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Planetary: Musing Modernist Studies

Susan Stanford Friedman

La modernité, c'est quoi? Modernity, what is it? Imagine a polylogue of reflections on this question. [fig. 1]¹



Fig. 1. Anupam Basu. *Scripts of Modernity*, 2009.

- Modernity is Europe's Enlightenment, the break from religious hegemonies and the spread of science, technology, and cosmopolitan ideals of freedom and democracy.
- Ilaju ti awon oy-ibo mu wa si ile awon enia dudu, imunisin and imuleru lo da, ati awon orile ede ti ko too rara; orile ede tori jakujaku rederede ranran, opolopo ijoba l'onkuna lotun losi.
[Modernity is Europe's brutal colonialism built on the systematic enslavement of Africans, arbitrary and imposed nation-state boundaries, and the formation of modern

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472 African identities amidst the legacies of corruption and failed states.] Translated from Yoruba.

- আধুনিকতা মানে বাংলার নবজাগরণ ।
বাঙালির আত্মবিশ্লেষণ, আত্মউপলব্ধি ।
শুধু বাঙালী হিসেবে নয়, ভারতবাসী হিসেবে
ব্রিটিশ সাম্রাজ্যবাদের বিরুদ্ধে রুখে দাড়ানো ।

[Modernity is Bengal's Renaissance, its self-critique and self-realization that emerges in the nineteenth century out of its struggle against British colonialism, not only as Bengalis, but as Indians.] Translated from Bengali.

- La modernidad en Latinoamérica es el mestizaje, producto de una mezcla excepcional de culturas colonizadoras y colonizadas; un mestizaje atrapado entre la hegemonía europea y la norteamericana.
[Modernity is Latin America's métissage, its particular mixture of colonizing and colonized cultures, caught between European and North American hegemonies.] Translated from Spanish.

- 现代性是不断的进步，
是摆脱封建主义的落后和西方列强的凌辱，
并在属于亚洲的新世纪里超过西方。

[Modernity is China's project for the future, moving beyond the backwardness of the past and the humiliations of foreign domination, reasserting the centrality of its five-thousand year civilization as a moral, global force.] Translated from Chinese.

- الحداثة في العالم العربي هي تجديد لكل قديم متبلور بالثقافة الدينية،
والإنسانية العربية، والنهضة العلمية، ومنطق الإجتهد، والتغيير الإبداعي عوضاً
عن التمسك بالتراث الراكد.

[Modernity is the Arab world's rebirth of the old informed by religious discourse, Arab humanism, scientific progress, the rationalism of *ijtihad*, and creative transformation rather than conformity to a stagnant *turath* (heritage).] Translated from Arabic.

- आधुनिकता भारतीय स्वतंत्रता है,
ब्रिटिश राज से जन्मी, विभाजन के लहू में नहायी,
विश्व के वृहदतम प्रजातंत्र व तकनीकी
महाशक्ति में विकसित होती ।

[Modernity is Indian Independence, born of British rule, bathed in the blood of Partition, and growing as the world's largest democracy and a technological powerhouse.] Translated from Hindi.

Modernity, of course, has no single meaning, not even in one location. This polylogue—constructed collaboratively with colleagues at the University of Wisconsin-Madison—voices particular views shaped by different planetary positionalities.² Globally and locally, modernity appears infinitely expandable. Listening to these diverse voices, reading their scripts, I despair—especially for the new scholar just entering the field of dreams, a Tower of Babel with too many levels to climb; but also for the older scholar, trained in the old modernist studies: vertigo out on a limb, whirled up into a vortex of the new. Yet I also rejoice. Change is what drew me to modernism in the beginning. Why should it ossify? Why should the fluid freeze over, the undecidable become decided?

All that is solid melts into air.³ We know that. Why should we want a stability for the field that the modernists themselves rebelled against? Caught in the polylogue, we are in the thick of things. At the level of scholarship and teaching we inhabit what it is we study. As W. B. Yeats asks, “How can we know the dancer from the dance?”⁴ We are participating in what we study, and we should not be apologetic about it. This is a planetary epistemology of modernity, of modernism.⁵

The New Modernist Studies: Expansion and Containment

In their 2008 overview of the “new” modernist studies in *PMLA* Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz characterize the field’s expansions along three major axes—the temporal, horizontal, and vertical, by which they mean the growing historical and geographical reach of modernist studies as well as the dissolution of divisions between high and low art and culture.⁶ Jennifer Wicke has dubbed the field’s making itself new a form of rebranding, a commodification of the field that ensures our own complicity in the logic of globalization.⁷ In *Disciplining Modernism*, Pamela L. Caughie asks whether modernism can or should be contained and if so, what would be the ethics/politics of such “disciplining”?⁸ We wonder, have the field’s boundaries become so boundless as to incorporate everything and thus lose all definitional cogency or analytic utility? Does this rebranding exhibit imperial ambitions to colonize other fields? Or is this new planetary reach an unraveling of foundational hierarchies? Modernism, like modernity, exceeds definitional and disciplinary limitations. And yet, these terms require some set of meanings to provide any functional use. The conjunction of the need for limits and their failure to contain characterizes modernist studies today, recapitulating the logic of modernism/modernity itself. As Garry Leonard suggests, modernism/modernity is like the internal combustion engine: both exhibit an endlessly recurring dynamic of explosion and containment. The logic of modernity follows the hydraulics of pressure and explosive release; containment and then movement.⁹

Beyond Anxiety and the Comfort Zone

There is a palpable anxiety pervading modernist studies, according to Stephen Ross, a meta-critical angst about the nature of the field that manifests in uncanny attempts

474 to define modernism and “make it new,” thereby creating an ethically unjustifiable need for ourselves as a professorial elite.¹⁰ But a retreat into the comfort zone of a modernist studies based on late nineteenth-early twentieth century “high modernist” experimentation in Europe and the U.S., is neither desirable nor possible. The cat is already out of the bag. And yet, the danger of an expansionist modernism lapsing into meaninglessness or colonizing gestures is real.

To navigate between these extremes, I advocate a *transformational* planetary epistemology rather than a merely expansionist or additive one, one that builds on the far-reaching implications of the linkage of modernism with modernity. This link, reflected in the title of the Modernist Studies Association’s journal, *Modernism/Modernity*, might seem so obvious by now as to be unworthy of note. But it wasn’t always so. In the early days of the field, modernism was understood primarily in formalist terms as a loose affiliation of movements coalescing around certain aesthetic rebellions, styles, and philosophical principles and resisting the aesthetics of immediate precursors in the arts and literature of so-called “high” culture.¹¹ Curiously, the substantive link between modernism and modernity appeared in Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane’s introduction to their 1976 volume, *Modernism*. They wrote:

Modernism is the one art that responds to the scenario of our chaos. It is the art consequent on Heisenberg’s ‘Uncertainty principle’, of the destruction of civilization and reason in the First World War, of the world changed and reinterrupted by Marx, Freud, and Darwin, of capitalism and constant industrial acceleration, of existential exposure to meaninglessness or absurdity.¹²

In spite of their book’s limited canon, the seed was sown for a radical departure from aestheticism as the definitional foundation for modernism.

Modernism, for many, became a reflection of and engagement with a wide spectrum of historical changes, including intensified and alienating urbanization; the cataclysms of world war and technological progress run amok; the rise and fall of European empires; changing gender, class, and race relations; and technological inventions that radically changed the nature of everyday life, work, mobility, and communication. Once modernity became the defining cause of aesthetic engagements with it, the door opened to thinking about the specific conditions of modernity for different genders, races, sexualities, nations, and so forth. Modernity became modernities, a pluralization that spawned a plurality of modernisms and the circulations among them.

To resist the definitional expansions in modernist studies is to fight modernism’s constitutive link with modernity. Could it be that the anxieties about the geohistorical and generic expansion of modernist studies represents an uncanny desire to re-establish a particular early twentieth-century Western aesthetic style as the *sina qua non* of modernism? What is the ethics of that interminably repeated comfort zone? How are we to break the hold of the old modernist mold? That is the question, if we want to foster a planetary modernist studies.

Thirteen ways of looking at a blackbird.¹³ Thirteen ways of looking at the interconnections of modernism slash modernity. The point of Wallace Stevens's iconic poem—like the point of Cubism—is epistemological: that seeing is multi-faceted; that what is seen must be seen from multiple points of view. Hold it up. Walk around it. Mull on its multiplicities. Listen to others who hold it up, walk around it, mull on its multiplicities. Resist fixity, finality, single perspectives.

Blackbird One: The Slash—Modernism/Modernity



Selena Beckman-Harned. *Thirteen Blackbirds*.

Interrogate the slash! A planetary epistemology in modernist studies begins by looking at the meanings embedded in that slash between modernism/modernity. The slash both connects and separates, it is the paradox of all borders. Many regularly assume that modernism mirrors, reflects, reacts, or responds to modernity—as if the historical condition of modernity precedes the aesthetic response to it, as if modernism comes belatedly as the avant-garde of dissolving epistemological and political hegemonies. I want to suggest however, a simultaneity of effects and practices. I think we should stop positing modernism as modernity's self-reflexive other, its symptomatic reaction formation, its oppositional consciousness.

Instead, I suggest we regard modernism in its different geohistorical locations and periods as a powerful domain *within* a particular modernity, not something outside of it, caused by it, or responding belatedly to it. From this perspective, modernism is a force effecting change as much as it intersects other domains of change. Thus, I am suggesting that we treat modernism as the domain of creative expressivity *within* modernity's dynamic of rapid change, a domain that interacts with the other arenas of rupture such as technology, trade, migration, state formation, societal institutions, and so forth.

The slash between modernity/modernism implies a simultaneity, but also a distinction; a connection, but also a separation. Modernism is a part of modernity, a part that is centered in modernity's aesthetic dimension, which is distinct from other dimensions but not separate from them. Though interlocked with institutional or economic forces, for example, modernism's expressive domain is a product of particularly human agencies in the media of the creative, the aesthetic, and the representational. Focused on the contradictions of the slash, this approach opens doorways to seeing how the aesthetic interacts with other arenas of change. It also empowers a planetary approach to modernism that breaks the Anglo-European hold on the field. Every modernity has its distinctive modernism.

476 **Blackbird Two: A Confession**

Dean Tersigni. In
*Honor of Edgar Allen
Poe's "The Raven."*
© 2002.

I must confess, however, to some anxieties that I have not yet resolved. The power of those early concepts of modernism as the crisis of aesthetic representation, with a repudiation of nineteenth-century realism, remains very strong within me. It is one thing to claim, as I have, that texts like Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1966) and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) are "modernist," defining a postcolonial modernism both interlocked with and yet distinct from Euro-American modernism.¹⁴ The formalist experimentalism of these texts makes them philosophically, psychologically, and aesthetically attuned to writers like Conrad, Joyce, Woolf, and Faulkner, however different their modernities.

It's another thing entirely for me to make such a claim about a novel like *Brick Lane* (2003), Monica Ali's predominantly realist novel of Bangladeshi migration to London. *Brick Lane* deliberately echoes *Ulysses* and *Mrs. Dalloway*, embeds epistolary narratives from London and Bangladesh, and deals centrally with what migration scholar Nikos Papastergiadis calls "the restless trajectories of modernity," the dialogic and contrapuntal psychologies characterizing the "turbulence of migration."¹⁵ But is *Brick Lane* a "modernist novel"?

I'm caught in a conundrum of my own making—my insistence on a planetary approach to modernism, alongside my anxiety at the implications of its scope. This is a confession. I find it hard to call a novel like *Brick Lane* "modernist." But I think this is my problem, not the problem of the more capacious understanding of modernism as the expressive domain of modernity I proposed earlier. I think the struggles within the field are embedded in my psyche. The anxiety is there, but I'm not proud of it. It needs to be worked through, as a holdover from the past. That's what it means to leave the comfort zone.

Blackbird Three: Eurocentrism's Hold

Pistoxenos Painter.
Apollo and his raven
on a white-ground
bowl, c. 480 BCE.
Delphi Archaeological
Museum.

A planetary epistemology of modernism/modernity must break the mold of Eurocentrism. "Eurocentrism," writes Aamir Mufti, is "an *epistemological problem*" ("Global Corporatism," 493). Epistemology signifies ways of knowing and embeds the political questions of who is doing the knowing, for whom knowledge is produced, how knowledge is deployed, and who benefits from that deployment. Eurocentrism, of course, is not the only centrism on earth—all societies construct narratives of their own centrality, exceptionalism, and world view through which others are viewed and against which they are measured. But in modernist studies, Eurocentrism is the dominant centrism to confront because the West's narrative of itself is the story of its own invention of mo-

ernity and because the field of modernist studies itself began in the West as a study of Western modernities and modernisms. A planetary modernist studies begins with “provincializing Europe,” to invoke Dipesh Chakrabarty’s resonant phrase.¹⁶ Add to this an awareness that the concept of “the West” is itself deeply centric, repressing the heterogeneities and peripheries *within* Europe and North America and the degree to which the West has never been and is not “one.” Eurocentric “structures of historical knowledge,” as Mufti writes,

normalize and *make* normative the idea of Europe as “the scene of the birth of the modern”. . . . It is the social and cultural *force* of this idea of Europe in intellectual life . . . that I am referring to here as Eurocentrism. . . . Humanistic culture is saturated with this informal developmentalism—a “first in the West, and then elsewhere” structure of global time. . . . in which cultural objects from non-Western societies can be grasped only with reference to the categories of European cultural history, as pale or partial reflections of the latter, to be seen ultimately as coming late, lagging behind, and lacking originality.¹⁷

The old mold of modernist studies narrates just such a tale of informal developmentalism—“we” did it first in the West (although the origin dates and locations differ radically, from Baudelaire to Imagism, from the Impressionists to the Cubists); and then “they” did it elsewhere: derivative and belated.

The power of the field’s originary narratives of modernism is a wonder to behold.

Blackbird Four: The End of the Nominal and the Rise of the Relational



Lynette Shelley. *Three Ravens*, 2009. www.lynetteshelley.com. Mixed media on Canson pastel paper.

How can we challenge those Eurocentric originary narratives, exploding radically out of their forces of containment, to invoke Leonard’s combustion metaphor? The first step is to set aside the nominal definition of modernity as it has so commonly been constructed:

Modernity is: [fill in the blanks]

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

Anthony Giddens, for example, a progressive doyen of sociological modernity studies, defines modernity as a specific historical development characterized by the rise of the nation-state, panoptic bureaucracies, and capitalism as developed in the West from the eighteenth century and spread to many parts of the world by the twentieth century. In his view, globalization is the diffusion of Western modernity to the rest of the world. He is not alone.¹⁸

A planetary epistemology of modernity, in contrast, needs to be relational, delineating not a nominal set of characteristics (e.g., “big” = x, y, and z), but rather defining

478 one thing in relation to another (e.g., “big” is not “small”). It focuses on the dynamics of change, the self-consciousness of change, or even the illusion of change—a “before” and “after,” an “old” and a “new.”¹⁹ As Bruno Latour writes, “Modernity comes in as many versions as there are thinkers or journalists, yet all its definitions point, in one way or another, to the passage of time. The adjective ‘modern’ designates a new regime, an acceleration, a rupture, a revolution in time.”²⁰ This relational, adjectival approach to modernity is more suited than a nominal definition to planetarity because it enables recognition of a spatial dimension to modernity’s temporality, an interactional set of relations throughout the globe that may also manifest differently in particular places and times. It provides a comparative framework that balances the commensurable—what different modernities share—with the incommensurable—how they are different.

Of course, the relational dynamic of old and new is fraught with contradictions. Elsewhere, I have posited modernity’s relational structure as a temporal narrative that invents the “before” as “tradition.” Tradition is itself a construct of modernity, coming into being at the moment of its loss, a process both celebrated and lamented. In relational terms, Modernity contains within it a struggle—often a violent one—between modernizers and traditionalists—evident, for example, in *both* the U.S. and the Middle East today. It also contains a palimpsestic layering of new over old, one that often involves a misrecognition of powerful continuities that is constitutive of modernity. For some, such misrecognition involves a haunting of the old in the new, a return of the repressed occasioned by the ruthless forgetting of the past that Nietzsche and De Man theorized as constitutive of modernity.²¹ For others, it represents illusory thinking based in what Bruno Latour describes as the needs of the moderns “to invent the Great Divide” between themselves and the premoderns.²²

In facing the question of how new is “the new,” and how much must we forget to think of it as “the new,” we also bump squarely into a major difficulty with the relational approach. Where the nominal definition provides the comfort of relative stability (modernity = a, b, and c), the relational approach opens us up to the difficult question of whether anything is “not modern,” and thus whether any expressive form is “not modernist.” Is there a historical period which is not undergoing rapid change across a spectrum of social indicators? Are there texts which are not engaged with that change? For any text that I might name, would someone rise up to defend its particular form of engagement with a particular modernity? Milton’s *Paradise Lost* for example? Willa Cather’s *O Pioneers!*? Norman Mailer’s *The Naked and the Dead*? For *modernity/modernism* to have utility as analytic categories, even relationally defined, must we identify the *not modern, not modernist*?

Blackbird Five: An Experiment, Bound to Create Resistance

479



Mark Graver. *Blackbird V*, 2008. Acrylic resist etching, 300x300mm.

Although I still struggle with these questions, let me briefly share an experiment; an attempt to draw a verbal map of modernity relationally defined as a set of conditions—dare I say structures?²—open to a vast array of distinctive articulations across the *longue durée* of history.²³

Modernity as Matrix of Converging Changes**Vortex of Change:**

technological, commercial, political
cultural, religious, aesthetic
familial, sexual
uneven
unequal

Radical Ruptures:

shattering breaks
movement, mobility
acceleration, speed
collisions
fluidity
dynamism
freedom/unfreedom

Hybridity Heightened:

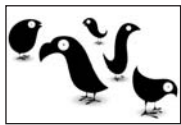
encounters
contact zones
mixing, mimesis
convergence, conjuncture
transaction, translation
juxtaposition
innovation

Phenomenology of the New and the Now:

utopic/dystopic
exhilaration, alienation
disorientation, defamiliarization, despair
nostalgia
the Other elsewhere and within
epistemological flexibility
ruthless forgetting
haunting
invention of tradition

480 Striking, you might say, how much that map exhibits a modernist poetics drawn from the early twentieth century in the West. In fact, Satya P. Mohanty challenged my chart on just those grounds, saying that it represents an imposition of an aesthetic perspective onto modernity, instead of the philosophical one featuring individualism that he prefers, or the socioeconomic one Giddens delineates. He may be right.²⁴ Perhaps all relational definitions slide into the nominal, incorporating willy-nilly some presupposed characteristics. As I struggle with this problem, I acknowledge that I am what I study, formed by my background in literary studies—this is epistemologically true. I cut my critical teeth on manifesto modernism—perhaps my efforts to move outside of my epistemological frame end up repeating it. On the other hand, for the word *modernity* to mean anything at all, we need to think about what is put into relation with what, and how that relationship takes on different forms at different geohistorical locations. Perhaps the modernist poetics of the early twentieth century in the West presciently articulated a logic at work in other times and places.

Blackbird Six: The Multiple, Polycentric, and Recurrent



A relational epistemology allows us to see the globe afresh, to see that modernity which is not one, to see modernity in its multiple and diverse forms in the geohistory of the world. In step with the rapidly proliferating rhetorics of plural modernities, I ask, here, for an approach diametrically opposed to that of Fredric Jameson in *A Singular Modernity*, in which he argues that “Everyone knows the formula by now. . . . you talk about ‘alternative’ or ‘alternative’ modernities. . . . But this is to overlook the other fundamental meaning of modernity which is that of a worldwide capitalism. . . . I believe that the only satisfactory semantic meaning of modernity lies in its association with capitalism.”²⁵ Such a reductionist view limits the nominalist definition, even more radically than Giddens does, to a set of one: capitalism. Jameson’s notion of singularity impoverishes what needs to be a complex approach to the overdeterminations of history and the enmeshments of different systems of power in understanding modernity.

The profusion of terms for modernity’s plural formations belies the singularity Jameson seeks. The field abounds in such adjectives for modernity or modernities as *multiple*, *polycentric*, *early*, *at large*, *alternative*, *other*, *peripheral*, *divergent*, *discrepant*, *uneven*, *conjunctural*, and *recurrent*.²⁶ Each term is its own keyword, with different nuances, particularly in what it suggests about the relation to Western modernities. I like how they suggest a spatial approach to modernity, a necessity for globalizing a concept that has been predominantly temporal. I like how they assume an uneven temporality for the emergence of different modernities. Some arise at the same time, such as the modernities of colonizer and colonized in the *fin de siècle* of Britain, Egypt, and India. Some arise at different times, such as the early modernities of India in the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries or the postcolonial modernities of Africa after 1960. I like how the term *polycentric* posits each modernity as its own center, with others as their peripheries. I also like how the terms *uneven* and *discrepant* invite analysis of unequal

power and privilege, both between differently located modernities and within a single location. I do object to the way such terms as *alternative*, *other*, *peripheral*, and even *divergent* reinstate Western modernity as the center, with all the “other” modernities as marginal or derivative. In sum, I like terms that suggest the fluidity and multiplicity of modernities, terms that refuse to use one modernity as the measure of all others.

I have been probing the potential of yet another term, *recurrent* modernities, because it suggests that human history cycles unevenly through periods of relative stasis and then explosive kinesis; between retrenchment and expansion, continuity and change, consolidation and risk; between inward and outward mobilities.²⁷ The concept of recurrent modernities requires a capacious historical archive, the *longue durée* of world historians or what Wai Chi Dimock calls “deep time.”²⁸ Different points of the globe flare up at different times as nodal points of transformational change across a wide spectrum of societal domains, each taking a particular form in its geohistorical location—from long ago world systems to today’s globalization. As Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar writes, “*everywhere, at every national/cultural site, modernity is not one but many, modernity is not new but old and familiar; modernity is incomplete and necessarily so.*”²⁹

Blackbird Seven: Conquest, Coloniality, and World-Systems



U.S. Air Force Blackbird.

“There is no modernity without coloniality,” Walter D. Mignolo writes.³⁰ He is speaking specifically of European and Latin American modernities formed constitutively through conquest since 1500. He regards them as distinctive modernities, but thoroughly enmeshed, formed through interaction with each other through conquest, or through colonial and postcolonial relations. “We have come to understand colonialism and conquest as the very condition of possibility for modernity and for aesthetic modernism,” writes Andreas Huyssen of Euro-American modernism.³¹ Have we all come to this understanding, I wonder, or do (post)colonial modernities and modernisms remain at the periphery of the field?

More fundamentally, do other, even earlier empires combine periods of violent conquest with rapid technological change, world-systems of trade and cultural exchange, the bang/clash of different peoples and their world views, and new representational practices in the arts and other expressive domains? Yes, I think they do. For starters, the Roman Empire; Tang Dynasty China; the Muslim Empire centered especially in the commercial and cultural capitals of Baghdad, Al-Andalus, and Timbuktu; the Mughal Empire in India; and the largest land empire in human history, the Mongol Empire—all encompassed these phenomena I am calling modernity *before* the modernities of the post-1500 world-system. All produced explosively creative mixtures of peoples and cultural practices.³² Putting the formation of Western modernity within that *longue durée* does not diminish its global power, but it does change the exceptionalist, diffusionist, and hierarchical originary myths of modernity that have dominated the field.

482 Recognizing the violence and conquest that are so often a constitutive part of recurrent modernities helps prevent discourses of modernity's fluidity, multidirectionality, and reciprocal exchange from sliding into a utopian rhetoric of happy hybridity. To counter this tendency, I keep reminding myself that the massive ruptures of modernity across a spectrum of social formations are most likely to occur during periods of rapid, often brutal conquest that cause wide-scale material, psychological, spiritual, representational, and epistemological dislocation.

And yet, with the dislocations of imperial or hegemonic dominance come creative re-locations. With suffering also come the transformative agencies of the human imagination. Recurrent modernities, I believe, are neither pure defeat nor pure progress. They are geohistorical moments of dynamic kinesis that put in dialectic the dystopic with the utopic, slaveries with freedoms, destructions with creations. At the center of these contradictions lie the self-reflexive and representational domains of modernity, the arena of all modernisms.

Just think of jazz: Remember that Paul Gilroy argues that the first modern subjects of the Enlightenment period were the Africans torn from their homes, enslaved in the New World—alienated, exiled, transplanted, and infinitely creative.³³ And in that new world, their descendants blended European and African musics to create creolized musical forms that have themselves transformed, traveled, and transplanted throughout the planet.

Blackbird Eight: Circulations, Networks, and Translations



Erin McKean. Photograph, 2010.

Polycentric, recurrent modernities and their modernisms develop not in isolation but always relationally through encounters with other societies and civilizations, encounters which are transcultural, not unidirectional. “Les contacts entre les cultures—,” Édouard Glissant writes,—c’est là une de données de la modernité” / “Contact among cultures is one of the givens of modernity” (*PR*, 39/26). Historians of the global ecumene like André Gunder Frank trace large-scale patterns of encounter through commerce, war, technology, migrations of people, and cultural practices.³⁴ Anthropologists like James Clifford and Arjun Appadurai trace traveling cultures, intercultural networks, and the processes of cultural translation and transculturation, asserting that distinctive cultures form through hybridic interaction with others.³⁵ In *The Hybrid Muse* and *A Transnational Poetics* Jahan Ramazani adapts these concepts of circulating cultures to propose a planetary poetics of modernism that is “both discretely located and thoroughly enmeshed, networked, cross-racialized.”³⁶ As Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel argue in *Geomodernisms*, thinking “in terms of interconnected modernisms” “breaks open” the term *modernism* into something they call “geomoderisms,” a landscape of interlocking engagements with “cultural and political discourses of global modernity.”³⁷ In “Modernism, Geopolitics, Globalization,” Melba Cuddy-Keane brings the “interactivity and interdependency” of “cultural globalization” to modernist studies, insisting on the multidirectional, kinetic, and impure fluidity of “disjunctive global

flows.”³⁸ Reginia Gagnier’s Global Circulation Project is a vast online dialogue among scholars around the world on the circulations of different Anglophone modernisms.³⁹

The borderlands of contact zones create creolizations on all sides through patterns of imitation, adaptation, transculturation, and cultural translation. “I call creolization the meeting,” Glissant writes, “the interference, shock, harmonies, and disharmonies between the cultures of the world, in the realized totality of the world” (“Unforeseeable Diversity,” 290). Beyond *creolization*, dozens of keywords in English are being used—and presumably in other languages—for these processes, each with different resonances, often suggesting both utopic and dystopic forms of intercultural encounter. Think, for example, of the opposing weight of terms like *contamination* versus *adaptation* or *theft* versus *translation*. I have been collecting these keywords and sorting them into distinctive rhetorics based on the biological (e.g., adaptation, bastardization, contamination, grafting, rhizome, transplantation, etc.); the corporeal (e.g., incorporation, absorption, cannibalization, ingestion, etc.); the commercial (e.g., borrowing, commerce, exchange, lending, traffic, etc.); the political (e.g., accommodation, alliance, appropriation, collaboration, co-optation, etc.); the technological (e.g., interlocking, network, web, transmission, etc.); the cultural (e.g., assimilation, blending, encounter, hybridization, vernacularization, etc.); and the representational (e.g., mimesis, cutting and pasting, distortion, translation, versioning, etc.). In short, the vast array of keywords for interculturalism on a global scale point to the major domains that constellate different modernities.

Models of planetary cultural traffic, mimesis, and translation need to supplant older concepts of modernist internationalism, which are typically based on binaries of Self-Other, modern-traditional, civilized-savage, high art-primitive art. The appropriation model in particular regards the modernists of the West as cosmopolitan producers of culture who cite or steal the traditions of the Rest to break out of the repressive, clichéd, or narrow representational conventions of the West. Whether used in praise or critique of the West’s modernism, the appropriation model recapitulates the logic of imperialism, with the Rest providing the raw material transmuted into modernist art in the West. As Jahan Ramazani argues, “Criticism that reduces high modernist . . . ‘appropriations’ to orientalist theft or primitivist exoticism may risk circumscribing instead of opening up possibilities for global and transnational analysis.”⁴⁰ Picasso’s *Les Femmes d’Alger (O. J.)* (1907), with its incorporation of African masks into three of the five faces of the prostitutes in the painting, is often invoked as the iconic example of this appropriation model.⁴¹ [fig. 2] As Simon Gikandi has argued, such discussions often refuse to grant African art the position of aesthetic or formal innovation, instead reducing it to the fetishistic and psychological.⁴² In contrast to the appropriation model, a planetary approach to cultural circulation would stress how the agencies of African artists producing and being collected in Africa in the late nineteenth century were part of a colonial modernity, constituting a colonial modernism that Picasso and the cubists indigenized, that is, made native to Parisian modernism. The creative agencies of modernities outside the West circulated into the West as transformative influences. Who, we must ask, is derivative of whom? [figs. 3–6]

Take for another example the Ukiyo-e, or Floating World woodblocks from Japan, absorbed into Paris in the 1880s as *Japonisme* swept the West while Japan itself modern-

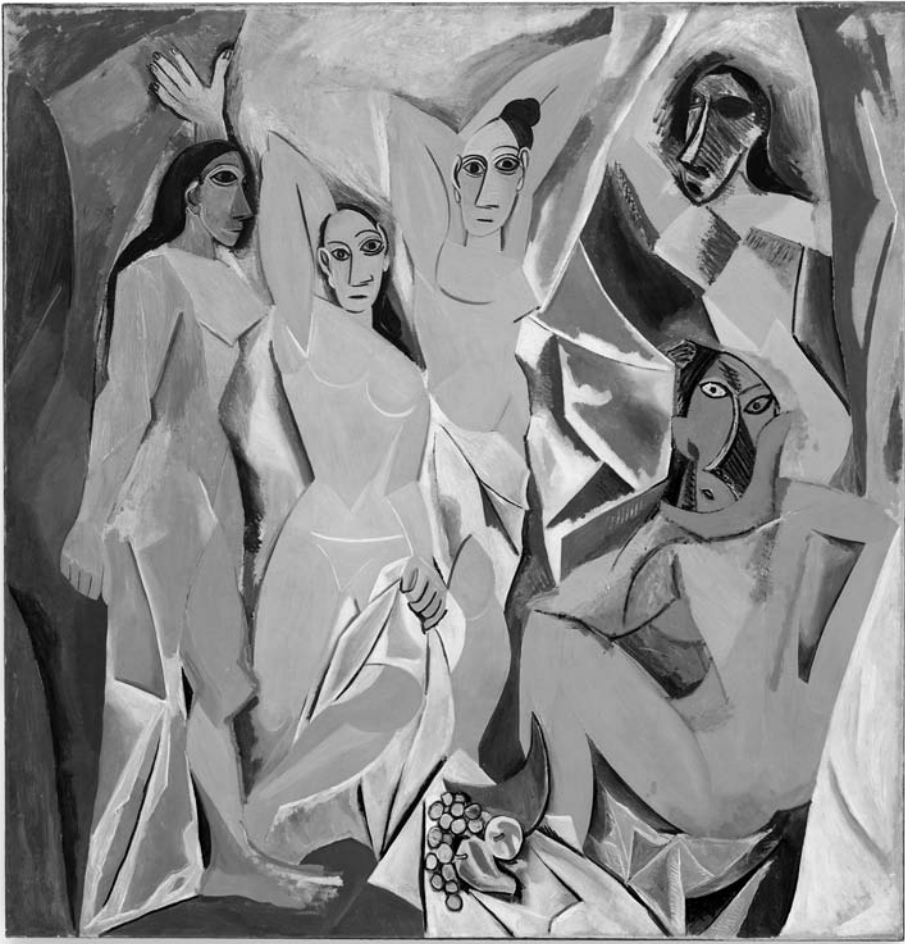


Fig. 2. Pablo Picasso. *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. Version O)*, 1907. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest. © The Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS).

ized in the Meiji period. [figs. 7 and 8] As a form of “low” or popular art, the Ukiyo-e had been produced since the seventeenth century in Edo, a little sea of commercial and aesthetic modernity within Japan’s feudal state. Van Gogh called the Ukiyo-e “savage,” and freely translated their bold aesthetics of cropped edges, radical designs, and color patterns, to make his palette and frame “modern.”⁴³ [fig.9] Mary Cassatt indigenized the Ukiyo-e as well, adapting formalist qualities, as in *The Boating Party* (1894), along with their fascination with interiors, fabrics, material culture, and moments of intimacy [fig. 10]. She did not regard the Ukiyo-e artists as “savage,” but rather promoted their artistry through collecting Ukiyo-e and displaying her favorite, Utamaro, side by side with her *Suite of Ten* (1890–1891) in her own house. [figs. 11 and 12] Again, I ask, who is derivative of whom? And how does seeing Japanese popular art as the source of aesthetic innovation indigenized in France change our understanding of modernism?⁴⁴



Fig. 3. Pablo Picasso. Detail, *Les Femmes d'Alger*, 1907. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest. © The Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS).



Fig. 4. Mbuya mask, Pende, Congo. 19th century. Painted wood, fiber, and cloth. Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, Tervuren, Belgium.



Fig. 5. Pablo Picasso. Detail, *Les Femmes d'Alger*, 1907. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest. © The Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS).



Fig. 6. Mask, Etoumbi region, Congo. 19th century. Musée Barbier-Müller, Geneva.

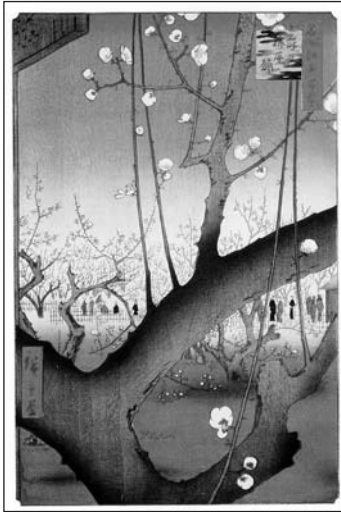


Fig. 7. Utagawa Hiroshige. *Plum Estate, Kameido* from the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*. 1857. Woodblock print. Brooklyn Museum. Gift of Anna Ferris.



Fig. 8. Vincent Van Gogh. *Flowering Plum Tree (After Hiroshige)*, 1887. Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).



Fig. 9. Vincent Van Gogh. *The Sower*, 1888. Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).



Fig. 10. Mary Cassatt. *The Boating Party*, 1893/94. Oil on Canvas. Chester Dale Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.



Fig. 11. Kitagawa Utamaro. (1753–1806). *Midnight: Mother and Sleepy Child*. 1790. Polychrome wood-block print; ink and color on paper. H. 143/8in. (36.5 cm); W. 9 5/8 in. (24.4cm). Rogers Fund, 1922 (JP1278). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, U.S.A. Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Art Resource, NY.



Fig. 12. Mary Cassatt. *The Bath*, 1890/91. Drypoint, aquatint, and softground etching, 436 x 300 mm (sheet), Mr. and Mrs. Martin A. Ryerson Collection, 1932. 1287, The Art Institute of Chicago. Photography © The Art Institute of Chicago.

Blackbird Nine: Plural Poetics



Lynn Simmons. *Blackbirds Fly*, 2000. Steel rod, wood beam, charred wood pieces. c. 8'x1'x7'.

A planetary aesthetics of modernism needs to be transformative rather than merely additive. It is worthwhile to identify texts—visual, verbal, auditory—outside the West that exhibit the aesthetics of so-called “high modernism,” but a fully planetary approach should aim to detect the different forms that representational rupture take in connection with different modernities. We need to let go of the familiar laundry list of aesthetic properties drawn from the Western culture capitals of the early twentieth century as *the* definitional core of modernism. I’m attached to that list, as I have confessed. But we need to provincialize it, that is to see “high” or “avant-garde” modernism as ONE articulation of a particularly situated modernism—an important modernism but not the measure by which all others are judged and to which all others must be compared. Instead, we must look across the planet, through deep time, and vertically within each location to identify sites of the slash—modernity/modernism—and then focus our attention on the nature of the particular modernity in question, explore the shapes and

488 forms of creative expressivities engaging that modernity, and ask what cultural and political work those aesthetic practices perform as an important domain within it.

Let me be clear: I am not suggesting we abandon consideration of the aesthetic, the formal, particularly the creative agencies of expressive culture that put into question the representational conventions of their time and place. I want to avoid the familiar polarization of aesthetics and politics that privileges one over the other. Rather, I hope that we can be open to different kinds of aesthetic innovation linked to different modernities around the world and through time. In this regard, the aesthetic is always imbricated in the political, the historical. And *vice versa*. Not a single set of formalist characteristics, but rather the formal *per se*, however it might articulate the modern.

Take, for example, the experimental blend of high and low culture as aesthetic markers of an African diasporic modernity in the Harlem Renaissance. Langston Hughes's *Montage of a Dream Deferred* weds a jazz and blues aesthetic to the lyric sequence form of the twentieth-century long poem and the dialectical principles of cinematic montage:

Dream Boogie

Good morning, daddy!
 Ain't you heard
 The boogie-woogie rumble
 Of a dream deferred?

Listen closely:

.....
You think
It's a happy beat?

.....
 Sure,
 I'm happy!
 Take it away

Hey, pop!
 Re-bop!
 Mop!

Y-e-a-h!⁴⁵

Take the particular intertextuality of postcolonial modernisms. The global citational strategies of Pound and Eliot are reinvented in the dialogic engagement of the colonized with the colonizer, through denaturalizing mimics or indigenizing transplantations, as in Tayeb Salih's or Arundhati Roy's rewriting of *Heart of Darkness*. Roy's play with Conrad's title—"Dark of Heartness tiptoed into the Heart of Darkness"—does more than mimic in a colonial register. It relocates the "darkness" of all states (colonizing,

colonized, and postcolonial) from the purely geopolitical to the interpenetrations of public and private, institutional and personal, thereby fostering a rereading of Marlow's lie to the Intended.⁴⁶ Postcolonial intertextualities are not derivative; they innovate, in a different register, breaking with other and often multiple conventions.

A planetary modernist poetics must be plural, opening up the concept of formal ruptures to a wide array of representational engagements with modernity. "Rather than privilege the radically new in Western avant-gardist fashion," writes Huysen, "we may want to focus on the complexity of repetition and rewriting, *bricolage* and translation," or the layering of high and low, realism and experiment, "thus expanding our notion of innovation."⁴⁷ In Latin America, Mary Louise Pratt argues, European avant-gardism developed alongside other experimentalisms with rural, frontier, and ethnographic aesthetics blending orality, popular forms, realism, the vernacular, and the supernatural—as in the modernist magic realism of Gabriel García Márquez.⁴⁸

Blackbird Ten: Plural Languages



Blackbirds of 1928.
Music score cover.

How can modernist studies be planetary if it is monolingual, if it operates within the *lingua franca* of any given era, if it reproduces the linguistic hegemonies of modernity's imperial legacies, if, for example, it remains within the confines of global English today?

"Le dit de la Relation," Glissant writes, "est multilingue. Par-delà les impositions des puissances économiques et des pressions culturelles, ils s'oppose en droit au totalitarisme des visées, monolingues" / "Relation is spoken multilingually. Going beyond the impositions of economic forces and cultural pressures, Relation rightfully opposes totalitarianism of any monolingual intent" (*PR*, 31/19). Even more than multilingualism, however, Glissant advocates a "worldness" in which "we write . . . in the presence of all the world's languages, all of them, leaving none out of consideration":

If we say that we write, henceforth, in the presence of all the world's languages, . . . If we rediscover the fact that we can change through exchange with others, without losing ourselves. . . then we are able to glimpse what I would like to call worldness, which is our common condition today. ("Unforeseeable Diversity," 287)

Modernity's polylogue is a vast archive of hundreds of languages beyond the ken of any individual. But Glissant's "worldness"—his concept of "planetary consciousness"—asks not for the impossible linguistically, but rather for a transformative epistemology: that we write with the consciousness of the diversity of languages and cultures and the richness that these differences bring. In this sense, the multilingual archipelago of the Caribbean is his model for "worldness." Creolization, for Glissant, is not the synthesis or fusion of difference into a monolingual sameness, not a global homogenization. Instead, *creolité* represents the principle of linguistic differences in mixture: the contact zones

490 of encounter, linkages, interconnections—a poetics of multilingual relation based in the continual play of multiple vernaculars.⁴⁹

Translation has a central role to play in the multilingual globalization of modernist studies. Translation involves a paradox of the commensurable and incommensurable, as Emily Apter argues in *The Translation Zone*. Equivalence from one language to another, one culture to another is not possible, but the existence of world systems for thousands of years has necessitated the continual presence of translation, evident in the ancient Rosetta Stone in Egyptian hieroglyphics, Egyptian Demotic, and Greek from 196 B.C.E. and the more recent Chengde Imperial Stele in Manchu, Tibetan, Chinese, and Mongol from the Qing Dynasty in the eighteenth century. [figs. 13 and 14] Planetary cultural circulations, networks, and enmeshments of the global and local all depend upon translation, broadly understood from the linguistic to the cultural. Indeed, linguistic translation is essentially a practice of intercultural encounter and border thinking, the basis upon which other cultural traffic depends. Translation is a form of adaptation, transplantation, indigenization—from one culture to another. The multidirectional traveling of modernities and their modernisms is fundamentally a translational practice.

On a planetary scale, the multitude of vernaculars coexists with the singularity of a *lingua franca*, a common language that enables the cultural flows of the global ecumene—from Aramaic, Latin, Sanskrit, and Chinese to Arabic, French, and English. The coexistence is a dynamic and tense one, with the vernaculars perpetually under threat, with the native speakers of the common language privileged above all others.⁵⁰ Translation in planetary modernist studies today ought to be reciprocal and multidirectional. But it is too much of a one-way street, with the rest of the world translating English texts into other languages, with many fewer works being translated into English, and with English translation too often serving as the mediation between two other languages.⁵¹ Challenging modernity's complicity with colonialism in the formation of a planetary modernist studies requires studying, reading, and empowering the vernaculars.

Every modernity plays out linguistically in a dialectic of the vernacular and the cosmopolitan. The linguistic cosmopolitanism of *Ulysses*, *The Cantos*, or *The Waste Land* is famously citational, absorbing languages from elsewhere into English. Make no mistake, however. The opposition between vernacular and *lingua franca* or cosmopolitanism does not reproduce the binary of traditional/modern. The vernacular has often signaled a modernity of a different kind, a resistance to the hegemony of the language of elites of all kinds as part of widespread societal change.⁵² Chaucer's Middle-English and Dante's Italian were harbingers of the Renaissance, breaking with the dominance of Latin. Women, at times denied access to the languages of "high literature," wrote and read in the vernacular, helping local spoken languages develop literary cultures: for example, Lady Murasaki in the early eleventh century, broke with the dominance of Chinese in high culture, by writing *The Tale of Genji* in Japanese.⁵³ In medieval Al-Andalus, a new poetic form arose called the *Muwashshahāt* counterpointing the parallel love laments of a man speaking in classical Arabic and a woman speaking in



Fig. 13. *Rosetta Stone*, Egypt. 196 BCE. © Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig. 14. *Chengde Imperial Palace Stele*, Qing Dynasty, China. 18th century. Inscriptions in Manchu, Tibetan, Chinese, and Mongol.

the vernacular, as Maria Rosa Menocal shows.⁵⁴ In fifteenth-century Orissa, a group of low-caste (sudra) poet-saints challenged the Sanskrit-educated elite in producing revolutionary poems in Oriya, the local vernacular, according to Satya P. Mohanty. One of these, Baram Das, writes an explicitly feminist narrative in the vernacular that advocates gender and caste equality (“Alternative Modernities,” 3–5). In his novella, *The Broken Nest*, Rabindranath Tagore conflates the association of the vernacular with modernity and women writers by having a woman’s anonymously published, fresh, modern writing in the vernacular take literary Calcutta by storm for its break with the artifice of convention-ridden Bengali poetics.⁵⁵ The vernacular, as Amit Chaudhuri writes, is “the idiom of modernity.”⁵⁶

Blackbird Eleven: Anxiety’s Return

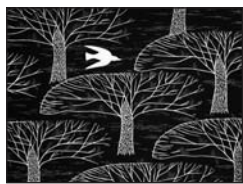


The Blackbirds, *Anatomy of Melancholy*. 2006. Album cover, Blackdog Records.

I see doubt in your faces; I feel doubt in my own. Ten ways of seeing that blackbird have produced an archive of modernisms that is staggering in its global and temporal reach. That way paralysis lies. What’s a poor scholar to do? This is too much. That’s just going too far. Don’t we need to discipline the proliferation of modernisms and their interconnections? Can’t we just globalize modernism within a single and identifiable historical period—let’s say, 1890 through 1950, as the Modernist Studies Association’s website proclaims, or 1840 through 1950, if we want to include the French? *Genug*, enough already!

492 Ah, that old comfort zone again, the return of what is so hard to repress in modernist studies. I suggest, however, that we return instead to the full significance of the slash: Modernism/Modernity. If modernism is constitutively linked to modernity as the creative and expressive domain within it, then we are bound to recognize that particular modernisms take shape within different modernities and can potentially end up looking very different from each other. That slash has consequences.

Blackbird Twelve: The Archives of Planetary Modernisms and How to Read Them



Whitney Sherman. *Blackbirds*. © 2010.

To work within a planetary framework, no single scholar need do it all. Instead, we can recognize the foundational meaning of collaboration in the project of scholarship—we share a common project, however our views, methods, and languages differ. We can each locate ourselves in a manageable way among the multiplicity of critical practices in modernist studies. We can find our own place on the critical map of the field, one that suits our particular interests and knowledge

base. As navigational guide, I suggest one or more of four main critical practices, each distinctive but also blendable: Re-vision; Recovery; Circulation; Collage.⁵⁹

Re-vision is the act of looking again, of defamiliarizing the familiar archive by looking anew through different lenses, asking new questions of “high modernism”: Picasso, Pound, Joyce, Woolf, Eliot, and so forth. What are the traces of other modernities within the texts of European and Anglo-America “high modernism”? Where are the footprints of the planetary in the local formations of the West? What is the ghost in the machine? Scores of scholars since Simon Gikandi’s pathbreaking *Maps of Englishness* have learned to read coloniality in the modernisms of Europe and the U.S.⁶⁰ But the planetary not only incorporates Western empires but also exceeds them. The planetary of what Dimock calls “deep time”—a transcontinental spatiality as well as *longue durée*—needs to be reread in the modernisms of the West.⁶¹

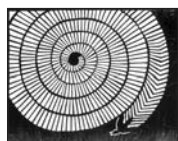
Recovery is the act of digging, an archaeology of new archives—other modernities outside the familiar Western ones and thus other forms of creative expressivities. New books on other modernisms are proliferating, working with modernisms contemporaneous with or in different time-frames from Western modernisms. In his translation of *Kalapurnodaymau/ The Sound of the Kiss* from the Telegu of the sixteenth century, V. Narayana Rao, for example, claims an early modernism for Pingali Suranna, citing his invention of the novel-in-verse genre for Telegu literature, his radical disruption of literary conventions, and his psychologizing of the human mind. Rao also translates a more recent Indian modernism: *Kanyasulkam/ Girls for Sale*, an 1892 Telegu play using parody, masquerade, and satire to attack both the colonial government and the gender system within Indian culture.⁶² Multilingual scholars are the avant-garde of such recoveries, locating buried and forgotten texts in the global archive of languages, but scholars working in translation are also essential to bring knowledge of these modernisms into the *lingua franca* of the field.⁶³

Circulation is the archive of mobility, calling for the act of seeing linkages, networks, conjunctures, creolizations, intertextualities, travels, and transplantations connecting modernisms from different parts of the planet. Often the pathways are the routes born of colonialism, passages to India, Africa, or the Caribbean by western writers like Forster or Conrad; passages to the colonizers' metropole by writers like Jean Rhys, Mulk Raj Anand, or Tayeb Salih. How is that relationality experienced, reflected upon, represented? What is the interplay of roots and routes in those circulations across the globe? Unlike a center/periphery model, circulation stresses the interactive and dynamic, assuming multiple agencies, centers, and conjunctures around the world.

Collage is the archive of radical juxtaposition, the scholar's act of paratactic cutting and pasting. It establishes a montage of differences where the putting side by side illuminates those differences at the same time that it spotlights commonalities. Ideally, collage is a non-hierarchical act of comparison, a joining that illuminates both commensurabilities and incommensurabilities. Take, for example, from different parts of the world and different decades, Aimé Césaire's *Notebook for a Return to the Native Land* and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée*. Voila! What comes into focus is a diasporic modernism based in the instabilities of colonial exile and the imaginative recreation of lost homes: for Césaire, Negritude reuniting the diasporas of slavery with black Africa; for Cha, the maternal body as route to a syncretic phenomenology of home and homeland. Both invoking the rhythm of *aller/retour*.⁶⁴

Re-vision, Recovery, Circulation, and Collage: Four strategies for reading particular modernisms within a planetary epistemology. This is manageable. We can each find our place on the map without vertigo, paralysis. We don't need to try to do it all. We can change our epistemological framework and locate our specific method within it, as one part of a large, fluid, mobile project to which all of us are contributing, differently. Planetary: Modernist Studies as a living, breathing organism.

Blackbird Thirteen: The Planet in Planetary



Michael Spafford,
The Planet. No.
9 from woodcut
series, *Thirteen
Ways of Looking at
a Blackbird*. 1975.
Courtesy of Mi-
chael Spafford.

Planetary in its very name invokes the Earth in deep time. Does the planet have its own modernities, crises distinct from those of the human species? The critical practices of re-vision, recovery, circulation, and collage can examine the meanings of the non-human world for the human and the interactions of human modernities with the Earth as a planet in the cosmos. Can we, for example, re-vision Eliot's waste land in the context of ecological disasters and read the human mind as objective correlative of the landscape scarred by war? How do the rivers of *Heart of Darkness*, *Season of Migration to the North*, and *The God of Small Things* both shape and exceed the human stories upon them? "Time passes," Woolf famously writes in *To the Lighthouse*, with human modernities a mere parenthesis within nature's geohistory.⁵⁷

Perhaps more answerable is to examine the intersection of human modernities with the earth's non-human species, diversities, and cosmic rhythms. Ursula K. Heise

494 calls for an “eco-cosmopolitanism”, or environmental world citizenship” that frees the term cosmopolitanism from early twentieth-century modernist “connotations of social privilege and leisure travel.”⁵⁸ Glissant’s poetics of relation includes a call to recognize the “relational interdependence of all lands, of the whole Earth,” and the particularly harsh consequences of the “politics of ecology” for the poor (*PR*, 146). He asks for an “aesthetics of the earth” which is not “anachronistic or naïve: reactionary or sterile,” but rather an “aesthetics of rupture and connection,” of “disruption and intrusion” that can encompass “the half-starved dust of Africas,” “the mud of flooded Asias,” “in epidemics, masked forms of exploitation, flies buzz-bombing the skeleton skins of children,” “in city sewers” and so forth (*PR*, 150, 151). In what way do our human modernities Other the Earth, he wonders.

Planetaryity



Akira Studios,
*Guardian of the
Blackbirds*. © 2004
all rights reserved.

Photo by Larry
Blount.

Planetaryity as I use the term is an epistemology, not an ontology. On a human scale, the “worldness” the term invokes—to echo Glissant—means a polylogue of languages, cultures, viewpoints, and standpoints on modernism/modernity. It requires attention to modes of local and translocal meaning-making and translation, to processes and practices of perception and expression on a global scale. It is not nominalist, fundamentalist: it doesn’t name a singular modernism/modernity, thereby privileging one over all others. It must, by its very “worldness,” encompass multitudes on a global grid of relational networks. And that means encompassing contradictions, tensions, oppositions, and asymmetries. Like rooted and situated cosmopolitanisms, planetaryity suggests a capacity to engage simultaneously with local and global modernities. It embraces the generative energies and synergies of modernism’s Tower of Babel. In that, it is utopian.

Not very quotidian, I know; not down and dirty in the trenches of reading, teaching, conferencing, publishing. But nonetheless planetaryity is a vision that can percolate through the practices of everyday professional life.

Planetaryity is not a threat, it is an opportunity. It means leaving the comfort zone for the contact zone.

Notes

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1. My thanks to Anupam Basu, who developed Figure 1 as a moving image accompanied by the music of Bartok for the powerpoint presentation counterpointing the MSA version of this essay.

2. For their collaborations, scripts, and translations, Tejumola Olaniyan (Yoruba); Anupam Basu (Bengali); Guillermina De Ferrari (Spanish); Nicole Huang, Edward Friedman, and Daisy Yan Du (Chinese); Duaa Saleme and Ammar Naji (Arabic); and B. Venkat Mani (Hindi).

3. See Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* 2nd ed. (New York: Penguin, 1988).

4. "Among School Children," *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (New York: Macmillan, 1956), 212–14.

5. I use the term *planetarity* in a different sense than Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), where she invokes "planetarity" as a utopian gesture of resistance against globalization as the geohistorical and economic domination of the Global South. Terms such as *planet*, *planetary*, *globality*, *globalism*, *world*, *worldness*, *worlding*, and *worldliness* abound in cultural theory without stable meanings; they are often utopic or dystopic, typically connoting a transnational consciousness or world system beyond the national paradigm, though seldom denying the continued significance of the nation-state. I use the term *planetarity* in an epistemological sense to imply a consciousness of the earth as planet, not restricted to geopolitical formations and potentially encompassing the non-human as well as the human. For the shifting rhetorics of the planetary, global, or worldness, see for example, Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 1–37; Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 29–57; Wai Chee Dimock, *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006); Edward Said, "Culture and the Cultures," *Times Higher Education Supplement* 24 (January 1992): 19; Bruce Robbins, "Comparative Cosmopolitans," in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, ed. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 247; Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature," *New Left Review*, Second Series (January/February 2000): 54–68; Emily Apter, *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006), 3–11, 85–93; Robin Morgan, "Planetary Feminism," in *Sisterhood Is Global* (New York: Feminist Press, 1996), 1–37; R. Radhakrishnan, "Worlding, by Any Other Name," in *History, the Human, and the World Between* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008), 183–248; Aamir R. Mufti, "Global Comparatism," *Critical Inquiry* 31 (Winter 2005): 487; hereafter abbreviated "Global Comparatism"; Édouard Glissant, "The Unforeseeable Diversity of the World," trans. Haun Saussy, in *Beyond Dichotomies: Histories, Identities, Cultures, and the Challenge of Globalization*, ed. Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 287–88, 295; hereafter abbreviated "Unforeseeable Diversity"; Édouard Glissant, *Poétique de la Relation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 155–81/ *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 141–67; hereafter abbreviated *PR*.

6. Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, "The New Modernist Studies," *PMLA* 123, no. 3 (2008): 737–48.

7. Jennifer Wicke, "Appreciation, Depreciation: Modernism's Speculative Bubble," *Modernism/Modernity* 8, no. 3 (September 2001): 389–404.

8. Pamela L. Caughie, Introduction to *Disciplining Modernism*, ed. Pamela L. Caughie (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 1–10.

9. Garry Leonard, "The Famished Roar of Automobiles: Modernity, the Internal Combustion Engine, and Modernism," in *Disciplining Modernism*, ed. Pamela L. Caughie (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 221–41.

10. Stephen Ross, "Uncanny Modernism, Or Analysis Interminable," in *Disciplining Modernism*, ed. Pamela L. Caughie (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 33–52.

11. See Astradur Eysteinnsson, *The Concept of Modernism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990).

12. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, "The Name and Nature of Modernism," in *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890–1930* (1976; reprint, New York: Penguin, 1991), 27.

13. "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 92–95.

14. Susan Stanford Friedman, "Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies," *Modernism/Modernity* 12, no. 3 (September 2006): 425–44; Susan Stanford Friedman, "Paranoia, Pollution, and Sexuality: Affiliations between E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*," in *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity*, ed. Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 245–61.

15. Monica Ali, *Brick Lane* (New York: Scribner's, 2003); Nikos Papastergiadis, *The Turbulence of Migration: Globalization, Deterritorialization and Hybridity* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 2000), 12.

16. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

17. "Global Comparatism," 474. For this argument on European priority as an ideological construct rationalizing European imperialism, see also J. M. Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History* (New York: Guilford Press, 1993); Friedman, "Periodizing Modernism," 429; Susan Stanford Friedman, "Unthinking Manifest Destiny: Muslim Modernities on Three Continents," in *Shades of the Planet: American Literature as World Literature*, ed. Wai Chee Dimock and Lawrence Buell (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), 62–100.

18. Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1994). See also Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben's *Formations of Modernity*, a textbook summarizing the prevailing view (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1992).

19. For extended discussion of nominal versus relational definitions of modernity/modernism, see Susan Stanford Friedman, "Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of *Modern/Modernity/Modernity*" *Modernism/Modernity* 8, no. 3 (September 2001): 500–05.

20. Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 10.

21. Friedman, "Definitional Excursions," 504, 510; Friedman, "Periodizing Modernity," 434–39.

22. Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 39–40.

23. For extended discussion, see Susan Stanford Friedman, "One Hand Clapping: Colonialism, Postcolonialism, and the Spatio/Temporal Boundaries of Modernism," in *Translocal Modernisms: International Perspectives*, ed. Irene Ramalho Santos and António Sousa Ribeiro (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 11–40.

24. Comments during discussion of Susan Stanford Friedman, "Planetary Modernisms and the Modernities of Empire and New Nations," paper delivered at the conference on Meanings of Modern: South Asia before and after Colonialism, Madison, Wisconsin, December 4–6, 2008.

25. Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present* (London: Verso, 2002), 12. In spite of his belief "that the only satisfactory semantic meaning of modernity lies in its association with capitalism," his book analyzes the many "uses of the word 'modernity'" in the history of ideas and claims that he "rejects any presupposition that there is a correct use of the word," thus contradicting his own prescriptive and limited definition (13).

26. See for example Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1993); S. N. Eisenstadt, ed. Special Issue on Multiple Modernities *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (winter 2000); Shumel N. Eisenstadt and Wolfgang Schluchter, eds. Special Issue on Early Modernities, *Daedalus* 127, no. 3 (summer 1998); Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, ed. *Alternative Modernities* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001); Mary Louise Pratt, "Modernity and Periphery: Toward a Global and Relational Analysis," in *Beyond Dichotomies: Histories, Identities, Cultures and the Challenge of Globalization*, ed. Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi (Albany: State University Press of New York, 2002), 21–48; R. Radhakrishnan, "Derivative Discourses and the Problem of Signification," *European Legacy* 7, no. 6 (2002): 783–95; Julios Ramos, *Divergent Modernities: Culture and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*, trans. John D. Blanco (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001); Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Hearing Voices: Vignettes of Early Modernity in South Asia, 1400–1750," *Daedalus* 127, no. 3 (1998): 75–104; Satya P. Mohanty, "Alternative Modernities and Medieval Indian Literature:

The Oriya *Lakshmi Purana* as Radical Pedagogy," *Diacritics* 38, no. 3 (fall 2008): 3–21; hereafter abbreviated "Alternative Modernities."

27. My thanks to Jay Clayton for suggesting the term *recurrent* to describe my concept of modernity in the *longue durée*.

28. Dimock, *Through Other Continents*, 1–6.

29. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, "On Alternative Modernities," in *Alternative Modernities*, ed. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), 23.

30. Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 43.

31. Andreas Huyssen, "Geographies of Modernism in a Globalizing World," in *Geographies of Modernism: Literatures, Cultures, Spaces*, ed. Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (London: Routledge, 2005), 7.

32. See Friedman, "Unthinking Manifest Destiny"; my book in progress engages with the modernities of their pre-1500 empires.

33. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 221.

34. André Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). See J.M. Blaut, *The Colonizer's View of the World* and Stephen K. Sanderson, ed. *Civilizations and World Systems: Studying World-Historical Change* (London: Sage, 1995).

35. James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997). See also Anna L. Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

36. Jahan Ramazani, *A Transnational Poetics* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 16; *The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

37. Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel, eds. *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 430. See also Brooker and Thacker, eds. *Geographies of Modernism*; Mark Wolleager, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2011); Mary Ann Gillies, Helen Sword, and Steven Yao, eds. *Pacific Rim Modernisms* (Toronto, CA: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

38. Melba Cuddy-Keane, "Modernism, Geopolitics, Globalization," *Modernism/Modernity* 10, no. 3 (September 2003): 544.

39. Global Circulation Project, founded by Regina Gagnier and supported by Wiley-Blackwell's Literature Compass (<http://www.blackwell-compass.com/subject/literature/>).

40. Ramazani, *A Transnational Poetics*, 11. See also Sally Price, *Primitive Art in Civilized Places* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

41. See for example William Rubin, "Modernist Primitivism: An Introduction," in "Primitivism" in 20th Century Art: *Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, ed. William Rubin. Vol. 1 (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, 1984); Christopher Green, ed. *Picasso's Les Femmes d'Alger* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University, 2001).

42. Simon Gikandi, "Picasso, Africa, and the Schemata of Difference," *Modernism/Modernity* 10, no. 3 (September 2003), 455–80.

43. Van Gogh's comment is quoted in Rubin, "Modernist Primitivism," 2.

44. For fuller discussion of the impact of African colonial modernities on Picasso and Japanese modernity on the Impressionists, see Friedman, "One Hand Clapping," 29–34.

45. *Montage of a Dream Deferred, Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, ed. Arnold Rampersad (New York: Vintage, 1995), 388. See also Arnold Rampersad, "Langston Hughes and Approaches to Modernism in the Harlem Renaissance," *The Harlem Renaissance Revaluations*, ed. Amrijit Singh, William S. Shiver, and Stanley Brodwin (New York: Garland, 1989), 49–71. For recent transnational approaches to Harlem Renaissance modernism, see Edward M. Pavlič, *Crossroads Modernism: Descent and Emergence in African-American Literary Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002) and Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translations, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

46. Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*, trans. Denys Johnson-Davies (Boulder, Colo: Three Continents Books, 1970); Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (New York: Random House, 1997), 290. See Friedman, "Periodizing Modernism," 435–39; and "Paranoia, Pollution, and Sexuality."

47. Huyssen, "Geographies of Modernism," 15, 13.

48. Mary Louise Pratt, "Modernity and Periphery," 40–43.

49. For other theorizations of multilingualism and polyglot languages (including Englishes), see Evelyn Nien-ming Ch'en, *Weird English* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004); Marina Camboni, "Impure Lines: Multilingualism Hybridity, and Cosmopolitanism in Contemporary Women's Poetry," *Contemporary Women's Writing* 1.1 (December 2007): 34–44; John Marx, *The Modernist Novel and the Decline of Empire* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Françoise Lionnet, "Continents and Archipelagoes: From *E Pluribus Unum* to Creolized Solidarities," *PMLA* 123, no. 5 (2008): 1503–15; Stuart Hall, "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity," in *Culture, Globalization and the World-System*, ed. Anthony King (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 19–40.

50. See Walter D. Mignolo, "Globalization, Civilization Processes, and the Relocation of Languages and Cultures," in *The Cultures of Globalization*, eds. Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999), 32–53; Brian Stock, "Toward Interpretive Pluralism: Literary History and the History of Reading," *New Literary History* 39, no. 3 (summer 2008): 389–413; David Bleich, "Globalization, Translation, and the University Tradition," *New Literary History* 39, no. 3 (summer 2008): 497–517.

51. See Esther Allen's discussion of "English as an Invasive Species" in "Translation, Globalization, and English," and Simona Škrabec, "Literary Translation: The International Panorama," in *Pen/IRL Report on the International Situation of Literary Translation*, ed. Esther Allen (2007), 1–48. (<http://www.centerforliterarytranslation.org/TranslationReport>).

52. See Sheldon Pollock, "Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History," in *Cosmopolitanism*, eds. Carol A. Breckenridge, Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, and Dipesh Chakrabarty (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2002), 15–53; Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (2nd ed. London: Verso, 2006), 47–82.

53. Muraski Shikidu, *The Tale of Genji*, trans. Edward G. Seidensticker (New York: Knopf, 1978).

54. Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 91–114.

55. Rabindranath Tagore, *The Broken Nest/ Nashtanir*, trans. Mary M. Lago and Supriya Sen (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1971).

56. Amit Chaudhuri, Introduction, *The Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature*, ed. Amit Chaudhuri (London: Picador, 2001), xx.

57. Virginia Woolf, "Time Passes," in *To the Lighthouse* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), 125–43. See also Ursula K. Heise, *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2008); Robert Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010); Lawrence Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell, 2005); and Tsing, *Friction*.

58. Heise, *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet*, 10, 6.

59. Another set of reading strategies is implicit in Melba Cuddy-Keane's "Modernism, Geopolitics, Globalization" through her identification of "four strands of globalized thinking in modernist texts," that is strategies aimed at locating what she calls the "critical, syncretic, cohabiting, and runaway modes" of globalized thinking (545).

60. Simon Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). See also Marx, *The Modernist Novel and the Decline of Empire*; Richard Began and Michael Valdez Moses, eds. *Modernism and Colonialism: British and Irish*

Literature, 1899–1939 (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007). Consideration of East Asia (especially China) in Western modernism is especially well-developed; see Stephen G. Yao, *Translation and the Languages of Modernism: Gender, Politics, Language* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Zhaoming Qian, *Orientalism and Modernism: The Legacy of China in Pound and Williams* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art: Pound, Moore, Stevens* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), and *Ezra Pound and China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003); Robert Kern, *Orientalism, Modernism, and the American Poem* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Christopher Bush, *Ideographic Modernism: China, Writing, Media* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2010); Eric Hayot, *Chinese Dreams: Pound, Brecht, Tel Quel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003) and *The Hypothetical Mandarin: Sympathy, Modernity, and Chinese Pain* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2009).

61. Dimock, *Through Other Continents*

62. Pingali Suranna, *The Sound of the Kiss, or the Story That Must Never Be Told*, trans. Velcheru Narayana Rao and David Shulman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Gurajada Apparao, *Girls for Sale: Kanyasulkam, a Play from Colonial India*, trans. Velcheru Narayan Rao (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

63. See edited volumes listed in note 37. Recoveries of Latin American modernisms are particularly prevalent; see Fernando J. Rosenberg, *The Avant-Garde and Geopolitics in Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006); Vicky Unruh, *Latin American Vanguard: The Art of Contentious Encounters* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Cathy L. Jrade, *Modernismo: Modernity and the Development of Spanish American Literature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998). For pre-1500 modernisms in India, see Suranna, *The Sound of the Kiss*; Mohanty, “Alternative Modernities and Medieval Indian Literature,” and for Indian modernisms from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Priya Joshi, *In Another Country: Colonialism, Culture, and the English Novel in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Aparna Dharwadker, “Mohan Rakesh, Modernism, and the Postcolonial Present,” *South Central Review* 25, no. 1 (spring 2008): 136–62.

64. See Susan Stanford Friedman, “Modernism in a Transnational Landscape: Spatial Poetics, Postcolonialism, and Gender in Césaire’s *Cahier/Notebook* and Cha’s *Dictée*,” *Paideuma* 32, no. 1/2/3 (spring, fall, winter, 2003): 39–74.