CHAPTER 3

Planetarity's Edges
Modernist Studies and the Bounds of Modernism

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In *The Philosophy of History* (1837), G. W. F. Hegel lays out a *mappa mundi* that affirms the predominance of Europe as much as it turns a geopolitical commentary into a reflection about the planet's many edges. In Hegel's thinking, geological formations reflect cultural and historical progression. He writes that "the true theatre of History" is "the temperate zone; or, rather, its northern half, because the earth there presents itself in a continental form, and has a broad breast, as the Greeks say." The south represents a wholly different situation, as "it divides itself, and runs out into many points."[1] Thinking about the world in terms of the "*Old*" and the "*New*," he goes on to describe America and Australia as "intrinsically" recent not only in terms of their appearance in the Europeans' perception of the world, but also "in respect of their entire physical and psychical constitution." Meanwhile, the "Archipelago between South America and Asia shows a physical immaturity" (98). Hegel's intention is, of course, to trace the development of progress, what he terms Spirit.[2] His focus on cycles of land formation and resulting geological irregularities could also be read as a primitive form of planetary thinking, in the sense that his vision of the earth's surface reflects for him a northern primacy that continues to come up against the alterity of its opposite. While Hegel concentrates Spirit in the European population, the specter of the future runs through *Philosophy of History* – a future in which the jagged otherness of that "new" world may reveal its own designs.

Hegel's planet, though sketched in a moment quite different from our own, begins to dramatize the challenge of dealing with cultural and locational difference on a grand scale – a challenge that has remained a vital conundrum to this day. How do individuals reconcile a vision of their sense of the world with multiple, competing visions of otherness? This chapter engages with a disciplinary and institutional history of this question, specifically as it pertains to the new modernist studies. In what follows, I explore the incremental currency of "planetarity" since the

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1990s in different sectors of the international academy, and particularly in the United States and Latin America, as a way of arriving at the question of how planetarity – particularly as a way of unsettling Eurocentrism and discourses of globalization – sits with, and fits within, the new modernist studies. In thinking about this relationship, I ask how planetary thinking affects our current conceptions of expertise, and indeed our efforts at formulating in-depth arguments about cultural phenomena in different locations, beyond disciplinary boundaries, and across linguistic competencies. My exploration of these issues requires a consideration of other, proximate terminologies that also seek to develop notions of alterity in the study of modernity, such as globalization, transnationalism, and cosmopolitanism. However, for the purposes of this chapter, I give most weight to specific cases of scholars who opt for the "planetary" as their theoretical framework, and in particular the case of Susan Stanford Friedman's proposals for the study of what she calls "planetary modernisms." As a response, the final section of the essay is devoted to the case of fin-de-siècle Spanish American *modernismo*. The *modernistas* and their aesthetic output, I posit, present a particular dilemma for a study of modernism that eschews cultural hubs and stable period boundaries.

Versions of "Planetarity"

The "planetary" as an academic paradigm that unhinges discourses of globality has been gaining currency since the late 1990s. Gayatri Spivak launched the term "planetary" into the Anglo-American scholarly conscience in a lecture delivered in Zurich in December 1997.[3] Spivak then expanded that lecture into *Death of a Discipline* (2003). In the latter, she proposes we think in terms of the planet in order "to overwrite the globe" and the framework of globalization; for her, the latter entails "the imposition of the same system of exchange everywhere," through which a blindness to alterity is enacted.[4] Instead of continuing with this monolithic model of literary study, Spivak beckons us to "mak[e] home uncanny" (76) in our development of a future comparative literature. Spivak's proposal represents an invitation to think of literature well beyond national paradigms and to embrace the planet's jaggedness rather than adopt an idea of "global" or "worldly" oneness. This sentiment is echoed in subsequent works that envisaged the planet as a challenge for literary scholars in the new millennium. In the introduction to their collection *Shades of the Planet* (2007), to name one volume that begins to take on the difficulties of assuming a planetary model of scholarship, Wai Chee Dimock and

Lawrence Buell contemplate the state of American Studies as a field whose "autonomized chronology" implodes in the face of the planet as temporal and spatial span.[5] The contributions of Spivak, Dimock, and Buell reveal how planetarity poses a disciplinary challenge and, as such, amounts to a conundrum for Anglo-American humanities, organized as they are according to language departments, comparative literature programs, and area studies. Dimock and Buell describe the "elimination of 'span' as a scholarly requirement" – a symptom of what they call the "modularity" of American Studies. In their view, this elimination can translate into "a distorting lens in some cases, a fatal pair of blinkers in others" (6). For Spivak, meanwhile, planetarity offers an as-yet-undeveloped study model in which "collectivities cross borders under the auspices of a Comparative Literature supplemented by Area Studies" (72). Spivak, Dimock, and Buell spell out forms of reading that are, to say the least, difficult to accomplish given our disciplinary realities, ensconced as they are within set period, linguistic, and cultural boundaries.

In Spivak's call for an "uncanny" study of literature, she asks for a renewed understanding of what it is to be human, which means "to be intended for the other" (73). This renders planetarity not only a proposal for scholarly reform, but also an ethical proposition that asks for an incorporation of relationality and ecological thinking into our readings of our shared lived space. Such a position is invoked in subsequent proposals for planetary thinking. In *The Planetary Turn* (2015), Amy J. Elias and Christian Moraru distinguish this framework from globalization by defining the former as "a transcultural phenomenon whose economical and political underpinnings cannot be ignored but whose preeminent thrust is ethical."[6] Elias and Moraru also find a number of limitations in the new cosmopolitanism's "chiefly . . . philosophical enterprise": "[i]t is a kind of knowledge and interpretation of the world, a way one mentally processes environments, assesses them, and endorses attitudes in them" (xxiii). For Elias and Moraru, "planet" and "planetary" are, by contrast, "a noun and an attribute signifying and qualifying, respectively, *a multicentric and pluralizing, 'actually existing' worldly structure of relatedness critically keyed to non-totalist, non-homogenizing, and anti-hegemonic operations typically and polemically subtended by an eco-logic*" (xxiii). The planetary field that Elias and Moraru delineate represents, then, an existential-critical challenge and a form of future-thinking that considers the relation of humans to each other, particularly in this current time of environmental and populational upheaval.

While these are evaluations of the planetary as a mode of thinking forward into our precarious futures, the "planetary" has also been invoked

by non-Anglo-American scholars; the Argentine-Mexican liberation theologian Enrique Dussel is a case in point. In a sustained engagement with Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems theory across the 1970s into the new millennium, Dussel's vast body of work amounts to an ethical critique of Eurocentrism, from Hegel and Marx to Foucault and Habermas. In an article written in 1993 (and translated into English in 1998), Dussel claims that "two opposing paradigms, the Eurocentric and the planetary, characterize the question of modernity."[7] (It is important to note here that, while "planetarity" is the translator's preferred nomenclature in this quote, in the original, Dussel employs the term "un horizonte mundial" – a "global" or "worldwide" horizon – but in the same essay he also employs the term "planetaria" to explain the same phenomenon, making them more or less interchangeable.)[8] While Eurocentrism, according to Dussel, "formulates the phenomenon of modernity as *exclusively* European, developing in the Middle Ages and later on diffusing itself through the entire world" (3), the planetary paradigm perceives European modernity "not [as] an *independent*, autopoietic, self-referential system," but as "*part* of a world-system: in fact, its *center*" (4). Amerindia is the periphery to Europe's center following the discovery and conquest, and it is this historical development that, according to Dussel, will give Europe "a *comparative advantage* over the Ottoman-Muslim world, India, and China" (5). Perceiving modernity in this light, Dussel claims that "this planetary paradigm is a phenomenon proper to the system of 'center-periphery'" – of violent inclusion and exclusion – in which Europe administers its central position. Thus, "the *management* of the centrality of the world-system will allow Europe to transform itself in something like the 'reflexive consciousness' . . . of world history" (5). In this particular iteration of Dussel's argument, then, the planetary comes to describe the spread of a system from a set of imperial centers in Europe; at the same time, Dussel reiterates the impossibility of the formation of that thing we call "modernity" without the presence of Europe's so-called periphery. He therefore rejects the idea that modernity is self-constituted in Europe. "If modernity enters into crisis at the end of the twentieth century, after five centuries of development," Dussel posits, it has a lot to do with "those moments of a 'planetary' description of the phenomenon of modernity," and not solely with the internal-European crises identified by Weber and Habermas (18).

After formulating this theory of what he calls the "first modernity," Dussel has continued to rework his philosophical history of planetarity, further considering, for example, China's powerful position in the world during the eighteenth century – demonstrating his engagement with the

work of Andre Gunder Frank in *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (1998).[9] He has also continued to think about the politics of exclusion and victimhood in this modernity, and has theorized an ethics of alterity in his philosophical project. It is in this aspect that his work converses most fully with Spivak's future-thinking. In a 2002 article, he proposed the term "'trans'-modernity," which he defines as "a 'beyond' that transcends Western modernity . . . and that will have a creative function of great significance in the twenty-first century."[10] He puts his faith in human diversity. Moving the discussion into the future, Dussel visualizes a

> multipolar twenty-first century world, where cultural difference is increasingly affirmed, beyond the *homogenizing* pretensions of the present capitalist globalization and its supposedly universal culture, and even beyond the postmodern affirmation of difference that finds it difficult to imagine cultural universalities from a millenary tradition outside of Europe and the United States. This "trans"-modernity should adopt the best that the modern technological revolution has to offer – discarding antiecological and exclusively Western aspects – and put it at the service of differentiated valorized worlds, ancient and actualized, with their own traditions and ignored creativity. (236)

While such a statement could smack of a celebration of difference (another critical tendency of which critics from Alberto Moreiras to Elias and Moraru are suspicious), Dussel, like other critics discussed in this essay up to this point, is interested in arriving at a theorization of the world's diversity that critiques and ultimately seeks to overcome the homogenizing discourses of globalization. His past and future thinking offer a continuous dismantling of Eurocentrism from the vantage point of excluded bodies and cultures too often rendered "barbaric" in Western thought.

I have described the development of Dussel's planetary thinking for a number of reasons. A first, and quite obvious, one is that, although well known to Latin Americanists worldwide, Dussel's work is overlooked in current Anglo-American discussions of planetarity, many of which are coming out of English and Comparative Literature departments. Another reason for his relative absence could be that, for a long time, his work has engaged with the idea of *center* and *periphery*, which contemporary critics – particularly within literary studies, as we will continue to see – are trying hard to do away with. At the same time – and this point bears heavily on the new modernist studies – it is important for proponents of planetarity in the Anglo-American academy to engage with critics that do not hail from, or work within, the Global North – in other words, for them to see how that "jagged otherness" that I describe in Hegel's *Philosophy of History*

speaks back. Dussel's collected work reveals a keen interest in theorizing alterity and historicizing the invention of a mythology about European modernity from the outside.

Planetarity as Practice: How (Not) to Read Otherness

There is an essential tension between Dussel's and Spivak's work, which leads me back to a discussion of planetarity as a way of reframing how we read literature. Spivak has expressed a strong resistance to applying world-systems theory – a methodology employed by Franco Moretti and Pascale Casanova, for example – to literary studies. Here, I am particularly interested in how Spivak voices her disagreement in terms of a reading practice. In dialogue with Moretti's essay "Conjectures on World Literature" (2000), Spivak questions the formation of a global comparative literature that relies on "the close reading practiced by national literary scholars on the periphery."[11] Skeptical about producing "authoritative totalizing patterns" produced from the opinions of "small groups of people treated as native informants," Spivak asks a different and pertinent question: "The others provide information while we know the whole world. Why should the (novel in the) whole world as our object of investigation be the task of every comparativist, who should give up on language learning?" (108n1). Here, Spivak puts her finger on what I see as an essential question that scholars who espouse the category of planetarity must continue to consider: What would a responsible, ethical planetary reading practice look like, and what would such an expertise demand of us as scholars who want to produce an account of the planet's diverse populations, languages, and histories?

One of the most poignant features of Spivak's essay on planetarity in *Death of a Discipline* is an admission about the limits of her own readings. "I keep feeling that there are connections to be made that I cannot make," she admits, hoping that a "future reader" may get there in the end (92). Read in this light, planetarity as a proleptic configuration for criticism is bound within the dimensions of our present condition as scholars whose vision is frustratingly reduced and limited at an institutional level. Indeed, if planetarity represents a future for criticism, our current aspirations to such a model continue to spell out our limitations as readers, as well as the limits to our access to a planetary corpus. This brings to my mind a passage from the collection of essays *Not to Read* (2018), by the Chilean writer Alejandro Zambra, in which he describes the "marvellous and incurable illness that brings us to treasure first editions of bibliographic rarities," and

a variation of this affliction in the act of purchasing books that "we're not going to read," but that "we wouldn't know how to read . . . because they are written in languages that are mostly unknown to us."[12] At the same time, he claims, "it is hard to resist the beauty of an edition of Kawabata in Japanese, for example" (66). Zambra, for me, dramatizes a scene of comparative literary intractability, reflecting as he does on how we approach texts from dispersed points across the globe, even those that we are perhaps not equipped enough to read. Extrapolating slightly into our current discussion, I would argue that Zambra's indecipherable book could represent a symbol for planetary thinking's current status as a set of scholarly desires, or future-thinking, for literary studies.

The wish to read the other's text can be satisfied, in part, by translations. At the same time, it is important to remember that these are active sites of cultural tensions that require careful unpacking.[13] Each translation carries a trajectory, which itself requires intense scholarly attention. Thinking about translation in the field of modernist studies in particular, Rebecca Beasley has argued that "attention to the translation process across cultures and across national and ethnic languages is vital in order to prevent the grouping of diverse cultural material under the banner of 'modernism' from producing a false sense of homogeneity."[14] She also offers the following warning to the field with which this volume is concerned: "For modernist studies to be actively transformed (not only passively informed) by the global turn, we need to be more persistent in asking questions about translation, dissemination, and reception" (552). The difference between a field that is "actively transformed," as opposed to "passively informed" is valuable to our discussion of planetarity. What would it mean to be an "active" scholar of planetary modernism?

The figure of Kawabata Yasunari (1898–1972), Zambra's example of one of his bibliographic pleasures laced with readerly incomprehension, is useful here. As a Kawabata non-expert and as someone who knows very little of Japanese literature from any period, I can immediately research him and see that he is a point in a constellation of authors who have come to be identified under the broad umbrella of international modernism. Kawabata, I read in an essay written by the Japanologist Irena Hayter, was a founding editor of the *Bungei jidai* (*Literary Age*) magazine (1924–1927) in Japan and the author of the first piece published in the first issue. Here, Kawabata announces the need to "create new literary arts at the same time as creating new life."[15] This call for newness and the interchangeability of art and life chime, again straight away, with many other modernist calls to "make it new," from Ezra Pound's motto to similar calls in the Mexican

and Argentine avant-gardes of the 1920s, to name just some examples I am quite familiar with. This Asian cipher of newness leads me, then, to Michael North, who argues that a dictum like Pound's, which is (ironically) an "ancient" one, "stands first on the command line of the modern program because it converts everything into a format that modernity can use."[16] North's critique of the "modern program," with Pound as one of its linchpins, points to a number of assumptions made by past and current scholars of modernism about the time and place of modernity, as well as modernism, where the "new" can be used as a battle cry for a generation of young writers and artists. This assumed location is, of course, the Global North. The brief association I have drawn – of Kawabata and Pound – raises the possibility of thinking of modernism otherwise, of de-centering it in a way that enables us to explore the potential of its cultural and linguistic diversity. It is an exciting prospect. At the same time, however, my knowledge of Kawabata is filtered through translation and through a group of "native informants" that have vouched for his promotion of "the new." These percolations undoubtedly stand between his work and my ability to read him in the same way that I read the authors whose work I am able to decipher on my own.

Friedman's *Planetary Modernisms* and the Shifting Boundaries of Modernism

The realization of my own limits as a reader points to a difficulty in thinking about planetarity in tandem with modernism: the recent interest in considering this aesthetic movement or tendency as spatially and even temporally unbounded. This possibility is perceived as a corrective to the commonly held assumption that modernism must be understood, mainly, according to Eurocentric paradigms that would make an Anglo-American author like Pound an example on which the whole movement hinges. The most eminent proponent of a planetary framework for modernist studies is, of course, Susan Stanford Friedman. For quite some time now, Friedman has proposed what she terms "comparativity" as a way forward for the field as a whole.[17] In her *Planetary Modernisms* (2015), a culmination of such interventions, she lays down a proposal for an understanding of modernity and a modernism unbounded in both space and time:

> [M]odernity need no longer reside solely in a specific set of institutional, ideological, or aesthetic characteristics emergent in the post-Renaissance West, radiating globally along the pathways of empire and postcoloniality, and appearing as pale copies of Western genius. Instead, a particularized

> modernity located in space and time could potentially emerge wherever and whenever the winds of radical disruption blew, the conditions of rapid change flared up, or the reflexive consciousness of newness spread – whether these were eagerly sought or resisted, whether imposed from without or developed within.[18]

This proposal, which Friedman avowedly puts out there to "provoke more debate, not close it off" (311), radically refigures received histories of art and literature, but it also raises a number of problems that deserve our careful attention. The first issue here is that Friedman equates modernity and modernism with rupture, change, and, as we see above, newness. Thinking back to Michael North's discussion of the "modern program," one notices how she is happy to adhere to what is quite a standard definition of European modernism, one that North warns we should nevertheless be wary of. Working on newness and rupture as the ultimate principle of modernity and modernism (not empire, its mythologies, and the debunking of such myths, as Dussel has done), Friedman paradoxically leaves unquestioned a definition of the "modern" that has its roots in an Anglo-American center in the period European and Anglo-American institutions have commonly ascribed to modernism.

A second and widely discussed point (for this book has certainly led to quite a rich debate) is the impressive stretching of the category of the "modern" in Friedman's intervention – a term on which she relies so heavily as a way of setting things right (for cultures and time periods that Eurocentrism has cast to the side or altogether ignored) that it risks stretching itself out beyond recognition. This echoes what Christopher Bush describes as the book's "relentless suspicion of 'those who would narrow and fix the meanings of *modernity* and *modernism*'" (343 in Friedman), which "often seems to suggest that any limitation on the semantic range of either term necessarily shores up Eurocentrism."[19] The wish to develop a totalizing critique and dismissal of Eurocentrism resonates with more ethical approaches to the idea of planetarity, which we have seen in the work of Dussel and Spivak. (Friedman does not engage with Dussel at all, and only briefly deals with Spivak in the works cited in this essay.) At the same time, however, Friedman's planet, constituted in a set of diverse readings of texts and objects across time, does not quite bear the mark of what alterity may look like in a world, or parts of the world, that is not necessarily constituted by modernity – and that generates modes of artistic production whose originality is not inevitably made any more critically comprehensible with the aid of those familiar mandates of rupture, fragmentation, or hunger for newness.

Moreover, and to return to the issues that I have been raising up to now about planetarity as a form of reading, we need to account for the specter raised in Dimock and Buell's collection, and in Spivak's *Death of a Discipline*: the difficulty of offering a breadth of analysis within the constraints imposed by institutional frameworks and the limits of our expertise. This becomes patently clear in Friedman's text when she enters periods and languages that have not been part of her critical tool kit (e.g., Chinese and vernacular Hindi), in search of what she calls "a creative rupture of conventional forms that accompanies the specific modernities of their time and place."[20] "Fully aware of the controversies that surround the use of translation," and cognizant that the "linguistic and cultural/historical knowledge of area studies would no doubt produce much more nuanced and expansively knowledgeable readings," she proceeds with a reading that relies on "the assistance of critics working in the original," and which "point her toward the sensibilities and aesthetics of modernist rupture" (191). This takes us back to Spivak's critique of world-systems-inflected literary scholarship: in this case, the reliance on the reading of others to account for the ubiquity of a particular phenomenon across cultures, languages, and periods.

Literary Influence, Linguistic Expertise, and the Routes into and out of Paris: The Case of Spanish American *modernismo*

Spivak turns to several examples from Latin American literature – and particularly Diamela Eltit (Chile) and José Martí (Cuba) – to begin demonstrating what future planetary readings may look like. Martí here is read as a figure who opens up nineteenth-century nationalism into something else: a "ruralist left-humanism" that "giv[es] way not only to a heterogeneous continentalism but also to an internationalism that can, today, shelter planetarity."[21] Concentrating on Martí's expansions onto an idea of "our América," Spivak does not read Martí in terms of movements or periods; instead, she is interested in identifying points of origin for that future ethical reading. I want to move the discussion begun by Spivak to one about periods as a way to continue conversing with Friedman's own theory of planetarity. For these purposes, then, let us think of Martí as also what Iván Schulman has called one of the originators of "la revolución *modernista*" in Spanish America – a revolution in which writers experimenting with that new internationalism sought to refresh their reading and writing practices, and even coined the name "modernists" to describe their position as writers in the world.[22]

Enjoying its heyday from the 1880s till the 1920s, *modernismo* – a term that its main figure and theorist, the Nicaraguan Rubén Darío, began employing as early as 1890 – represents a first moment of literary cosmopolitanism in post-independence Spanish America. It encompasses the efforts by writers from the region (Martí's América) to establish a rapprochement with the literary currents flowing through European countries and especially France. This preference meant that *modernismo* entailed a symbolic break of ties with the former colonial metropolis, Spain, as the one and only literary model available for Spanish American writers. Instead, inspiration for new forms of expression was to be found elsewhere. In this way, *modernismo* entailed what Manuel Díaz Rodríguez called in 1908 an "inverted conquest" – a conquest of Spanish writers by their counterparts in the ex-colonies.[23] In spite of this, *modernismo* and the body of critical work surrounding it, as Gerard Aching avers, "remain isolated in modernist studies."[24] As authors from the periphery, the *modernistas* – keen as they were in reading, translating, and seeking creative inspiration from authors hailing from *another*, non-Hispanic Europe – have been dismissed for their "afrancesamiento" (Frenchification) since their first appearance on the literary scene. Such a superficial reading may reveal that *modernismo* stands as the sort of "pale copy of Western genius" dismissed in Friedman's model "planetary modernism."[25] In other words, the *modernistas*' sense of rupture, the first significant one in post-independence Spanish American letters, could be skipped over by scholars intent on "know[ing] the whole world" (to recall Spivak) because it smacks of Eurocentrism. But this would be too simple a critique, particularly if we consider what this relationship actually entails in terms of reading, translating, and writing processes. To this end, Aching argues that this transatlantic transaction between *modernistas* and Europe "is graspable . . . not as stark oppositions between center and periphery, modern and premodern, Paris and Spanish America, but as circuits of texts, reading, translation, and literary composition."[26] In their direct engagement with French letters, Spanish American writers were devising their own literary identities within a changing geopolitical scene. Such correspondences are productive and conducive to momentous innovation, and at the same time, the processes constituted in them also reveal the inequalities and divergent expectations about expertise that were inherent in multicultural encounters at a specific moment in time in which Paris was considered by many intellectuals and artists around the globe as the capital of Western culture.

In what remains of this chapter, I take a look at some of the encounters between *modernismo* and French *Décadence* in the fin de siècle, as a way to

offer some final thoughts on the uses of planetarity to date. Within the context of the new modernist studies, Anglo-American modernism has engaged in the study of the continuities with artistic movements that preceded it, particularly decadence and aestheticism.[27] Spanish American *modernismo* could be read, at least partly, as the reception of and response to French decadent and symbolist attitudes to art, especially in terms of how to construct verse. *Modernismo* itself is contemporaneous with the development of these movements in Europe. For the *modernistas* and especially Darío (who eventually relocated to Paris around 1900), the literary innovations of French decadent and symbolist poets represented a new way forward for Spanish letters. The *modernistas* paid special attention to how the poets of *Décadence* employed their own native tongue, partly in order to come closer to the French tradition but also as part of their search for a revivifying of the Spanish language, as well as Spanish metrical forms. Nobel Laureate Octavio Paz argues that *modernismo* signaled a profound observation and critique of the Spanish language by its native speakers in the Americas: "los hispanoamericanos comprendieron que nada personal podía decirse en un lenguaje que había perdido el secreto de la metamorfosis y la sorpresa." (Spanish Americans understood that nothing personal could be said in a language that had lost the mystery of metamorphosis and surprise.)[28] While Darío only mustered the courage to write a handful of compositions in French, he remains an exceptional example of a poet-scholar breathtakingly attuned to the structures, rhythms, and themes of contemporary French poetry. This is evident not only in his poems, but in his literary criticism as well. One example of the latter is Darío's "Los colores del estandarte" (The Colors of the Standard Bearer), his response to the Franco-Argentine critic Paul Groussac's rather damning review of the Nicaraguan's *Los raros* (1896), a book of collected profiles of authors and artists (including Poe, Verlaine, Moréas, and even Max Nordau) that explains Darío's trajectory and tastes as a reader of contemporary literature.[29] In his review essay, Groussac writes of the untranslatability of French decadent style in the Spanish American context, which was, according to him, too hybrid, too new, and as such incompatible with an aesthetic movement and practice that hinged on something akin to what Henry James called the European "accumulation of history and custom."[30] Moreover, he attacks Darío on his understanding of French syllabification; but Darío, in "Los colores," offers a retort that demonstrates his thorough knowledge of historical Spanish and French metric forms. At the same time, he hails a new age of poetic liberty in his own language, given how, in both languages, "puede haber idénticos artífices" (the same artifices can be used).[31]

Darío's poetry speaks directly to this belief about the correspondence between French and Spanish. He did not write French verse often, but instead sought out ways to translate and transfigure those "artifices" from the French into his native language. One salient example can be found in his collection *Prosas profanas*, published the same year as *Los raros* and considered a high point for *modernista* poetics. The poem "Canción de carnaval" (Carnival song) begins with a two-verse epigraph from Théodore de Banville's "Mascarades" (1846), included in the French poet's *Odes funambulesques* (1857): "*Le Carnaval s'amuse! Viens le chanter, ma Muse* . . . ." (The rest of the four-line stanza in the Banville poem reads "En suivant au hasard / Le bon Ronsard!," showing the combination of hexasyllabic lines with a four-syllable foot that will be followed throughout the rest of this long poem.)[32] In Darío's "Canción," the epigraph works as an invitation for Darío to step in and continue the poem with his own version of playfully erotic verses. Darío's poem begins, in turn, with an invitation to his muse to partake of the joyful liberties of carnival life: "Musa, la máscara apresta, / Ensaya un aire jovial / Y goza y ríe en la fiesta / Del carnaval."[33] Darío's combination of octosyllabic and pentasyllabic lines comprise a series of appeals to the "muse" to let herself and her body go, little by little, in this feast of the senses; in the second stanza, he asks her to laugh and show her rosy leg – "Ríe en la dansa que gira / Muestra la pierna rosada," – which echoes Banville's request to his own muse in the third stanza of "Mascarades": "Chante ton dithyrambe / En laissant voir ta jambe . . ." (sing your dithyramb, / whilst showing your leg) (35). Further correspondences between Banville's longer poem and Darío's own include a series of onomastic games. Where, for example, Banville plays with the name of the mid-nineteenth century popular composer Pilodo by rhyming it with the word "cadeau" (gift) in one of his rhyming couplets ("Et dans le bal féerique, / Hurle un rhythme lyrique / Dont tu feras cadeau / À Pilodo!") (38), Darío, in his own composition (with an *abab* rhyme), performs a similar game, but this time with the name of a famous contemporaneous performer, the English mime Frank Brown, who had relocated to Buenos Aires in 1884: "Únete a la mascarada, / Y mientras muequea un clown / Con la faz pintarrajeada / Como Frank Brown [. . .]").[34] Popular features of Banville's Paris meet those present in Darío's Buenos Aires (where the latter resided in the mid-1890s) in this game of correspondences, which is in itself set to popular metric forms and rhymes. Darío's conversation with Banville is a carefully choreographed affair that situates him in the midst of transatlantic literary innovations of his day. In studying Banville, Darío joins such contemporaries as Stéphane Mallarmé,

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who also found lyrical inspiration in this older poet; he too experiments with the reverberating "artifices" shared by two linguistic and poetic traditions that were finding forms of renewal in the fin de siècle.

The establishment of intimacy with French literature and culture was, for many *modernistas*, an intellectual and a physical affair, as a great number of these figures relocated to Paris at the turn of the century. Another important figure within *modernismo*, but less widely known, is the Guatemalan Enrique Gómez Carrillo, who was, at the time of the *modernista* relocations to Paris, extremely successful as a Parisian. Gómez Carrillo was everywhere, and befriended a number of the main figures of Western European decadence. Gómez Carrillo was, for example, Darío's first point of contact in Paris when the latter arrived in Paris in 1893 for a short stay. There, Gómez Carrillo introduced him to Jean Moréas and led him to a café where he tried to speak to his idol, the poet Paul Verlaine. Verlaine was drunk (as was often the case). When Darío introduced himself as a great admirer, Verlaine replied by slamming his hand on the table and saying, "La gloire! La gloire! M. . . M. . . encore!"[35] Darío never had the opportunity to have an in-depth conversation with his literary hero. Among the great figures associated with *Décadence* and symbolism, Darío was able to establish a better relationship with Moréas, the author of the *Symbolist Manifesto* (1886). When Darío relocated more permanently to Europe, it was again Gómez Carrillo who introduced the Nicaraguan to Oscar Wilde a few months before the latter's death in 1900.[36]

Darío's Parisian encounters with these figures reveal the internal politics of translation and translatability within the center of French *Décadence* – that center that was crucial for the development of Spanish American *modernismo*. Darío writes, in a different part of his autobiography:

> Me habían dicho que Moreas sabía español. No sabía ni una sola palabra. Ni él, ni Verlaine, aunque anunciaron ambos, en los primeros tiempos de la revista *La Plume,* que publicarían una tradución [sic] de "La Vida es Sueño" de Calderón de la Barca. Siendo así como Verlaine solía pronunciar, con marcadísimo acento, estos versos de Góngora: "A batallas de amor campo de plumas" ["for battles of love a field of feathers"]; Moreas, con su gran voz sonora, exclamaba "No hay mal que por bien no venga" ["every cloud has a silver lining"] . . . O bien, en cuanto me veía: "Viva don Luis de Góngora y Argote!", y con el mismo tono, cuando divisaba a Carrillo gritaba "¡Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza!" (116–17)

> They'd told me that Moréas could speak Spanish. He couldn't speak a word of it. Not him, and not Verlaine, though they had both announced in one of the first numbers of *La Plume* that they would publish a translation of

> "Life Is a Dream" by Calderón de la Barca. With a strong foreign accent, Verlaine used to pronounce Góngora's verse "A batallas de amor campo de plumas" ["for battles of love a field of feathers"]; and Moréas, with his sonorous voice, would exclaim, "No hay mal que por bien no venga" ["every cloud has a silver lining"] . . . Or, when he saw me, he would say "viva don Luis de Góngora y Argote!", and when he saw Carrillo, he'd exclaim with the same tone of voice, "Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza!"

Darío concludes this observation by noting that these were the heroes of the Latin Quarter and enjoyed the company of a large, if often mediocre, entourage of disciples. The Nicaraguan notes here, as in other parts of his vast oeuvre, how this relationship of his *modernismo* and French decadence and symbolism is inequitable. In the passage above, we see how Verlaine and Moréas appear to commit a number of faux pas that hit a nerve with Darío as a representative of the new wave of Hispanic literature in fin-de-siècle Paris. Instead of recognizing the individuality of the Spanish American newcomers to Paris, hailed across Spanish America for the way they had reinvigorated Hispanic letters, Verlaine and Moréas jokingly invoke the names and lines of famed figures from the Spanish Golden Age. Unselfconsciously, and to top it off with "strong foreign accents," they cite the works of those sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers when the Spanish Americans approach them and believe themselves capable of translating one of the masterpieces from that bygone period – one that Darío and other *modernistas* were impressively versed in, as it represented for them a crowning point in the Hispanic tradition they had inherited from Spain.

Where Darío's literary horizons had spread across an ocean in his project to *modernize* Spanish American letters, he recognized in the French icons of *Décadence* an unwillingness to move beyond the Iberian Peninsula in their own knowledge and admiration of great Hispanic literature. This led the mouthpiece of *modernismo* to focus most of his energies on the promotion of Hispanic letters on both sides of the Atlantic. The poems compiled in *Cantos de vida y esperanza* (1905), such as "Salutación del optimista" and "A Roosevelt," reveal a poet in search of affinities rather than dissonances between Spain and its former colonies – this, as the imperial designs of the United States were becoming clearer to Spanish Americans. ". . . [S]i encontráis versos a un presidente," he writes in his prologue, "es porque son un clamor continental. Mañana podremos ser yanquis (y es lo más probable)." (. . . If you find verses to a president, it is because they are a continental clamor. Tomorrow we may well become Yankees [and this is most likely] . . . .)[37]

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Gómez Carrillo's trajectory as a Spanish American *modernista* in Paris took a different turn. He published in Spanish and in French; his articles and chronicles about poetry, contemporary theater, and bohemian life demonstrate his familiarity and ease with the culture of the French capital. His travel writing, moreover, reflects his ever-expanding horizons as a self-professed cosmopolitan. Literary histories of *modernismo*, especially those containing a critique of Eurocentrism, have been unkind to Gómez Carrillo, because he appears to have imbibed Frenchness unreservedly. While Darío's world was constituted by travels between Spanish America and Western Europe (his fame made him a literary ambassador, if not hero, across Central and South America), Gómez Carrillo appears to have used his footing in France to uncover other senses of the foreign in the age of increased mass travel. His travel writings, for instance – published in the Paris magazine *Mundial* (1911–1914), which Darío edited – detail his journeys to Egypt, Jerusalem, Russia, China, and Japan. These works ultimately earned Gómez Carrillo the French Legion of Honor. As Mariano Siskind explains: "if, on the one hand, he configured his world around a French culture that represented its particularity as always already universal, on the other he also displayed in his readings of global modernisms a wide and decentered world literary network of aesthetic relations."[38] In an age in which South and Central American eyes were turning to the rise of Japan as a political superpower (particularly in the face of the US threat to Latin America), Gómez Carrillo introduced Spanish-reading audiences to an array of writers from Japan (early writers like Tsuruyuki and Hikomaro, but also contemporary ones, such as Kikuchi Yūhō), broadening the scope of world literature and translation well beyond the goalposts set up by Darío.[39] We could say that, if Darío's coordinates are fixed as a line that extends from Spanish America to Western Europe, Gómez Carrillo quite clearly re-orientates *modernismo* beyond Paris: he uses Paris as a point from which to continue looking further eastward for cultural, literary, and political models with which to relate.

These varying coordinates of the two authors are visible in Darío's prologue to Gómez Carrillo's collected travel essays, *De Marsella a Tokio: sensaciones de Egipto, la India, la China y el Japón* (From Marseilles to Tokyo: Sensations from Egypt, India, China, and Japan), published in 1900. Darío, in the prologue, presents himself as the friend who listens to the returning traveler's adventures abroad, perceiving in these a form of poetry: "Es usted impresionable é incansable. Es usted curioso y deseoso; y hemos quedado convenidos [sic] en que sin escribir versos, es usted un poeta." (You are impressionable and tireless. You possess curiosity and

desires; and we are convinced that, even if you do not write verses, you are nevertheless a poet.)[40] The question of colonialism – those encounters of traditional societies with new bureaucracies, financial systems, and modern forms of labor – lies at the heart of many of Gómez Carrillo's travel narratives. In his portrayal of the port city of Yokohama in Japan, to take just one example of many, he writes:

> Es un puerto cosmopolita, y no una ciudad japonesa. Su arquitectura es la misma de Amsterdam y del Havre. Su vida es de negocio y no de placer.. . . Aquél que parece un teatro es el depósito de los petróleos de la Compañía Standart [sic] de Nueva York; el otro, muy grande, muy blanco, que se enseñorea en un inmenso espacio vacío y que los extranjeros toman por Casa Consistorial, es la Specie Bank; el de más allá, tan noble de aspecto con sus fachadas Renacimiento, es la agencia de los vapores alemanes; el de enfrente, algo bajo, pero muy vasto, que parece un circo ó un teatro popular, es el despacho de la Compañía Nipón Yusen Kaisa [sic]. (139–40)

> It is a cosmopolitan port and not a Japanese city. Its architecture is the same as Amsterdam's or the Havre's. Its life is that of business and not of pleasure. . . . That building there that looks like a theater is the New York Standard Oil Company's depot; the other, very large and white building towering over its vast, empty surroundings and which foreigners take to be the City Council offices, is the [Yokohama] Specie Bank; the one further down, so noble with its Renaissance façade, houses the offices for a German steamboat company; the one across from it, quite low-lying but vast and which looks like a circus or popular theater, houses the offices of the Nipon Yusen Kaisha shipping company.

Gómez Carrillo's *modernista* poetics extend this movement's cosmopolitan aspirations into locations that break open the transatlantic correspondences first established by Darío. Written in a period that witnessed the expansion of old and new empires, Gómez Carrillo's writings raise questions about imperial capitalism's reach, its effect on the preservation and promotion of culture and local aesthetics, and the lessons that so-called peripherical communities in one part of the globe can learn from distant, yet connected others. If nothing else, his and Darío's contributions to world literature define modernity in terms of a series of (re)orientations, or shifting cultural and aesthetic observations that enable a better understanding of the geopolitical events unfolding throughout the fin de siècle. Paris acts as a complex working center, in and through which *modernistas* worked out their aesthetic methods and literary theories and ultimately recalibrated their relationship to Europe as well as their understanding of a wider world. However, their gravitation toward Paris should not be

dismissed as uncomplicated Eurocentrism, or as a reification of the periphery by the powerful center. Instead, the movements I have outlined here – of subjects, languages, literary styles, and even of travel – reveal an ongoing, multilocational modernism through which the diverse possibilities and the multiple intractabilities of cultural translation are played out.

I would like to finish with a brief reprise of Darío's memory of the encounters with his French counterparts in Paris, which should give us reason to pause now. Amid such scenes of jocularity, there is also a grave impasse: the Europeans are and appear to remain uninterested in seeing the newly arrived Spanish American as their counterpart, as an assiduous reader of their work, or as an innovator in his own region and language. But they themselves claimed to know the Hispanic literary tradition, asserting an expertise that was glaringly out of sync with Darío's own knowledge of French literature. Darío's comparativism, encompassing so many different practices and transactions, is different from the practice of his Latin Quarter interlocutors, who remind me of those readers in Spivak's critique who, in the contemporary scene, feel they have a right to "know the whole world." The imbalance and incompatibility evident in Darío's Paris dealings continues to represent a challenge to planetary thinking and planetary reading, particularly as it develops within current Anglo-American contexts. Despite its reparative intentions, this will to planetarity runs the danger of becoming a palliative, unrigorous form of critique if it is intent on dismissing certain core formations and periods. Critical approaches that mobilize planetarity will always have to contend with complex and evolving transactions between diverse cultural actors; thus, these approaches will always confront the limits of competency and selection as they produce new literary cartographies of comparison. In light of these challenges, modern and contemporary Anglo-American deployments of planetarity must remain alert to the risk of reading the "world" through the interpretive and translational filters provided by institutions of the Global North.

Notes

1 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, tr. J. Sibree (Kitchener, ON: Batoche Books, 2001), 97.

2 For a reading of Hegel's reading of the Global South, see Enrique Dussel, "Eurocentrism and Modernity (Introduction to the Frankfurt Lectures)," *boundary 2* 20.3 (Fall 1993), 65–76.

3 The lecture was "Imperatives to Re-imagine the Planet," and was presented on December 16, 1997, at the Sifttung-Dialogik in Zurich. See Spivak, "'Planetarity' (Box 4, WELT)," *Paragraph* 38.2 (2015), 290–92, 290.

4 Gayatri Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 72.
5 Wai Chee Dimock and Lawrence Buell, "Introduction: Planet and America, Set and Subset," in *Shades of the Planet: American Literature as World Literature*, ed. Wai Chee Dimock and Lawrence Buell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 1–16, 7.
6 Amy J. Elias and Christian Moraru, "Introduction: The Planetary Condition," in *The Planetary Turn: Relationality and Geoaesthetics in the Twenty-First Century,* ed. Amy J. Elias and Christian Moraru (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2015), xi–xxxvii; xii. This introductory essay offers a useful survey of the uses of "planetarity" in different academic quarters.
7 Enrique Dussel, "Beyond Eurocentrism: The World-System and the Limits of Modernity," tr. Eduardo Mendieta, in *The Cultures of Globalization*, ed. Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (1998; Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 3–31, 3.
8 Enrique Dussel, "Europa, mundialidad y Eurocentrismo," in *La colonialidad del saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales. Perspectivas latinoamericanas*, ed. Edgardo Landfer (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2000), 41–52, 50, 48.
9 See Enrique Dussel, "World-System and 'Trans'-Modernity," tr. Alessandro Fornazzari, *Nepantla: Views from the South* 3.2 (2002), 221–44.
10 Dussel, "World-System and 'Trans'-Modernity," 221.
11 Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, 107n1.
12 Alejandro Zambra, "Traveling with Books," in *Not to Read*, tr. Megan McDowell (London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2018), 63–68, 66.
13 I offer a brief commentary on this idea in "Chine 1929," *Modernism/modernity* Print Plus 3.3 (August 20, 2018), https://doi.org/10.26597/mod.0070.
14 Rebecca Beasley, "Modernism's Translations," in *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, ed. Mark Wollaeger with Matt Eatough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 551–70, 552.
15 Irena Hayter, "Figures of the Visual: Japanese Modernism, Technology, Vitalism," *positions* 25.2 (May 2017), 293–322, 302.
16 Michael North, *Novelty: A History of the New* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 16.
17 See Susan Stanford Friedman, "World Modernisms, World Literature, and Comparativity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, ed. Mark Wollaeger with Matt Eatough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 499–525.
18 Susan Stanford Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity across Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 34.
19 Christopher Bush, review of *Planetary Modernisms*, by Susan Stanford Friedman, *Modernism/modernity* 23.3 (September 2016), 686–88, 687. See also Bruce Robbins's review/discussion of *Planetary Modernisms*, *Interventions* 18.5 (2016), 746–48.
20 Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms*, 190.
21 Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, 92.

22 Iván Schulman, "Modernismo/modernidad: teoría y poiesis," in *Historia de la literatura hispanoamericana*, vol. II, ed. Luis Íñigo Madrigal (Madrid: Cátedra, 1987), 524.
23 See Alejandro Mejías-López, *The Inverted Conquest: The Myth of Modernity and the Transatlantic Onset of Modernism* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2010).
24 Gerard Aching, "The Temporalities of Modernity in Spanish American *Modernismo*: Darío's Bourgeois King," in *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, ed. Mark Wollaeger with Matt Eatough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 109–28, 112.
25 Friedman's engagement with Latin American literary and cultural developments in *Planetary Modernisms* extends to brief discussions of Walter Mignolo, Oswald de Andrade's "Manifesto Antropófago" (1928), and the "modernist magical realism of Gabriel García Márquez" (72), but there is no mention of *modernismo*. One reason for this could be the relative lack of good translations of *modernista* texts into English.
26 Aching, "The Temporalities of Modernity," 119.
27 See, for example, Vincent Sherry, *Modernism and the Reinvention of Decadence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
28 Octavio Paz, "El caracol y la sirena," *Revista de la Universidad de México* 4 (December 1964), 4–15, 5.
29 Paul Groussac, "Boletín Bibliográfico: *Los raros,* por Rubén Darío," *La Biblioteca* 1.6 (November 1896), 474–80. Darío's response, "Los colores del estandarte," was published in *La Nación* newspaper in Buenos Aires, on November 27, 1896, 3.
30 Henry James, *Hawthorne* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 34.
31 Rubén Darío, "Los colores del estandarte," 3.
32 Théodore de Banville, "Mascarades," in *Odes funambulesques* (Paris: Alphonse Lemerre, 1873), 35–45, 35.
33 A rough translation of this is "Muse, with mask ready, / Put on a jovial air / And enjoy and laugh in the celebration / of the carnival." Darío, *Prosas profanas* (Paris: Librería de la V. de C. Bouret, 1908), 69–71.
34 "Come join the masquerade / And while a clown frowns / with his painted face / like Frank Brown . . .."
35 Rubén Darío, *Autobiografía* (Madrid: Mundo Latino, 1918), 114.
36 Darío, *Autobiografía*, 180.
37 Rubén Darío, preface to *Cantos de vida y esperanza* (Madrid: Mundo Latino, 1917), 9–11, 11. Translated text taken from Darío, *Songs of Life and Hope*, tr. Will Derusha and Alberto Acereda (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 49, 51.
38 Mariano Siskind, *Cosmopolitan Desires: Global Modernity and World Literature in Latin America* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2014), 154.
39 In *El porvenir de la América Latina/The Future of Latin America* (Valencia: Sempere, 1911), 67, for example, Argentine Manuel Ugarte (1875–1951) writes: "Si el Japón entra en las combinaciones de nuestra política

internacional y si la diplomacia latinoamericana debe contar con él desde ahora, es porque la hostilidad entre esa nación y los Estados Unidos puede ser utilizada con éxito en un momento dado." (If Japan becomes a player within our international politics and if Latin American diplomacy should count on this participation from now, it is because the hostilities between that nation and the United States can be used in our favor in future.)

40 Enrique Gómez Carrillo, *De Marsella a Tokio: sensaciones de Egipto, la India, la China y el Japón* (Paris: Casa Editorial Garnier Hermanos, 1900), x.