

THE MODERNIST SELF IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY
ENGLISH LITERATURE

By the same author

A novel

Ms. Moffatt

(under the pen-name Ned Brown)

The Modernist Self in Twentieth- Century English Literature

A Study in Self-Fragmentation

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For my Colleagues and Students:

*the quality
of the affection . . .
that has carved the trace in the mind*

Ezra Pound
(Canto LXXVI)

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Preface

The book results from many years of thinking about and teaching Modernist literature. It is dedicated to my colleagues and students (past, present and future) because my readings of specific texts, and my general notion of the 'Modernist Self', developed through interchange with them, and will doubtless develop further through their responses to this study. Particularly relevant here has been teaching (and co-teaching) Modernism courses on Hatfield multi-disciplinary degrees – the BAs in Humanities, English with Historical Studies and Contemporary Studies, and our part-time MA in English ('Literature in Crisis, 1890–1930'). Since my first thoughts on Modernist representations of selfhood, and my early sense that a deconstruction of self-unity was centrally at issue, it has become commonplace to talk about 'the decentred self', 'self-fragmentation' and so forth. However, to my knowledge, no one has yet mapped this phenomenon across disparate Modernist authors as a shared discursive project. This I have attempted to do – and in my own terms. Without arguing from a specific theoretical perspective, I have tried to show that Modernist texts were involved in a revolutionary project of self-representation long before there were Poststructuralist or Postmodernist theorisations to help translate their experiments into general intellectual parlance. The intersubjective mechanisms through which such a project evolved will be the theme of my next book.

All books owe more to the thinking of others than to a single originating author, and this is no exception. In general terms, this book owes most to certain texts, and texts about those texts, and texts related to the latter, in turn. But there are people outside texts – and the final version of my book is indebted to specific people. Most particularly, I wish to thank Patrick Grant (of the University of Victoria) and Eric Trudgill (of The Hatfield Polytechnic) for helpful comments on drafts of the entire work. I also thank Margaret Carpenter, Further Education teacher and student on the Hatfield MA in English, for her attention to details, in thought and wording, while typing the final version and for her composition of the index. Many colleagues at

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Dennis Brown