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I T IS FAIR TO SAY THAT THE EXTANT BODY of Canadian modernist criticism suggests that there are no textual records of Black Canada's engagements with the global intellectual movements of modernism. Most book-length studies of modernism in Canada in the past two decades involve some recognition of the role of race and racism in modern Canadian literature. More frequent are appeals for closer examinations of racial politics in Canadian modernism, and acknowledgement of modernist criticism's failure to address race adequately, in turn positioned as one among various sites of marginalization. In his introduction to *The Canadian Modernists Meet* (2005), Dean Irvine asserts the need to examine "co-emergent modernisms" to account for the diversity of modernist practices in Canada and to interrogate the canon's "centres and peripheries" (5). Since then, both *Wider Boundaries of Daring* (2009) and *Making Canada New: Editing Modernity in Canada* (2017) have challenged the "masculinist genealogy" of Canadian modernism, advocating an expanded canon inclusive of women in order to "augment existing histories of the modernist period" (Brandt 4, 21). "Issues of race, gender, and sexuality," write the editors of *Making Canada New*, "have notoriously been elided by masculinist, white narratives of Anglo-American modernism" (Irvine et al. 17). Such elision, they argue, has been challenged both by the many "revisionary studies" of Canadian modernism over the past two decades and by the "renovatory activity" of editorial scholarship (5). Similarly, in his conclusion to *Translocated Modernisms: Paris and Other Lost Generations* (2016), Kit Dobson admits the need to question received histories to recognize those marginalized by "the dominant conceptions of modernism, those that are gendered, racialized, classed, and beyond" (235). These critical interventions have helped to revise the conventional narrative of Canadian modernism and the received canon. None, how-

ever, refer to Black writing in Canada or to the possibility that Black writing in Canada might bear some relationship to literary, cultural, and political modernism.

The implication of the foregoing seems to be clear: there exists no significant instance of Black Canadian modernist writing. The beginning of the twentieth century is generally considered a period in which there was a dearth of Black writing in Canada. In *The Black Atlantic Reconsidered: Black Canadian Writing, Cultural History, and the Presence of the Past* (2015), Winfried Siemerling summarizes the critical consensus when he observes that, "after the outpouring in the nineteenth century, a resurgence of Black Canadian writing occurred only after the increase of Caribbean immigration policy in the 1950s on" (151). Although Siemerling acknowledges the publication of Black writing in the range of ephemera produced in the period spanning 1900-60, he nevertheless concludes that "A renewed, more substantial literary output would have to wait until the latter third of the twentieth century" (151). Accordingly, Siemerling leaves unexamined those texts produced by Black writers and editors during the period. What are the consequences of this relative dearth? More particularly, given Siemerling's decision to omit the period spanning 1900-50, what are the consequences of curtailing an investigation of early-twentieth-century Black writing in Canada on the basis of relative paucity? These questions carry considerable weight for what they suggest not only about the relationship between Black cultural expression and Canadian modernism but also about the possibility of studying textual records of twentieth-century Afro-modernity[1] in Canada prior to the 1960s.

Of course, paucity does not imply critical neglect. In part, this comparative lack can be seen to have resulted from a particular problem faced by Black writers and editors in Canada at the turn of the century. Those who sought to foster a dialogue on race and racism in Canada in the postbellum period were confronted with a trenchant narrative of liberal tolerance, buttressed by what Siemerling calls "popular assumptions and complacencies about early Canada as a haven for blacks mistreated south of the border" (182). He explains that "The moral capital earned through Canada's role in the Underground Railroad has been happily pocketed in this perspective, while continuing black Canadian life has been cast as somehow exterior to the nation" (147). This obliteration of Black presence was predicated on assumptions of uniform racial identity, and it was wedded to processes whereby whiteness was continually

rendered synonymous with "Canadian" identity. This was a process affected, in part, writes Adrienne Shadd, through "centuries of erasure of people of colour from Canadian media" (11). For Black writers, editors, and publishers seeking to address and combat anti-Black racism in Canada, the problem was twofold: the "colour line" and de facto segregation created nearly insurmountable barriers for Black writers, editors, and publishers, while a mainstream denial of that "colour line" meant that appeals to the general, predominantly white, Canadian public were met with disregard.

Yet it was into this milieu — a city, a region, and a nation, all secure in the myth of Canadian exceptionalism — that barrister and journalist Abraham Beverley Walker launched *Neith: A Magazine of Literature, Science, Art, Philosophy, Jurisprudence, History, Reform, Economics* (1903-04). The first issue received notice in nearly all of Saint John's eight newspapers. But conspicuously missing from all but one of those papers was any mention of *Neith*'s central role as a vehicle for Walker's Black nationalism, his numerous articles on racial equality and Black rights, and his radical solution to "The Negro Problem." The situation is telling: as an impressively produced periodical that published essays and poems by Saint John's leading intellectuals, *Neith* was lauded as a welcome addition to regional print culture. However, as a magazine of diasporic scope dedicated to providing "a forum" for "those who are bleeding under the heel of despotism and caste," *Neith* seems to have been regarded as somewhat of an anachronism (Walker, "Prefatory").

Over its short run of just five issues, *Neith* thus reveals the precarity of a magazine that sought to articulate a radical Black politics at a time when periodicals in the Maritimes were trenchantly regionalist and when periodicals outside the region were obsessively preoccupied with Canadian nationalism and imperial federation. In effect, *Neith* appeared when no similar vehicle for anti-racist discourse existed north of the forty-ninth parallel.[2] It was not in spite of this precarity but in part because of it that Walker engaged in a polemic that at once assimilates and transcends the matrices of nationalist and imperialist discourses into which *Neith* was launched. Situated at the intersection of competing discourses — Canadian nationalism, North American Black nationalism, pan-Africanism, and British imperialism — *Neith* sought to be international in scope and significance, even as it was rooted in, and shaped by, its specific local, regional, and national contexts. The result was short lived but significant: over its five issues, *Neith* provided

a forum for Black intellectuals in the Maritimes and challenged the homogeneous and exclusionary identities then being constructed and addressed in the region's cultural-historical magazines. In effect, by rejecting the nation-state as a legitimate vehicle for identity politics and social criticism, *Neith* challenged notions of a racially and culturally homogeneous polity at both regional and national scales.

But the significance of *Neith* as a literary-cultural magazine goes beyond its having contested monolithic, homogeneous constructions of the nation within the limiting discursive context of *fin-de-siècle* Canada. As one of the few Black periodicals published in Canada during this pivotal period, *Neith* offers an especially productive ground for examining the relationship between Black expressive culture and modernism in Canada. Notwithstanding the magazine's innovative visual aspect, this Afro-modernist aesthetic is not immediately apparent from the magazine's literary content. Although modernist affinities can be sighted in the range of authors whom Walker cites and celebrates in *Neith*, it is his own critical approach, the philosophy of art and politics developed over *Neith*'s five issues, that ultimately underpins his political-cultural modernism. This modernism begins, in part, with a transnational engagement with Afro-modernist thought in America by contemplating the modern Black polity at the particular historical conjuncture of the turn of the century — a moment marked by the failure of Reconstruction and the intensification of racial violence within a reformed, ostensibly progressive, liberal order. In terms of discursive strategies, Walker's modernism emerges through what might be called, following Richard Iton, the "aesthetic grammars" of Walker's polemics: his commitment to the imbrication of the aesthetical and the political (9). Accordingly, Walker renovated cultural traditions and discourses grounded in Ethiopianism, Afrocentric historiography, psychopathology, and Afro-Protestantism in order to envision emancipatory futures for Africa and the Black diaspora. *Neith* provided the vehicle for this Afro-modernist vision.

Situating *Neith* within its local, national, and international publishing contexts, I examine Walker's essays at the juncture of Afro-modernity, modernism, and Black expressive culture in Canada. Such an attempt to locate early-twentieth-century Black writers such as Walker under the rubric of modernism presents its own set of difficulties. These difficulties are connected, on the one hand, to the aforementioned failure of Canadian modernist criticism to consider Black writing and, on

the other, to the constitutive tension between modernity and black-ness identified by theorists and critics of Black cultures in Canada and elsewhere. Nevertheless, modernism remains a valuable frame through which to read Walker and *Neith*, not simply for challenging an exclusionary modernist tradition (for a politics of representation) but also for registering Walker's key engagements with the global intellectual movements that defined the modernist moment. These engagements reveal an intellectual genealogy that includes major figures of Afromodernism in America such as Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois, as well as lesser-known members of the Caribbean diaspora, such as African Methodist Episcopal Church pastor and classicist Henry Alexander Saturnin Hartley. Walker's own aporetic response to a reconfigured modernity at once intersects with and diverges from those of his contemporaries. By registering those countervailing influences and examining his distinctive cultural-political thought, we can begin to trace the contours of his unique modernism across several of his key essays in *Neith*. Short lived, *Neith* nevertheless constitutes one of the most important and distinctive periodicals of its time, providing an entry point into discussions about the aesthetic and territorial politics that lay at the intersection of Black writing and modernism in Canada.

Neith, Its Critics, and Its Contemporaries

Neith first appeared in February 1903. It was printed by Paterson Publishing in super-octavo format on medium-weight printing paper with a matte finish for covers and a gloss finish for images. Ranging from fifty-four pages (no. 5) to seventy-six pages (no. 3), and averaging sixty pages per issue, the magazine was an expensively produced, illustrated monthly. Its stated purpose, expressed in the first issue's editorial, was "to set people thinking, to extirpate erroneous ideas, to advance the spirit of freedom, to stir up a feeling of brothership among all men, and to spread Christian civilization throughout Africa" (Walker, "Prefatory"). The first issue of *Neith* is exemplary of Walker's editorial direction: running to seventy-two pages, the issue consists of "Prefatory Remarks" followed by eleven unsigned short essays, five medium-length essays (including the first part of Walker's serialized "The Negro Problem, and How to Solve It"), four signed longer essays, three poems, literary notes (comprising brief essays, commentaries, and reviews), and editorial announcements. In addition to Walker, six con-

tributors are identified in the first issue. The topics of the essays vary widely, but nearly all contribute to the Afrocentric, imperialist ideology to which Walker was committed, and nearly three-quarters of the first issue concerns subjects related directly to African American, Black Canadian, or pan-African issues, politics, and initiatives. For Walker, *Neith* was to be a vehicle for change and racial advancement, and at the core of his editorial program was a conviction that civil discourse coupled with creative expression could effect social reform. Yet four issues later, and already behind on its publication schedule, *Neith* published its final issue in January 1904.

Although there exists no sustained critical treatment of *Neith*, Walker's career as a lawyer, journalist, and civil rights activist has received variable attention in several studies, most notably W.A. Spray's *The Blacks in New Brunswick*, Robin Winks's "Negroes in the Maritimes: An Introductory Survey" and *The Blacks in Canada: A History*, Barry Cahill's "First Things in Africadia: Or, The Trauma of Being a Black Lawyer in Late Victorian Saint John," and George Elliott Clarke's "Winking at Winks" in *Directions Home: Approaches to African-Canadian Literature*. Spray, though significant for providing one of the earliest histories to reference Walker, gives only a cursory description of him and *Neith*. In contrast, Cahill's article provides the most comprehensive biography of Walker. Cahill details the systemic and bureaucratic racism that Walker confronted as the first Canadian-born Black barrister as well as the politics and "white-chauvinist" culture that prevented him from maintaining a successful law practice in Saint John (376). Cahill, though acknowledging that *Neith* "merits a study in itself," focuses on Walker's career in law (376). Conversely, Winks's chapter "Source of Strength? — The Press" in *The Blacks in Canada* offers the most extensive treatment of *Neith*, but his approach is marred by his refusal to engage deeply with the form and content of the magazine beyond cursory and superficial description. Nor does Winks treat Walker and his writing as legitimate subjects for critical analysis, opting instead to position him as a hopelessly naive aberration in the history of African Canadian print culture, albeit one with "considerable talent" (398).

Clarke, rejecting Winks's "usual professional sneering," provides the most sustained examination of Walker's social, political, and philosophical thought (*Directions* 32). Clarke submits Walker's 1905 treatise *Message to the Public* to close analysis while situating Walker within the

broader fields of North American and pan-African political-cultural thought. He identifies Walker as an Afrocentric "neo-British imperialist," whose *Message to the Public* "weds New World African imperialism to the globalist white supremacy articulated by backers of an 'Anglo-Saxon union' between Great Britain and the United States" (36). In *Neith*, the contradiction that arises from these apparently disparate ideologies appears not only within Walker's thought but also between articles. The same "African diasporic imperialism" that Clarke sees operating in *Message to the Public* is evident in the pages of *Neith*, though Walker had not yet conceived of the African Civilization Movement of which he writes in the former (35).

Neith can thus be seen as a proving ground upon which Walker introduced, developed, and amended his positions on a range of political and cultural subjects, critical stances that he would later consolidate in his *Message to the Public*. Accordingly, the political-cultural touchstones that Clarke stresses in his discussion of Walker — Washington's "Atlanta Compromise" (1895) and *Up from Slavery* (1901), Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk: With "The Talented Tenth" and "The Souls of White Folk"* (1903) — are central to many of the articles published in *Neith*. Yet the magazine also provides insight into additional key Black diasporic and American figures not covered by Clarke, notably Trinidadian-born classicist Reverend Henry Alexander Saturnin Hartley and Reverend Henry McNeil Turner, former bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and editor of the newspaper the *Voice of the People* (1901-05). In *Neith*, Turner is both listed as a contributor and cited by Walker as an ally in the cause for emigration to Africa. Finally, *Neith*, more than Walker's other publications, must be read in relation to "the nexus of African-Canadian intellectuals in the Maritimes" in which Clarke locates Walker (*Directions* 34). In fact, many of those "Africadian" intellectuals whom Clarke suspects Walker to have been familiar with, including Reverend John Clay Coleman, Reverend Adam S. Green, and James Robinson Johnston, are listed as contributors to *Neith*. Such inclusions not only confirm Walker's familiarity with leading Black or Africadian intellectuals but also suggest that the influence might have been reciprocal.

Just as Walker's *Message to the Public* must be placed in conversation with the works of Washington and Du Bois, so too *Neith* finds analogues among twentieth-century African American magazines. They include magazines that resemble *Neith* in form and content, such as

Walter Wallace's Washington-friendly and accommodationist-oriented *Coloured American Magazine* (Atlanta, 1900-09); J. Max Barber's increasingly anti-accommodationist *Voice of the Negro* (Atlanta, 1904-05); and W.E.B. Du Bois's short-lived *Moon Illustrated* (Memphis, 1905-06) and much-longer-lasting *Crisis* (Baltimore, 1910-). These were political and cultural magazines with a strong literary focus, "involved first in political and social occurrences and then in black literature" (Johnson and Johnson 1). In scope and content, *Neith* most resembles these early-twentieth-century American magazines: although committed to an explicit Black-nationalist politics, *Neith* comprised essays and poems on a range of topics. To an extent, Walker also aligned *Neith*'s literary criticism with its politics, even if the poetry published was generally divorced from the immediate political message that Walker intended to communicate.

As for the specific political enterprise to which *Neith* was committed, its closest analogues were newspapers such as Henry McNeal Turner's *Voice of the People* (Atlanta, 1901-04) and, over a decade later, Marcus Garvey's *Negro World* (New York, 1918-33). Both periodicals served as vehicles for the promotion of their editors' respective back-to-Africa schemes: Turner's International Migration Society and the Black Star Line operated by Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. Insofar as emigrating to Africa and "spread[ing] Christian civilization throughout Africa" ("Prefatory" 1) formed two key objectives of Walker's editorial agenda, Turner's and Garvey's periodicals were united in purpose with *Neith*. These publications, however, were weekly papers, their format and scope dissimilar to those of *Neith*. In basic physical format and in the range of titles included, *Neith* appears to have aligned as much with conventional British and Canadian miscellanies as with the activist Black magazines then emerging south of the border. Nevertheless, though *Neith* does share formal similarities with some of Canada's literary and general interest magazines of the period, such as *Saturday Night* (1887-2005) and *Canadian Magazine of Politics, Science, Art and Literature* (1893-1939), those similarities are superficial.

A glance at the cover of the first issue of *Neith* would likely alert the reader to the novelty of the magazine. Printed in dark blue, the cover features an illustration of Neith, "an Ethiopic divinity" ("Editorial" 59), holding a scepter in her left hand and grasping a bolt of lightning in her right hand. The bolts emanate from the title, centred just above and drawn in capitalized sans-serif font. Surrounding this image is a trefoil

arch featuring an image of the Great Sphinx in the upper left and of the Great Pyramids in the upper right. At top centre is an inverted pentagram. Along the bottom, at the base of the columns that frame either side, is the Latin inscription "*Ecripuit cælo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis*," meaning "He snatched the lightning from heaven and the sceptre from the tyrants." The image occupies all but the top and bottom margins. In the top margin appear the volume number, date, and issue number. In the bottom margin are the frequency of appearance, cost of subscription, and city of publication: "issued monthly: $1.00 a year: 10c. a single copy. ST. JOHN, N.B. CANADA." Much can be gleaned, or at least conjectured, from this imposing image, but Walker leaves no need for speculation. The "Editorial Announcements" inform the reader that "Neith was an Ethiopic divinity, and was worshipped in Meroe, Egypt, and Carthage. She stood for Liberty, Wisdom, and Eternal Justice, and presided over the thunder and the tempest" (59). The phrase inscribed on the cover, writes Walker, was adopted "as being more attributable to [Neith] — a splendid myth, a sacred fiction, imagined and adored by the greatest and noblest people of all antiquity — than to the one that it was originally fabricated to flatter" (60). The same design, in varying colours, would appear on the covers of all five issues.

Notably, this visual aesthetic aligns *Neith* with African American magazines in two ways. First, it reflects an editorial commitment to encouraging visual arts with African themes and icons, paralleling what Du Bois described as his own attempt to "encourage graphic arts" both through "magazine covers with negro themes and faces" and by "portra[ying] the faces and features of colored folk" (*Dusk* 135, 136). Second, the choice of Neith as the magazine's governing icon engages the Ethiopianism embraced, albeit in sharply distinct ways, by Walker's leading African American contemporaries, including W.E.B. Du Bois, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and later Marcus Garvey. Du Bois, for instance, incorporated representations of Neith into his own "African-centred ideology" concerning Black femininity (Lemons 56). Gary Lemons explains that, for Du Bois, "motherhood embodied the essence of Black womanhood which he idealized in the form of the mythological African goddess Neith, his universal symbol of maternality" (56). Although Walker did not explicitly connect Neith to a women's liberation philosophy, as did Du Bois, he clearly drew from an Ethiopianist aesthetic to contribute to a form of cultural nationalism that, like Du Bois's, was "rooted in African mythology popularized in the early 1900s" (Lemons 56).

This intellectual genealogy, and the print-cultural analogues of *Neith* in African American magazines, alert the reader to Walker's transnational engagements with contemporary Black intellectual currents while cutting through some of the rhetoric that Walker himself deploys in an appeal to white Canadian nationalism and British imperialism. More importantly, though, they invite an analysis of *Neith* that situates it in relation to Afro-modernist thought in America. If *Neith*, as both Clarke and Irvine maintain, was a "little magazine" — a genre always closely associated with the production and dissemination of modern and, finally, modern*ist* literature — then we might ask whether it was also a vehicle for modernism (Clarke, *Directions* 31; Irvine, "Little Magazines" 607). More to the point, if Walker's "touchstones" — Washington's *Up from Slavery* and Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* — have long been associated with the origins of Afro-modernism in America, then it might be productive to locate *Neith* at the intersection of Black expressive culture and modernism. To date, this encounter has been almost entirely neglected in Canadian modernist studies.

Afro-Modernity, Modernism, and Black Expressive Culture in Canada

Situating Walker in relation to a range of writers and thinkers, from Washington and Du Bois to the lesser-known classicist Hartley, provides a productive basis for reading Walker's essays and journalism as a form of political and cultural modernism connected to the origins of Afro-modernism in America. This modernism involves, first, a commitment to the interdependence of politics and art at the level of critical and editorial practice and a neoteric response to a reconfiguration of modernity and, second, at the level of discursive practice, the fusion of Afro-Protestantism and classicism into a distinct political aesthetic. I am concerned here with the first, the specific modernist sensibility developed in *Neith*, but I want to suggest, by extension, that the examination of early-twentieth-century Black print culture might offer a basis for theorizing the relationship between modernism(s) and Black expressive culture in Canada more broadly. Such an approach is complicated, however, by the fact that there is little critical precedent for reading modernism in Black Canadian writing. In fact, any attempt to broach the idea of "Black modernism" in Canada must begin by addressing not only the critical supposition of its non-existence but also the potential problems that such a framework might introduce.

Although Black Canadian writing is most conspicuous in its absence in Canadian modernist criticism, substantial work has been done outside modernist studies to illuminate early Black writing in Canada. George Elliott Clarke, Winfried Siemerling, Wayde Compton, and Karina Vernon are but a few of the most prominent scholars to have expanded the archive of Black Canadian literature back to include writing produced prior to the 1960s. Notwithstanding Clarke's reading of Anna Minerva Henderson's *Citadel* (1967) (see Clarke, "Anna Minerva Henderson"), however, extant studies of early-twentieth-century Black Canadian writing demonstrate a critical reticence to locate Black writers within the framework of literary modernism, a reticence that might point to deeper reservations about the viability of "modernism" as a critical category for Black writing.

Reading Walker as a modernist, by situating him in relation to Afro-modernism in America or by otherwise postulating Black modernism in Canada, presents several difficulties connected to modernism in particular as well as to the relationship between blackness and the idea of "modernity." This involves recognizing that it might be neither desirable nor productive to bring early-twentieth-century Black writers such as Walker under the rubric of Canadian modernism. This is especially true insofar as that critical endeavour entails the evaluation of Black writing according to the pre-established modernist dicta that has long guided Canadian modernist criticism. The value of *Neith* and Walker's essays does not derive from their alignment with "modernism," nor is their aesthetic worth co-extensive with how far they can be shown to conform to Anglo-American aesthetic values. At the same time, a critical reading of Walker's "modernism," understood in its broadest sense as an intellectual response to a particular historical conjuncture, to modernization, and to twentieth-century modernity, confronts a more fundamental problem, one that has been addressed in recent theorizations of modernity by scholars such as Michel-Rolph Trouillot and Richard Iton.

Taken together, Iton and Trouillot suggest that the very idea of "Black modernism" involves a tension not easily resolved within the conventional narrative of Western modernity. For Iton, "any simplistic reconciliation of the modern and the black" is suspect: "[I]n the language game staked out by the modern, blacks are uniquely locked into a relationship that allows few possibilities for agency, autonomy, or substantive negotiation" (14). Iton suggests not only that the dominant scripts of modernity cast blackness as other but also that the exclusion

of blackness is contained in the idea of the modern. Iton thus follows Trouillot's assertion that modernity "requires an alterity, a referent outside itself — a pre- or nonmodern in relation to which the modern takes its full meaning" (222). This formulation, that claims to modernity are at once historical and geographical, intelligible only insofar as there is a pre- or non-modern other against which the modern is defined, has significant implications for theorizing "Afro-modernity" and "Black modernism" in North America. Accordingly, the response of leading critics has been to theorize alternative modernities, including but not limited to Paul Gilroy's "Black Atlantic" as necessarily a "counterculture" of modernity (37); Trouillot's "[o]ther from within, the otherwise modern" (228); and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's "altermodernity" as a "decisive break" with modernity (102-03).

This critical response to modernity's failures, its inadequacy to account for the complexity of Black culture and Black polities, has informed the work of Canadian critics such as Siemerling, who sees the "different time-spaces" of Black Canadian writing as contributing "to the counter-modernity that Gilroy has evoked in *The Black Atlantic*" (30). A similar need to challenge "triumphalist" narratives of progress (though not specifically in terms of their relationship to Black culture) likewise has informed a tendency in Canadian modernist criticism toward "altermodernities" (Dobson 237; Siemerling 30). Accordingly, Kit Dobson maintains that "possible routes into these altermodernities can be sighted in modernism, [and] the entangled webs of aesthetics and politics" (237). These critics provide an important precedent for locating *Neith* within the "relational practices" of "Black Canadian writing," practices that "generate new time-spaces and genealogies, as well as other possible futures of modernity" (Siemerling 28). Yet such a "sighting" of routes cannot merely celebrate the end of modernity; it must also involve a concomitant effort to examine how dominant discourses of Canadian modernity historically have marginalized Black expressive culture.

Rather than jettisoning the term "modernism," then, I suggest that it retains value as a critical paradigm and aesthetic category in the context of Black Canada. Deployment of the category, however, requires substantial qualification. This involves not only a recognition of what Iton calls the "constitutive tension" between the terms "Black" and "modernism" but also a resistance to absorbing early-twentieth-century Black writing into the received canon of Canadian modernism and a

recognition of how modernist studies have contributed to the oblitera-
tion of blackness as they imagine Canada and Canadian modernity in
the twentieth century (212). By shifting the critical terrain as such, we
can begin to approach *Neith*, and Walker's writing in particular, with
a view to sounding for a modernism that unsettles as much as it but-
tresses many of the features deemed to have defined modernist literature
in Canada.

Sounding for Modernism

Walker's modernism emerges in his polemical essays, in his specific
response to modernity, and in his distinct discursive strategies, but
it is connected to a broader aesthetic philosophy expressed in *Neith*.
Apparent from even a cursory survey of the magazine, however, is that
the poetry featured in each issue, penned almost entirely by white mem-
bers of Saint John's literary set, offers little if any variation on the pre-
vailing Victorian-Romantic modes that dominated the pages of most
fin-de-siècle national and regional magazines in Canada. Moreover, the
magazine's verse, save for the single poem "Neith" (Partridge 151), fre-
quently bears so little relation to Walker's polemical journalism that it
produces noticeable inconsistencies. Poems such as Charles Campbell's
"The Museum Shell," with its melancholic longing for the "misty mem-
ory of vanished years" (4), jar against Walker's preceding assessment
of racial politics, his concern with futurity, and his prediction that,
"in time, the Negro race will overtake [the British Empire] — *tempus
omnia revelat*" (Walker, "The Negro Problem" 25). Attention to com-
mon tropes does reveal an editorial preference for classicism, an orienta-
tion that underpins Walker's own political aesthetic as well as his align-
ment with the Afrocentric philosophy of history being developed by
contemporary African American thinkers such as Du Bois. But none of
the verse published in *Neith* resembles the sort of literature called for in
the first issue when Walker, quoting socialist writer and critic Abraham
Cahan on the Russian realists, declares that "the present struggle for
popular institutions will give birth . . . to a new great literature, one
which will mirror the new era" ("Literary" 56). In effect, the poetry that
Walker published in *Neith* served to obscure the racial aesthetics of his
writing rather than augment his modernism.

　　More telling than the verse that Walker chose to publish is his own
literary criticism and that of his son, George Gilbert Walker. On the

surface, modernist predilections can be detected in the range of writers acclaimed in the pages of *Neith*: naturalists Emile Zola and Thomas Hardy; realists Leo Tolstoy, Vladimir Korolenko, and Maxim Gorky; symbolist Dmitry Merezhkovsky; and transitional figures Henrik Ibsen and Henry James. Zola in particular is given special attention in articles by both Walker and his son. In "Realism in Fiction," the younger Walker celebrates the realist novel for its ability to present "both the psychic and physical in their highest form of delineation," and he celebrates Zola as its foremost practitioner (229). Zola's willingness to explore social taboos is deemed a decisive mark of his craft: "Zola shows you sinks and cesspools of squalor and filth, morally and physically, and makes you feel that you are in the midst of it" (231). What Walker extols here as Zola's foremost achievement are those aspects of his naturalism that also helped to shape modernist fiction in Canada.

The influence of figures such as Zola, Ibsen, and Hardy on the development of modernism in Canada has been well documented. As Colin Hill notes, "critics have identified a naturalist strain in the *oeuvres*" of many of Canada's leading modernist novelists ("Introduction" xxix). As a "hybrid genre," explains Hill, modern realism in Canada was shaped by the influence of "European and American realisms and naturalisms, and various modernist movements" (*Modern* 38). In the Canadian context, it is difficult to overstate the importance of this literary genealogy and the realist genres that it influenced. Glenn Willmott goes so far as to suggest that "realism is a descent into Canadian national particularity" (22) and that the postcolonial *Bildungsroman*, as a genre of modern realism, offers a key to "the structures of feeling and interest in Canadian modernity" (23). Accordingly, when Walker celebrates realism and naturalism, proclaiming Ibsen "one of the most imposing literary personages in the world," it is tempting to locate him within a critical tradition that anticipated the emergence of a specifically Canadian modernism ("Literary" 96).

Yet the national paradigm is more likely to limit than to expand an understanding of the intellectual tradition of which Walker was a part. Rather, his familiarity with and penchant for contemporary international literary movements is best interpreted as one aspect of his transatlanticism. Moreover, the writers whom Walker celebrates do not form a coherent and consistent aesthetic tradition from which he might be said to have drawn in his own writing, never conventionally "literary." Nearly as important to Walker as European and American natural-

ists and realists were figures such as Harriet Beecher Stowe and Paul Laurence Dunbar, whose works had a more direct bearing on *Neith*'s anti-racist agenda. Thus, though a particular focus on Zola and references to Hardy, James, and Ibsen might indicate lines of influence that parallel those of major writers of modern fiction in Canada, such as Frederick Philip Grove or Morley Callaghan, they are not as significant as the particular orientation toward literature and politics developed in Walker's critical essays about those authors.

For Walker, the importance of figures such as Zola and Ibsen derived from the power of naturalism to provide a vehicle for social critique. In his article "Emile Zola," for instance, Walker interprets Zola's oeuvre as an assault on modern society, which "presented the aspect of a huge, dissolute, leprous monster, appeasing its diseased and abnormal appetite on vanity, wretchedness, and despair" (4). Zola, argues Walker, "was not afraid to speak of society as he saw it, or snatch from its face its mask, and thus expose all its ugliness and foul sores" (4). The critique that Walker identifies in Zola's work is similarly interpreted by George Walker as a crucial function of Zola's naturalism, in which the reader "[sees] shame by looking upon the society of the great metropolis" (231). According to the elder Walker, naturalism is as much a political enterprise as it is an aesthetic one; Zola's stories are not merely artistic works but also "great philippics against vice and sham" ("Emile Zola" 4). More importantly, Walker connects this social critique to the politics of race. It is Zola the author of "*J'Accuse . . . !*" rather than the Rougon-Macquart cycle that Walker ultimately deems "a prophet" (5). Zola's role in the Dreyfus affair and his condemnation of the French state's anti-Semitism made Zola an enemy of those "hateful perjurers" whom Walker elsewhere identifies with racist regimes of power (5).

Worth noting in Walker's discussion of Zola are traces of Walker's own rhetorical strategies: the pathologization of racism in a "diseased" society, the politicization of classicism in the form of modern "philippics," and the identification of a prophetic tradition of apocalyptic or jeremiadic social criticism. What Walker appreciates in Zola's fiction is the imbrication of the political and the aesthetic that underpins his own essays. A "champion of the oppressed," Zola represents for Walker the ideal of the politicized author expounding "the broadest and deepest and highest doctrines of truth and equity — doctrines which benefit all alike, regardless of kindred or color" (5). Notably, Walker's claim to the universality of Zola's writing here does not diminish the significance of

Zola's social critique in relation to the politics of race. Rather, it makes explicit what Walker implies throughout: that politicized works can be mobilized toward all forms of social criticism, including the anti-racist objectives of his own program.

This rejection of art as a purely aesthetic practice distances Walker from traditionally conceived notions of high-modernist aesthetic detachment. At the same time, it aligns him more closely with contemporary thinkers such as Du Bois, whose aesthetic philosophy would eventually propound a necessary connection between politics and art. In his 1926 article "Criteria of Negro Art" published in the *Crisis*, Du Bois provided his most explicit statement of the relationship between art and political commitment: "Art is propaganda and ever must be. . . . I stand in utter shamelessness and say that whatever art I have for writing has been used always for propaganda for gaining the right of black folk to love and enjoy" (103). Walker never made statements as unequivocal as Du Bois did in the 1920s, nor did *Neith* provide a forum for Black poets, as did Du Bois's *Crisis* during the Harlem Renaissance. But Walker invariably did wed "beauty" as an aesthetic ideal to "truth and equity" ("Emile Zola" 5), anticipating Du Bois's insistence that "the apostle of Beauty . . . becomes the apostle of Truth and Right not by choice but by inner and outer compulsion" ("Criteria" 103). As it is with the literature that Walker celebrates, so it is with his own essays; the particular aesthetic philosophy that begins to emerge in essays such as "Emile Zola" and George Walker's "Realism in Fiction" invites an analysis of Walker's other essays attentive to what Iton refers to as the "aesthetic grammars" of political discourse (9). It is by shifting the focus from the conventionally literary to the aesthetic and rhetorical dimensions of Walker's essays, to the "poetics of the political," that *Neith* emerges as an important vehicle for Black modernism (9).

What Iton[3] refers to as the "aesthetic grammars" — the "signs, styles and performances" (9) — of Black political communication has been a subject of American modernist criticism for several decades. As K. Merinda Simmons and James Crank observe, "the subversion of traditional formalism and a repositioning of aesthetics in relation to discursive performance and political action" were part of the "pivotal" scholarship initiated in the 1980s by critics such as Houston Baker and Henry Louis Gates Jr. (16). Baker's classic study, *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (1987), as well as his later *Turning South Again: Re-Thinking Modernism/Re-Reading Booker T.* (2001), are particularly germane to

an analysis of Walker's writing. Baker effectively delineates "a different timeline of modernist work and sensibilities," one bookended by "cultural moments of both political and creative forms" (Simmons and Crank 17). Combined with his assertion that Afro-modernism cannot be "confined to a traditionally defined belle lettres or to Literature with a capital and capitalist *L*," Baker's analysis provides both a starting point for reading modernism in *Neith* and a basis for locating Walker (however obliquely given Baker's national framework) as a dissident voice within the "discursive constellation that marks a change in Afro-American nature on or about September 18th 1895" (Baker, *Modernism* 8).

If, as Baker argues, Washington was "the quintessential herald of modernism in Black expressive culture," then we might analyze Walker's oratorical prose with a critical eye on the "culturally specific and canny rhetorical appropriation" that Baker terms "the mastery of form" (*Modernism* 31). We might also position Walker's writing in relation to what Paul Gilroy interprets as Du Bois's "aporetic responses to American modernity" (130), a genre of modernism, Gilroy argues, "inaugurated in Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk*" (115). Such comparisons are not only productive but also necessary to appreciate adequately the depth and contemporaneity of Walker's writing and his particular response to the consequences of a reconfigured modernity.

Walker's "Aporetic Responses" to Modernity

The historical juncture to which Walker responds in *Neith* was not a sudden rupture but the particular reconfiguration of modernity marked by the failure of Reconstruction and the subsequent failure of Booker T. Washington's politics of accommodation. Walker's critique of accommodation was central to his program of racial advancement, but his cultural and political modernism aimed to make sense of a more profound set of circumstances of which accommodation was only a part, one emanating from the American South but reverberating globally. This set of circumstances corresponds to what Saidiya Hartman terms "the double bind of equality and exclusion that distinguishes modern state racism from its antebellum predecessor" (9). Here it is necessary to turn to Walker's "Tillmanism, or Mob Rule in the South," which appeared in the first issue of *Neith*, to register a particular moment of aporia. This aporia, if not analogous to Du Bois's "aporetic responses to . . . modernity," nevertheless arises from the same crisis and the perceived impossibility

of language to address effectively the disenfranchisement and violent subjection of Blacks in America.

For Walker in "Tillmanism," this apparent impasse begins with the challenge of bearing witness to racial violence in the American South: "The history of the South is a record of a series of crimes; awful crimes; crimes against God and man and religion; crimes so brutal, so heinous, so revolting, that it would be an unpardonable sin to express them in words" (18). In this instance, the ethical consequences of bearing witness, rather than the failure of language itself, temporarily suspend Walker's analysis; this initial refusal to bear witness to the "crimes" of the South anticipates his subsequent reluctance to reproduce the scene of a lynching, "the most execrable freak of insanity that has ever afflicted or cursed human society" (21). One might read this momentary reticence as Walker's refusal to summon what Hartman terms the "terrible spectacle" of racial violence, scenes that invoke "the spectacular character of black suffering" (3). Yet Walker goes on to invoke just such a scene, deploying precisely the sort of "theatrical language" that Hartman contends is "usually resorted to in describing these instances [of Black suffering]" (3). It is not the unrepresentability of such scenes that produces Walker's aporia, then, but the futility of representing forms of violence that effectively are sanctioned by the modern, post-Reconstruction state.

What initiates his aporia in "Tillmanism" is his recognition, at the moment that Walker reproduces the violent scene of a lynching, that this bearing witness is futile. He demurs that neither the pathos that the scene is intended to evoke nor a reasoned argument can appeal to the American majority. To the contrary, such "loathsome, deplorable" scenes have "ruined the temper of the nation," and "argument, or logic, or reason, has no more effect upon [the majority], especially when it is friendly to the Negro, than it would upon some incurable Bedlamite" (21). Moreover, racial violence itself precludes remonstration. Black Americans "dare not, in either public or private, discuss their situation for fear of being lynched," "the Negro press is gagged and muzzled both in the south and in the north," and "there is no retribution in the courts" (21). The fact that such racial violence is permitted, even enabled, by the progressive, democratic, liberal state finally renders this crisis inexorable.

Thus, the impasse that Walker confronts in "Tillmanism," in effect, is "subjection in the context of freedom," what Hartman describes as

"the corporeal anxieties of the liberal order" and their consequence, "the wedding of equality and exclusion in the liberal state" (9, 10). For Walker, this state-sanctioned violence is not inimical to democracy, and it does not exist in spite of it; rather, it is facilitated by the "malevolence and prejudice of the rude multitude, the majority; i.e., the invincible, irresistible, irrevocable power, in the United States, both North and South, which makes for evil, disorder, oppression, and the reign of terror; and the very power that can never be coaxed, persuaded, or coerced into giving the Negroes their due" (17). Without the political franchise, Walker suggests, African Americans have no hope of combatting the racism of the white majority; yet the same political powerlessness makes them targets of racial violence should they attempt to gain suffrage. Hence, the failure of accommodation was the failure of Black America to understand that "to disfranchise them simply means to ruin them and blight them as freemen" (20). But Walker holds little hope for the civil rights reforms of Du Bois, suggesting instead that the near future will see "the utter disarmament of the Negroes of the ballot" (20). Protest, social criticism, and public debate, Walker suggests here, have no currency in a fundamentally unjust society.

Of course, he mobilized social criticism and public discourse toward racial uplift despite his apparent doubts about their efficacy. In fact, "Tillmanism, or Mob Rule in the South" is atypical of his essays insofar as it expresses a profound skepticism of the possibility of racial uplift, a skepticism that Walker overcomes in the conclusion by appealing to Black separatism. Elsewhere in *Neith*, he responds differently to the terror of democratically endorsed and legally sanctioned racism. In "Lynching in the South," he advocates armed resistance (though he explicitly disavows violent insurrection against the state), declaring that "a thousand Negroes are fit to flog fifteen hundred crackers; that is, if the Negroes are armed like the crackers with Winchester rifles" (168). Conversely, in "A Reasonable Protest," Walker endorses the "lawful" civil protest of the National Afro-American Press Association in its struggle for "civil and political rights" (170). And in his serialized treatise, "The Negro Problem, and How to Solve It," Walker outlines his own solution to the "problem of the colour line," emigration to Africa. Each approach emphasizes very different aspects of his program, from radical forms of militant resistance to comparatively conciliatory forms of lawful protest. Nevertheless, the essays in which these various proposals are articulated rely on common rhetorical patterns and dis-

cursive strategies. Rarely, as in "Lynching in the South," such strategies bordered on sedition; more commonly, they involved forms of social criticism that incorporated psychoanalysis, classicism, and a prophetic rhetoric grounded in Afro-Protestantism. To analyze these discursive strategies sufficiently across Walker's dozens of essays in *Neith*'s five issues is beyond the scope of my study. Briefly examining his deployment of the discourse of psychopathology, however, helps to convey a sense of the rhetorical force with which Walker appropriated and redirected established discourses toward anti-racist ends.

Again "Tillmanism" offers a productive example. In it, Walker deploys the rhetoric of psychopathology to characterize racial intolerance and violence in the United States, using a discursive strategy similar to the "canny rhetorical appropriation" that Baker describes as foundational to African American modernism. The state-sanctioned and hence democratically endorsed "prejudice," "disorder, and oppression" that Walker terms "Tillmanism"[4] are the manifestations of an endemic racism that he names — to give it a "definite form in pathology and nomenclature" — "misethioposis" (22). He further deems lynching a "freak of insanity" and characterizes the white American majority as "Bedlamites" infected with "a veritable disease" and "abnormal emotion" (21). Walker's appeal to psychopathology in his analysis of race relations is not unique. According to Fred Moten, "[the] cultural and political discourse on Black pathology has been so pervasive that it could be said to constitute the background against which all representations of blacks, blackness, or (the colour) black take place" (177). Walker, however, self-consciously co-opts the vocabulary of Black pathology in order to analyze white racism, a phenomenon that he claims is so pervasive as to render America irremediably hostile to blackness and, hence, uninhabitable. His analysis in "Tillmanism" thus places Walker in a tradition of Black writing that deploys psychopathology for anti-racist and anti-colonial resistance, again inviting comparisons that place him in dialogue with thinkers from Du Bois to Frantz Fanon. Nevertheless, though his commitment to Black nationalism and separatism signals affinities with later figures such as Garvey, Fanon, and Malcolm X, his modernism generally aligns him more closely with contemporaries such as Du Bois. Of course, Walker's *Neith* would enjoy neither the success nor the longevity that magazines such as Du Bois's the *Crisis* did in the United States. In fact, financial exigencies led to *Neith*'s early demise.

The third issue of *Neith* appeared in July 1903, three months behind schedule. Five months elapsed between the fourth and fifth issues. The fifth issue would be the last, but it is fitting that *Neith* ended the way that it began, restating the magazine's pledge to "offer all opposition within our capacity to every form of evil or oppression" ("Editorial" 238). To the end, *Neith* provided a forum in which Walker strove to articulate an Afrocentric, Black-nationalist program that transcended its local, regional, and national contexts. To promote that program to a Canadian readership, however, he first had to engage an anti-racist dialogue in a city and nation in which such a discourse had been rendered all but invisible, "obliterated from the Canadian psyche in general" (Shadd 11). This was a context in which white Canadian antipathy precluded the very critique — transnational in scope but directly targeting local, regional, and national racisms — that might have made Walker's modernism more proximately operative for Black communities in Saint John, the Maritimes, and Canada. The geopolitics of his pan-African project, however, did not necessarily represent a deterritorialization of racial politics.

Black Geographies and Local Legacies

Walker's modernist vision of Black futurity was fundamentally a spatial project, one that theorized separatism as the only solution to racial oppression in white-dominated Western states and that posited the continent of Africa as the eventual site of belonging for all African and African diasporic peoples. However, though that separatism might be taken to imply a disconnection from the localized or regionalized realities of long-resident Black subjects in the Maritimes, in fact it was integrally tied to activist traditions at the local and regional levels. Most immediately, Walker was part of a much longer tradition of activism in Saint John centred on St. Philip's African Methodist Episcopal Church. That tradition included the integration politics of fellow Saint John writer H.A.S. Hartley as well as subsequent civil rights organizations such as the British Negro Protective Association. Walker was among Black leaders in Saint John who had sought an educated clergyman to lead the congregation at St. Philip's (Fingard 26). Consequently, Hartley, a native of Port of Spain, Trinidad, was brought to Saint John from Ontario in 1888. Walker and Hartley appear to have become close; Walker gave the address at Hartley's reception in 1888, and the

two formed a fraternity together in 1889 ("Address"). However, whereas Hartley tirelessly preached integration from the pulpit, Walker would turn to Black separatism. Unlike Hartley's integrationism, Walker's African colonization scheme failed to win substantial support in the city before his sudden death in 1909. There is good reason to reject Winks's claim that *Neith* "sank without a trace" (*Blacks in Canada* 401). *Neith* introduced Black separatist politics to Saint John and likely made its residents responsive to similar movements. When Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association held a meeting at St. Philip's in May 1922, it was "well attended," the audience sat with "rapt attention," and a Saint John chapter was formed that evening ("Saint John"). It is difficult to determine with certainty whether Walker's separatism decisively oriented the community toward Garveyism; however, given the remarkable similarity between Walker's and Garvey's programs, Walker's close ties to St. Philip's,[5] and his role as community leader, activist, and public intellectual, it is highly probable that it did.

Similarly, on a regional level, *Neith* provided a forum and a focal point for Black intellectuals in the Maritimes, including the aforementioned Halifax-based lawyer and activist James Robinson Johnston; Reverend John Clay Coleman, author of *The Jim Crow Car: Or Denouncement of Injustice Meted Out to the Black Race* (1898); and Reverend Adam S. Green, author of *The Future of the Canadian Negro* (1904). Notably, the final issue of *Neith* featured Green's "The Present Demands for an Educated Negro Ministry," in which Green argued for higher education among the Black church leaders in the region, a need made more acute by the globalizing influences of new media, "the daily press, the telegraph, the telephone, the ocean cable, the Marconigram, railways, steamships, and a thousand-and-one other devices of diffusing knowledge" (215). His demand for Black education was a response to the contemporary moment of expanding transatlantic networks, and like Walker's aporetic response to modernity, Green's analysis takes aim at the double bind of equality and exclusion in the modern liberal state. What these intersections reveal is not a magazine divorced from localized sites of production, dissemination, and Black social and political struggle but one that connected urgent issues faced by local and regional Black cultures to the global struggle for racial justice and Black liberation. The situatedness of local and regional Black cultures within and across the Maritimes was not easily reconciled with the long-standing

nationalisms and emergent regionalisms that effectively obliterated blackness from hegemonic constructions of nation and region.

Like many early-twentieth-century magazines in the Maritimes, *Neith* was the product of translocal cultural exchanges. Unlike the editors of most contemporary magazines in Canada, however, Walker rejected regionalism and Canadian nationalism as legitimate vehicles for identity politics and social criticism, opting to foreground rather than to obscure the translocal and transnational linkages that constituted the region and its Black communities. As a Black-nationalist magazine, *Neith* rejected the region and the nation-state as primary loci of identification. Insofar as *Neith* offered coherent geopolitics across its diverse articles, it might be understood to point to how "black geographic narratives . . . reconfigure classificatory spatial practices" (McKittrick and Woods 5). Certainly, Walker's Black-nationalist modernism upset regional and Canadian-national classifications predicated on cultural and racial uniformity. For Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods, "the lives of [Black diasporic] subjects demonstrate that the 'common-sense' workings of modernity and citizenship are worked out, and normalized, through geographies of exclusion" (4). For Walker, both the region and the nation could be understood as manifestations of such geographies of exclusion. Perceiving white domination and racial intolerance to be so pervasive as to render North America irremediably hostile to blackness, Walker rejected the Maritime region, the Canadian nation, and the North American continent as potential sites of belonging.

Of course, his position was one among many adopted by Black writers, editors, and leaders in the Maritimes. When the *Atlantic Advocate*, the first Black newspaper in the region, appeared in Halifax in 1915, it aimed to be "the voice of coloured people in the Maritime Provinces," and it was devoted to "the interests of coloured people in the Dominion generally, but more particularly to those in the Maritime Provinces" (Jemmott 10). Placing particular emphasis on "the need for unity" at the regional level and committing itself to recording local and regional Black history, the newspaper imagined the region as a principal space of belonging and the appropriate scale at which to engage the struggle for racial equality and civil rights. Read in relation to the politics of place, as articulating "different desires for home," *Neith* and the *Atlantic Advocate* did not resolve tensions among transatlantic, diasporic, regional, and national frameworks (McKittrick and Woods 6). They did suggest, however, that these tensions were as much a part of the heterogen-

eous discourses informing modern Black Canadian writing as they were an animating feature of contemporary critical discussions. And both periodicals contested the whiteness that had been wedded to regional identity at the turn of the century, a union not merely symbolic but also rooted in concrete geographies of exclusion.

This structural and geographic manifestation of white supremacy was nowhere more apparent than in Canada's first incorporated city. Saint John had been founded upon the exclusion of Black life: the Saint John royal charter of 1785 at once established the oldest city in British North America and constituted what was perhaps the first legislative act of anti-Black racial discrimination in Canada, granting only "unto the American and European *white* inhabitants . . . the liberties, privileges and pre-eminences of freemen" (*Charter* 15; emphasis added). By the time that the charter was amended in 1849 to allow "any black person or person of colour" to "become a free citizen of, and be admitted to the freedom of the said City" ("Act" 136), structural violence, inequality, and racism were firmly embedded in the urban geography of Saint John. The city itself thus attests to the perpetual precarity produced by racialized geographies that exclude people of colour from conceptions of citizenship and subjecthood. Within this context, *Neith* emerges as the dissident voice of a disappeared community, a forum for people conceived of as non-citizens within the dominant white order. In this way, the project that Walker articulated in *Neith* transcended, even as it was forced to engage with, the regionalist, nationalist, and imperialist discourses of its time, achieving an effective modernism relevant to Black cultures within and across local, regional, and transatlantic geographies.

Notes

[1] I use the term "Afro-modernity" here, following Michael Hanchard, to refer to "a form of relatively autonomous modernity distinct from its counterparts of Western Europe and North America" (247). Although interlocked with Western modernities, Afro-modernity "is no mere mimicry of Western modernity but an innovation upon its precepts, forces, and features" (247).

[2] A robust anti-racist discourse did exist, even if it was rendered illegible within the white public sphere. *Neith* was certainly not the first Black periodical in what would become Canada; in many ways, it continued the intellectual tradition once sustained in Black newspapers such as Henry and Mary Bibb's *Voice of the Fugitive* (Canada West and Ontario, 1851-53) and Mary Ann Shadd's *Provincial Freeman* (Ontario, 1853-60?). And, though the first half of the twentieth century might have been marked by a relative dearth of writing

by Black Canadians, positive articulations of blackness and anti-racist discourse could be found in the "Church-spawned booklets of spirituals and hymns, newspaper verse, journalism, petitions to governments, and other ana and ephemera" that constituted the vibrant Black print culture in Canada at the beginning of the twentieth century (Clarke, *Odysseys* 109). *The Future of the Canadian Negro* (1904) by Adam S. Green — a contributor to *Neith* and a member of its editorial board — is exemplary of this literature of civil rights and resistance in *fin-de-siècle* Canada.

[3] Iton engages with modernist scholarship, particularly that of Baker, but ultimately rejects "black modernism" as an appropriate frame through which to read Black popular culture in America. He does so, in part, because of the "constitutive tension" of the terms "Black" and "modernism" discussed above but also because he takes issue with Baker's national framework and how his particular deployment of the "minstrel mask" and the "plantation" overlook "the constitutive bifurcations embedded in the modern/colonial relation as expressed in asymmetrical and differential access to the benefits of citizenship" (211). Baker's emphasis on national parameters (i.e., the United States) leaves little room for a diasporic, Canadian resident such as Walker. However, Baker's larger intervention — his revision of conventional modernist chronology to account for the range of innovative discursive practices developed by Black writers at the turn of the twentieth century — remains valuable.

[4] Walker derived the term from the last name of United States Senator Benjamin Tillman. As the Governor of South Carolina from 1890-1894, Tillman effectively disenfranchised Black South Carolinians, and as Senator from South Carolina from 1895-1918, he was a fervent opponent of civil rights. In his speeches — which Walker refers to as a "gospel of annihilation" ("Tillmanism" 16) — Tillman repeatedly defended lynching and argued that Black Americans must accept subordination or else face extermination (Kantrowitz 216).

[5] Not only was Walker a parishioner and lay leader in the church, but also his son, George Gilbert Walker, became a pastor in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, gaining minor renown as a church theologian (Angell and Pinn 143; Pinder 3). Among the views that he espoused was the image of "a 'God-Man' that alluded to a black Christ" (Pinder 3). Notably, the theological component of Garvey's project was also predicated on the Black Christ thesis (Johnson 128).

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