



The Flapper

Searching for the Modern Girl: Flappers and Bright Young Things Around the World [The Space Between: Literature and Culture 1914-1945](#)

Special Issue: Call for Essays

While the Bright Young Things of England and the flappers of the America remain fixed in cultural memory, their incarnations elsewhere around the world have all but disappeared from history. Affiliation with a feminized Anglo-European metropole may have contributed to their invisibility in the colonial peripheries, which constructed political identities around paradigms of masculine nationhood or were anxious to distinguish themselves from Anglo-European mass culture. Despite her iconic status in the interwar period, the Modern Girl was a stigmatized female figure in her own time, and that stigma seems to have carried over into the academy, inhibiting serious critical analysis of her role and function as an image for modernity.

In contrast to the earlier figure of the New Woman of the 1890s to the 1910s, the Modern Girl was less concerned about politics and more absorbed by issues of personal agency, pleasure, and desire, often as routed through commodities and popular culture.

In the last decade, scholarship of the Modern Girl has been stimulated by expanded conceptions of modernity and by easier access to digital runs of periodicals. Investigations of the figure in Japan, China, Australia, and Canada have begun to appear alongside renewed interest in her Anglo-American counterpart. For the most part, however, this work has been limited to magazine and commodity culture. Research on the figure of the Modern Girl in literature (even in American and British literature) remains rare, often confined to isolated studies of single authors or well-known narratives. Examining the Modern Girl as a figure for trouble of all kinds has the potential to open up new conversations in relation to cultural studies and market, audiences, readers, brows, genres, popular cultures, intermediality, and historiography.

As we call for papers for this Special Issue of *The Space Between*, we are deep in a set of rolling crises triggered by COVID-19. What happens to the Modern Girl around the world when crisis looms? What was the relationship between the earlier New Woman and the Modern Girl of the 1920s to 40s, and how did she fare during the crises of Depression and subsequent World War, and thereafter? Was the Modern Girl a playful figure of frivolity, or a danger hidden in plain sight? How can we understand her historically and historiographically, around the world, in her own time, and thereafter?

Now is the time to reappraise the legacy of the Modern Girl in her various incarnations around the world. While focusing on the Modern Girl from the 1920s and 40s in print, literature, and media this issue encourages scholars to explore such tensions and questions in ways that draw on rich material approaches from a variety of global, transnational, and interdisciplinary perspectives.

Suggested topics include but are no means limited to:

- The Modern Girl across media forms in particular milieus around the world that place her in the context of an expanded understanding of colonial modernity
- The Modern Girl, mass culture, and empire
- Challenges to boundaries between popular and commercial print forms and highbrow literature enabled by the Modern Girl
- Attitudes toward Modern Girls in terms of repute or reputation (variously conceived)
- The effect of visual and leisure cultures, advertising, illustration, cinema, jazz, fashion, glamour, theatre, entertainment, and photography on the portrayal or reception of the Modern Girl in literature
- The Modern Girl in transnational or transmedial entertainment circuits and franchises
- Tropes of the Modern Girl: Ingenue, the starlet, the jazz singer, the bad girl, the working girl, the mobile girl (in planes, trains, and automobiles), the girl in trousers, or the party girl
- Famous flappers and/or their commentators: Zelda Fitzgerald (and F. Scott), Clara Bow, Coco Chanel, Joan Crawford, Theda Bara, Norma Shearer, Louise Brooks, Anita Loos, Edna Ferber, or Dorothy Parker; Noël Coward
- Stigmatizing the Modern Girl
- Modern Girls in times of crisis

Please submit inquiries and essays of 6,000-7,500 words in Times New Roman 12 pt. font, with MLA citation style, to the editors, Victoria Kuttainen (Victoria.Kuttainen@jcu.edu.au) and Jilly Lippmann (JillyLip@gmail.com) by **December 31, 2021**

We welcome queries and proposed topics prior to submission and will provide advice and comment. All digital images, film stills, and media files should be sent separately (not embedded in documents or PDFs). For further details and past issues, see the [general guidelines for submission](#). **Note:** Please include a brief bio, keywords, and abstract with your submission. The journal's platform supports all types of files and media.