

jean rhys good morning midnight

Jean Rhys Good Morning Midnight: Exploring the Depths of a Timeless Novel

jean rhys good morning midnight is a novel that has captivated readers since its publication in 1939. Known for its hauntingly lyrical prose and profound exploration of loneliness and despair, the book offers an intimate glimpse into the fractured psyche of its protagonist, Sasha Jansen. Jean Rhys's masterful storytelling and deeply personal themes continue to resonate with modern audiences, making *Good Morning, Midnight* a significant work in 20th-century literature.

The Essence of Jean Rhys Good Morning Midnight

Jean Rhys is often celebrated for her unique voice and perspective, and *Good Morning, Midnight* stands as one of her most influential works. The novel delves into themes of alienation, mental anguish, and the search for identity, all set against the backdrop of 1930s Paris. Through Sasha's introspective narrative, readers are invited to experience the raw vulnerability and emotional turmoil that define her existence.

Who Was Jean Rhys?

Before diving deeper into the novel, it's worth understanding the author behind the story. Jean Rhys, born in Dominica in 1890, was a writer whose life was marked by hardship and exile. Her experiences as a woman navigating the complexities of colonial identity, displacement, and personal tragedy heavily influenced her writing style and subject matter. Rhys's work often centers on marginalized women and their struggles, and *Good Morning, Midnight* is no exception.

Plot Overview: A Portrait of Isolation

Good Morning, Midnight follows Sasha Jansen, a woman grappling with emotional scars and a fading sense of self. The narrative unfolds in a stream-of-consciousness style, oscillating between present moments and fragmented memories. Sasha's days in Paris are filled with moments of desperation, fleeting connections, and a pervasive sense of emptiness. The novel does not offer easy resolutions but instead immerses readers in the complexity of human suffering and resilience.

Thematic Depths in Jean Rhys Good Morning Midnight

One of the reasons Jean Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight* remains relevant is its exploration of themes that transcend time and place. Let's unpack some of the critical themes that shape the novel's enduring appeal.

Loneliness and Alienation

Sasha's isolation is palpable throughout the book. Despite being surrounded by the bustling life of Paris, she feels disconnected from others. This theme of loneliness is not just physical but emotional and psychological. Rhys captures the internal desolation that can exist even in crowded spaces.

Mental Health and Despair

The novel offers an unvarnished look at mental health struggles, portraying Sasha's descent into despair with empathy and nuance. The fragmented narrative style mirrors her fractured state of mind, providing readers with a visceral experience of depression and hopelessness.

Gender and Identity

Jean Rhys's portrayal of Sasha also touches on issues of gender and identity. As a woman navigating societal expectations and personal trauma, Sasha's story reflects the challenges faced by many women of the era—and still today. Her vulnerability and strength co-exist, creating a complex character study.

Literary Style and Narrative Techniques

Jean Rhys's writing style in *Good Morning, Midnight* is distinctive and impactful. The novel's narrative choices contribute significantly to its emotional resonance.

Stream of Consciousness Narrative

Rhys employs a stream-of-consciousness technique that allows readers direct access to Sasha's thoughts and memories. This approach creates intimacy and immediacy, blurring the lines between past and present.

Symbolism and Imagery

Throughout the novel, Rhys uses vivid imagery and symbolism to deepen the emotional landscape. The recurring motifs of darkness and light, the city of Paris itself, and the shifting weather patterns all serve to reflect Sasha's inner turmoil.

Why Jean Rhys *Good Morning Midnight* Still Matters

Decades after its initial release, *Good Morning, Midnight* continues to be studied and celebrated for several reasons.

A Voice for the Marginalized

Jean Rhys gave voice to characters often overlooked in literature—women struggling with mental health, displacement, and societal rejection. Her empathetic portrayal encourages readers to engage with difficult and often stigmatized topics.

Influence on Modern Literature

Rhys's innovative narrative style and thematic concerns have influenced countless writers. The novel's exploration of fractured identity and psychological complexity paved the way for contemporary literary fiction that delves into the human psyche.

Relevance in Contemporary Discussions

In today's context, *Good Morning, Midnight* resonates with ongoing conversations about mental health awareness, gender studies, and post-colonial identity. Its timeless themes invite reflection and dialogue across generations.

Tips for Reading Jean Rhys *Good Morning Midnight*

If you're approaching this novel for the first time, a few tips can enhance your reading experience.

- **Take Your Time:** The novel's introspective and non-linear style benefits from slow, thoughtful reading.
- **Pay Attention to Mood:** Notice how the atmosphere and tone shift to reflect Sasha's emotional state.
- **Use Annotations:** Mark passages that stand out or raise questions to revisit later.
- **Explore Historical Context:** Understanding the 1930s Parisian setting and Rhys's background deepens appreciation.
- **Discuss with Others:** Sharing insights with book clubs or reading groups can uncover new perspectives.

Exploring Adaptations and Critical Reception

Jean Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight* has also inspired various adaptations and critical analyses that highlight its literary significance.

Film and Stage Interpretations

Though less frequently adapted than some classic novels, *Good Morning, Midnight* has seen theatrical productions and film adaptations that attempt to capture its mood and narrative complexity. These adaptations often focus on translating Sasha's internal monologue into visual and performative elements, challenging but rewarding endeavors.

Critical Acclaim and Scholarship

Scholars continue to examine Rhys's work for its pioneering approach to narrative and character development. Critical essays often explore themes of exile, trauma, and the female experience, underscoring the novel's multifaceted nature.

Good Morning, Midnight remains a powerful exploration of human fragility and endurance. Its lyrical prose, psychological depth, and timeless themes invite readers into a world both haunting and profoundly human. Whether you're a longtime admirer of Rhys or discovering her for the first time, this novel offers rich terrain for reflection and connection.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main theme of Jean Rhys's 'Good Morning, Midnight'?

The main theme of *'Good Morning, Midnight'* is alienation and despair, focusing on the protagonist's struggle with loneliness, memory, and identity.

Who is the protagonist in 'Good Morning, Midnight' by Jean Rhys?

The protagonist of *'Good Morning, Midnight'* is Sasha Jansen, a middle-aged woman grappling with her past and present isolation in Paris.

When was 'Good Morning, Midnight' by Jean Rhys first published?

'Good Morning, Midnight' was first published in 1939.

How does Jean Rhys use setting in 'Good Morning, Midnight' to reflect the protagonist's mental state?

Jean Rhys uses the bleak and cold Parisian winter setting to mirror Sasha's internal desolation and emotional turmoil throughout the novel.

What narrative style is employed in Jean Rhys's 'Good Morning, Midnight'?

The novel uses a stream-of-consciousness narrative style, allowing readers to experience Sasha's fragmented thoughts and memories.

How does 'Good Morning, Midnight' explore the theme of gender and identity?

The novel explores gender and identity through Sasha's experiences as a woman marginalized by society, highlighting issues of vulnerability and self-perception.

Why is 'Good Morning, Midnight' considered a significant work in Jean Rhys's career?

'Good Morning, Midnight' is considered significant because it marked Rhys's return to literature after a long hiatus and established her reputation as a pioneer of modernist fiction focusing on female subjectivity.

What is the significance of the title 'Good Morning, Midnight' in Jean Rhys's novel?

The title 'Good Morning, Midnight' signifies the paradox of greeting darkness or despair as if it were a new beginning, reflecting the protagonist's acceptance of her bleak reality.

Additional Resources

Jean Rhys' **Good Morning, Midnight**: A Profound Exploration of Alienation and Despair

jean rhys good morning midnight stands as a seminal work in modernist literature, offering a poignant and unflinching look into the psyche of a deeply troubled woman navigating the shadows of post-war London. First published in 1939, Rhys's debut novel remains a critical study in themes of isolation, identity, and emotional fragmentation. Its enduring influence is evident in contemporary literary discourse, where it is frequently analyzed for its innovative narrative style and psychological depth.

In-depth Analysis of Jean Rhys' **Good Morning, Midnight**

Jean Rhys' **Good Morning, Midnight** is a masterclass in portraying the inner turmoil of its protagonist, Sasha Jansen, a woman grappling with loneliness, addiction, and the scars of past trauma. The novel's narrative unfolds in a stream-of-consciousness style, immersing readers in Sasha's fragmented thoughts and memories. This approach mirrors the disjointed reality she inhabits, blurring the lines between past and present, sanity and despair.

Set against the backdrop of a bleak, wintry London, the atmosphere of **Good Morning, Midnight** is suffused with a pervasive sense of melancholy and decay. Rhys's use of setting is not merely incidental; it reflects the protagonist's internal desolation. The city becomes a metaphor for Sasha's emotional landscape—cold, unforgiving, and isolating.

Thematic Exploration: Alienation and Identity

One of the most compelling aspects of **Good Morning, Midnight** is its exploration of alienation. Sasha's detachment from society is palpable throughout the text. She is an outsider, not only because of her social position as a woman of mixed Caribbean and European heritage but also due to her fractured mental state. This dual alienation underscores the novel's critical engagement with themes of displacement and identity crisis.

The novel delves into the complexities of female subjectivity, especially within the context of early 20th-century gender norms. Sasha's experiences challenge traditional portrayals of women in literature, presenting her as a flawed, vulnerable, yet fiercely human character. This nuanced depiction contributes to the novel's feminist undertones, highlighting the limitations imposed on women by societal expectations and the psychological toll of such constraints.

Narrative Style and Literary Devices

Rhys's narrative technique in **Good Morning, Midnight** is notable for its fragmented, non-linear structure. The prose often shifts abruptly between moments of lucidity and confusion, reflecting Sasha's unstable mental state. This stylistic choice invites readers to engage actively with the text, piecing together Sasha's story from disjointed impressions.

The novel's language is sparse yet evocative, characterized by short sentences and repetitive phrases that underscore Sasha's obsessive thoughts and emotional numbness. Rhys employs symbolism subtly but effectively—the recurring motif of night and darkness symbolizes both physical and psychological obscurity, while the titular phrase "Good Morning, Midnight" encapsulates the paradox of awakening into despair.

Historical and Biographical Context

Understanding **Good Morning, Midnight** within the context of Jean Rhys's life enriches its interpretation. Rhys, born Ella Gwendolyn Rees Williams in Dominica, experienced a turbulent life marked by personal losses, financial hardship, and struggles with alcoholism. These elements resonate in the novel's themes of vulnerability and survival.

The period in which the novel was written—the late 1930s—was marked by social upheaval and the looming threat of World War II. The sense of impending doom permeates the narrative, adding to the pervasive atmosphere of anxiety and hopelessness. Rhys's own marginalization as a colonial woman in Europe informs the novel's exploration of displacement and identity crises.

Comparative Perspectives: **Good Morning, Midnight** and Contemporary Modernist Works

Good Morning, Midnight is often compared to other modernist texts such as Virginia Woolf's **Mrs Dalloway** and James Joyce's **Ulysses**. Like these works, Rhys employs stream-of-consciousness techniques to delve into the complexities of human consciousness. However, Rhys's focus on a marginalized female protagonist sets her apart, bringing a distinct voice to modernist literature.

Where Woolf's and Joyce's characters often navigate urban spaces with a degree of social privilege, Sasha Jansen inhabits a liminal space marked by poverty and social exclusion. This contrast highlights Rhys's unique contribution to the literary canon, foregrounding perspectives that were frequently overlooked in early 20th-century literature.

Critical Reception and Legacy

Upon its initial release, **Good Morning, Midnight** received modest attention, overshadowed by more prominent modernist works of the time. However, the novel experienced a resurgence in the 1960s and 1970s, coinciding with the rise of feminist literary criticism. Scholars and readers began to recognize Rhys's incisive portrayal of female subjectivity and emotional complexity.

Today, **Good Morning, Midnight** is celebrated as a pioneering text that challenges conventional narrative forms and thematic boundaries. Its influence can be seen in the works of later authors who explore themes of trauma, exile, and mental health. The novel's enduring relevance is further evidenced by its continued inclusion in academic curricula and literary anthologies.

Pros and Cons of **Good Morning, Midnight** in Literary Study

- **Pros:** Offers an intimate psychological portrait; challenges traditional gender roles; innovative narrative style; rich thematic content.
- **Cons:** Non-linear narrative may be challenging for some readers; the pervasive bleakness can be emotionally taxing; limited external plot action.

Despite these challenges, the novel's depth and emotional resonance make it a rewarding subject for literary analysis.

Relevance in Contemporary Culture

Jean Rhys' **Good Morning, Midnight** continues to resonate with contemporary audiences, particularly in discussions surrounding mental health, gender, and post-colonial identity. Its candid exploration of depression and alienation anticipates modern conversations about psychological well-being.

The novel also finds echoes in contemporary media, inspiring adaptations and influencing writers who seek to give voice to marginalized experiences. Its themes transcend temporal boundaries, speaking to universal human conditions of loneliness and the search for meaning amid despair.

In sum, **Good Morning, Midnight** remains a vital work that confronts uncomfortable truths with honesty and literary artistry. Jean Rhys's contribution through this novel enriches the modernist tradition and offers profound insights into the complexities of the human spirit.

Jean Rhys Good Morning Midnight

jean rhys good morning midnight: Good Morning, Midnight Jean Rhys, 1986 A woman encounters a life filled with desires and emotions when she returns to Paris after suffering from a bout of depression and alcoholism in London.

jean rhys good morning midnight: **Good Morning, Midnight** Jean Rhys, 1996

jean rhys good morning midnight: **Critical Perspectives on Jean Rhys** Pierrette M. Frickey, 1990 Rhys, acclaimed author of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *Quartet*, and other novels treating the alienation of a woman from the Caribbean living in European settings, has been a focus of interest both as a feminist writer and in the context of Caribbean literature.

jean rhys good morning midnight: Modern Classics Good Morning Midnight Jean Rhys, 2000-08-29 Jean Rhys's *Good Morning Midnight* is an unforgettable portrait of a woman bravely confronting loneliness and despair in her quest for self-determination In 1930s Paris, where one cheap hotel room is very like another, a young woman is teaching herself indifference. She has escaped personal tragedy and has come to France to find courage and seek independence. She tells herself to expect nothing, especially not kindness, least of all from men. Tomorrow, she resolves, she will dye her hair blonde. Jean Rhys was a talent before her time with an impressive ability to express the anguish of young women. In *Good Morning, Midnight* Rhys created the powerfully modern portrait of Sophia Jansen, whose emancipation is far more painful and complicated than she could expect, but whose confession is flecked with triumph and elation. With an introduction by A.L. Kennedy 'Her eloquence in the language of human sexual transactions is chilling, cynical, and surprisingly moving' A.L. Kennedy

jean rhys good morning midnight: *I Used to Live Here Once: The Haunted Life of Jean Rhys* Miranda Seymour, 2022-06-28 "Enthralling.... Seymour powerfully evokes the world from which Rhys never really escaped, one of prejudice, abuse, and abuse's shamefaced offspring, complicity." —James Wood, *The New Yorker* An intimate, profoundly moving biography of Jean Rhys, acclaimed author of *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Jean Rhys is one of the most compelling writers of the twentieth century. Memories of her Caribbean girlhood haunt the four short and piercingly brilliant novels that Rhys wrote during her extraordinary years as an exile in 1920s Paris and later in England, a body of

fiction—above all, the extraordinary Wide Sargasso Sea—that has a passionate following today. And yet her own colorful life, including her early years on the Caribbean island of Dominica, remains too little explored, until now. In *I Used to Live Here Once*, Miranda Seymour sheds new light on the artist whose proud and fiercely solitary life profoundly informed her writing. Rhys experienced tragedy and extreme poverty, alcohol and drug dependency, romantic and sexual turmoil, all of which contributed to the “Rhys woman” of her oeuvre. Today, readers still intuitively relate to her unforgettable characters, vulnerable, watchful, and often alarmingly disaster-prone outsiders; women with a different way of moving through the world. And yet, while her works often contain autobiographical material, Rhys herself was never a victim. The figure who emerges for Seymour is cultured, self-mocking, unpredictable—and shockingly contemporary. Based on new research in the Caribbean, a wealth of never-before-seen papers, journals, letters, and photographs, and interviews with those who knew Rhys, *I Used to Live Here Once* is a luminous and penetrating portrait of a fascinatingly elusive artist.

jean rhys good morning midnight: A Beginner's Guide to Critical Reading Richard Jacobs, 2001 Brings literature to life through a combination of fascinating texts, critically up-to-the minute readings and Jacobs' enthusiastic, lively approach.

jean rhys good morning midnight: Recharting the Thirties Patrick J. Quinn, 1996 The aim of *Recharting the Thirties* is to revitalize the awareness of the reading public with regard to eighteen writers whose books have been largely ignored by publishers and scholars since their major works first appeared in the thirties. The selection is not based on a political agenda, but encompasses a wide and divergent range of philosophies; clearly, the contrasts between Empson and Upward, or between Powell and Slater, indicated the wide-ranging vision of the period. Women writers of the period have largely been marginalized, and the writings of Sackville-West and Burdekin, for example, not only present distinct feminine voices of the period, but also illuminate how much good literature has been forgotten.

jean rhys good morning midnight: Jean Rhys's Modernist Bearings and Experimental Aesthetics Sue Thomas, 2022-01-27 Addressing Jean Rhys's composition and positioning of her fiction, this book invites and challenges us to read the tacit, silent and explicit textual bearings she offers and reveals new insights about the formation, scope and complexity of Rhys's experimental aesthetics. Tracing the distinctive and shifting evolution of Rhys's experimental aesthetics over her career, Sue Thomas explores Rhys's practices of composition in her fiction and drafts, as well as her self-reflective comment on her writing. The author examines patterns of interrelation, intertextuality, intermediality and allusion, both diachronic and synchronic, as well as the cultural histories entwined within them. Through close analysis of these, this book reveals new experimental, thematic, generic and political reaches of Rhys's fiction and sharpens our insight into her complex writerly affiliations and lineages.

jean rhys good morning midnight: Wounded Images Kristine M. Whaley, 2024-03-27 This volume works through deconstructing traditional models of the imago Dei in search of a more inclusive understanding of the doctrine, one that allows for literature to bring important questions to bear. Brief analyses of Karl Barth and Paul Tillich and then growing dissatisfaction with the two in various liberation theologies brings to light the problems of a perfected image of God. An exploration of four novels by Jean Rhys between 1928 and 1939 then follows the footsteps of Katie Cannon and others who include literature in their theological work. The Rhys novels follow tragic stories of women who are wounded both by others and by their own inability to see themselves as worthy. Through the questions these women ask about themselves and God, the reconstruction of the imago Dei is set up. This reconstruction centers trauma, wounds, and a non-contrastive transcendence that Kathryn Tanner defines. Ultimately it is not in how we are perfect, but rather through our risks, our wounds, and even our grief that we connect to God.

jean rhys good morning midnight: Jean Rhys Erica L Johnson, 2015-06-21 The 10 newly commissioned essays and introduction collected in this volume demonstrate Jean Rhys's centrality to modernism and to postcolonial literature alike by addressing her stories and novels from the 1920s

and 1930s.

jean rhys good morning midnight: Snow on the Cane Fields Judith L. Raiskin, 1996
Presents practical strategies for teaching patients to cope with the emotional stress of cardiac and pulmonary disease, describing a model using behavioral medicine and body/mind techniques to enhance quality of life and physical recovery. Case studies and sample scripts show health professionals without specialized training in mental health how to help patients learn to control stress, relax, address marital and family issues, and control negative thinking patterns. Annotation copyright by Book News, Inc., Portland, OR

jean rhys good morning midnight: Marking Whiteness Sonita Sarker, Jennifer Nesbit, 2025-09-01 The collection is divided into three parts to address the practices of Whiteness in modernist studies: Aesthetics, Intersectionality, and Inter/disciplinary Practice. We begin with aesthetics because modernism is the aesthetic produced in dynamic relation to the cultural formations of modernity: perceived rapid changes in labor, transportation, technology, and perceptions of body, mind, and even character. Essays in this section examine how the production of Whiteness is baked in as a positive value in assessing the value of cultural production. The second section focuses on the embodiment of Whiteness, primarily through the gendered and racialized female body, as a deflective practice that unmarks Whiteness while making it central to cultural crises around morality, national borders, and futurity. The third section considers the tacit prioritization of Whiteness as a positive value through institutional structures and pedagogical practice; these case studies ruminate on the generative potential of isolating and marking these effects. In each essay, scholars examine the stakes of marking Whiteness as a category of analysis distinct from, yet wholly imbricated with, racial categorization, given the potential for reification inherent in all strategies of marking.

jean rhys good morning midnight: Jean Rhys at "World's End" Mary Lou Emery, 2014-01-30 The Caribbean Islands have long been an uneasy meeting place among indigenous peoples, white European colonists, and black slave populations. Tense oppositions in Caribbean culture—colonial vs. native, white vs. black, male conqueror vs. female subject—supply powerful themes and spark complex narrative experiments in the fiction of Dominica-born novelist Jean Rhys. In this pathfinding study, Mary Lou Emery focuses on Rhys's handling of these oppositions, using a Caribbean cultural perspective to replace the mainly European aesthetic, moral, and psychological standards that have served to misread and sometimes devalue Rhys's writing. Emery considers all five Rhys novels, beginning with *Wide Sargasso Sea* as the most explicitly Caribbean in its setting, in its participation in the culminating decades of a West Indian literary naissance, and most importantly, in its subversive transformation of European concepts of character. From a sociocultural perspective, she argues persuasively that the earlier novels—*Voyage in the Dark*, *Quartet*, *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie*, and *Good Morning, Midnight*—should be read as emergent Caribbean fiction, written in tense dialogue with European modernism. Building on this thesis, she reveals how the apparent passivity, masochism, or silence of Rhys's female protagonists results from their doubly marginalized status as women and as subject peoples. Also, she explores how Rhys's women seek out alternative identities in dreamed of, magically realized, or chosen communities. These discoveries offer important insights on literary modernism, Caribbean fiction, and the formation of female identity.

jean rhys good morning midnight: Transnational Jean Rhys Juliana Lopoukhine, Frédéric Regard, Kerry-Jane Wallart, 2020-12-10 This volume investigates the frameworks that can be applied to reading Caribbean author Jean Rhys. While *Wide Sargasso Sea* famously displays overt forms of literary influences, Jean Rhys's entire oeuvre is so fraught with connections to other texts and textual practices across geographical boundaries that her classification as a cosmopolitan modernist writer is due for reassessment. *Transnational Jean Rhys* argues against the relative isolationism that is sometimes associated with Rhys's writing by demonstrating both how she was influenced by a wide range of foreign – especially French – authors and how her influence was in turn disseminated in myriad directions. Including an interview with Black Atlantic novelist Caryl Phillips, this collection

charts new territories in the influences on/of an author known for her dislike of literary coteries, but whose literary communality has been underestimated.

jean rhys good morning midnight: Revisiting Modernism Maria-Ana Tupan , By shifting the centre of gravity from author to reader, Roland Barthes had certainly prepared us for a Copernican turn in aesthetics, yet Michael J. Pearce's *Art in the Age of Emergence* still sounds unfamiliar two years after its publication. While acknowledging the existence of homologues among the art objects of a cultural phase, the Californian academic also launches an explanatory hypothesis: "I realized that in order to understand art, instead of looking for the similarities between the paintings and the sculptures we have to look at the similarities between the people looking at them. Art is better explained by looking at how the mind works than by looking at the products of mind." (XV). The substitution of the phenomenology of mind for the phenomenology of the work of art can only have a partial contribution to the understanding of period terms, yet not devoid of relevance. The numerous studies in modernism published of late, for instance, are revisionary, the changing views being motivated by the new historical context rather than by a new assessment of forms. The mind turns out to be working according to the critical theory it has been exposed to or which it has freely embraced. Relegated to the status of socio-political movement without aesthetic significance since 1939, when Clement Greenberg associated it with kitsch, to Renato Poggioli, Peter Bürger or Christopher Butler (*Early Modernism: Literature, Music, and Painting in Europe, 1900-1916*, 1994), the avant-garde came to be enshrined as the weightiest artistic phenomenon and "the last post of modernism" by Richard Sheppard in *Modernism-Dada-Postmodernism* (2000), who joined thus a new party of postmodern critics, among whom, Linda Hutcheon, who see the historical avant-garde as the generative matrix of the post-war literature in the 50s and the 60s, stretching the term to include the French nouveau roman or the *Tel Quel*. Quoted by Sheppard on Marx's Communist Manifesto being "the first great modernist work of art", Marshall Berman (*All That Is Solid Melts into Air*, 1982) too welcomes modernism into the sixties and seventies. Titles, such as, *Avant Garde and After: Rethinking Art Now*, by Brandon Taylor, have tilted the scales measuring modernism against the avant-garde into a more balanced position, even if also the leads of the earlier twentieth century have been the object of New-Historicist and culturalist approaches that corrected the Axel Castle icon of egocentric aloofness through readings that evinced the substantial presence of history in the writings of Woolf, Joyce or D. H. Lawrence. With interdisciplinarity the latest buzz word in the academic world, lots of studies have been dedicated to the influence of Non-Euclidian Geometry, relativity and quantum physics on modernist art, for instance, *Surrealism, Art and Modern Science. Relativity, Quantum Mechanics, Epistemology* by Gavin Parkinson (2008). The most spectacular renovation has probably been undergone by no other than Charles Baudelaire, the founding father, who has been removed from his site with transcendent flavours and symbolic correspondences and inserted into the phantasmagoric pre-cinematic media world : Marit Grotta: *Baudelaire's Media Aesthetics (The Gaze of the Flâneur and 19-th Century Media)*. If we travel back in time to get a feeling of what modernists saw in each other and compare their vision with such contemporary framing, we realize to what extent the history of reception modifies the history of composition. Mina Loy's ekphrasis of sculptor Brancusi's *Golden Bird*, for instance, conveys the modernist artist's infatuation with archetypes, tropes of immaculate conception, "breast of revelation" or hyperaesthesia - the alchemy whereby the senses projected a secondary reality of mixed perceptions. Is there a possibility to negotiate meanings when talking to the dead, as Stephen Greenblatt has put it in the opening of *Shakespearean Negotiations*? Used also by Ayendy Bonifacio in his essay on Hart Crane, "interliterariness" is a middle-European term for what Russian semioticians or French and American social critics or American New Historicists had already attempted to achieve: an archeology of meaning, a history and a philosophy of culture that help the visitor of past ages assess meaning and value. The more elements of a culture's codes are absorbed into an art object, the more representative and valuable is its testimony in the history of the spirit. Understanding such "serious and heavy" codes, as Pound dubbed them, takes longer, studies of a work's genealogy bringing it to light in all its complexity. The history of literature is replete with

such novae, Irish Flann O'Brien, whose works are an ark of his time's literary, aesthetic, scientific or political ideas, is the revelation of the last decade, emerging almost out of anonymity thanks to systematic research initiated by a team coordinated by Professor Werner Huber from the University of Vienna. Whether the Virgilian guide be New Historicist Greenblatt, or, as suggested by Professor Sachin C. Ketkar in his essay, Lotman's semiotics or Dionyz Durisin's study of the discursive exchanges of semantic energy across national boundaries, it becomes possible, for instance, to read Mardhekar in the context of the international modernist movements and in light of "interliterary 'genetic-contactual relations' instead of the idea of 'influence' which invariably brings in normative hierarchy between the influencer and the influenced, placing the latter on a lower or secondary position." In the beginning, building international communities was indeed a matter of hierarchies of power. Japan or China were forced to open their harbours to international trade, coming out of their ancestral isolation, while the Macaulay law forced Indians into chimeric native bodies and English minds. Merchants or colonizers, however, opened the way to enlightened politicians, scientists or artists. In his *History of Romanian Civilization*, Eugen Lovinescu, critic and editor of the earlier twentieth century, distinguishes between evolutionary and revolutionary models of culture. The major cultures know a continuous and organic growth, whereas minor ones, lured by centres of influence, break off abruptly from their traditions borrowing foreign models. That is why it is easy to date period terms in the latter, whereas the former have very discreet lines of demarcation. Ezra Pound's manifesto of imagism, for instance, is heavily indebted to Alfred Binet's model of reasoning through associations of images instead of syllogisms, but ahead of Binet there was Herbart, and before Herbart, Kant, who had borrowed ideas for his *Anthropology* from David Hume ... It is again the constitution of homologies across disciplinary spheres and reciprocal loans that allow an observer to identify a territorialization, as Deleuze calls it, that is, a distinct type of culture. Politically speaking, modernism begins with Baudelaire's declaration of war on the bourgeois: "Vous êtes la majorité, - nombre et intelligence ; - donc vous êtes la force, - qui est la justice." (You are the majority - in number and intelligence; therefore you are the force - which is justice - Salon de 1846). With its nomination of the working class as being entitled to lead the other social classes - which they did when they had the chance - Marx's *Capital* meant even less democracy than the bourgeois republic. The modernist political discourse was one of individualism and human rights, built on Jefferson's model. It is this fascinating rebel against hypocritical social conventions that still appeals to the nonconformist youth cultures, Shweta Basu undertaking a study in the translation of "Flowers of Evil" across cultures and media in a Japanese manga series. Modernism saw the collapse of dynasties, and the foundation of international leagues of nations enjoying equal rights or of clubs of the intellectual elites of all nations (PEN CLUB). E. M. Forster was writing in 1938: "I believe in aristocracy . . . Not an aristocracy of power, based upon rank and influence, but an aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky." Under the circumstances of huge differences in point of civilization - Bipin Balachandran mentions the case of Poland and other middle and East-European countries - but capitalizing on the widely circulated narrative of the superiority of culture over civilization, which was considered to be rapidly changing into a soulless machinery, individual contacts of scholars or artists contributed to the emergence of a truly international spirit and a cosmopolitan culture. By contrast, the eighteenth century had thrived on models of justified hierarchies (the best of all possible worlds), colonizing missions, histories of empires to learn from them the rise to international power. The systematic oppositions we can establish between the Enlightenment and modernism prevent us from merging them into "a singular modernity" (Frederic Jameson). The culture of modernism is a hybrid one, with metropolitan cultures fascinated by the new nations they were put in contact with, open to the foreigners who sought them out to study or pursue a career. Japanese art was studied and imitated, while the interest in India, aroused by the discovery of the common origin of Indo-European languages, by Schopenhauer's philosophy or by Madame Blavatsky's esoteric pursuits, emulated by the British and the Americans alike, reached such proportions that references to India almost became a sign of recognition. Even quantum physics pioneers, Heisenberg and Schrödinger, owed a debt to Hindu mythology and the Indian logic

of the included third. Naturally possessed of this mindset, physicist Satyendra Nath Bose initiated calculations of a new state of condensed matter, where atoms lose their identity reaching the peace of a frozen quantum state of superimposed waves. The experiment is known as the Bose-Einstein condensate. A very fashionable topic of research nowadays, the search for native forms of modernism outside the centrality of Paris, London or New York is usually successful. Paraphrasing, scratch a national culture and you will find traces of modernism. It was not difficult for Rindon Kundu and Saswati Saha to spot out a Wagner in Latin America in the person of Rubén Darío, and even an aesthetic contest between him and Enrique González Martínez, similar to the Wyndham Lewis-Marinetti duel in Europe. For T.S. Eliot, India was a myth of origin from *The Love Song of Alfred Prufrock* to *The Waste Land*. As he confessed in a speech in memory of Rudyard Kipling, the former was inspired by *The Love Song of Har Dyal*. Eliot's protagonist is spiritually impoverished, frustrated by lack, not of love affairs but of strong feelings, like those that give lovers the courage to risk their lives in the Indian story. Anindita Mukherjee chooses another contextualization, out of many possible, as is the case with the erudite modernists, and that is Rilke's thoughts on love disclosed to a young poet who had asked him for advice. In that letter, Rilke says that dragons are but princesses who want to see their lovers courageous. Prufrock is acutely aware of his inferiority in relation to bright, cultivated women, who comment on his weakness, while the imagery surrounding them suggests the strength of warrior-women (And I have known the arms already, known them all— /Arms that are braceleted). The essayist notices though the redemption of the protagonist, his final capacity to dismiss his daily routine as rubbish and reach for transcendence. Sumi Bora looks into textual traces of the relationship between the poet and his rhetorical masks, interrogating the status of the authorial figure and biography in the modernist text. The web of mythic allusions in *The Waste Land* is a familiar feature of the modernist agenda "to seek reality and justice in a single vision (Yeats). Nisarga Bhattacharjee and Ananya Chatterjee write on the modernists' use of myth as part of the mythopoetic tradition, blooming into extended metaphors of life or of the human condition, while Susan Haris is plumbing into the symbolism of unconscious drives and identification with elementary nature in D.H. Lawrence's personal version of psychoanalysis. The figural psyche of modernist fiction and the gendered landscape of female isolation is Lava Asaad's focus on the early modernist career of Jean Rhys, better known for her postcolonial rewriting of *Jane Eyre*. Is there an aesthetic continuity between the historical avant-garde and the Beat Generation or the abstract expressionism in the 50s and 60s? Allen Ginsberg, John Ashbery or Lawrence Ferlinghetti engage often in dialogue with precedent canonical texts, their intertexts sinning on the side of courteous attitudes to tradition, which does not fit into the context of Marinetti's dismissal of libraries, academies and museums (*The Futurist Manifesto*). Abstract art is, obviously, something different from found objects, while, in critical theory, the fifties and the sixties saw the rise of semiotics, psychoanalysis, deconstruction, feminism, that is, of the very practice of interdisciplinarity in literary criticism, something at the other pole from New Criticism and other formalisms in which ended up structuralism. Although not irrelevant in point of aesthetic achievement, Ayendy Bonifacio writing persuasively on Hart Crane's constructivist rhetoric, the avant-garde is still perceived as a self-standing chapter in the cultural history of modernism. The exchange of cultural narratives and traditions, fostered by historical circumstances but also by Worringer's aesthetics that praised primitive art for its tendencies towards abstraction in flight from a threatening and alien nature, that could provide a spiritual cure to a materialistic civilization, was defining for the poetics of art at the turn of the last century. Modernism was humanity's first coming together.

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