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Introduction: Parallax Visions of Transnational Modernisms

The "Transnational Turn" in literary studies has been running hot now for more than a decade, and its effects upon modernism studies are well documented. By developing new ways of thinking about cross-cultural influence and exchange, including a more nuanced sense of reciprocal flows, this movement is effectively remapping concepts of the production and reception of literature across time as well as space. The contested boundaries and forces of modernism—its duration, centres of intensity, authorial agents, tropological vocabularies, and patterns of dispersion and rejuvenation—as well as its location within a condition of modernity (another term that has undergone similar radical transformations), makes it perhaps especially fertile territory within which to conduct a critical transnational examination. The consequence thus far has been to profoundly expand the parameters of modernism in space and time, as well as in terms of genre, cultural register, and the political, class, and gender economies and lifeworlds of its authors and readers. These parameters are still being contested—the recent development of planetary modernism might suggest an outer limit to this expansion. What is clear is that the seismic ruptures of assumed taxonomies of modernism demand a rethinking of the term and its constitution from first principles.

In *What Is World Literature* (2003) David Damrosch investigates whether Goethe's concept of *Weltliteratur* suggests a viable contemporary cognate, given the concept's regeneration in the contexts of comparative and postcolonial literatures in the early years of the current century.[1] Goethe's anticipation of a global modernity as a marketplace for the trading of ideas was taken up by Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*: a mid-nineteenth century locus bearing a kind of post-national potential, and a way of exceeding existent models of exploitation in favour of a more fully experienced modernity.[2] This notion of

[1] David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 1-14.

[2] Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?*, 3-4.

world literature has aroused its fair share of concern, especially as it might be understood in the literature of modernism as well as in the contemporary moment. Does world literature include the sum of all literatures? What could possibly be excluded from its compass? Does inclusion come at a price of linguistic or cultural agency? How might the formation of its contours and focal points, and the regulation of its lines of agency—in short, its process of *worlding*—be understood, and how might the reader participate in this new cultural economy? How might writers and readers otherwise absent or overlooked be brought into its ken? And how might social, political, economic, military, ethnic, regional, national, linguistic, and other factors determine inclusion in a "world literature" or otherwise be shaped by such an idea?

Weltliteratur carried within it the latent faultlines of its definition and practice, where the dissatisfactions of its critics were to become productive territory for more versatile definitions and descriptions of literary practice. Emily Apter's *Against World Literature* (2013) lays down a direct challenge to the idea's viability, a challenge based in the material practices that mediate between literatures and languages, most notably translation in all of its varied definitions.[3] This revision of the perceived liberties of unfettered border crossing draws on embodied experience and theoretical reflection from a variety of disciplinary formations: gender, indigeneity, ecology, theology, and the metaphysics of planetarity, to name just a few. In her theorisation of planetarity, Susan Stanford Friedman offers an alternate view of the global literary system, in which literary production across time and place is an index of the globe not as a site of economic and cultural exchange, but as the *habitus* from which such production emerges. Her *Planetary Modernisms* (2015) develops a thesis first set out in the essay "Planetarity: Musing Modernism Studies," in which the conventions of taxonomy are blown open in a series of "definitional excursions" that take in literatures from the Tang Dynasty and the Abassid Caliphate as much as from the postcolonial Caribbean.[4] These kinds of modernism are cultural expressions of "transformational rupture," allowing modernism itself to become both global

[3] Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (London and New York: Verso, 2013).

[4] Susan Stanford Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity Across Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); and "Planetarity: Musing Modernist Studies," *Modernism / Modernity* 17.3 (2010): 471-99.

and transhistorical. But does this reanimate the old problem of *Weltliteratur*, applying a definition so widely that it threatens to halt the machinery of literary understanding, a loosened serpentine belt that whiplashes its way off a faltering engine?

These debates on the taxonomic scope of the terms *globe*, *planet*, and *transnational* bear direct consequences for the understanding and development of the field of modernism. Susan Stanford Friedman's study presents a direct challenge to both traditional and revised efforts to define modernism within historical and geographical boundaries. The now-legendary PMLA essay "The New Modernist Studies" by Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz in 2008 announced a basic challenge to definitions of the field by claiming a much-expanded methodological and formal conception of modernism, as well as an interrogation of its viability as an organising concept per se.[5] The field itself responded with gusto to this challenge, taking up some of Mao and Walkowitz's prompts to theorise and formalise innovative work in postcolonial, transnational, and media studies in examinations of a newly expanded canon of modernist texts—themselves embodied in a wider media palette, as well as in many cases having since experienced radical remediation themselves. The implications for understanding modernist work in relation to a newly historicised field of critical positions—informed by gender theory, sexuality studies, political economy, social theory, cultural studies, and more—extend to profound revaluations of erstwhile "core" modernist practitioners and to the assertion of alternate modernist histories, genealogies, and hermeneutic formations.

The intensity and quality of scholarship dealing with the transnational turn and its implications for modernism studies are widely in evidence: several texts have become essential points of orientation for much current work. Jahan Ramazani's *A Transnational Poetics* (2009) takes one literary mode (poetry) and one language (English) and demonstrates how conventions of national literature, cultural capital, and other historic markers are exploded by writers pressing the limits of their chosen form to explore such themes as globalisation, diaspora,

[5] Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, "The New Modernist Studies," *PMLA* 123.3 (2008): 737-48.

creolisation, decolonisation, and migration.[6] Given the continued dominance of the North American academy in literary studies, the transnational turn takes on a specific complexion with regard to the national literature of the United States. Wai Chee Dimock's *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time* (2006) reads American literature—including but extending well beyond modernism—as essentially imbricated in world literature rather than performing an allegiance to the nation state.[7] This work continues in the collection of essays edited by Dimock and Lawrence Buell, *Shades of the Planet: American Literature as World Literature* (2007), radically reconfiguring Goethe's term into one responsive to the emergence and hegemony of globalisation.[8] Paul Giles has written extensively on the transnational implications for the concept and corpus of American literature, perhaps most acutely resolved in *The Global Remapping of American Literature* (2011).[9] This study ranges from early colonial history to the present, showing how different epochs of American literature responded to, and were implicated in, specific global orientations. The implication for the notion of American literature is borne out in its identification with the geographical and political boundaries of the United States between the conclusion of the Civil War in 1855 and the end of the Carter presidency in 1981. The authors and works of American modernism thus reside squarely at the centre of this orientation of history and geography.

Scholars have taken this expanded view of national literature in other fruitful directions. Yunte Huang's *Transpacific Displacement* (2002) is a pioneering study in its critique of ethnography as a mode by which American literature has imagined Asia over the past century, particularly through the medium of poetry (in Chinese, in English, and in various modes of translation between the two). He widens the historical field and concentrates the geographic field in a subsequent book, *Transpacific Imaginations: History, Literature, Counterpoetics* (2008), in which an oceanic bond directs a cross-cultural literary project from

[6] Jahan Ramazani, *A Transnational Poetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

[7] Wai Chee Dimock, *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[8] Wai Chee Dimock and Lawrence Buell, eds, *Shades of the Planet: American Literature as World Literature* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007).

[9] Paul Giles, *The Global Remapping of American Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

Melville's *Moby Dick* to the fictional poet Araki Yasusada.[10] This turn to Asia, specifically in the context of American literature and the American academy in modernism studies, has had a significant effect on work in transnationalism. Eric Hayot's work attempts to remedy the dominant "Eurochronology" of modernism (about which more below), and the critical anthology *Pacific Rim Modernisms*, edited by Mary Ann Gillies, Helen Sword, and Steven Yao in 2009, remaps the Pacific as a zone connecting disparate cultures and literatures open to a renewed vision of migration and exchange.[11] Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel's critical anthology *Geomodernisms* (2005) explores the imbrications of geography and race, emphasising the subaltern rather than the hegemonic view.[12]

Following such pioneering examples of cross-cultural scholarship as Sanehide Kodama's *American Poetry and Japanese Culture* (1984), extensive work on modernism and East Asia has emerged in the Anglophone academy particularly in the last twenty years, including Robert Kern's *Orientalism, Modernism, and the American Poem* (1996), Cynthia Stamy's *Marianne Moore and China* (1999), Steven Yao's *Translation and the Languages of Modernism* (2002), and Zhaoming Qian's *Orientalism and Modernism* (1995) and *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art* (2003), to name only a few.[13] One of the most exciting developments in modernism and transnationalism is the emergence of scholarship on East Asian modernism and its mutual effects and influences with

[10] Yunte Huang, *Transpacific Displacement: Ethnography, Translation, and Intertextual Travel in Twentieth-Century American Literature* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2002); and *Transpacific Imaginations: History, Literature, Counterpoetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

[11] Mary Ann Gillies, Helen Sword, and Steven Yao, eds, *Pacific Rim Modernisms* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

[12] Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel, eds, *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005).

[13] Sanehide Kodama, *American Poetry and Japanese Culture* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1984); Robert Kern, *Orientalism, Modernism, and the American Poem* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Cynthia Stamy, *Marianne Moore and China: Orientalism and A Writing of America* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999); Steven Yao, *Translation and the Languages of Modernism: Gender, Politics, Language* (London: Palgrave, 2002); Zhaoming Qian, *Orientalism and Modernism: The Legacy of China in Pound and Williams* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 1995) and *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art: Pound, Moore, Stevens* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003).

the West. While much of this work is inaccessible to scholars without Chinese, Japanese, and Korean linguistic competencies, a growing corpus of work in English or translated into English provides encouraging signs that these boundaries may begin to dissolve in increasingly meaningful ways: Karatani Kōjin's *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* (1993), Roy Starrs's *Modernism and Japanese Culture* (2011), and Seiji M. Lippit's *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* (2002) represent recent work in just one East Asian national literature that is transforming the field of transnational modernism.[14] The primary obstruction to what might be a hugely productive reciprocal scholarly flow is fairly obvious: insufficient competency in East Asian languages by Western scholars, a situation that is showing signs of gradual—perhaps generational—change.

However, several scholars have already harnessed this expanded geography in productive ways. Bonnie Kime Scott's critical anthology *Gender in Modernism* (2007) continues her critical reorientation of modernism evident in *The Gender of Modernism* (1990).[15] The recent collection expands the boundaries of modernism in line with the transnational turn, investigating the nexus between contemporary feminist work and scholarship concerned with global location, race, trauma, and colonial and postcolonial contexts across a wide range of artistic media. Another recent key work is *Afromodernisms* (2013), a critical anthology edited by Fionnghuala Sweeney and Kate Marsh. This collection seeks to identify how black avant-garde artists and intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic shaped modernist artistic practice, and to interrogate blackness itself as a category in art and politics during and after interwar modernism. Tyler Stovall's essay "Black Modernism and the Making of the Twentieth Century: Paris 1919,"[16] demonstrates the recuperative and radical dimensions of this

[14] Karatani Kōjin, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 1993); Roy Starrs, *Modernism and Japanese Culture* (London: Palgrave, 2011); and Seiji M. Lippit's *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

[15] Bonnie Kime Scott, ed., *Gender in Modernism: New Geographies, Complex Intersections* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); and Scott, ed., *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

[16] Tyler Stovall, "Black Modernism and the Making of the Twentieth Century: Paris 1919," in *Afromodernisms: Paris, Harlem and the Avant-Garde*, ed. Fionnghuala Sweeney and Kate Marsh (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 19-42.

project by identifying the role of black artists in Paris in that crucial postwar year of 1919, and exploring how the black diaspora placed pressure on monolithic social and political identifications of black populations in European cultural centres.

If a first generation of scholarship in transnational modernism can be said to have arrived more or less completely with the proposition for a planetary modernism—its reach across space and time unhindered by conventions of chronology and erstwhile cultural narratives—then the network of connections and influences within this sphere still require full articulation. The essays in this special issue of *Affirmations* address many of the themes set out in this introduction, reflecting their historical moment and stimulating further debate and discussion of the definitions and implications for theories of modernism in a transnational vein. What follows below is a brief account of each essay, emphasising local contexts and global implications of the authors under discussion: with a tendency in several essays toward thinking through an antipodean modernism and how it might inflect a general theory of transnational modernism.

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The opening essay by Paul Giles, "*Ulysses*: Burlesque Modernism and Antipodean Parallax," reconfigures prevailing chronologies and geographies of modernism via arguably *the* text at the epicentre of transatlantic modernism, James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Giles invokes the *antipodean* as a relation between north and south that recalibrates the modernist project itself, rather than simply adding another region to the ever-expanding map of modernism (including its multiple temporalities). This rethinking of space, time, and cultural relations is made the more provocative in its "structural resemblance" to *burlesque*, like the antipodean a fulcrum for "reversal and transposition," and especially apposite as a measure of modernism in its quality of "reading backwards" or temporal splitting. Such tropes of backwardness take on ominous traction when applied to Australian modernism, but for every notion of regression and perceived self-satisfaction among cultural arbiters and audiences, there lies an opportunity for the antipodean to offset and reorient discourses of High Modernist disdain for more demotic cultural pursuits: in other words, for antipodean modernism to

function as the burlesque reconfiguration of modernism's planetary ambitions. The burlesque function in *Ulysses* extends well beyond the Nighttown episode, capturing in its incessant stylistic and modal diversities a resistance to centralised authority—cultural, national, political, linguistic—including that of a unified narrative voice. The novel's universe is structured by the formal principle of antipodean parallax, whereby space and time are realigned from their normative values in Western modernity to produce a global burlesque in which opposites are brought into alignment (embodied in the typesetting of Paddy Dignam's name and the direction of his corpse in his coffin, for example). The consequence is a series of transpositions of time—the International Date Line, narrative time, Greenwich time—and place—parallax, equator and tropic, latitude and longitude—producing a burlesque modernism that extends into a potential for planetary reversal.

In *Antipodean America* (2014) Paul Giles demonstrates how Australia has occupied the American literary imaginary from the earliest years of its British colonisation, presenting a transnational challenge to the rhetoric of independence and autonomy issuing from the United States, from its revolutionary birth through to the present time.[17] In his essay "Christina Stead's 'Devil's Kitchen'," Sam Matthews examines Stead's first novel, *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*—Stead also receives close attention in *Antipodean America*—by way of a reoriented transnational lens. Stead's internationalist and socialist tendencies are well known, as are her literary influences that include nineteenth-century French novelists, Balzac foremost among them. Taking several narrative cues from Balzac's novel *Illusions perdues* (*Lost Illusions*), Stead's text reimagines the choice between aesthetic desiccation in the provinces and entry into the literary field in the urban capital as a movement between suburban Sydney and its inner city, as well as between Sydney and the capitals of Europe. But Stead inverts this structure in terms of geography and genre, resituating the *bildungsroman* within a young nation, and shifting the narrative burden from a single protagonist to a "mesh" of multiple consciousnesses. This allows for a multi-faceted social critique as well as opportunities to challenge generic formations of gender and class in which cultural capital and literary production are often enmeshed.

[17] Paul Giles, *Antipodean America: Australasia and the Constitution of U.S. Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Matthews pays particular attention to the way Stead's narrative engages tropes of printing and forgery—again adapted / purloined from Balzac and smuggled into the Australian literary field—to produce a self-conscious interrogation of literary originality via the critique of the conditions of material production in an age of globalised commodity capitalism.

The transnational turn in modernism studies that has brought a renewed focus on writing from Australia and elsewhere outside of the transatlantic zone is perhaps most vividly evident in the upsurge of attention to East Asia and especially China. Sophisticated arguments by Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, Shu-mei Shih, and others recalibrate what is understood as Chinese modernism, and the implications for transatlantic modernism of increased exposure to Chinese culture and ideas finds eloquent articulation in work by Haun Saussy, Steven Yao, Christopher Bush, and Eric Hayot, among many others.[18] Ira Nadel's essay, "Oriental Woolf," articulates this second tendency, tracing out the manifold ways Virginia Woolf absorbed and deployed aspects of the cultures and aesthetics of the Orient (understood as non-European, Moroccan, Persian as well as Chinese) in her work. Her first perceptions drew upon a stereotyped exoticism of the East inherited from her Victorian forebears, but contained the seeds of a scepticism that later unfolded into a more nuanced consideration of particularly Chinese aesthetics (influenced by her nephew Julian Bell's extended residency in China). Such examples of Woolf's Orientalism as Lily Briscoe's "Chinese eyes" in *To the Lighthouse*, or "the foot of the Chinese murderess" in her story "The Mark on the Wall," are modulated by the challenge to an outdated colonialism in the form of Constantinople: "a place of exploration, study, and intense expression." Whilst the critique of imperialism appears only tangentially

[18] On Chinese modernism, see Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, "Twentieth-Century Chinese Modernism and Globalizing Modernity: Three Auteur Directors of Taiwan New Cinema," in *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity*, ed. Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), 133-50; and Su-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001). Some recent examples of Western modernist responses to Chinese culture include: Haun Saussy, Eric Hayot, and Steven Yao, eds, *Sinographies: Writing China* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007); Erik Hayot, *Chinese Dreams: Pound, Brecht, Tel Quel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); and Christopher Bush, *Ideographic Modernism: China, Writing, Media* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

in much of her work (unlike her husband Leonard's acute anti-colonial awakening), Woolf's "Oriental style" develops by way of her attention to East Asian aesthetic practices that had received pronounced attention in contemporary London by her Bloomsbury contacts, as well as by such figures as Laurence Binyon, Arthur Waley, Ezra Pound, and others. This style, influenced by a resurgent Chinoiserie during the first decades of the century, is embodied in Woolf's treatment of time, character, and the means of expression in her stories and novels, not least, as in the famous portrait of the Qianlong emperor, in a theory of multiple selfhood and the role of objects in the expression of self.

The urban cosmopolitan novel achieves a strong interwar representation in writers from Germany and Mitteleuropa, such as Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* (1924), Hermann Hesse's *Steppenwolf* (1927), Alfred Döblin's *Alexanderplatz* (1929), Hermann Broch's *The Sleepwalkers* (1931-32), and Elias Canetti's *Auto-da-Fé* (1935), not to mention the setting of Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* (1936). The peculiar transnational intensities at the geographical heart of Europe also produced cosmopolitan narratives now considered middlebrow, such as Stefan Zweig's *Beware of Pity* (1939), Joseph Roth's *Radetzky March* (1932), as well as their numerous shorter fictions. Vicki Baum's *Grand Hotel* (1929) is beginning to receive the attention it deserves as a narrative within this tradition, but it remains a problem novel in that it embeds distinctly modernist techniques within its avowed self-promotion as a "potboiler." In her essay "Intermodernism and Transnational Modernism," Juliane Römhild considers Baum's novel as an example of intermodernism: it crosses stylistic boundaries into documentary fiction—showing the influence of "American cool" upon interwar Weimar culture—and draws on techniques from the new mass media in its challenge to conventions of high and low cultural production. Baum's engagement with *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity)—a German artistic and literary movement of the Weimar period which took its cues from an American pragmatic view of art in its reaction to expressionism—functions as a means by which to examine the relation between High Modernism and middlebrow and popular culture. Yet the emergent middlebrow category does not capture sufficiently the modernist experimentalism evident in Baum's novel, and Römhild's essay fruitfully reads the novel within the specifically German manifestation of intermodernism, taking its stylistic cues from the emergent vocabulary of film, jazz, and popular culture.

Russell Smith presents a deft argument that extinction "is a vector of transnational modernity" in his essay "Global Modernity, Anthropogenic Extinction and the Future of Sexual Difference." This claim bears strong empirical support, entangling biology, culture, and politics in ways that appear both patently obvious and deeply troubling. Taking Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (subtitled "The Modern Prometheus," lest we forget) and the daemon's threat to Victor Frankenstein to seek his revenge at the location of human sexual reproduction—"I will be with you on your wedding night"—Smith reads Julia Leigh's Tasmanian novel *The Hunter* as a cognate exploration of modernity, extinction, and sexual difference. The leading villains of both texts complicate the moral register, however, with Victor's creature eliciting readerly sympathy and the eponymous hunter M throwing off his humanity and "becoming-animal" in his pursuit of the last remaining thylacine or Tasmanian tiger. Just as asexual reproduction comes to dominate the moral imagination of Victor and his creation, imagining a queer future in which sexual difference becomes extinct, *The Hunter* develops a critique of extinction narratives of both the thylacine and of Aboriginal Tasmanians—victims of genocide and also of the colonial narrative of extinguished "full-bloodedness." The survival of Tasmanian Aboriginality marks a "queerly modern" identity beyond that of a Neo-Darwinist theory of "race-as-blood," finding its counterpoint and echo in M's divestment of his sexual attraction to Lucy Armstrong in virtue of his libidinal investment in hunting his marsupial quarry, ostensibly to harvest her genetic material for his biotech employer. Both novels explore the relation between sexual indifference and the potential for human extinction.

Heidi Stalla and Diana Chester explore how cultural objects are appropriated and deployed to harness certain kinds of prestige and capital, taking Abu Dhabi's rapidly developing cultural precinct on Saadiyat Island as a vivid example of a reverse flow of Western Orientalism. As the leadership attempts to engender a cultural elite within the next generation, some of the West's most prestigious museums have or soon will open branches in the United Arab Emirates—the Louvre, the Guggenheim, and the British Museum among them. The Emirati acquisition of cultural appurtenances to bolster this new global economic centre is underwritten by economic might rather than enforced appropriation (or outright theft) exercised by Western colonial powers in the past. By setting these Emirati ventures against the fate of the Parthenon Marbles exiled in the British

Museum, Stalla and Chester uncover some of the pressure points of expropriation and curation of objects bearing significant cultural value. Virginia Woolf's direct and mediated experiences of Greek and Egyptian archaeology sets this discourse within an identifiably modernist milieu: the title character of *Jacob's Room* performs an unwitting parody of British cultural imperialism on a visit to the Acropolis, embodying a self-aggrandizing but potentially hollow inheritance of classical culture. The question remains whether Abu Dhabi's recent cultural appropriations reflect similar anxieties of legitimacy and inheritance, or manifests a gesture of cosmopolitanism and cultural exchange. Stalla and Chester evaluate the Zayed University photographic project and exhibition *Lest We Forget: Structures of Memory in the U.A.E.* in a fascinating exploration of these issues.

The transnational energies invested in radical political thought and avant-garde artistic practice of modernism find expression in the "Manifesto for an Independent Revolutionary Art," co-authored by Leon Trotsky, Diego Rivera, and André Breton in Mexico City in 1938. Mark Steven shows how this multilinguistic collaborative event was facilitated by—made possible by—the "distaff side of the three couples," namely Frida Kahlo, Jacqueline Lamba, and Natalia Sedova, and how the scene of its composition, 1930s Mexico City, becomes an apposite counterpart to 1914 London and 1920s Paris in the history of modernism. The fertility of communist thought in Mexican soil finds its corollary in the fascinations "the oldest country in the new world" held for such Soviet artists as Vladimir Mayakovsky, Sergei Eisenstein, Victor Serge, and others. Art and revolution, and art *for* and *because* of revolution, mark out Mexico as an alternative to modern capitalism and its cultures on the southern borders of the emergent hegemon, the United States. Steven analyses visual artworks—Eisenstein's films, Rivera's murals, and Tina Modotti's photography—to demonstrate how the visual field of modernism in its peculiarly Mexican revolutionary inflections embodies a transnational vitality, an alternative to art commandeered by the liberal capitalist nation state.

Emmett Stinson's essay conducts an exploration of modernist cosmopolitanism in his reading of the texts of Wyndham Lewis across several decades. The term *cosmopolitanism* has generated renewed valency in contemporary theory and in its applications to modern and contemporary literature, but it continues to

occupy an agonistic space. Recent work connecting modernist aesthetics with a pluralist cosmopolitanism allows for critical divergences from the latter's basis in Enlightenment liberalism. Revisionist work that seeks to include non-Western views of globalisation both informs, and is made problematic by, Wyndham Lewis's cosmopolitanism, shaded by his thinking on race, nation, and liberal governance, and taking on different inflections at various stages of his life and career. Lewis's novel *The Childermass* (1928) illustrates his suspicion of cosmopolitanism in the wake of the nationalist aggressions precipitating World War One. The novel is set in a posthumous and evidently purgatorial camp, run by an authoritarian Bailiff who refuses basic human rights such as *habeas corpus*, providing a bitter critique of plutocratic and inherently violent forms of democracy in contemporary Britain. This critique is parlayed in *The Mysterious Mr Bull* (1928) to deny essentialist notions of English identity in favour of internationalism, and eventually to a cosmopolitanism freed from racial and nationalist essentialism, and best illustrated in Lewis's depiction of the postwar United States in *American and Cosmic Man* (1949), *Rude Assignment* (1950), and *The Writer and the Absolute* (1952). Lewis's cosmopolitanism, elided in recent influential accounts of modernist cosmopolitanism, reveals how New Modernist Studies deploys modernist texts to "think laterally about the contemporary," and risks eliding the way modernist works critique the conditions of liberal capitalism in which their authors found themselves.

Jean Rhys—white, Creole, Dominican, whose literary star was born on the Left Bank of 1920s Paris—embodies a knot of problems for transnational readings of her work. In "Jean Rhys's Piecing of the Local and the Transnational in *Voyage in the Dark*," Sue Thomas examines Rhys's novel (1934) as a productive site of contestation with regard to gender, national, class, and racial identities. Deploying Jahan Ramazani's notion of the *translocal*, and adapting Rhys's own writerly metaphor of *quilting*, Thomas traces out how Rhys crosses boundaries of nation, geography, and culture, and develops allegiances at local and transnational levels—allegiances readily available to her readers. The novel addresses a series of moral panics in the late-nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth—literary decadence, amateur prostitution, "tropicality," the ragtime craze—developing (or "stitching") its themes out of a series of now-lost notebooks Rhys began in her late teens. By spatialising time Rhys is able to reformulate moral panics as serial events centred upon decadence and

degeneracy. In so doing, she turns this logic to an immersive first-person narrative in which the protagonist Anna Morgan is able to incorporate and problematise difference in its various manifestations: temporal, cultural, geographic, racial, as well as within the economies of gender and sexuality. Anna's racial liminality is productively read within the discourse of tropicality, whereby the tropics are figured as other-than-civilised, as fantasies of sublimity or visions of miscegenation, slavery, and latent violence. The sea, and specifically the Atlantic Ocean, surges into Anna's dreams at points of narrative crisis, joining with historical and artistic representations of the Middle Passage and its latter day revival in British Neocolonial plantocracy in the Caribbean.

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These essays claim a common ancestry as papers initially delivered at "Transnational Modernisms": the second conference of the Australasian Modernist Studies Network (AMSN) held at the University of Sydney on 15-17 December 2014. Each author has extended exemplary generosity and patience on the path to publication, and I thank them individually for this collective act of gracious collegiality. On behalf of the AMSN I would also reiterate my thanks to the School of Literature, Art and Media (SLAM) Conference Support Scheme at the University of Sydney, as well as to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the then-Dean, Professor Duncan Ivison, for financial support that allowed the conference to take place and flourish. In all delegates from each of the six inhabited continents delivered 48 papers over two days, creating a sense in which geography became the field for proximity rather than distance, folding themes, authors, and methods into a singular event that continues to radiate throughout the essays presented here. Paul Giles, Ira Nadel, and Sue Thomas delivered three provocative and wonderfully stimulating keynote lectures. Finally I extend my profound thanks to the editors of *Affirmations: Of the Modern*, Julian Murphet and Sean Pryor, without whose energy and judiciousness this special issue would not have taken shape. I take ownership of any remaining errors, of course, at the same time as I invite readers to be stimulated and provoked by the essays themselves, and to take them beyond a boundary.