

9. Transnational Modernism and the Problem of Eurochronology

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James Joyce's vision of hell, in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, is a "great hall," dark and silent, with a "great clock" ticking unceasingly;¹ Marcel Proust's memorable narrator in *In Search of Lost Time* complains of "the insolent indifference of the clock chattering loudly as though [he] were not there";² Virginia Woolf in *Orlando* points out "the extraordinary discrepancy between time on the clock and time in the mind."³ These three fragments by canonical figures of modernism show a pronounced preference for time of the mind over time on the clock. Clock time is viewed as an empty and uniform resource that lends itself to exploitation by rational and calculative behaviour, utterly detached from the particular and from subjective experience. Periodisation schemes, like the clocks of these modernists, are convenient tools for time measurement. They are retrospective temporal concepts that we use to understand and interpret past events. *Chronotypes* are insolent and indifferent to the histories of different regions, "chattering loudly" as though those histories are not there. Some are "visions of hell" for historical thought, imagined as one big clock ticking nonstop, marching towards a universal telos. The discrepancy outlined by Woolf between clock time and perceived time might also be imagined as the chasm between periodisation schemes and the multiplicity of the lived experiences. The modernists' concern for temporal calibration is thus not far removed from the problem of periodisation in Historiography.

Modernism is a critical term that is, and has always been, subjected to a number of descriptions and definitions. While the term refers to a body of innovative works produced during a period of extraordinary cultural, social, economic, and political transformation, critics disagree about almost every aspect of its definition, including its nature as an artistic phenomenon, its cartography and chronology. Hence, we now refer

- 1 James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Dubliners*, ed. Kevin J. H. Dettmar (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2004), 116.
- 2 Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way: In Search of Lost Time*, ed. Christopher Prendergast, trans. Lydia Davis, vol. 1 (New York: Penguin, 2004), 8.
- 3 Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1995), 47.

to modernisms in the plural.⁴ The engagement with time, however, is an established characteristic of literary modernisms more generally. It is a dominant concern, if not a signature aspect, of modernist fiction on many levels. Modernists are attentive to the time of history that surrounds and permeates their works, as they problematise the representation of time and temporality, and finally, as they experiment with narrative time in their fiction. The Proustian oeuvre, in addition to its trademark device of *mémoire involontaire*, is usually taken as an extensive menagerie of different temporal devices. Furthermore, stream-of-consciousness, the celebrated narrative device of modernist authors, lets time flow through subjective experience, simultaneously slowing it down to arrest the present. Joyce, in *Ulysses*, introduces the epic enlargement of a single day with an overwhelming sense of temporal density, while Woolf in *Orlando* slows time down by interweaving the present with the recent past and the immediate future, with constant recollections and anticipations. The world of experience is now suffused with perception and with the task of recovering lost time. Modernity's own temporal logic, that is, modernity as always new, as a break with the past and as an experience of accelerating time, contrasts with the time of subjective consciousness in modernist narrative. The literary modernist reacts to the ruptured chronologies of Modernity by deliberately confusing (and breaking) the teleological progress of the narrative, thus resisting the linear temporal regime that Modernity would impose. This signature characteristic of the modernist aesthetic begs the question: what are the historical periodisations and *chronotypes* attributed to the history of a literary and artistic movement that is so engaged with time?

Let us consider the periodisation of modernism in literary history. When does modernism start? When does it end? Where does it end? Or, does it refuse to die, casting a long shadow over post-modernism in a linear succession? If the 'post' in question is a temporal marker, then what is late modernism? 'Early' modernism? 'High' and 'low' modernism? The answers to these questions regarding the periodisation of this artistic movement are generally debated and contested, much like the term modernism itself. In this chapter, I would like to revisit these historiographical questions, particularly that of periodisation and geographic scope, regarding the history of literary modernism, and offer a transnational perspective that, I argue, would enable us to critically reassess literary historiography.

Modernism constitutes a unique movement where philosophy, art, literature and historiography come together around the question of time, be it historical, narrative, phenomenological or mnemonic. Many modernists were burdened by an extreme consciousness of time while sharing a common skepticism of modernity's temporal ideology that values newness, a break with the past and a linear and teleological

4 For transnational approaches initiated by the new modernist studies, see the September 2006 special issue of *Modernism/modernity* 13, no. 3 (2006) 'Modernism and Transnationalisms.'

development. Yet, for this literary movement that problematises historical time, such problematisation is not afforded to it in literary history. In other words, modernists who critically engaged with time are contingent on arbitrary periodisation in literary history. Modernism remains first and foremost a Euro-American endeavour, generally squeezed in the inter-war period, characterised by what some critics have called *Eurochronology*. Bringing history, literary studies and, to some extent, also art history together, this chapter asks cross-disciplinary questions regarding modernism and its contested chronologies and cartographies. In the same manner as a number of other chapters in this volume that apply terms of literary formalism to historiography—such as Bakhtinian polyphony and dialogic heteroglossia—I argue for an approach to research in the humanities that includes, without appropriation, a number of different voices which may well remain in conflict, and I advocate multi-lingual and translational research practices.⁵

I argue that the discipline of Comparative Literature has much to offer when rethinking historical periodisations, and when reworking historical categories that go beyond nation-centric interpretive paradigms. It is in many ways a meta-discipline, always in search of new identities and self-definitions, of new methodologies, genealogies and typologies. Initially, the field was (and it partially still is) defined by Eurocentric assumptions, a concerted effort to consolidate European universal literary and cultural values, assimilating, appropriating or directly marginalising other societies and their literary and cultural creativity. It now attempts to define a more transnational and interdisciplinary literary sphere beyond the nation-state and center-periphery models, with remarkable studies that cross chronological, cartographic, and linguistic boundaries. Edward Said, who himself was first and foremost a comparatist, once said of the field: “To speak of comparative literature therefore was to speak of the interaction of world literatures with one another, but the field was epistemologically organized as a sort of hierarchy, with Europe and its Latin Christian literatures as its center and top.”⁶ He thus highlights and questions the conflict within the discipline of Comparative Literature (and comparative humanities more generally). The discipline tries to keep western European histories at the center, while, on the other hand, it also spreads out its limits, finding other cores, thus building transnational geo-histories. This chapter argues for this second movement in the study of modernism, expanding periods and

5 Mikhail Bakhtin introduces the concepts of polyphony and dialogism in his seminal analysis of Dostoevsky’s main characters. He later extends his idea of the dialogical principle through the concept of heteroglossia in his essay “Discourse in the Novel.” Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1988).

6 Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 45.

cartographies not epistemologically organised around a European core, but around the formal, stylistic and historical aspects of the literary movement.

The question of periodisation has recently taken on a new urgency for the discipline of Comparative Literature around the question of world literature. Chris Prendergast, in his edited volume on world literature, borrows the term *Eurochronology* from Appadurai's *Modernity at Large*, to describe the "ethnocentrism of literary-historical periodisation."⁷ He is concerned with the adaptation of the long temporal and spatial reach of world history to the idea of world literature, since the parameters of inquiry are not identical. As an example of the prominence of *Eurochronology* in the study of world literature, he cites the prioritisation of printed literature, particularly modern cosmopolitan literatures, over oral and traditional literatures. He argues that the study of world literature in practice has been concerned with printed literatures that, by some mechanism or other, have entered into relations with others, whose historical point of departure was usually the European Renaissance and the development of national literary traditions, and whose terminus was the literary world 'marketplace' of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Prendergast is here referring to Pascal Casanova's *La République Mondiale des Lettres*, a book that has many merits although its *Eurochronologic* assumptions have incited fierce debates on global literary comparativism—much like Patrick Boucheron's *L'Histoire Mondiale de la France*, discussed in the introduction to this volume.⁸ Hence, the 'world' in world literature does not encompass the global (in the sense of including all literatures in the world), but rather reflects specific international structures and transactions with their inbuilt *chronologic* disorders. Building on the concept of *Eurochronology*, Emily Apter has recently drawn attention to the Eurocentric assumptions inherent in literary categories, and to overcome these has proposed a transcultural approach to world literature that would rely on the 'untranslatable'—a conscious mapping and mining of conceptual difference across languages.⁹

Despite recent efforts to broaden its scope, the humanities in Europe have largely remained invested in *Eurochronology*, which implies the idea that diverse literary traditions and historical practices unfold on a single predestined course, following the western European calendar that serves as a universal measurement of time, its hereditary disorders, that is, its inborn categories and typologies, like 'Renaissance,' 'world literature,' or genre histories, such as the European genealogy of the novel. *Eurochronology* is useful as it displays a time-space continuum in literary history,

7 Christopher Prendergast, ed., *Debating World Literature* (London: Verso, 2004), 6; Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Public Worlds 1 (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 30.

8 Pascale Casanova, *La République mondiale des Lettres* (Paris: Seuil, 2008); Patrick Boucheron, *Histoire mondiale de la France* (Paris: Seuil, 2017).

9 Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (London: Verso, 2013).

uncovering the Eurocentric in its chronologies, and illustrating how certain ideological and political cartographies determine certain periods. A Eurocentric geography also leads to a Eurocentric understanding of literary periodisation. Therefore, a literary movement like modernism, defined by its extreme consciousness of time, remains essentially a European category, while its chronology depends entirely on European history. In the *Eurochronology* of modernism, the geography contains British and French literatures, it may include some token authors writing in German or North American, but anything West or East of these literatures features only marginally, if at all. The treatment of Spanish modernism in literary history as a marginal or aberrant case is a good example for this exclusionary logic.¹⁰ Once modernism is periodised as such, the non-western-European, or any literary agencies outside of that cartography, inevitably and necessarily figure as ‘deviations,’ ‘failures’ or ‘late emulations.’

Modernism, in this regard, is a strongly contested typology: from the debate about when and where it begins and ends, to its less known Latin American etymology, it has become a literary category where *Eurochronology* is practiced most frequently—as is evident from the commonly used terminology such as “Late Modernism,” “Inter-War Literature” or “Men of 1914”—and simultaneously most contested, as in geo-modernisms and planetary modernisms.¹¹ Susan Friedman, who coined the term ‘planetary modernism,’ details the spatial politics that periodise modernism in her essay “Periodizing Modernism.”¹² She shows that whether conceived as a loose affiliation of aesthetic styles, or as a literary/artistic historical period with at least debatable beginning and end points, inherent in modernism is always the presence of an unacknowledged spatial politics that suppresses its global dimensions through time, and the interplay of space and time in all modernisms. Friedman therefore calls for spatialising the literary history of modernism, and reminds us of the agencies of those writers, artists, philosophers, and other producers of culture in the postcolonial world, who are cut off

10 For a compelling collection of essays that address this question, see Anthony L. Geist and José B. Monleón, eds., *Modernism and its Margins: Reinscribing Cultural Modernity from Spain and Latin America* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999).

11 See Laura Doyle and Laura A. Winkiel, *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); Susan Stanford Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity Across Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

12 Susan Stanford Friedman, “Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies,” *Modernism/Modernity* 13, no. 3 (2006): 425–443. For a similar analysis on periodisation of modernism, see Eric Hayot, “Chinese Modernism, Mimetic Desire, and European Time,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 149–170.

from the mainstream by way of unproblematised periodisations. Although Friedman's main concern here is the interplay of cultural differences in postcolonial contexts, other studies have followed in complicating histories and maps of modernisms.

Despite the plethora of attempts at defining modernism under different agendas, literary critics and cultural historians seem to agree on three aspects: a period, a cultural response to modernity and a particular style. The first defines modernism as the literature of a particular chronology, which is again inflected with a specific geography. While the British genealogy, which constitutes the early scholarship on the movement, sets 1910 as its birthdate, later studies emphasise cultural production in France dating it back to nineteenth-century Paris. The movement is considered to have declined after the Second World War, although some critics argue that it still continues, especially outside of Euro-America. It is particularly important to re-consider this last point: the continuing legacy of modernism into the present is reserved for the global south, thus confirming the 'late emulation' *chronotype* mentioned earlier. My re-consideration should in no way be seen as an attempt at delegitimising these chronologies, as each works within their particular cartography, and any definition or history inevitably includes implicit or explicit exclusions. But what is proposed here is a heightened awareness of the internal logics of periodisations.

Modernism is also defined as a reaction and response to modernity and the changing conditions of modern life. Literature that is concerned with mechanisation, urbanisation, impending wars and conflicts, and that responds to new ideas in philosophy, psychology and science, is considered modernist. Finally, modernism is considered to be a particular style: the new literature that employs experimental styles and techniques, such as stream-of-consciousness, fragmentation of narrative time and a multiplicity of perspectives. If we consider these last two definitions, many works outside of the initial chronological definition can be considered modernist. However, few of these make it to acclaimed anthologies, curricula or critical works. As Sanjay Subrahmanyam demonstrates in the Conclusion to this volume, moving scales creates an awareness for multiple periodisations. If we scale modernisms according to the last two categories (i.e. modernism as a response to modernity and modernism as a particular style), we will see that the particular chronology of modernism, too, would have to change. National and local modernisms have tried to limit the scale to a particular geography while extending modernism to outside of Europe-America. National frameworks, such as studies on Brazilian or Chinese modernism, have developed their own canon. These studies, however, do not necessarily challenge *Eurochronology*. For instance, as long as the non-European claim to modernism is inflected with select few locations or authors, even a Swiss-German modernist like Robert Walser at the heart of European cartography will only figure marginally within modernism in the German language, which is reserved for Franz Kafka and Thomas Mann, based on an albeit problematic logic of resemblance. Aijaz Ahmad, in "Show me the Zulu Proust," demonstrates this point with

sarcasm.¹³ Ahmad argues here for the re-invention of ‘World Literature’ from a South-South perspective rather than from a periphery-center one. The formula criticised here is clear: show me the Zulu Proust, so that I can appreciate, and appropriate, the Zulu author, through his or her resemblance to the ‘authentic’ modernist. This understanding demonstrates a kind of illogical periodisation which re-writes the literary history of the non-West through *Eurochronologies*. There are many other examples of this rationale in critical studies: the Balzac of the Arabic novel is deemed to be Naguib Mahfouz, which is an effortless translation of the nineteenth-century French realism *chronotope* into the twentieth century Arabic novel—which is in itself a problematic cartography. In the *Eurochronology* of modernism, Tanizaki figures as Japan’s Kafka, and Tanpınar as the Turkish Proust. This is not a comparative methodology, but rather, in Aamir Mufti’s terms, the logic of orientalism re-packaged as world literature,¹⁴ which produces narratives of European ‘diffusionism’ and ‘influence studies.’

Jörn Rüsen’s typology of historical forms, presented in the first section of this volume and elsewhere, provides a useful model with which to approach the treatment of modernism in literary history, particularly given the historical baggage of the term ‘modern.’¹⁵ According to this model, there are four types of narrative construction of history—traditional, exemplary, critical and genetic—as projected in a progressive framework, from the oldest to the newest, co-existing in different historical narratives. The first one is the “traditional” narrative, in which historical meaning stays the same over time. It confirms and reinforces continuity between past and present and history becomes one normative and pragmatic event. According to this narrative logic, quite prevalent in nineteenth-century literary historiography, the origins of the ‘modern’ would be in Europe, they would be considered a pre-given cultural pattern affirmed by antiquity. Not only literary historians but also some modernists themselves, such as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and James Joyce, clearly adapted this traditional *chronotype* in their search for organic unity in art, by making references to ancient mythology in a highly idiosyncratic and personalised manner.

The second typology in Rüsen’s categorisation is the “exemplary” formation of historical meaning, in which history is used to generate general principles and thus becomes a teacher of life. In this exemplary form, modernist literature from the

13 Aijaz Ahmad, “‘Show Me the Zulu Proust’: Some Thoughts on World Literature,” *Revista Brasileira de Literatura Comparada* 17 (2010): 11–45.

14 Aamir R. Mufti, *Forget English!: Orientalisms and World Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

15 Jörn Rüsen, “Making periodisation possible. The concept of the course of time (Zeitverlaufsvorstellung) in historical thinking,” in this volume; Jörn Rüsen, *Evidence and Meaning: A Theory of Historical Studies* (New York: Berghahn, 2017). I would like to thank Barbara Mittler for her response to a draft of this essay and for bringing to my attention the parallels between Rüsen’s typology and this particular periodisation of modernism in literary history.

European core becomes *the chronotype*. Similarly, in Ahmad's "Zulu Proust," texts from western Europe are examined as to their suitability for the formulation of a "universal law" of the modernist form, which is then applied to other texts from elsewhere, based on this exemplary logic.

The third and fourth typologies suggested by Rüsen develop a critical approach to the deep structure of existing historical narratives. The "critical" narrative takes into account counter-evidence and counter-narratives that contest the present meaning of historical phenomena, while the "genetic" type asserts the inevitability of historical change in the making of historical time. Although it is now quite evident to the twenty-first century historian that the first two narrative types, i.e. the "traditional" and the "exemplary," are untenable today, it seems that mainstream literary criticism reproduces these narratives, paradoxically, in an effort to promote the last two. One such example is the scholarly and pedagogical practice concerning world literature, which has virtually dominated the field of comparative literature over recent decades. Its primary aim, to build a canon of key works of literature from diverse historical, aesthetic and cultural perspectives—evidently an attempt at a "critical" narrative of literary history that challenges established orientations—is driven by a predisposition to universal origins and exemplary forms. This proclivity of world literature scholars for establishing what Aamir Mufti has called "the European universal library," excludes many diverse literary practices and traditions.¹⁶ Literary history, therefore, needs to develop more "genetic" and "critical" narratives without necessarily abandoning entirely the lower levels. Finally, following this critical approach even further, one might add that Rüsen's own typology of historiographic forms in fact also tends towards this proclivity for carving out universal origins and general principles. Relying on notions of "anthropological universals" and "a new universal idea of time," his four-tier categorisation of historical consciousness presumes the translatability of these narrative models across particular cultural and linguistic experiences. Emily Apter's critique of the idea of a "transnationally translatable monoculture," and her subsequent argument for untranslatability as "a deflationary gesture" toward such a comparative principle grounded in universals, might be one way to approach Rüsen's otherwise effective typology.¹⁷

But let us go back to the literary modernists and their clocks. The question of time and temporality is a fundamental aspect of modernist fiction, in particular the dialectic between past and present. While staying informed by this modernist legacy, which seems to have dominated the critical work on the relation between the philosophy of time and literature, we need to draw a polycentric and pluralist map of modernist

16 Mufti, *Forget English!* (see note 14).

17 Emily Apter, *Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Apter, *Against World Literature* (see note 9).

temporality. These two signature topoi of the modernist aesthetic are not the only examples early-twentieth century literature provides of the diversity and fragmentation of temporal experience. Other works have produced parodies of managed existence, deriding any stable form of time-keeping, or *chronometry*, including the cardinal modernist mode of recovering lost time and streaming it back to consciousness. One such figure is the Turkish modernist Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar. While Joyce's vision of hell, Proust's insolent clock and Woolf's time of the mind are part of modernism's key tropes, Tanpınar's narrative experiments in diversity and fragmentation of temporal experience point towards unexplored directions in modernist studies. Through parody, pathos, satire, narrative instability and mutually cancelling ambiguities, temporal disorders, irregularities and *chronopathologies*, are epitomised as state-sponsored frenzy in his 1961 novel *The Time Regulation Institute* (TRI).¹⁸

Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, born in 1901, bore witness to a series of momentous historical events including the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the British invasion of Istanbul, the Independence War, the replacement of the monarchy by the Turkish Republic, as well as an exhaustive series of reforms ranging from government structures to everyday life practices, and two World Wars. He became a professor of nineteenth-century Turkish literature at Istanbul University, where he remained until his death in 1962. Two years before his death, Tanpınar wrote "Letter to the Youth from Antalya" addressed to a high school student, which he considered to be his literary manifesto. In this letter he lists his two main influences: the prominent poet (and Tanpınar's mentor) Yahya Kemal, who taught him to "appreciate the old poetry," and who developed the idea of "perfection" and "sublime language" in modern poetry, and, secondly and most importantly, French symbolism. Tanpınar names Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Valéry, as well as Hoffman, Poe, Goethe, Bergson and Proust as the main inspirations for his writing.¹⁹ Standing at the crossroads of the Ottoman literary tradition, modern Turkish poetry and European modernism, Tanpınar incorporates this multiplicity in his writing and considers this condition of in-between-ness with an "exilic consciousness" (*daiüssıla*) as an essential component of Turkish literary modernity.

While the modernist canon sustains the idea that fragments of lost time can be retrieved and streamed back into consciousness, Tanpınar produces a parody of managed existence, questioning any stable form of *chronometry*. TRI presents a chaotic multiplicity of temporalities. In contrast to the heroic model of recovering lost time, as in stream-of-consciousness novels, his work produces and functions with an

18 Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *The Time Regulation Institute*, trans. by Alexander Dawe, Maureen Freely (New York: Penguin Classics, 2014). For a detailed analysis of the novel, see Özen Nergis Dolcerocca, "'Free Spirited Clocks': Modernism, Temporality and The Time Regulation Institute," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 20, no. 2 (May 4, 2017): 177–197.

19 Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *Yaşadığım Gibi* (İstanbul: Dergâh, 2000), 350.

untypical hero, Hayri İrdal, who has an inexhaustible list of professions, including fabulist, alchemist, spiritualist, mental patient and finally bureaucrat. Born and raised during the fall of the Empire, overwhelmed by chaotic and ceaseless social, political and cultural transformation, Hayri is an anti-hero with an anxiety-driven compulsion for stability. Trapped in a cycle of infernal repetition, he inhabits this series of roles and eventually exhausts himself in the effort to stand still and survive in the face of his rapidly changing world.

In *TRI*, questions regarding time, change and rupture are displayed in the symbolic and metaphorical characterisation of clocks. Time machines gain multiple meanings: they are personified, turned into objects of desire; they both submit to and subdue the human. Here, watches reflect the inner flow of time. They are stripped of their actual, objective and spatial existence and become reflections of the autonomous and non-spatial temporality of their specific wearers. They also reflect their owners' unconventional political persuasions, concealments and idiosyncrasies, embodying multiple temporalities. Their rhythms change according to the prudence or rashness of their owners, to their private life and "political creeds," which here refers to the authoritarian regime of Sultan Abdülhamit II (1876–1909). Assuming the essence of its owner, a watch "thinks and lives" as the owner does, until "they are as one." In this view, time is not a neutral abstraction that exists independently of lived experience. Time here is a function of something other than itself: every event, process, revolution or "fate" (*talih*) has its own particular time. Time is not one time, but an infinite number of times. In the image of anthropomorphised watches, Tanpınar recognises this temporal diversity and their simultaneity in order to reimagine the process of change itself.

Staying within the bounds of *Eurochronology* that still defines the field of literary history, results in the calculated or inadvertent exclusion of many authors. Their works are either subsumed within a national framework, e.g. 'Turkish modernism,' or they appear in transnational studies along with other works both from the center and the periphery. In both cases, the ill-logic of resemblance and of orientalism accompany these mostly well-intentioned projects. Much like the arms of the "West" in Perjovschi's drawing entitled "Radical Museology" from 2013 (Fig. 1), the West embraces, surrounds and absorbs the "non-West," which is always defined with respect to what it is not. In the case of Tanpınar, for instance, we can see his evolution into a national cultural product of exportation: he resembles the center just enough to become the 'Turkish Proust,' and he is local enough to be branded within a national framework. As he gradually becomes the second token Turkish author of world literature (after Orhan Pamuk), with recent international interest in his work, there is a need to contextualise and critically examine such local and global appropriations. Modernist studies still rely on the metropole-periphery distinction and the criteria of cultural legitimation generated in Europe. The double bind of this view is this: eventually, both local and global reception end up celebrating "nationally and ethnically branded differences,

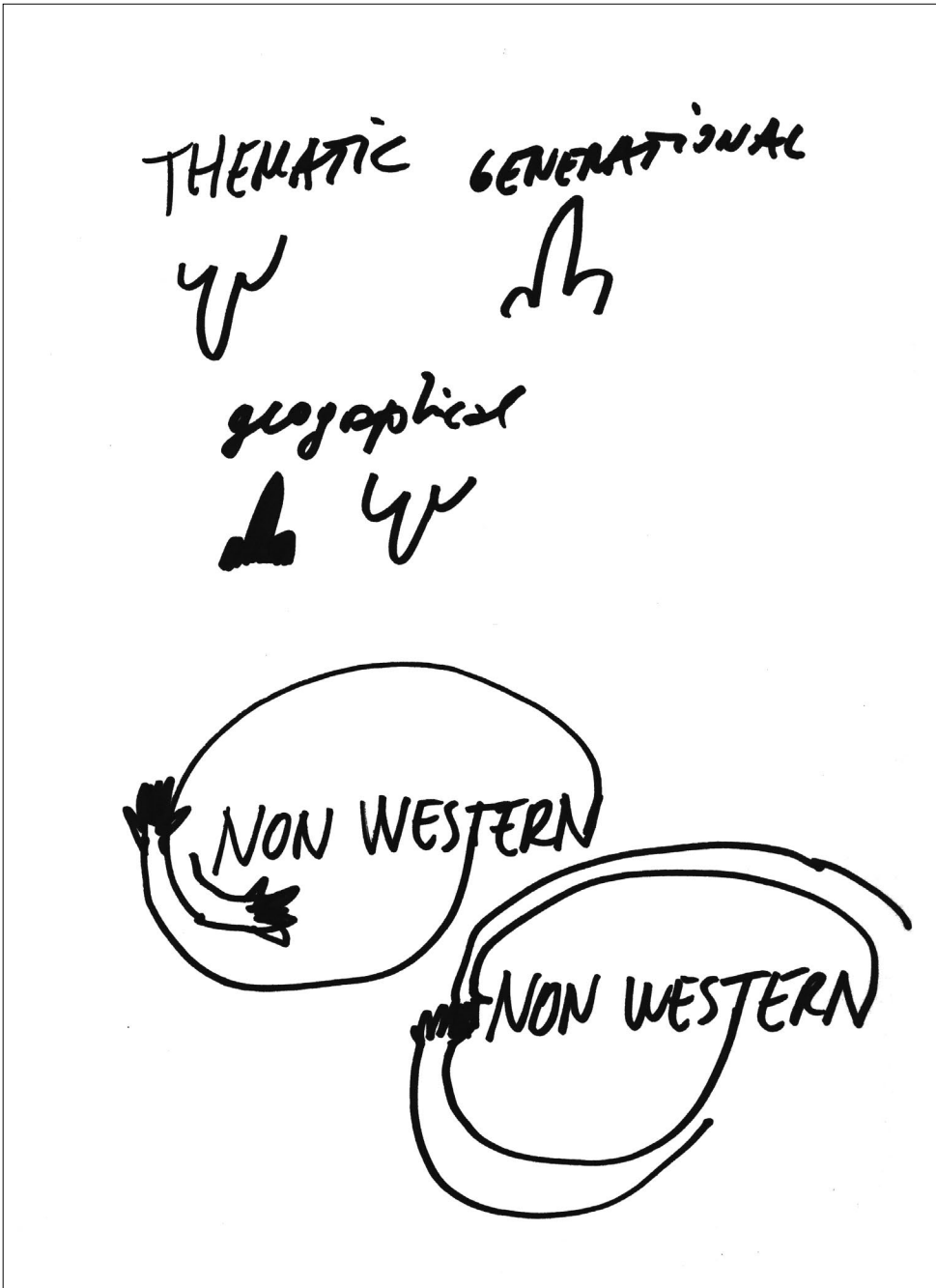


Figure 1 Dan Perjovschi, Drawing from *Radical Museology*, 2013, black marker on paper, 30.5 × 22.8 cm.

niche-marketed as commercialized identities.”²⁰ The image of the Bosphorus as the effortless metaphor for the composite of East and West, has, similarly, become a commercialised identity for Turkish literature. It has become a literary property that is culturally unique, nationally branding and self-defining. Tanpınar, however, offers more than such a synthesis of East and West; he understands the novel as a chronicle of political instability and crisis, with a compositional heterogeneity, and even linguistic pluralism. We thus need to avoid making claims about ‘authentic’ ‘local’ literary categories, neither should we hold his work up to the ‘global’ standards of readability.

I would like to end with Joyce, whose exilic literary career has drawn considerable attention from comparative and transnational literary studies. His somewhat voluntary exile from Ireland has been interpreted as part of the transnational and cosmopolitan roots of modernism.²¹ He spent many years working and writing in Trieste, Rome, Paris and Zurich. One of Joyce’s visits was to Pula, Croatia, where he spent a year in 1905, writing parts of *Dubliners* and *Stephen Hero*. Even if I try to think about that moment, to envision Joyce in Pula which functioned as a transnational or transregional contact zone for Joyce—some scholars have talked about the ‘global Joyce’—I cannot. A local scholar, Ivo Vidan, who studied Joyce’s stay in Croatia, notes with disappointment and a hint of nationalist pride that Joyce, a “new-fledged language teacher,” did not even know what the spoken language was in Pula: “They speak Italian, German and Slav,” Joyce wrote in a letter.²² Vidan sarcastically remarks that “he could have said just as well: ‘Romance, Teutonic and Slav,’ since a language called Slav does not exist.” In this cosmopolitan port city, where *Mittleuropa* and the Mediterranean meet, Croatian, Italian, Ottoman, German and Serbian would have been among the languages spoken at the time. Joyce was not part of this picture. The relationship between the exiled Irish author and the Croatian (or then, Austrian) cultural scene of Pula was a non-encounter, a non-contact zone, a non-relation. And yet, there are other encounters to uncover in the history of modernism, missed encounters, marginal or regional ones, through which we can think about transnational modernism, removed from diffusionist stories, theories of influence and center-periphery dichotomies.²³ My aim here, unlike that of

20 Apter, *Against World Literature* (see note 9), 2.

21 For a critique of this understanding of modernism, see Raymond Williams, *Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (London: Verso, 2007), 31–36.

22 Ivo Vidan, “Joyce and the South Slavs,” *Studia Romanica et Anglica Zagabiensia: Revue publiée par les Sections romane, italienne et anglaise de la Faculté des Lettres de l’Université de Zagreb* 33–36 (1972): 265–277, here at 266.

23 For recent examples of this scholarship, see Nergis Ertürk, “Modernity and Its Fallen Languages: Tanpınar’s Hasret, Benjamin’s Melancholy,” *PMLA* 123, no.1 (2006): 41–56; Harsha Ram, “The Scale of Global Modernisms: Imperial, National, Regional, Local,” *PMLA* 131, no. 5 (2016): 1372–1385.

Vidan, is not to reproach Joyce for his lack of interest in the local culture, it is rather to critique the type of comparative history that draws cursory connections between cultures and their periodisation of modernism.

This chapter has explored the case of literary modernism in terms of its problematic periodisation and geographic scope in certain practices of literary historiography. It has discussed the paradox that time is a dominant theme in modernist fiction whereas this concern is fairly absent in its periodisation, for instance, in histories which squeeze the movement in the interwar period or draw a genealogy dating its origins to French symbolism in the nineteenth century. All these histories are of course well-grounded within their particular historiographic framework, but once we move the geographic scale outside of western Europe and take up a transnational and transcultural perspective, as we have seen in the case of Tanpınar, periods inevitably vary. This chapter has therefore argued for a heightened awareness of the internal logic of periodisation in literary history. Establishing a cross-disciplinary conversation on methodology, between history and literature, the chapter has discussed the advantages of multi-lingual and transnational approaches, for example, and the shortcomings—inherent in Eurocentric categories—of the contemporary practices in comparative literature. It has shown the limits of national frameworks, and how these frameworks are challenged by a problematic and yet quite popular category called ‘world literature,’ which has become an umbrella term to include non-European works in a new canon. In order to overcome such methodological limitations, on the one hand, and in order to avoid a comparatism that is reduced to questions of originality and mimicry, on the other, this chapter has suggested, instead, to examine specific problems, taking into account specific temporal ideologies in order to rewrite the history of literary modernism as a history of “modernism-in-common” as an analogy to what Carol Gluck has called ‘modernity-in-common.’²⁴

Figure

Fig. 1 Courtesy by the artist and Gregor Podnar, Berlin.

24 For a lengthy discussion, see Thomas Maissen and Barbara Mittler, *Why China did not have a Renaissance and why that matters—An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018).

