ILKA BRASCH
RUTH MAYER (Eds.)

Modernities and Modernization in North America

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ILKA BRASCH & RUTH MAYER

Introduction: Modernities and Modernization in North America

Modernity is a quality that has been associated persistently with the United States, and that became a staple piece of US self-conceptualization. This long-standing ascription and (self-)stylization has been made possible by the fact that modernity as a concept is highly negotiable; what is considered modern needs to be mapped out against the horizon of what is ancient – while the ancient is assessed on the grounds of what is considered modern.

Debates around modernity and modernization stretch from the so-called age of exploration in the 'early modern' period to our present moment. The relevance of concepts of modernity for North America thus manifests well before the founding of the United States: Key processes of settlement, colonization, and revolution are fashioned, after all, as negotiations of the 'old' and the 'new' and in the oxymoronic terms of persistent revolutions and ongoing disruption (Kammen, Kerber, Oakes, Slotkin). At the turn of the twentieth century, such negotiations reached a tipping point when fundamental categories and concepts of spatial, temporal, and moral orientation came to be challenged and redefined. Questions of modernity thus inform the entirety of North American history, yet they seem to culminate in the beginning of the twentieth century in ways that warrant a closer inspection. At this point in time, the concern with what it means to be modern was not just one issue among many others, it turned into the defining cultural question of the day. This volume assembles new (re-)assessments of modernity in American Studies that grew out of the keynotes and conference papers delivered at the sixty-fourth annual conference of the German Association of American Studies in Hannover in 2017. As such, the papers focus on both modernity during its crucial phase and on multiple later reverberations and discussions of the modern.

Studies of turn-of-the-century modernity diverge into or conflate two prominent areas of interest. On the one hand, they examine the artistic scenes that were identified or self-identified as 'modernist' and that established 'modernism' as a key category of cultural innovation on a transnational scale. On the other hand, modernity studies explore the technological and social shifts and the multiplying media formats in their impact on cultural expression and experience. "The mode of human sense perception changes with humanity's entire mode of existence," wrote Walter Benjamin in his seminal essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in 1936 (111) and thus formulated a key tenet of what was later known as the "modernity thesis": the assumption that the fast-paced, efficiency-oriented, and sensation-driven industrial cultures and cultural industries of the early twentieth century managed to effect a profound rearrangement of the cognitive and perceptual underpinnings of modern subjectivities (Singer 102-103, see also Doane, Hansen, Keil, Kern).

'Modernist studies,' then, tend to address the many areas of the modern experience in their interaction, approaching artistic modernism in close connection with the social, medial, and more generally technological shifts. These investigations have always thrived on a comparative perspective to question the uniqueness and ingenuity of artistic innovations and the exceptionality of the distinct early-twentieth-century period. Winfried Fluck has identified a "critical theory of modernity" as the driving force in a particularly American (and Americanist) formation of literary history (69). Other scholars have likewise, if with different inflections and conclusions, traced the impulse and impact of the modern in key figures and texts of North American history (Berman, Lasch, North, Tomlinson) and branched out from there into the study of movements that often conflate ideas of Americanization and modernization (Appadurai, Beck/Sznaider/Winter, Doyle/Winkiel, Friedman: "Definitional Excursions," Giddens, Goankar, Mignolo).

To conceive of modernity as a quality or principle rather than a particular historical condition allows to reflect critically on presumptions such as novelty, innovation, exceptionality or uniqueness and to cast doubt on the exceptionality of the distinct early-twentieth-century period. At the same time, the study of larger tendencies of modernization across the centuries favors the construction of chronological, if not outright teleological, progress narratives. One way to escape this conceptional gridlock is offered in the notion of a plurality of modernities, which does not only go up against the assumption that modernity is singular but also questions the implied or possible championing of the Western hemisphere. This is what Shmuel Eisenstadt contends from a sociological perspective, when he introduces the idea of "multiple modernities" as a means to counteract the prevalent understanding of modernization. He turns against the presupposition that the modernization of Western societies brings about a basic set of institutions that then takes hold in countries all over the world. Instead, he argues that in effect the post-WWII developments in many societies eschewed Western hegemony and modernized in ways that reflect the influence of local norms and customs (1-2): "The idea of multiple modernities presumes that the best way to understand the contemporary world – indeed to explain the history of modernity – is to see it as a story of continual constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programs" (2). Eisenstadt locates the commonalities between the evolving "cultural programs" in their increasing awareness of social roles beyond local and familial ones and in a feeling of being included in larger, wavering communities (4). In this context, one defining feature of modernity is its self-reflexivity, that is, a society's refusal to take a given social and political order for granted (3).

This asynchronous and self-reflexive understanding of modernity curiously echoes the ways in which early-twentieth-century art came to be classified as modernist, similarly emphasizing self-awareness as key (*Bad Modernism* 11/12 epub). Seen in this way, Eisenstadt's "multiple modernities" converge toward an unacknowledged committing reference frame, as they read diverse developments in various spaces through an early-twentieth-century lens. Modernism serves as a tool of bundling modernities together. While the concept of "multiple modernities" intends to counter an equation of modernization and Westernization, it still does establish 'the West' as a point of reference and reinforces a binary of 'the West' versus 'non-Western' societies. As Dipesh Chakrabarty points out: "if *modernity* is to be a definable, delimited concept, we must identify some people or practices as *nonmodern*" (xix, see also Ashcroft, Cooper, Love). But since the concept of modernity is subdued in a discourse of Westernization, Chakrabarty argues that this identification of nonmodern elements implies “a gesture of the powerful” (xix). The solution to this problem cannot consist in abandoning the critical vocabulary of modernity altogether, however, since this vocabulary reaches far beyond the confines of academic discourse. Instead, Chakrabarty emphasizes the political need of self-reflexivity, as an awareness of the violent implications and histories of the modern help to curb the possibilities of their continuation (xxiv).

Therefore, in order to counteract the binary logic of a sharp divide between the modern and nonmodern, the very conceptualization of modernity needs to be addressed and questioned. This would also serve to challenge the long-standing conflation of the modern and the West. Taking up this train of thought, Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz point out in their critical review of theories of modernity: “early-twentieth-century writers were themselves […] preoccupied with border crossings such as cosmopolitanism, synesthesia, racial masquerade, collage, and translation” (“Introduction” 11). Transnational impact and exchange thus appear as systematically and systemically inscribed in modernism and its conceptualization of modernity. A similar move away from a locally limited focus, the authors argue elsewhere, informs modernist studies in the new millennium more generally. They attest an expansive quality to the field itself, as it extended its areas of inquiry in terms of space and time and abandoned earlier distinctions of high art versus popular culture (“The New” 737-38). This shift resonates with shifts in American Studies, which simultaneously and in relation turned to notions of transnational and cross-cultural intersections and ramifications (Banerjee, Fluck/Pease/Rowe, Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms*, Jay, Mayer, Rowe). The current conception of modernity capitalizes on resonances between the early twentieth century and other time periods, and between locally specific and cross-culturally comparable occurrences. As a result, the essays collected in this volume both revisit turn-of-the-century modernity and approach notions of modernization and the modern at other times. It was this mixture that informed the sixty-fourth annual conference of the German Association of American Studies in Hannover.

On the one hand, modernity thus emerges as an important nexus of cultural phenomena that allow to situate current and historical experiences across timescales and locales. On the other hand, modernity appears to be a somewhat fleeting concept that only manifests as a result of the comparison and contrasting of divergent, comparable phenomena. Ironically, the idea of modernity can be said to result from a study of modernities – casting 'modernity' as what Michel Foucault describes as "discontinuities." Describing shifts in historiography since the 1960s, Foucault argues for an introduction of elements into the writing of history that disrupt orderly evolutionary sequences and chronological chains of causes and effects. Viewed against the horizon of history as a coherent development, these elements stick out as discontinuities. Discontinuities thus break up a supposed spatio-temporal coherence, yet the elements or anecdotes introduced to facilitate that break only become discontinuities because they pry open a formerly continuous sequence. The result, for Foucault, is an understanding of historiography as a layering of series that overlap and relate but cannot, and should not, be neatly ordered (7-10). In this context it makes sense to understand modernities not as individual instances in individual places, but precisely in their layered seriality. After all, consecutive developments are never entirely identical but relate to and reference each other in ways that allow to draw conclusions on how industrialization, mediatization, commercialization, and progressive political projects take effect. Modernity as a concept, then, results from such acts of contrasting multiple series and of comparing the discontinuities effected by social, technological, and artistic change.

Such a conceptualization of modernity in terms of cross-references and intersections runs the risk of exhausting itself in quasi-New Historicist tracking exercises, in which the shock experience that Walter Benjamin identified as a core element of modernist meaning-making is spotted in ever varying contexts and ever widening temporal and spatial circles. In order to avoid conceptualizing modernity exclusively in terms of resonance, return, and recognition, the concept of modernity itself needs to be critically interrogated. The study of modernities as transnational phenomena has to acknowledge the dispersed and uneven character of processes of cultural and social communication and contact, which may very well cast themselves in terms of correspondences or clashes of a center and a periphery – the West and the rest – and still defy this binary logic in the particularities of their unfolding. In this volume, scenarios of repercussion, revisitation, or reciprocity are examined with close attention to formative and paradigmatic instances of cultural expression – most notably early-twentieth-century modernist culture. But the focus of the following essays is on instances of inversion, disjunction, and dissemination – they are interested in how the very idea of modernity hinges on a plurality of factors, voices, perspectives, and agents. In concert, they show how modernity hinges on negotiations of the old and the new, innovation and tradition, the man-made and the natural, and notions of past, present, and future, and they offer ways in which clear distinctions of all of these categories become increasingly improbable.

This volume begins with reflections on the more traditional representatives of literary modernism, featuring essays that reconsider 'classic' authors in a transnational context and explore their contributions to "Conceptualizing Modernities." Anita Patterson revisits T.S. Eliot and traces the impact of Buddhist ethics in his poetry both as a result of transpacific exchange and as a reexamination of previous intercultural exchanges, as Eliot's fascination with Buddhism is grounded in a history of exchange between the two cultures that manifests in Ralph Waldo Emerson's works, enabling Eliot's simultaneous study of the impact of transpacific exchange in New England. Birgit Capelle studies Gertrude Stein's works in a comparable manner, in an essay that considers the modernists' own myth of novelty and new beginnings in the light of Taoist and Zen Buddhism and thereby manages to draw a line from Stein to Jack Kerouac's work. Ulla Haselstein explores how Gertrude Stein appropriates and refashions a core principle of modernist production – seriality – in order to exhibit (rather than represent or replicate) the apparatuses of modernist meaning-making and the cognitive mechanisms of perception and reflection. Heike Schaefer takes these authors to the classroom in an essay that details the fruitfulness of teaching Gertrude Stein's literary portraits and John Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer* in the context of modernity as manifest in, for instance, Cubist painting, Edison's turn-of-the-century motion studies, and urban documentaries and avant-garde film of the 1920s. Schaefer's text thereby stresses the interdependency of the classical modernists and the larger context of cross-media modernity, which takes place outside of the written forms. The final two contributions to this first section of the volume hark back to a previous generation of authors, unearthing the immediate predecessors to modernist literary projects. Florian Sedlmeier takes recourse to William Dean Howells' critical texts in order to assess the shifting cultural function and status of literature at the end of the nineteenth century. Sedlmeier's basic premise is that literature and modernity correspond in two ways, because the novel itself as a form of genre hybridity is essentially modern, while the literary market and its institutions undergo a similar process of modernization. Herwig Friedl's contribution returns to a study of Ralph Waldo Emerson and considers a concept of the frontier as a metaphor for an unstructured mental space the basis for the modernist's self-conceptualization as writing outside of tradition or history.

The second section turns away from literary studies proper to include the multiple ways in which modernity comes to characterize performance arts, both during the early twentieth century and afterwards. Laura Horak situates early-twentieth-century cinema and its many transformations at the intersection of modernity and tradition and shows that cinema's moves to categorize and label forms of sexuality took place in the same force field of "Performed Modernities." She furthermore traces how economic considerations impacted contemporaneous categories of sexuality and gender, highlighting the interdependence of modernity and capitalism's market economy that Sedlmeier tracks for the literary marketplace. The following two essays consider stage performances of the same era. Echoing Horak's move to consider the interrelation of modernity and history or tradition, Johanna Heil studies the modern dance techniques of Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, and Katherine Dunham, who created a (self-)perceived novelty in dance through recourse to pre-cultural forms of organic movement as well as to, in Dunham's case, a transnational history of cultural displacement. Birgit M. Bauridl takes notions of play and performance back to literary studies in her reading of five of Zora Neale Hurston's short stories that were rediscovered in the twenty-first century, in which performance becomes a means to negotiate identity formations within the shapeshifting cultural environments of modernity's urban spaces. The final two contributions to this section turn away from the early twentieth century and focus on more recent performances. Astrid M. Fellner zooms in on Guillermo Verdeccia's 1993 play *Fronteras Americanas* and joins in the conceptualizing of modernity as transnational and mobile, indicating how Verdeccia's play questions existing maps as Western geo-political constructs and casts modernity as an imperial project that can be countered by stressing contingent, "Alternative Modernities." Whereas this approach conceptualizes possible alternatives mostly in spatial terms, Florian Weinzierl turns to recent productions of the musical *A Man of No*

Importance to investigate alternative temporalities. He argues that the musical, and particularly its musical numbers, offer temporal disruptions that serve to queer time and complicate distinctions of past, present, and possible futures.

Sections three and four of the volume focus on the intersection of modernity and novelty. The third section, “Mapping Modernities,” initially returns to the temporal safe haven of modernity, the first half of the twentieth century, but turns away from the classic authors of modernism to consider conceptions of novelty and change in popular culture. Sascha Klein, Connor Pitetti, and Martin Holtz show in different though interlocking ways how technological development and the forces of nature form a pair that is negotiated in short stories, editorials, and in documentaries. Klein demonstrates how science fiction literature merges the oppositional ideas of the Western frontiersmen and the workers in the new, urban frontier of metropolitan high-rises. Pitetti’s essay turns to the work of author and theorist Hugo Gernsback to question the dichotomy of fossil and alternative energy sources and the uncritical championing of the latter. Focusing on three documentary films that portray ecological destruction and posit governmental intervention as a solution, Holtz argues that New Deal-era propaganda films evoke a romanticized idea of a pastoral past to criticize modernity’s implication of unchecked progress and offer governmental intervention as a means to ensure a controlled, uncorrupted notion of technological advancement. Development, progress, and the new, it seems, need to be managed and steered.

According to Michael North, the difference between the ‘modernist art’ of the first half of the twentieth century and the products that came afterwards rests on their attitude vis-à-vis the possibility of the new (epub 9). He argues that the hailing of the ‘new’ stopped in the 1960s, when people thought everything had been done already (8). Florian Groß’s contribution intervenes at the breaking point in this distinction and shows how at the New York Worlds’ Fair of 1964/1965, in contrast to its predecessor three decades earlier, the championing of the new itself took on the air of a bygone time. As a final contribution to this section, Torsten Kathke studies non-fiction bestsellers of the 1970s and 1980s, which helped to re-formulate a popular perception of time in that they described a moment of the present that interlinks the past and the future, resulting in a popular tradition of futurologist literature. In turning towards texts from the later stages of the twentieth century, Kathke's essay also leads the way towards the final section, which explores contemporary inflections of modernity.

Simon Schleusener opens the volume's final section on "21st Century Modernities" with a reading of the recent notion of a 'post-fact society.' Studying the aftermaths of modernity, Schleusener considers contemporary right-wing arguments as informed by critical currents of the postmodern era, whereas academics, artists, and intellectuals have abandoned postmodernism's more radical tendencies in the face of material realities such as climate change and poverty. Dennis Büscher-Ulbrich then probes the impact of the 2008 financial crisis, which challenged the modernity-as-progress narrative and the concurrent close relationship of modernity and capitalism. He charts how post-millennial zombie films provide allegories for a wageless, surplus force of workers and envision a future that only accommodates a small range of beings. Büscher-Ulbrich's text describes the cultural impact of the question of whether modernity as a progress narrative will ultimately cease to depend on human labor – a question which Christian Guese's essay then takes from the film screen to the American trucking sector. In Guese's essay, trucking and the economic structures on which the business depends emerge as a force field in which the question of whether technological progress and artificial intelligence will ultimately aid or replace human workers can be seen to play out.

The final three contributions turn away from modernity's intersection with employment and instead focus on the recreational engagement with digital-era marvels. Diana Wagner undertakes a reading of Siri Hustvedt's novels as invitations to critically reflect on the ways in which social media transform and reshape human interaction and allow for communal, reciprocal practices of surveillance. With regard to the 2016 computer game *Pony Island*, Sören Schoppmeier details the ways in which the game displays its dependence on software and code and thereby encourages the player's self-reflexive engagement with computer gaming and with the digital structures that inform our everyday lives. Finally, Ingrid Gessner mobilizes recent augmented reality artworks to indicate the ways in which the digital becomes re-inscribed in the material world. Augmented and virtual technologies, it seems, may come to blur the boundaries of nature and technology, the digital and the material, that informed modernity and the discussions thereof throughout the previous century.

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Section I

Conceptualizing Modernities

ANITA PATTERSON

Eliot, Emerson, and Transpacific Modernism

The global turn in modernist studies has prompted a revisiting of fundamental questions Americanists have raised about the fact and significance of intercultural dialogue in a dauntingly expanded field. The rise of 'post-national,' 'hemispheric,' and 'transnational' perspectives in American Studies has vitally enhanced our ability to question and revise prevailing exceptionalist myths, and the debate over transpacific dialogue and exchange within modernism has been heated and productive in recent years. Pathbreaking studies by Yunte Huang, Steven Yao, Christopher Bush, Takayuki Tatsumi, and Ruth Mayer, to name just a few, have vitally enhanced our revisionary understanding of Euro-American modernist encounters with Asian cultural traditions. At the same time that East Asia was a source of literary models for twentieth-century writers, many modernists, as Paul Gilroy has observed, self-consciously appropriated 'Other' global cultures as a signifier of "cultural insiderism" that affirmed race-based barriers to power and status held by high modernist elites (3). This same appropriation and cultural insiderism also characterized the development of *Japonisme*, a term coined in 1872 by Philippe Burty, to describe the growing awareness, and passage into Europe, of woodblock prints, manuscript books, sculpture, ceramics, poems, and other artifacts from Japan. By the 1880s, *Japonisme* had become a popular trend that influenced U.S. decor, architecture, and material culture as much as it did debates about aesthetics and the development of fine arts (Lambourne 11).

I hope to show, however, that there is still more to be said and studied about the significance of this flow of people, texts, and ideas across the Pacific for American Studies and modernist aesthetics. My examples focus on Boston, which by the turn of the twentieth century was already a world city and home to a vibrant community dedicated to the study of Asia. In what follows, I will explore how scholarly debates about Buddhist ethics at Harvard initiated transpacific interculturality in the poetry of T.S. Eliot, and fostered his ambivalent engagement with Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose prior interest in Buddhism laid a foundation for Eliot's modernism. Building on studies that affirm the importance of Buddhism for Eliot's understanding of poetic impersonality, I will argue that Eliot's references to Buddhism must be viewed in the broader context of his coming to terms with Emerson and New England's legacy of transpacific exchange, and thus that Buddhism figured in Eliot's acknowledgement of tradition, and the nation, as a dynamic set of practices, relationships, and cross-cultural encounters.

Eliot's attraction to Asia began early in life. Tatsuo Murata (22-23) and Tatsushi Narita (30-32) have shown that already as a young boy he showed a precocious concern with transpacific cross-culturality, first reading about Buddhism in Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* (1879), at a time when serious hostilities were breaking out between the U.S. and the Philippines. Roderick Overaa reminds us that Eliot would have known about or seen the Japanese pavilion and gardens at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, which were generally lauded for their beauty and craftsmanship (161). When Eliot arrived in New England to attend Milton Academy in 1905, the region's longstanding maritime trade connections to Asia would already have been familiar to him. Eliot's great-grandfather, William Greenleaf Eliot, Sr., had been a New Bedford ship-owner, and Eliot and his brother were taught to sail, according to his cousin Samuel Eliot Morison, by an "ancient mariner of Gloucester," during a long and formative period between 1893 (when Eliot was five) until Eliot left for his Paris year abroad in 1910 (234). At Harvard College, in a 1909 essay called "Gentlemen and Seamen" that was written for the *Advocate*, Eliot recalls "the hightide of New England's naval energy," during the late eighteenth century, when Salem merchants and mariners worked to establish trade with Asia. Referring to imported artifacts such as "ginger-jars" and "carved ivory" ("Gentlemen and Seamen" 22), so common in the domestic decor of well-to-do townhouses in Boston, Eliot indicates his awareness that the first stirrings of U.S. interest in East Asian art, which would result in the flourishing of what Edward Sylvester Morse called a "Japan craze" (xxvii) during the latter half of the nineteenth century, centered on the old clipper ports of New England.

Eliot's comprehension of Japan's shaping cultural presence in New England is evident in "Mandarins," a lyric sequence composed in August 1910, a little over a year after Eliot graduated from college, and the summer before he received his M.A. in philosophy from Harvard. The opening poem portrays a mandarin, a scholar-bureaucrat or sage, who is distinctly yet ambiguously East Asian:

> Stands there, complete,
> Stiffly addressed with sword and fan:
> What of the crowds that ran,
> Pushed, stared, and huddled, at his feet,
> Keen to appropriate the man?
>
> Indifferent to all these baits
> Of popular benignity
> He merely stands and waits
> Upon his own intrepid dignity;
> With fixed regardless eyes—
> Looking neither out nor in—
> The centre of formalities.
>
> A hero! and how much it means;
> How much—
> The rest is merely shifting scenes.
> (*Poems* 243-44)

Eliot's poem explores what T.J. Jackson Lears has called the "antimodern impulse" in the U.S., when the "rationalization of economic life […] was moving into high gear," and the transformation of work into a "new bureaucratic world" prompted members of the educated, affluent elites in New England to "recoil from an 'overcivilized' modern existence" as they sought moral and spiritual regeneration in Asian cultures (9, 60, xv). The sword and fan refer not to China, but to Japan under the Tokugawa *shogunate*, during the Edo period extending from 1603 to 1868, when the all-embracing ideology of the *shogunate* was founded on Neo-Confucian principles that owed much to Buddhism. Overaa has observed that the poem reflects Eliot's "fascination with Japanese… woodblock prints in their flattened representations" (162); and, as Frances Dickey has demonstrated, the sequence also alludes to the characteristic use of color titles in paintings by *Japonistes* such as James

McNeill Whistler, whose exhibits in Boston Eliot attended as an undergraduate (93-4).

Situated within the cultural logic of the Tokugawa era, the sword and fan in Eliot's poem recall the historic transformation of suicide into a public ritual designed to restrain the fascination with spectacles of violence, where instead of actually committing the deed with a sword, a symbolic fan was presented on a tray (Ikegami 255, 257). Eliot's emphasis on 'indifference' and this ritual act of suicide reflect a common negative stereotype for Buddhist self-extinction in Boston-area scholarly debates, as seen in a 1909 translation of the *Lotus Sutra*, the most important scripture for Japanese or Mahayana Buddhism. In his introduction, Hendrik Kern questions another scholar's mistaken view of the Buddha as a "cold, indifferent egoist, absorbed in Nothingness" (xxxiii). Critics such as Murata (18-23), Cleo Kearns (63, 69), Sharon Cameron (152), and Christian Kloeckner (166-167, 171) have examined how Eliot's impersonality theory was shaped by his engagement with Buddhist impersonality and the doctrine of the *nonego*, which denies any belief in the self as an eternal essence. Contesting Kearns's widely influential view that Eliot's exposure to Mahayana Buddhism was not reflected in Eliot's writings until late in his career (79), S. Cameron (viii) and Murata (45) have called attention to the influence of Masaharu Anesaki, whose course lectures in Philosophy 24a, "Schools of Religious and Philosophical Thought in Japan," Eliot audited as a graduate student, during the 1913-1914 academic year. Elsewhere, I have discussed the importance of Anesaki's teaching about Japanese Buddhism for Eliot's formulation of poetic impersonality in his 1919 essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (Patterson 673-74). Insisting that "indifference" is considered a "cardinal vice" of human nature in Mahayana Buddhism, and that the "perfection of a personality, in spite of the doctrine of the nonego, is the highest aim of Buddhist morality," Anesaki offered a dual and contradictory affirmation of personality and *nonego* that helped Eliot to formulate what Jewel Brooker describes as his dialectical conception of impersonality (Anesaki 451; Brooker 132).

"Mandarins (I)," however, was composed almost three years before Eliot heard Anesaki's lectures, and thus it raises the question how Eliot could have known about Buddhist ethics and Japanese samurai culture even when he was still an undergraduate. Boston at the turn of the twentieth century was already a "world city" in Peter Hall's sense, a focal point for professional activity associated with higher learning and information gathering and diffusion (8). As early as 1872, the first two Japanese students enrolled at Harvard Law School, and one of them, Kaneko Kentaro, would go on to become a Minister of Justice in Japan. The first Japanese undergraduate students were admitted to Harvard in the class of 1883 (Gewertz). In 1901, there was a groundswell of interest in Japanese culture with the publication of *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, a pioneering work about the Japanese samurai code that was grounded in Buddhist traditions. The book was written in English by the Meiji-era scholar, educator, and diplomat Inazo Nitobe, and became an international bestseller, helping to promote intercultural dialogue between the U.S. and Japan, during a time when the U.S. helped to mediate a settlement at the Portsmouth Conference at the end of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905. Indeed, Nitobe's *Bushido* was so well known that during the war, President Theodore Roosevelt had been given a copy by Kentaro, who returned to the U.S. in 1904 as a special envoy from the Japanese government to enlist Roosevelt's support in negotiating a peace treaty.

One possible source of Eliot's information about Japanese Buddhist ethics is Harvard's leading idealist philosopher, Josiah Royce, whose advanced seminar on comparative scientific method Eliot would attend as a graduate student and who would supervise his Ph.D. thesis on Bradley. Royce, a Californian with a strong interest in Japanese culture, discussed the Bushido code in *The Philosophy of Loyalty*, a book published in Boston by MacMillan in 1908, which was based on lectures given at the Lowell Institute in Boston and Harvard in 1906 and 1907. When Eliot met Royce at the Signet club in 1909, he may well have already known about him, because Royce had contributed to the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* circulated by the St. Louis Philosophical Society and had strong connections with the heritage of idealist philosophy in St. Louis (Crawford 112). In *The Philosophy of Loyalty*, Royce explicitly mentions Nitobe's *Bushido*, and examines a conception of the individual and a system of ethics in samurai culture that were largely based on Buddhism. In doing so, Royce addresses a theme that is also central to Eliot's "Mandarins (I)," namely, the conflicting claims of our 'public' and 'private' selves, of self-possessed individuality and inner life, on the one hand, and on the other, self-sacrificing, anti-individualistic, worldly public action that affirms loyalty to the state. "Now, Bushido did indeed have many anti-individualistic features," Royce observes.

> But it never meant to those who believed in it any sort of mere slavishness. The loyal Japanese Samurai, as he is described to us by those who know, never lacked his own sort of self-assertion. He never accepted what he took to be tyranny […]. He was fond of what he took to be his rights as a man of honor. He made much, even childlike, display of his dignity. His costume, his sword, his bearing, displayed this sense of his importance. Yet his ideal at least, and in large part his practice, as his admirers depict him, involved a great deal of elaborate cultivation of a genuine spiritual serenity […]. Chinese sages, as well as Buddhistic traditions, influenced his views of the cultivation of this interior self-possession and serenity of soul. And yet he was also a man of the world. (72-73)

Although Royce's description of the samurai as "childlike" may strike us as condescending, and although he qualifies his endorsement of the Bushido code, saying that it does not rightly conceive "the true worth of the individual," Royce nonetheless presents it as a version of ethical individualism that warrants serious consideration. "If [Bushido] has discouraged strident self-assertion," he concludes, "it has not suppressed individual judgment […]. This loyalty has not made machines out of men. It has given rise to a wonderful development of individual talent." (75)

Read in its entirety, Royce's description of the Bushido code anticipates many of the details in Eliot's much more ironical and ambivalent portrait of the samurai scholar-bureaucrat in "Mandarins (I)." As in Royce, in Eliot the Japanese samurai, described as a mandarin or sage, presents to the crowd a public display of his costume and "dignity" as a man of the world, while at the same time, in Eliot's phrase, he "stands complete," a self-possessed individual who is "indifferent" to the incentives of public opinion and popularity. But we cannot be certain when, or whether, Eliot read Royce's book, whereas we know that another active participant in the debates about Buddhism on the Harvard campus was Irving Babbitt, a former student of Charles Lanman's, who had already taught Eliot in a course during the fall of 1909, just months before the composition of "Mandarins (I)," a course which, as Eliot recalled in a 1933 memorial essay on Babbitt, "touched frequently on Buddhism." At that time, Babbitt, who taught modern French literature but also had a background in Classics, Sanskrit, and Pali, was well known for two books: *The New Laokoon* and especially *Literature and* *the American College: Essays in Defense of the Humanities*, published in Boston in 1908, which Eliot read, and always regarded as "the more important" ("A Commentary" 550).

Babbitt's *Literature and the American College* is a compelling work for my analysis of Eliot's "Mandarins (I)" in at least two ways. First, Babbitt draws copiously on Buddhist teachings in order to clarify and illustrate the ethical discipline of humanism. We see this, for example, when Babbitt describes a social type of public man, like Napoleon, who yields to the impulses of temperament and is "unduly fascinated" (39) by power, success, and progress. Babbitt contends that such men should learn, through the disciplinary arts of the humanities, to constantly exercise what Buddhists call the "active will" with reference to a true principle of restraint. "What is important in man in the eyes of the humanist," Babbitt writes, "is not his power to act on the world, but his power to act upon himself [...]. 'If one man conquer in battle ten thousand times ten thousand men,' says the Buddhist proverb, 'and another man conquer his own self, he is the greatest of conquerors'" (56-57).

Elsewhere, Babbitt quotes from Buddhist scripture to support his larger argument that the humanist should be a man of leisure, because he should not simply "receive" the vast and growing body of knowledge transmitted from earlier generations, but, rather, have enough time to engage in active reflection, transmuting "information" into wisdom (162).

> 'Without knowledge,' says the Buddha, 'there is no reflection, without reflection there is no knowledge; he who has both knowledge and reflection is close upon Nirvana.' The risk we run nowadays is that of having our minds buried beneath a dead-weight of information which we have no inner energy, no power of reflection, to appropriate to our own uses and convert into vital nutriment (162-63).

In the chapter on "Academic Leisure," Babbitt not only insists on the value of leisure in maintaining a balance between knowledge and reflection, where leisure is defined as a meditative "activity in repose" that blended "Oriental quietism" and the "strenuousness of a certain type of Occidental" (262). He even goes so far as to suggest that such a transpacific crossing of cultures would require us to question the status of the "hero" as a public, active man of the world. "The hero of the hour is not the man of leisure, but the man who engages in what may be termed