

Introduction

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Even my *New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* betrays some ambivalence about the meaning of “modernity.” The book (which does not include an entry on its title word “modern”) defines “modernity” as a term “sometimes used to refer simply to recent times,” but increasingly to denote “a phase in societal development”; also “sometimes seen as dating from the Enlightenment of 17th and 18th century Europe, sometimes from the development of industrial society in the 19th century” (540). A similarly fluid “modernity” emerges from this issue, not as a term defined but as significant nonetheless to the discussion undertaken in at least three of the following essays. In “Hiding in Plain Sight: Problems of Modernist Self-Representation in the Encounter Between Adolf Loos and Josephine Baker,” for instance, Christina Svendsen remarks that *Das Andere*, or *The Other*, the journal founded by Loos, “performs an exhortatory celebration of modernity.” At the same time, for Loos, “modernity is a fragmented, diachronic space inhabited by individuals from vastly different time periods who can nonetheless cross paths with one another and even communicate—albeit with predictable misunderstandings and conflicts.” Working through a number of sources in “Realism and the Discursive Dynamics of the Popular Periodical, 1900-1930,” Janet G. Casey mentions modernity’s “alienating effects,” advertising’s “paradoxical role ‘as both apostle of modernity and buffer against the effects of modern impersonalities of scale,’” and the camera, with its supposed

objectivity, “as one of modernity’s most powerful emblems of the subjectivity of perception and of knowledge.”

And what of modernity and melancholia? Banu Helvacioğlu’s “Melancholy and *Hüzün* in Orhan Pamuk’s *Istanbul*,” adding to the diversity of this issue’s “modernity,” suggests that “Pamuk yields to the depressive mood of melancholy/*hüzün*, but at the same time, by contemplating his mood in an aesthetic and historical context, he transforms collectively experienced resignation into a creative endeavour to understand the specific historicity and spatiality of Istanbul. This understanding makes it possible to explore how melancholy in aesthetic production transverses with melancholy as a historical condition of modernity and with melancholy as a cultural condition.” In the process of elaborating this thesis, Helvacioğlu offers a rich reflection on mourning and loss, not only in Pamuk’s own writing and in the works of the Turkish writers he analyzes, but also in Western modernity. The essay closes by noting a number of intersections in Pamuk’s narration, “between the historical and the timeless, between the Istanbul and the imaginary Western traveller and between black mood and sweet melancholy,” each “tailored such that the reader is left with life-affirming choices and a deep sigh by which to remember death.”

And, following from this life-death “intersection,” allow me to close by alerting *Mosaic* readers to an international, interdisciplinary conference, *A matter of lifedeath*, to be held at the University of Manitoba from October 1-4, 2014. A conference Call for Papers can be found on page 179 of this issue and on the journal’s website (www.umanitoba.ca/mosaic). The conference will feature five outstanding keynote speakers—Andrea Carlino, Françoise Dastur, David Palumbo-Liu, H. Peter Steeves, Elisabeth Weber—and promises to be an extraordinary event. Don’t miss it!

Dr. James Raymond Morrison, whose essay “The City and its Ontology in Lawrence Durrell’s *Alexandria Quartet*” is published in this issue, passed away in Vancouver on February 22, 2013, after a brief illness. With Dr. Morrison too ill to do so himself, his nephew, Tom Mahaffey, guided the essay through the pre-publication copy-edit, telling us that it was a frequent topic of conversation between them prior to his uncle’s death. *Mosaic* wishes to acknowledge Dr. Morrison’s expertise on Lawrence Durrell and to express our sincere condolences to his family members, who now look forward to seeing his essay in print.

WORKS CITED

- Bullock, Alan, and Stephen Trombley, eds. *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*. 3rd ed. London: HarperCollins, 1999. Print.