries 2012–2022*, accessed 2 December 2022, decadeofcentenaries.com.

[6] "Governo de São Paulo dá a largada para as comemorações do centenário da Semana de Arte Moderna com a apresentação de um grande projeto," cultura.sp.gov.br/governo-de-sao-paulo-da-a-largada-para-as-comemoracoes-do-centenario-da-semana-de-arte-moderna-com-a-apresentacao-de-um-grande-projeto/; "100 años da Semana de Arte Moderna de 22: Programação do Governo do Estado de São Paulo e outras iniciativas," cultura.sp.gov.br/semana22/programacao/; Fred Coelho, "A Semana de Cem Anos" ["The Hundred Years Week"] *Ars* 19, no. 41 (2021), 26–52; see also Frederico Coelho, *A Semana sem fin: celebrações e memória da Semana de Arte Moderna de 1922* [*The Endless Week:*

celebrations and the memory of the Modern Art Week of 1922] (Rio de Janeiro: Casa da Palavra, 2012).

[7] 张梦阳 [Zhang Mengyang], "由《阿Q正传》谈鲁迅作品的五种读法" ["On the Five Ways of Reading Lu Xun's Works from 'The True Story of Ah Q'"] news.gmw.cn/2021-07/31/content_35042625.htm.

[8] Suheil Badi Bushrui and Bernard Benstock, eds., *James Joyce, an International Perspective: Centenary Essays in Honour of the Late Sir Desmond Cochrane* (Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1982); Richard F. Peterson, Alan M. Cohn, and Edmund L. Epstein, eds., *Work in Progress: Joyce Centenary Essays* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983); see also Emily Tall, "The Joyce Centenary in the Soviet Union: Making Way for *Ulysses*," *James Joyce Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (1984): 107–22; "*Ulysses*—listen to the epic RTÉ dramatisation," *RTÉ*, June 11, 2020, rte.ie/culture/2020/0610/1146705-listen-ulysses-james-joyce-podcast/; "How should we celebrate the centenary?," *Irish Times*, January 25, 2003, irishtimes.com/news/how-should-we-celebrate-the-centenary-1.346631; "ReJoyce Dublin 2004: what's on," *Irish Times*, February 3, 2004, irishtimes.com/news/rejoyce-dublin-2004-what-s-on-1.1132176.

[9] Wim Van Mierlo, "*Anniversary Joyce*: Introduction," *James Joyce Quarterly* 56, no. 1–2 (2019): 27–43.

[10] Sian Cain, "Bid to repatriate James Joyce's remains ahead of *Ulysses* centenary," *Guardian*, October 15, 2019, theguardian.com/books/2019/oct/15/bid-to-repatriate-james-joyce-remains-ulysses-centenary; "Global Ulysses," globalulysses.com; "Launch of U22: The Centenary *Ulysses* Podcast," *Arts & Ideas*, ideas.berkeley.edu/archive/u22podcastlaunch; "The Edition," *U22 The Centenary Ulysses Podcast*, u22pod.com/the-edition; *James Joyce's* Ulysses *at 100*, ed. Samuel R. Delany, *Textual Practice* 36, no. 2 (2022); John McCourt, *Consuming Joyce: A Hundred Years of* Ulysses *in Ireland* (London: Bloomsbury, 2022).

[11] James Joyce, *Ulysses*, annotated student edition, ed. Declan Kiberd (1922; rpt., London: Penguin, 2000), 30.

[12] Heather Laird, *Commemoration* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2018), 28.

[13] An early key work on this is *Commemoration: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[14] Roisín Higgins, *Transforming 1916: Meaning, Memory and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Easter Rising* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2012).

[15] Anthony McIntyre, "Marginalizing Memory: Political Commemorations of the 1916 Easter Rising," *Studies in Arts and Humanities* 2, no. 1 (2016): 5–16. Benjamin Ziemann addresses a similar structural issue in *Contested Commemorations: Republican War Veterans and Weimar Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[16] Mike Cronin, "Irish History Online and in Real Time: *Century Ireland* and the Decade of Centenaries," *Éire-Ireland* 52, no. 1–2 (2017): 273–74.

[17] Axel Bruns, Tim Highfield, and Jean Burgess, "The Arab Spring and Social Media Audiences: English and Arabic Twitter Users and Their Networks," *American Behavioral Scientist* 57, no. 7 (2013): 871–98.

[18] For example, Roediger, Marsh and Lee counted 256 different kinds of memory in 2002; the Memory Studies Association was founded in 2016; and the three journals *Memory*, *Memory Studies* and *History and Memory* filled 18 issues in 2020. Henry L. Roediger, III, Elizabeth J. Marsh, and Stephanie C. Lee, "Varieties of Memory," in *Stevens' Handbook of Experimental Psychology* (New York: Wiley, 2002), 2:1–41; see also Endel Tulving, "How many memory systems are there?," *American Psychologist* 40, no. 4 (1985): 385–98, doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.40.4.385; Endel Tulving, "Are There 256 Different Kinds of Memory?," in *The Foundations of Remembering: Essays in Honor of Henry L. Roediger, III*, ed. James S. Nairne (London: Psychology Press, 2007), 39–52.

[19] *Memory Studies* is, broadly speaking, the social sciences journal in this area; *History and Memory* covers the humanities, while *Memory* tends towards scientific approaches. Neither of the latter journals carry articles which explicitly identify anniversaries as their subject, although of course there is a substantial amount of work on commemoration.

[20] Sue Robinson, "'We were all there': Remembering America in the anniversary coverage of Hurricane Katrina," *Memory Studies* 2, no. 2 (2009): 235.

[21] Donna Chu, "Remembering 1989: A case study of anniversary journalism in Hong Kong," *Memory Studies* 14, no. 4 (2021): 821.

[22] See, for example, "Critical Commemoration," youtube.com/channel/UC-3mitGzuGfkGMXgYrzlzdQ; Kris Brown, "Political commemoration and peacebuilding in ethno-national settings: the risk and utility of partisan memory," *Peacebuilding* 7, no. 1 (2019): 51–70.

[23] Dana Francisco Miranda, "Critical Commemorations," *Journal of Global Ethics* 16, no. 3 (2020): 424–25; Miranda takes the term from Federico Bellentani and Mario Panico, "The Meanings of Monuments and Memorials: Toward a Semiotic Approach Punctum," *International Journal of Semiotics* 2, no. 1 (2016): 28–46.

[24] Miranda, "Critical Commemorations," 428-9. See also, for example, Ten-Herng Lai, "Political Vandalism as Counter-Speech: A Defense of Defacing and Destroying Tainted Monuments," *European Journal of Philosophy* 28, no. 3 (2020): 1–15.

[25] Finn Fordham, "The Modernist Archive," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms*, ed. Peter Brooker et. Al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 53–54.

[26] Claire Battershill et. al., *Scholarly Adventures in Digital Humanities: Making the Modernist Archives Publishing Project* (New York: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 73.

[27] See, for example, the centenary edition of Virginia Woolf, *Jacob's Room*, ed. Urmila Seshagiri (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), and "Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*: Centenary Reflections," vwoolf100.wordpress.com.

[28] A small body of critical work on Hull has started to appear. Particularly notable in this context are Laura Frost, "The Romance of Cliché: E. M. Hull, D. H. Lawrence, and Interwar Erotic Fiction," in *Bad Modernisms*, ed. Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 94–118; Ellen Turner, "*The Sheik* and modernism," in "*The Sheik*," special issue, *Journal of Popular Romance Studies* 9 (2020), jprstudies.org/2020/12/the-sheik-and-modernism/. Turner has written several articles on *The Sheik*, and this one forms part of a special issue on the novel.

[29] Stephen Roberts, ed., *A Ministry of Enthusiasm: Centenary Essays on the Workers' Educational Association* (London: Pluto Press, 2003); William J. Thorn, Phillip M. Runkel, Susan Mountin, eds., *Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement: Centenary Essays* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2001).

[30] "Talks and Tales: The Childhood Writing of Christine Orr," *Museums and Galleries Edinburgh*, edinburghmuseums.org.uk/whats-on/talks-and-tales-childhood-writing-christine-orr.

[31] The Scottish Revival Network hosted a one-day conference, "MacDiarmid at 100," on August 31, 2022. "Events—Scottish Revival Network," *The Scottish Revival Network*, revival.scot/events/.

[32] Domonique Davies and Benjamin Bruce, "Modernist Review #43: Inside and Outside Modernism: An Anatomy of 1922 and its Cultures," *The Modernist Review*, November 4, 2022, modernistreviewcouk.wordpress.com/2022/11/04/modernist-review-43-inside-and-outside-modernism-an-anatomy-of-1922-and-its-cultures/.

[33] "Radio 4 and Radio 3 explore the legacy of Modernism," *BBC*, January 16, 2022, bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/2022/the-legacy-of-modernism.

[34] Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2005), plate 10, facing 113.

[35] *I Was There:* The Great War *Interviews*, BBC Two, March 14 2014, bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03y76xl.

[36] *Britain's Great War*, BBC One, January 27–February 17, 2014; "BBC—World War One at Home," bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01nhwgx. It was accompanied by an impressive website of stories from regions around the UK and a newly-commissioned historical radio drama. *Home Front*, BBC Radio 4, August 4, 2014 to November 11, 2018; "BBC Radio 4—Home Front," bbc.co.uk/programmes/b047qhc2.

[37] See, for example, Carey Mickalites, "'Enemies Within': Pat Barker's Great War and Margaret Thatcher's New Right," *College Literature* 48, no. 1 (2021): 1–28.

[38] Jessica Gildersleeve, "Remembering the First World War after 9/11: Pat Barker's *Life Class* and *Toby's Room*," in *Memory and the wars on terror: Australian and British perspectives*, ed. Jessica Gildersleeve and Richard Gehrmann (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 111–23.

[39] See, for example, Santanu Das, *1914–1918: Indian Troops in Europe* (Ahmedabad: Mapin, 2015); Das, *India, Empire, and First World War Culture: Writings, Images, and Songs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Claire Buck, *Conceiving Strangeness in British First World War Writing* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Claire Eldridge, "'The Forgotten of This Tribute': Settler Soldiers, Colonial Categories and the Centenary of the First World War," *History & Memory* 31, no. 2 (2019): 3–44. *First World War Studies* has seen special issues on "Colonial Veterans of WWI," 10, no. 1 (2019), "Encountering the

Other in Wartime: The Great War as an Intercultural Moment," 9, no. 2 (2018), "Commemorating the Disabled Soldier," 6, no. 1 (2015).

[40] "World War I Centennial," worldwar1centennial.org.

[41] See, for example, "Millicent Fawcett: Statue of suffragist unveiled," *BBC*, April 24, 2018, bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-43868925; "Historic statue of suffragist leader Millicent Fawcett unveiled in Parliament Square," *Gov.UK*, April 24, 2018, gov.uk/government/news/historic-statue-of-suffragist-leader-millicent-fawcett-unveiled-in-parliament-square.

[42] Alice Kelly, *Commemorative Modernisms: Women Writers, Death and the First World War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 2.

[43] Paul Connerton, "Seven types of forgetting," *Memory Studies* 1, no. 1 (2008): 59. Connerton expands his arguments in *How Modernity Forgets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[44] Susan Sontag, "Notes on Camp", in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Noonday Press/Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1966), 275–76.

[45] See, for example, *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, ed. Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); *The Modernist World*, ed. Stephen Ross and Allana Lindgren (London: Routledge, 2015); and Susan Stanford Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity Across Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015). A current project which does this well is *South African Modernism 1880-2020*, southafricanmodernism.com. Douglas Mao acknowledges questions about the expansion of modernist studies in his introduction to *The New Modernist Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 8.

[46] Mina Loy, "Feminist Manifesto," in *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, ed. Vassiliki Kolocotroni, Jane Goldman, and Olga Taxidou (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 258–61.

[47] Mina Loy, "Joyce's *Ulysses,*" in *The Lost Lunar Baedeker: Poems of Mina Loy*, ed. Roger L. Conover (Manchester: Carcanet, 1997), 90.