

## **Call for Papers: Symposium on “Modernist Moves”**

***CALL FOR PAPERS DEADLINE: 1 October 2012***

### **MODERNIST MOVES**

7-8 December 2012, Council Chambers, Brunel University

#### **KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

Susan Stanford Friedman, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Andrew Thacker, De Montfort University

“Modernist Moves” aims to reconsider our understanding of modernism by situating its aesthetic as an affective response to a world where a sense of place and spatial relations are undergoing fundamental change. The word “move” may refer to a change of position or location, feelings and emotions that touch individuals, and the impetus to act by making something happen. In a modernist context, these ‘moves’ call to mind the interplay between modernism as an era of changing relations to space, the emergence of a new sense of affect, and a wider engagement with the world through writing as action.

Until recently, modernist studies have tended to focus on impersonality, detachment, the apolitical, and scepticism as characteristic of modernism. Emotion or affect, when theorized, has been considered largely in terms of feminist and queer theories as well as melancholia, mourning, and (post-war) trauma. This body of work considers the impact of marginalization and pathological states, often as ways of moving beyond prevailing ideologies. What other emotions or affective responses might be considered? Can we see modernism as an era when the “structure of feeling,” to borrow a phrase from Raymond Williams, leads to a poetics that appeals to the passions of readers and reading communities, sometimes evoking visceral responses? Does a modernist emphasis on the affective experience and/or aesthetic foster new or deeper forms of social knowledge, critique, and creativity?

In terms of mobility and motion, the burgeoning field of transnational modernisms recognizes that socio-cultural, political, scientific, and economic factors contribute to changing spatial relations during the modernist period. New technologies for travel and communications, the making of modern tourism, shifting trade routes, imperial and colonial (re)mappings, increased and enhanced mobility (including migration within and across national boundaries as well as refugee movements), civil unrest and war, and the rise of globalization are among the factors that contribute to altered relations to space and place. This symposium responds to the spatial turn in modernist studies and builds on recent work in colonial modernisms, geo-political modernisms, planetarity, globalization studies, and peripheral modernisms (J. S. Berman, Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, Melba Cuddy-Keane, Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel, B. H. Edwards, S. S. Friedman, Anna Snaith and Michael H. Whitworth, Susan Stanford Friedman, and the Warwick Research Collective).

“Modernist Moves” considers affective, emotional, experiential, cognitive, and perceptual responses to a world of increased mobility and shifting relations to place/space. Speakers may wish to focus on the multiple meanings of modernist moves or consider one or more of its concerns with (a) motion/mobility, (b) emotion/affect, and (c) impact or the potential for social transformation. Participants might also revisit the idea that modernism is apolitical or detached from everyday life by interrogating the roles of writers, readers, and literary circulations across borders.

Possible topics/questions include:

- What is the relationship between motion and emotion? How are poetics and literary modes of production shaped by this interaction?
- How do we track the interplay of affect and space throughout a writer’s career, taking into account various representations in fiction, literary criticism, public engagement, life writing, and so forth. How is an author moved by changing spatial relations?
- How do writing and other forms of public engagement move readers to new ways of imagining or understanding the world? How are writing and activism related? Does an emphasis on “modernist moves” shed light on the role of the public intellectual, artist, or literary critic?
- What spatial paradigms and discourses trouble or affect the writer? Are there discrepancies or continuities in public / private relations to space through writing?
- What communities of readership does the writer aim to move?
- What role do literary circulations play in producing affective relations across borders? What is the impact of modernist writing in terms of the transnational imaginary?
- What role does affect play in the socially transformative potential of modernism? Here speakers might consider social upheaval, precarious conditions, uneven development, terror, war, empire, states of exception, citizenship, cosmopolitanism or the expatriate experience, pacifism, refugee/migrant experiences, and other concerns with the changing world order.

Other interpretations of “modernist moves” are also welcome.

#### **Deadline for Abstracts & Panel Proposals: 1 October 2012**

Please submit an abstract (250 words) or panel proposal (for three papers) to [ModernistMoves@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:ModernistMoves@brunel.ac.uk). Please remember to include your name, affiliation, and a short bio statement. For panel proposals, please also provide a short statement outlining the rationale for the panel.

#### **Questions**

For more information, please contact Wendy Knepper at [wendy.knepper@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:wendy.knepper@brunel.ac.uk).

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