

Routledge Studies in Twentieth-Century Literature

Ezra Pound and 20th-Century Theories of Language  
Faith with the Word  
*James Dowthwaite*

Gombrowicz in Transnational Context  
Translation, Affect, and Politics  
*Silvia G. Dapia*

The British Stake in Japanese Modernity  
Readings in Liberal Tradition and Native Modernism  
*Michael Gardiner*

Theatre-Fiction in Britain from Henry James to Doris Lessing  
Writing in the Wings  
*Graham Wolfe*

The Nationality of Utopia  
H. G. Wells, England, and the World State  
*Maxim Shadurski*

New Oceania  
Modernisms and Modernities in the Pacific  
*Edited by Matthew Hayward and Maebh Long*

For more information about this series, please visit: <https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Research-in-Early-Modern-History/book-series/RREMH>

# New Oceania

## Modernisms and Modernities in the Pacific

Edited by Matthew Hayward  
and Maebh Long

First published 2020  
by Routledge  
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an  
informa business*

© 2020 Taylor & Francis

The right of Matthew Hayward and Maebh Long to be identified  
as the authors of the editorial material, and of the authors for  
their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with  
sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted  
or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic,  
mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented,  
including photocopying and recording, or in any information  
storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from  
the publishers.

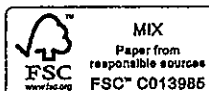
*Trademark notice:* Product or corporate names may be  
trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for  
identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*  
A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN: 978-0-367-25015-7 (hbk)  
ISBN: 978-0-429-28553-0 (ebk)

Typeset in Sabon  
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

In memory of  
Barbara Hau'ofa  
Paul Lyons  
Teresia Teaiwa



Printed in the United Kingdom  
by Henry Ling Limited

## 2 'Kidnapped by a Band of Western Philosophers': Modernism and Modernity in Oceania

*Sudesh Mishra*

Modernism is, of course, impossible without modernity, but the two are by no means peas in a pod. Modernity refers to a socio-political event, planetary in character although uneven in its forms of diffusion, unleashed by bourgeois and colonial forms of surplus accumulation, whereas modernism is an aesthetic movement, commonly though not uniformly identified with early-twentieth-century Europe and North America, that experimented with form and content in response to modernity. It is critical to point out, even at this early stage, that modernity and modernism are discursive categories thoroughly embedded in 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak'.<sup>1</sup> That these categories initially emerged in Western practices seems, from my perspective, decidedly self-evident. It is certainly possible to assert that some practices that constitute the object of modernity may have gone uncredited, such as the antagonistic contributions of African slaves, Indian indentured servants, and Chinese coolie workers, to its material, cultural, and political project. Moreover, it could be argued that the project of modernity, mounted as it is on post-industrial technologies and ideologies, gained traction because of the surplus capital amassed by Europe during the Mercantilist Era. Reserve capital obtained from the Eastern trade and from the violent plunder of the New World transformed European modes and means of production during the Industrial Revolution. Modernity, it follows, is indebted to the East in a precise material sense.

It would be anachronistic, however, to concur with Susan Stanford Friedman's claim that modernity (and modernism) flourished in non-European contexts (Kabir's India and Du Fu's China, for instance) during periods predating the emergence of the object-forming category.<sup>2</sup> Doubtless, Kabir's iconoclastic *dohas* (couplets) repudiate Hindu and

Islamic religious orthodoxies, but these latter are hegemonic manifestations of social relations embedded in the feudal-sultanate economic practices of the fifteenth century. Kabir belonged not to a class, but to a caste of weavers. His tools were the handloom and the spinning wheel. Kabir's stress on social equality is politically far-sighted for sure, but he was an artisan responding to the ritual orthodoxy of high Brahminism and to the exclusivist nobility of court Muslims, and not to the alienating social relations of modernity. He was modern (as opposed to modernist) with regard to the material context of his aesthetic egalitarianism, but the context was never that of the transformed social relations of modernity. Furthermore, Kabir is the name given to a ceaselessly proliferating 'author function' decoupled from any biological author.<sup>3</sup> The designation is indicative of the non-privatised, non-literary, folk-based aesthetics of the fifteenth century. It is worth remarking, as a point of comparison, that indentured Indians of the nineteenth century were translated out of their castes by the compulsory socialisation aboard coolie ships. They emerged as a class of workers in the outposts of plantation modernity. Their celebrated egalitarianism is, consequently, an outcome of class-based forms of resistance to their colonial-era exploiters.

Modernity, then, signifies a space-time value, as manifested in material and conceptual economies, distributed unevenly across the globe. Colonialism has been the most potent instrument for bringing non-European cultures and peoples within the ambit of this modernity. The ideological state apparatuses of modernity include Western forms of economic administration, labour mobility, industrial and militaristic assemblages, surplus-friendly governance, and institutionalised education. This last has played a critical part in shaping the complex—and doubtless, fractured and contradictory—subject positions of the colonised and ex-colonised. Any understanding of such a subject position will entail taking stock of the 'play of alienation and identification' so constitutive of postcolonial life-worlds.<sup>4</sup> In his poem, 'Kidnapped', Ruperake Petaia of Samoa captures this ambivalence whereby an expressed disavowal is only possible through the irony of avowal. The persona declares that, 'due to his mother's carelessness, he was '[k]idnapped by a band/of Western philosophers' who, for years, extracted a ransom from his parents in which time he 'grew whiter/and whiter' until finally he was handed 'a piece of paper/ to decorate my walls/certifying my release'.<sup>5</sup> The detention centre of the education system, and its imported epistemic structures, gives shape to

1 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge, 1992), 49.

2 Susan Stanford Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity Across Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

3 Michel Foucault, 'What Is an Author?' in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (1984; New York: Penguin, 1986), 108.

4 Simon Gikandi, 'Preface: Modernism in the World', *Modernism/Modernity* 13, no. 3 (2006): 420.

5 Ruperake Petaia, 'Kidnapped', in *Some Modern Poetry from Western Samoa*, ed. Albert Wendt (Suva: Mana Publications, 1974), 8–9.

the kidnapped subject. In a variant strain of the Stockholm Syndrome, this subject is able to articulate his dissent only through the paradoxical dynamic of identification with the imported episteme, as well as estrangement from it, in the ironised—and yet obstinately meaningful—silence of the Indigenous episteme. The certification of release amounts to the colonisation of the mind. The irony acknowledges the double bind, the loaded silence of the Indigenous episteme; but the poem is unable to free itself from a compulsive hybridity. In its recourse to free verse, to colloquialism, to irony and to direct political allusion, the poem announces its modernist genealogy while positioning itself as a postcolonial rejoinder to that genealogy vis-à-vis an imported education system. Such contaminated modernist genealogies, according to Simon Gikandi, prepares the ground for the 'projection of new desires and ideologies'.<sup>6</sup> In his 1976 manifesto entitled 'Towards a New Oceania', Albert Wendt expressed a kindred notion when he declared that the 'quest should not be for a revival of our past cultures but for a creation of new cultures'.<sup>7</sup>

Let me now return to the distinction between modernity and modernism. European modernism of the petty bourgeois variety constitutes an aesthetic conversation with the modernity I have defined. The conversation sometimes takes the form of a paean to an accelerated modernity (Futurism), or to the rejection of its repressive rationality (Surrealism), or it engenders ambiguity as with Imagism. The railway station in Ezra Pound's 'In a Station of the Metro', for example, becomes the new image of the urban commuter's spectral transience only when Pound brings it into juxtaposition with the wet petals of an obsolescent Romanticism.<sup>8</sup> Modernism, in short, emerged in response to a modernity that was post-Victorian and characterised by the effects of large-scale industrialisation, new urban styles and practices, the tyranny of scientific reason, technological inventions, global wars waged with advanced chemicals and weaponry, and the collapse of the imagined organic communities of the past. Modernists detected in their response to modernity pervasive symptoms of dehumanisation, acceleration, alienation, nausea, vertigo, disorder, and ennui. They responded to the material upheavals around them, often with abstruse aloofness and hostility, by dispensing with social realism, finding aesthetic representation itself to be in a state of crisis because of the magnitude of the changes wrought around them. 'Colour, lines, sounds and movements', writes Jürgen Habermas, ceased being 'the cause of representation', and 'the media of expression and the techniques

6 Simon Gikandi, *Writing in Limbo: Modernism and Caribbean Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 24.

7 Albert Wendt, 'Towards a New Oceania', *Mana Review: A South Pacific Journal of Language and Literature* 1, no. 1 (1976): 53.

8 Ezra Pound, *Selected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 53.

of production themselves became the aesthetic object'. A consequence of this shift was that the aesthetic object started to reveal 'the irreconcilable nature of the aesthetic and the social worlds'.<sup>9</sup> Art became disengaged from the world and from life-worlds which, ironically, formed the material basis of the disengagement. A new aesthetics of solitude was born in response to the teeming multitudes that populated the estranging city. If it was impossible to speak of art as possessing an aura of authenticity and novelty in the age of mechanical reproduction, aura itself could be turned into the material of art instead of remaining its hidden property.<sup>10</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno point out that the modernist stance engendered an idealistic aesthetics informed by a 'purposefulness without a purpose', thereby upending 'the scheme of things to which bourgeois art conforms socially—purposelessness for the purpose declared by the market'.<sup>11</sup>

Certainly, a purposefulness decoupled from the commodity form was at the heart of most avant-garde experimentation. Newness was to be grasped not as the accidental property of an artwork, but as its subject, its object, and its all-consuming purpose. Even the radical surrealist assault on an 'autarkical sphere of art' that aimed to negate the distinction between art and life achieved the opposite effect.<sup>12</sup> It led, as Habermas notes, to a self-reflexive aesthetics which 'gave a new legitimacy, as ends in themselves, to appearance as the medium of fiction, to the transcendence of the artwork over society, to the concentrated and planned character of artistic production as well as the special cognitive status of judgments of taste'.<sup>13</sup> For Raymond Williams, the crisis in representation (which, he says, resulted in a selective ideology of inclusions and exclusions) and the consequent espousal of denaturalised signs are profoundly bound up with innovations in the 'media of cultural production'.<sup>14</sup> The inventions of photography, cinema, radio, and television, he contends, propelled this crisis. If modernity rendered historical continuity between the past and the present largely untenable by altering the modes and relations of material production, modernist aesthetics, drawing on the new media that attested to and resulted from the crisis, negotiated the discontinuity

9 Jürgen Habermas, 'Modernity—An Incomplete Project', in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. V. B. Leitch, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 2010), 1583.

10 Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Fontana Press, 1992), 211–44.

11 Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, 'Dialectic of Enlightenment', in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. V. B. Leitch, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 2010), 1126.

12 Habermas, 'Modernity', 1583.

13 Habermas, 'Modernity', 1584.

14 Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*, ed. Tony Pinkney (London: Verso, 1989), 33.

in relation to ruins, fragments, and uncertainties, and, indeed, in terms of a fragmenting consciousness. Hence the recourse to free verse, autotelic conceptions of art, disorienting imagery, aleatory devices, collages, radical juxtaposition, compulsive allusion, streams of consciousness, fractured viewpoints (say, of the flâneur), new velocities, temporal derangement, and urbanised tropes and conceits.

Habermas has said famously that modernity, as a societal event, refers to a potentiality that remains unexhausted.<sup>15</sup> It bears a name, certainly, but this name, since it attempts to encapsulate a still-happening event, eludes the blissful state of plenitude and completion—hence modernity's partial, disaggregated, and unfinished character. This is precisely why it is important to resist Catherine Driscoll and Meaghan Morris's disavowal of the 'singularly transcendent' dimension of modernity.<sup>16</sup> I understand the transcendent designator, modernity, as an aspirational category that incites from the other side, but is empty in that it evades the plenitude of an incontestable definition. Modernity, thus, is a project that may never be finished (albeit, it may be abandoned) because the transcendent category is always already unattainable. Being an aspirational category, however, means that it gives rise to various material manifestations of the transcendent sign. These unfinished manifestations of modernity, far from being temporally relative to each other, which would imply that they belonged to modernity's past or present or future, are determined by the specificity of their historical context, as well as their topographical placement. In that they are situated manifestations of modernity, they do not submit to temporal calibration vis-à-vis other forms of modernity. They are co-extensive with the time-space of their specific manifestation.

Modernity is manifested differently in Oceania precisely because the region has never been subject to the kind of large-scale technology-driven industrialisation one comes across in Europe or Asia.<sup>17</sup> Oceania's tryst with modernity began in the early nineteenth century with the arrival of sandalwood and bêche-de-mer or sea cucumber traders and commercial whalers (and consequently muskets and modern weaponry), followed swiftly by missionaries who brought with them that ubiquitous engine of mechanical reproduction—the printing press. This early encounter prepared the ground for various waves of settlement, the dissemination of

15 Habermas, 'Modernity', 1586.

16 Catherine Driscoll and Meaghan Morris, 'Introduction: Gender, Modernity and Media in Asia-Pacific', in *Gender, Modernity and Media in Asia-Pacific*, ed. Catherine Driscoll and Meaghan Morris (London: Routledge, 2014), 5.

17 I follow Epeli Hau'ofa's definition of Oceania as 'a sea of islands' (as distinct from little 'islands in the sea') stretching from New Guinea to Samoa, from Hawai'i to Rapa Nui. See Epeli Hau'ofa, 'Our Sea of Islands', in *A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands*, ed. Eric Waddell, Vijay Naidu, and Epeli Hau'ofa (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1993), 7.

the written word as a consequence of the rivalry between representatives of the London Missionary Society, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, the Boston Puritans, and the French Catholics, the establishment of industrial types of plantation agriculture, the commerce in blackbirded (a racist neologism for kidnapped) islanders and indentured workers, formal colonisation, and the founding of bustling port cities such as Apia (1850s) and Suva (1880s).<sup>18</sup> Even the current delinked or transnational stage of modernity, while generating intermeshed economies and speedy virtual commerce, does not entail common experience, be it globally, nationally or individually. While I agree with Driscoll and Morris that modernity is context-specific and involves 'a politics of conjunction and disjunction',<sup>19</sup> I prefer Paul Gilroy's proposition that, in the specific context of the ex-colonised, it implies a state of 'antagonistic indebtedness' to the impossible transcendent category.<sup>20</sup> As a socio-economic practice defined by an element of antagonistic indebtedness, Oceanian modernity, while sharing a kinship with some postcolonial contexts, is not simply isomorphous with modernity as found in the North or the South. John O'Carroll puts it succinctly when he notes that Oceanian modernity 'is at once a structure of encounter with the logic of elsewhere and [. . .] something local and unique. Modern Pacific writers explore what this feels like—creating logics that are at once at home and are other *to oneself*'.<sup>21</sup> For writers in Fiji, Samoa, Niue, or Guam, the moment of discontinuity from the past, experienced as a rupture from known life-worlds, imagined or otherwise, is linked to an incursive modernity exemplified by colonial takeover, religious imposition, regulated plantation economies, transported and kidnapped drudgery, formal education, militarisation in the wake of the Second World War, Western-style administration, and the rise of port cities.

Oceania's writers were certainly exposed to modernist aesthetics during their time abroad or as students in (post)colonial tertiary institutions. Ruperake Petaia, for example, was educated at The University of the South Pacific (USP); Pio Manoa spent time in Australia and taught English at USP; Satendra Nandan studied in India, England, and Australia, graduating from the Australian National University with a PhD on the novels of Patrick White; Vilsoni Hereniko studied in England and completed his PhD at USP; Subramani received his education in New Zealand, Canada, and

18 An account of the interaction between modernity and islanders may be found in Nicholas Thomas, *Islanders: The Pacific in the Age of Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

19 Driscoll and Morris, 'Introduction', 5.

20 Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 191.

21 John O'Carroll, 'Deception, Loss and Modernity in Fiji', *Double Dialogues*, no. 8 (2007–2008), [www.doubledialogues.com/article/deception-loss-and-modernity-in-fiji/](http://www.doubledialogues.com/article/deception-loss-and-modernity-in-fiji/).

Fiji, and went on to become Professor of Pacific Literature at USP; John Pule was brought up in New Zealand; Craig Santos Perez completed a doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley, and teaches at the University of Hawai'i; and Albert Wendt graduated with a postgraduate degree in history from Victoria University in Wellington and ended his career as Professor of English at Auckland University. Their writing, however, also owes a substantial debt to the region's distinct experience of modernity. Instead of imposing a borrowed modernist aesthetics on their particular socio-economic and cultural contexts, Oceania's writers permitted their experience of a situated modernity to inform their approach to modernist aesthetics. They reversed the high modernist ploy of borrowing from non-European cultures and texts (Africa for the cubists, and China for the imagists) to frame a response to European modernity by, instead, adapting modernist structures to respond to localised manifestations of modernity. The upshot is an art that might be explained in terms of *décalage* or an aesthetics derived from the experience of the 'changing core of difference'.<sup>22</sup> Just as Eliot's tropes are anchored to the alienating practices of a metropolitan modernity of the petty bourgeois variety, so Subramani's stories are embedded in the estranging coolie plantations of colonial modernity. Since they are informed by the discrepant spatio-temporal contexts of a general modernity, forms of alienation as captured by the two writers are inevitably distinct in type, degree and quality, even when ostensibly similar. Subramani comes up with a distinct aesthetics of 'coolie modernism' precisely because of his encounter with the effects of post-indentured modernity.

This distinctness of Oceania's modernity is powerfully captured in the cultural and material dialogism—as well as hybridity—that exemplified the early encounter between printer-preachers and Indigenous islanders in relation to the imported technology of the printing press. While the first book in an Indigenous language of Oceania was published in London in 1810, the first printing press was dispatched by the London Missionary Society to Tahiti and reached Moorea (or Eimeo, as it was then known) in 1817.<sup>23</sup> It was accompanied by William Ellis, a young printer and missionary. If printing technology was unilaterally introduced to the islands from Europe, the process involved in the production of the region's first books was a multi-pronged affair involving the material, physical, cultural, and symbolic input of the Indigenous population. Richard Lingenfelter, for instance, reports that the printing ensemble was conveyed to the village of Afareaitu on nine canoes, that the building erected to house the press employed Indigenous workers and had basalt floors consisting

22 Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 12.

23 Richard E. Lingenfelter, *Presses of the Pacific Islands 1817–1867: A History of the First Half-Century of Printing in the Pacific Islands* (Los Angeles: Plantin, 1967), 3–4.

of blocks appropriated from a ruined Polynesian temple, and that King Pomare employed the composing stick to set the types for the alphabet of the spelling book and, later, turned out the first printed sheet to the wonder of his community.<sup>24</sup>

Gradually, as we read through the account of the first printing press in Oceania, the picture that emerges is that of a dialogically situated modernity whereby books, whether concerned with the scriptures or with local laws and hymns, are co-produced with the input of Indigenous Tahitians.<sup>25</sup> We learn that two local printers worked on the production of the second book and that King Pomare, according to Henry Nott's own testimony, collaborated with him in preparing the Gospel of Luke.<sup>26</sup> When not transfixed by the work of mechanical reproduction, the Tahitians contribute their labour power, their linguistic expertise, and Indigenous material to the creation of the books. Tahitian men are assigned the task of working the press while the women are 'folding and sewing and [. . .] beating up tapa cloth to make boards for the binding'.<sup>27</sup> It is in the reproduction of the 3,000 copies of *Te Evanelia na Luka* (The Gospel of Luke) that we witness the emergence of a modernity peculiar to Oceania. Barring a few leather-bound copies gifted to the royalty, Ellis recounts how he had to rely on Indigenous resources to produce the books:

a large quantity of native cloth, made with the bark of a tree, was purchased, and females employed to beat a number of layers or folds together, usually from seven to ten. These were afterwards submitted to the action of a powerful upright screw-press, and when gradually dried, formed a good stiff paste-board. For their covers, the few sheep-skins brought from England were cut into slips for the backs and corners, and a bundle of old newspapers dyed, for covers to the sides. In staining these papers, they were covered with the juice of the stem of the mountain plantain, or fei, [. . .] imparting to the sheet, when dried in the sun, a rich glossy purple colour, which remained as long as the paper lasted.<sup>28</sup>

This form of situated modernity is the outcome of a hybrid encounter between Western technology (printing press), dialogic knowledge production (Pomare and Nott), Polynesian labour (male and female), imported resources (sheep-skins and newspapers), Indigenous material

24 Lingenfelter, *Presses of the Pacific Islands*, 5–8.

25 Lingenfelter, *Presses of the Pacific Islands*, 22–3.

26 Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795–1895*, vol. 1 (London: Henry Frowde, 1899), 234; see also Lingenfelter, *Presses of the Pacific Islands*, 11.

27 Lingenfelter, *Presses of the Pacific Islands*, 15.

28 Quoted in Lingenfelter, *Presses of the Pacific Islands*, 16–7.

cultures (tapa cloth drawn from the mulberry tree), and localised dyeing traditions (fei sap). It is perhaps fitting that each copy of this product of a singular modernity is exchanged for commercially valuable coconut oil, thereby entering the commodity form of a general modernity.<sup>29</sup> The unique morphology of any situated modernity does not discount its incorporation, via an exchange logic that discovers equivalence in all commodity forms, into the general planetary modernity characterised by practices of surplus accumulation.

Similarly, the modernist attributes found in the works of writers such as Vilsoni Hereniko, Pio Manoa, John Pule, Satendra Nandan, and Craig Santos Perez cannot be decoupled from the authors' exposure to a situated and participatory modernity specifically generated in the context of Oceania. Oceania's writers are drawn into the familiar constitutive tug of war between a context-specific modernity and a recalcitrant aesthetics of modernism. Sometimes, as in Nandan's 'My Father's Son', the tension betrays itself in the sardonic tonalities of a voice commenting on 'pure australian ghee' being poured 'from a fiji bitter bottle' onto the father's pyre.<sup>30</sup> The consciousness of the urbanised son detects modernity's inexorable drive, motored by the traffic in commodities, as it invades the most sacred of practices, thereby cynically producing the idea of purity, ritual, and the sacred as lost and profane archaisms constitutive of modernity. The ironic standpoint belongs to modernism precisely because the profanities of Fiji Bitter beer and the impurities of Australia (hence the ironising quotation marks in relation to both) intersect with the funerary rites of ancient India in which sanctified ghee is ritualistically presented to the gods. Pule's modernist consciousness, by contrast, shores up the fragments of his ruined childhood in a novel-length work that is an uneasy collage of letters, prose narration, inserted verses, and the legends of Niue. This consciousness, which shows up in a self-reflexive portrait in Chapter 16 of *The Shark That Ate the Sun*, is the by-product of state-sponsored slums, sexual molestation, factory work, torching of childhood homes, a mother's aphasia, and acts of criminal delinquency.<sup>31</sup>

In 'Under Nabukalou Bridge', Pio Manoa's consciousness adheres closely to the dialectic identified by Theodor Adorno whereby the archaic 'is a function of the new' in that it engenders modernity's primal history and not its pre-history; it is thus 'everything whose voice has fallen silent because of history'.<sup>32</sup> Primal history is constituted alongside the

29 George L. Harding and Bjarne Kroepelien, *The Tahitian Imprints of the London Missionary Society, 1810–1834* (Oslo: La Coquille Qui Chante, 1950), 30.

30 Satendra Nandan, *Voices in the River: Poems 1974–1984* (Suva: Vision International, 1985), 50.

31 John Pule, *The Shark That Ate the Sun* (Auckland: Penguin, 1992), 106.

32 Theodor W. Adorno and Walter Benjamin, *The Complete Correspondence, 1928–1940*, ed. Henry Lonitz, trans. Nicholas Walker (1999; Cambridge, MA: Polity, 2003), 38.

modern and marks, for Adorno, the mandatory condition for the latter's emergence; consequently, it persists in haunting the historical march of modernity. Modernity, in Manoa's poem, is represented by the whirr and thunder of wheels on the bridge beneath, which sits a wizened fisherman. Crowds of spectators, including the personae, pause to gaze at him but they can only be 'audience to his/Silence'.<sup>33</sup> The old man is the primal image of archaic time, characterised by the use-value aspects of subsistence economy, produced in all its remoteness and silence and beneathness by the gaze of modernity. In his quasi-absurdist play titled 'Monster', Hereniko resorts to euphemism, jejune puns, games, misdirection, and selective memory to enact a political tussle in a post-apocalyptic arena. The absence of an identifiable context due to the choice of the allegoric form fails to undercut the tension between the play's absurdist mindset and the wrangle over the goods, spaces, and ideologies of modernity.<sup>34</sup> For Perez, who hails from Guam and writes of its conversion into an American military-industrial complex, typographical fragmentation and jarring linguistics insertions attest to radical departures and ghostly traces that betoken new connections. His poetry may be described as mnemonic acts in which appearances and disappearances co-exist. So, for instance, erased obituaries that bring proper nouns back to life share a common space with proper nouns that cannot escape the erased obituaries in which they are entombed. Perez's principle image is the 'ta(la)ya', a throw net, which serves both as a snare and a sieve, catching or letting slip discordant times, languages, genres, syllables, memories, names, technologies, and moralities.<sup>35</sup> His brand of modernism constitutes a sustained critique of the organised violence of modernity in which islands are used as pawns in the geopolitical wars waged by empowered nation-states.

There is, of course, much more to say about Perez and others, but I should like to now focus on two older writers whose works explore in nuanced detail the constitutive tension between modernity and modernism—namely, Subramani and Albert Wendt. Subramani's brooding story, 'Sautu', is perhaps exemplary in this regard. Set in a cheerless hinterland settlement owing its existence to plantation agriculture that led to indentured forms of labour mobility in the nineteenth century, the story recounts an ex-coolie's heightened consciousness of his own disintegration in response to an estranging habitat. Dhanpat dwells in derelict Sautu—a village of 'squalid little huts' scratched out from 'a little clearing' by post-indentured workers who continue to toil in leased canefields or for the

33 Pio Manoa, 'Under Nabukalou Bridge', *Mana Review: A South Pacific Journal of Language and Literature* 1, no. 2 (1976): 19.

34 Vilsoni Hereniko, 'The Monster', in *Beyond Ceremony: An Anthology of Drama from Fiji*, ed. Ian Gaskell (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies and Pacific Writing Forum, 2001): 93–111.

35 Craig Santos Perez, *From Unincorporated Territory [Guma]* (Richmond, CA: Omnidawn, 2014), 32–3.

sugar mill located on the outskirts.<sup>36</sup> The village, which is a by-product of plantation capital, has lost its 'momentum' and sticks out like 'an aberration, a contortion of history on that landscape' (F 2–3). Composed in the form of a drawn-out epiphany, charting a consciousness that proceeds from reverie to delirium to inflammatory insanity, the narrative is made up of remembered shards and transported objective correlatives (such as brass gods, worn-out photographs, a broken dholak) that attest to a crisis in Dhanpat's consciousness, and to an intense, and ultimately self-destructive, consciousness of this crisis. Although the story is related in the third person, the narrator's perspective often converges with the disoriented reflections of the protagonist. This doubling of viewpoint results in a twinned consciousness, which, though not quite conjoined or symmetrical, conveys the sense that Dhanpat's predicament, and his acute awareness of it, cannot be dislodged from the legacy of colonial modernity in the form of that ambivalent gift—the English language. The doubling of perspective takes on added resonance when we scrutinise the story's para-text along with its intra-text. Para-textually, the narrator's point of view is authorised by the 'legal personality' of the author,<sup>37</sup> Subramani, reared, as we learn elsewhere, on a diet of books 'thrown away at the European bungalows where my father worked', and supplemented by an account of his accomplishments in English from universities in New Zealand, Canada, and Fiji (F 141). Intra-textually, Dhanpat's consciousness of his own disintegration as a wretched subject of plantation modernity to which he is systemically subjected, is bound up with the letters his son, Somu, writes from New Zealand. Dhanpat's impregnable spirit, which once 'moved through life with such splendid reassurance', is undone by his son's introspective communiqués to the extent that he is 'confronted [. . .] with truths he had hidden from himself' (F 7). It is never resolved whether these truths bear any relation to the episodic nightmares concerning his wife's madness, the apparitions on horseback or her murder at the hands of unknown assailants. If there is a suggestion that sexual violence is an effect of gender disproportion instituted by the plantation system, it remains an insinuation.

There is a fifth layer of consciousness we cannot pass over without comment. This consciousness is not the property of the author or the narrator or of any of the characters; rather, it is the intrinsic property of ironic proper nouns such as Sautu and Dhanpat. The Fijian word 'sautu'

36 Subramani, *The Fantasy Eaters* (Washington, DC: Three Continents, 1988), 2. Subsequent references to this edition will be signalled within the text as F.

37 Derrida makes the point in 'Before the Law' that the 'legal personality' of a text, construed as its 'identity, singularity and unity', is sanctioned by the conventions and rules determined by the history of legal acts and that this legal personality cannot be detached from the signatory function of the author. See Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), 184–5.

denotes prosperity and plenty, while in Hindi Dhanpat signifies a person of considerable wealth. The story, by contrast, is a remorseless chronicle of squalor, impoverishment, dispossession, and madness. Dhanpat comes to recognise himself as the discarded subject of plantation modernity, with no roots, claims, bonds, or beliefs, and responds by embracing insanity. The consciousness driving the epiphany is an uneasy blend of the third-person narrator, the thoughts of an alienated, unlettered protagonist, the legal personality of a highly-lettered author, the brutal irony contained in monstrous proper names, and the musings of the different characters as half-understood by the main character. In the manner of its protagonist, the story hovers 'at the edge of new perceptions' (F 7) without ever achieving them. The consequent madness, enacted in a thwarted attempt at self-immolation, serves as an indictment of plantation modernity by coolie modernism.

Subramani adopts a different modernist ploy in the short story, 'Kala'. It is a ploy that depends on the importation of past aesthetic apparatuses—themselves derived from surmounted social relations—into the context of the later twentieth century. The two exemplary modernist texts in this regard are James Joyce's *Ulysses* and T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, both published in 1922. The latter text, in particular, frames a modernist response to the violent disruption of the integrated global economic order of the belle époque that existed in Europe prior to the First World War. The poem may be described as an aleatory assemblage of textual fragments consisting of cross-cultural intertextual allusions deprived of a systematic supplementary function. By bringing together intertextual allusions that randomly echoed divergent eras, cultures, aesthetics, and values predating the Great War, Eliot attempted to build a framework to integrate the ontological disintegration, ethical equivocality, and economic breakdown that defined the inter-war years, culminating in the Great Depression of 1929–1939. The poem's success lies precisely in its hyper-conscious failure to achieve such an articulation, thereby attesting to a world where the allusive fragments fail to find supplementary significance and cohesion in the contemporary disorder. The fragments are either eviscerated of their supplementary function vis-à-vis the signifying chain (which itself is fatally ruptured at various points in the text) or become mangled so as to serve the purpose of estranging irony and grotesque parody. If the purpose was to gather fragments from Dante, Shakespeare, Chaucer, Baudelaire, Virgil, Ovid, Marvell, Milton, Spenser, Verlaine, de Nerval, Buddha, St. Augustine, the Upanishads, and the Bible so as to bolster the crumbling architrave of the present with salvaged histories and aesthetics, the result is exactly the opposite inasmuch as the sequestered allusions, being devoid of a supplementary function, throw a sharp light on the disintegrated social relations in which they are anachronistically placed. In endeavouring to circumvent it, the poem paradoxically turns into an account of an epistemic breakdown. The jigsaw pieces of the past



fail to fit the present; calling attention to the wrong pieces in the puzzle as well as the gaps that cannot be filled.

Similarly, Subramani's 'Kala' draws on the aesthetic archetypes of a bygone era in an attempt to bind together a consciousness on the verge of disintegration. Unlike 'Sautu', however, this story is not located in a rural settlement in the immediate aftermath of plantation modernity. Rather, it covers the period after Fiji's independence from Britain in 1970, and concerns the upwardly mobile descendants of coolie workers who settled in coastal towns and cities. The protagonist, Kala, which name incidentally means art, has a bachelor's degree from India, while her husband, Sukhen, who has also studied abroad, works for the government in the Foreign Affairs Office. Set in the port city of Suva, the story's structure, in its meandering arrangement, reproduces Kala's meandering excursions through the streets which, in turn, take its form from her capricious and perambulating consciousness. Kala's consciousness, which is hyper-alert in its aesthetic approach to the world, not only plays havoc with sequence so that one is unclear about the story's precise temporal arrangement, but it also transforms the city into a spectral and unreal arena in which her desire seeks out the object of its sublimation. Kala has an unbearable sexual longing, captured in the form of an adulterous quest through the city streets, for a beloved who escapes her comprehension. Depicted as pest-ridden and in a state of disrepair, Suva's half-built spaces are employed as objective correlates to fan Kala's desire for a figure whose love, in its divine carnality, transcends Sukhen's 'sober love' (F 69) and human limitations.

A large part of the story is informed by the dynamic of North Indian viraha songs (songs of longing-in-separation) which are pivotal to the rasalila tradition exemplified by Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda*, a long poem composed in twelfth-century India. If, for Eliot, Cleopatra's exalted passion has been reduced to a lewd conversation in a London public house, and the blind prophet, Tiresias, can do no more than attest to the sterile and indifferent coupling of a clerk and a typist, Subramani draws on the rasalila tradition, characterised by the love-play of Radha and Krishna and that of Krishna and the Gopis (herd-girls), to frame Kala's quest for a passion that, in its unbearable intensity, marries the erotic and the ethereal, thereby transcending the sterility, uncertainty and tedium of mortal love in the postcolonial city. By introducing into the streets of Suva a sacral-sexual archetype derived from the caste-divided social relations of rural India, Subramani captures the maddening contradictions being played out in the emergent class-based consciousness of the educated descendants of indentured workers. On the one hand, Kala believes that she 'must live for others' (F 65) in compliance with received Hindu norms, thereby settling for the 'unexamined life' (F 66) which, according to Socrates, is not worth living; on the other, she mutinies against repressive cultural and patriarchal expectations in her bid to find work, self-worth, durable passion, and freedom from domesticity.

Subramani admits us into his character's internal crisis over incompatible versions of self-identification, and by implication incompatible social relations (one not yet fully dead and the other not yet fully born), by turning her into female flâneur. The flâneur is a member of the petty bourgeois class who wanders the marketplace in order to experience jouissance in the commingling of aesthetic and erotic pleasure.<sup>38</sup> Kala's solitary meanderings through the streets and shops of Suva are aesthetic as well as erotic, but driven by a set of conflicting factors which she cannot fully grasp. Most obviously, she ventures out so as to escape domestic confinement, the gendered division of labour, and her husband's undemonstrative love. Her little transgressions—looking for employment, opening a bank account, sharing laughter with a male worker, telephoning a perfect stranger, poring through a salacious diary—are indicative of the new subject she wants to be, freely immersed in the social relations, commodity spaces, and amorous ideologies of an emergent modernity. Yet, it is the ideological spectre of a different social relations derived from another temporality which haunts her most powerfully in this space of modernity. The shadowy figure she comes across in her private outings is allusively conjoined to the sacral-sexual aesthetics of the rasalila tradition of a peasant-based Indian economy. It is this familiar stranger that is the object of Kala's 'erotic mood (śrṅgārasa)'.<sup>39</sup> The divinity's presence in modern Suva is, then, representative of the archaic haunting the new. Kala's admission that she might be on the brink of madness concerns exactly this form of haunting whereby the subject channels into contradictory forms the ever-receding object of her desire. On the one hand, Kala yearns to be an unbounded and undomesticated subject of bourgeois modernity; on the other, she longs to circumvent modernity and return to the ideology of a surmounted social relations through consummating her restless sexual passion (ratibhāva) for an idealised god.

The modernist elements in 'Kala' are directly related to this bifurcation in the heroine's subjectivity whereby the archaic haunts the new even as their relations constitute the *différend*, defined as an impasse reached in communication due to the presence of incommensurable idioms.<sup>40</sup> If the female flâneur is driven to the postcolonial city by a private need to chart her place in modernity, she enters it via the archaic in that the unseasonal

38 Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1997), 35–66.

39 Barbara Stoler Miller, introduction to *Jayadeva's Gitagovinda*, trans. Barbara Stoler Miller (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978), 14. My understanding of the rasalila archetype, and its accompanying literary correlates, is derived from Stoler Miller's excellent introduction.

40 Jean-François Lyotard and Georges Van Den Abbeele, 'The *Différend*, the Referent, and the Proper Name', *Diacritics* 14, no. 3 (1984): 3–14.

rain of Suva is perfectly seasonal in India during June and related to the viraha aesthetic that associates monsoon rains (sawan) to sexual longing-in-separation (vipralambhaṣṅgāra). The downpour is generated by 'some strange godly intercession' just before Kala catches sight of the divine beloved, and the crowd milling in the streets is compared to 'a herd of buffalo' (F 63), evoking a rural scene that would be familiar to a Gopi on the lookout for Krishna. Kala's forays into the city are inspired by her failure to reconcile desires that emanate from incompatible social relations. A childhood obsession with the dark god persuades her to marry Sukhen because he is said by her mother to resemble Krishna. The divine figure functions as the Lacanian *objet petit a*, that is, as the inaccessible object which induces desire.<sup>41</sup> Sukhen is the corporeal sign attesting to the disappearance of the *objet petit a*, thereby setting off an unattainable quest through the shops, cafes, and streets of Suva. Kala chooses to frame the quest in the modern language of feminism when, in truth, she is drawn adulterously to the erotic religious aesthetics of a social relations that has been surmounted. The story itself is alert to the inaccessible status of the *objet petit a* in life since it directs Kala to a newspaper item on a suicide who claims that she has 'gone to join her dark lover in Brindaban' (F 68), Brindaban being Krishna's rustic habitat. The dead woman's note triggers Kala's memory of her grandfather investing her fantasies with the real emotions of 'a rural lass forsaken by her god' (F 69). Eventually, through self-scrutiny, she comes to half-comprehend the spectral character of the sacral-sexual *objet petit a*. The intensity of Kala's adulterous longing for the dark god (and in this she is comparable to the married Radha) drives a wedge between her and Sukhen, instituting a second dynamic of longing-in-separation. Only after Kala confesses to Sukhen the sacral-sexual motivations for her solitary excursions to the city does the story attempt to address the death drive informing an obsessive pursuit of the *objet petit a*. It is, in fact, Sukhen who exorcises the spectre of the surmounted social relations anachronistically haunting the time of modernity. He is the exemplary existential subject of modernity for whom individuals dwell between a now and a nothing, and what links this 'now and that nothing is our love' (F 74). By disavowing love in its non-existential and transcendent form, Sukhen also disavows the possibility of death being a pathway to the *objet petit a*, and, in so doing, destroys the figure that stands in for the unattainable object of desire. The derelict god is found dead in the rained-on city. With the death of her god, Kala relinquishes the ideology of a surmounted social relations and enters modernity as a secular existential subject.

41 Slavoj Žižek, 'Courtly Love, or, Woman as Thing', in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. V. B. Leitch, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 2010), 2415.

In *Pouliuli*, a novella set in Samoa, Wendt also thinks of insanity as the potential by-product of modernity's encounter with unassimilable life-worlds. The story begins with Faleasa Osovae waking up one wet morning to discover that he is overcome with revulsion, as expressed in bouts of nausea and vomiting, for everything around him: his spouse and extended family, religion and status, his matai's authority and obligations, past and present existence, the legacy left by unloving parents, and the manipulations and shibboleths that regulate life in the village. The reader is plunged headlong into a narrative wherein the act of vomiting announces the presence of the repressed other, the one under injunction not to be present, to stay forgotten, as it resurfaces to dislodge the ego's illusory sense of existential significance and stability.<sup>42</sup> If thematically the story starts with the most banal of modernist ploys—the eruption of repressed elements in a character's waking life—it is offset by the novella's initial controlled reliance on a realist mode of narration. Osovae's bouts of vomiting afford him the necessary cover to feign insanity in a bid to free himself from communal bonds and obligations, from the roots and causes of his repressed individuality. However, in chapters that chronicle the eruption of private and public histories straddling the two great wars of the twentieth century, he discovers that his bid for freedom invites indifference from others to the point that he feels worthless. Given that he cannot cope with this indifference, his rebellious solitude, too, turns out to be a type of un-freedom. Wendt frames his character's quest for existential freedom by holding up to scrutiny inherited life-worlds and the incursive practices of modernity. Osovae's early encounters with modernity are partly responsible for his disavowal of the fa'a-Sāmoa, or Samoan Way. When still a boy, he is appraised by a white missionary and travels to Apia, where he discovers cars, commodities, and ice cream, wonders at the miracle of electric light, and is mocked by a girl of mixed blood who embodies Apia's mysterious and elusive hybridity.<sup>43</sup> As a young man in 1942, he finds work in the military-industrial complex, and obtains insight into American largesse and the trauma induced by global wars.<sup>44</sup> In the culminating chapters of the story, however, the novella's realistic architecture begins to crumble in direct response to Osovae's exposure to a situated yet unassimilable modernity. The centre of the realist narrative will not hold. Apia loses its elusive

42 Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 4.

43 Albert Wendt, *Pouliuli* (1977; Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1980), 41–54.

44 Wendt, *Pouliuli*, 55–62.

glamour because modernity's representative is a corrupt and mendacious politician. The exemplary site of modernity turns into a scene of self-deception by the deceived.<sup>45</sup> Osovae succeeds in unseating the corrupt Malaga, but loses his son to prison in the ensuing bloodshed. The realist third-person narrative has, by this stage, disintegrated to include a symbolic fable about befriending darkness, a surreal tale of a suffering sage who sows stone circles to keep derangement at bay, and two second-person interventions. The first intervention assumes the form of a revelation by Osovae of his betrayal of the visionary sage while the second constitutes Laaumatuva's testimony that Osovae's insanity, now for real, resembles that of the sage he betrayed. Between the encroachments of an unscrupulous modernity and the demands of the fa'a-Sāmoa, form and character become unhinged and realism—associated with the ego—yields to the nightmarish id logic of modernism. In this manner, Samoa's experience of modernity (exemplified by the entry of Christian evangelism, introduction of colonial educational and governmental structures, establishment of the trading port city, and of the military-industrial complex) gives birth to a fa'a-Sāmoa modernism in which a fragmented self cannot find anchorage in realism or in the fabulous tapestry of the fāgogo (Samoan yarn-spinning for the edification of children). Neither imported nor Indigenous narratives manage to shore up the fragments of a broken subjectivity.

Unlike Wendt's fa'a-Sāmoa modernism, Subramani's coolie modernism is engaged in a related yet different experience of history—one characterised by the estranged lives of post-indentured Indians marooned by colonialism in the outposts of plantation modernity. It is possible by the way of conclusion to assert that Oceanian modernism, though derived from its specific experience of modernity as manifested in the region over the course of two centuries, shows signs of the same tensional and constitutive split between modernism and modernity that informs modernist aesthetics elsewhere. Modernism forever stands in a relationship of crisis to modernity, and this crisis manifests itself on several planes, including that of representation, content, and textual consciousness. In their antagonistic indebtedness to modernity, Oceania's writers chronicle their dissent in ethical epiphanies and ironies which are inseparable from persistent symptoms of nausea and insanity, and these latter, in turn, inseparable from the metaphoric, typographic, psychic, and mnemonic disintegration of unities, imagined or otherwise.

45 O'Carroll, drawing on the insights of Charles Taylor, makes an ingenious connection between modernist epiphany and deception or self-deception culminating in the revelation of a denunciative ethics ('Deception, Loss and Modernity').

## Bibliography

- Adorno, Theodor W. and Walter Benjamin. *The Complete Correspondence, 1928–1940*. Edited by Henry Lonitz. Translated by Nicholas Walker. 1999. Cambridge, MA: Polity, 2003.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*. London: Verso, 1997.
- . *Illuminations*. Edited by Hannah Arendt. Translated by Harry Zohn. London: Fontana Press, 1992.
- De Certeau, Michel. *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Acts of Literature*, edited by Derek Attridge. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Driscoll, Catherine and Meaghan Morris. 'Introduction: Gender, Modernity and Media in Asia-Pacific'. In *Gender, Modernity and Media in Asia-Pacific*, edited by Catherine Driscoll and Meaghan Morris, 1–21. London: Routledge, 2014.
- Edwards, Brent Hayes. *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Foucault, Michel. 'What Is an Author?' In *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow, 101–20. 1984. New York: Penguin, 1986.
- . *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith. London: Routledge, 1992.
- Friedman, Susan Stanford. *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity Across Time*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.
- Gikandi, Simon. 'Preface: Modernism in the World'. *Modernism/Modernity* 13, no. 3 (2006): 419–24.
- . *Writing in Limbo: Modernism and Caribbean Literature*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.
- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 'Modernity—An Incomplete Project'. In *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, edited by V. B. Leitch, 2nd ed., 1577–87. New York: Norton, 2010.
- Harding, George L. and Bjarne Kroepelien. *The Tahitian Imprints of the London Missionary Society, 1810–1834*. Oslo: La Coquille Qui Chante, 1950.
- Hau'ofa, Epeli. 'Our Sea of Islands'. In *A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands*, edited by Eric Waddell, Vijay Naidu and Epeli Hau'ofa, 2–16. Suva: University of the South Pacific; Beake House, 1993.
- Hereniko, Vilsoni. 'The Monster'. In *Beyond Ceremony: An Anthology of Drama from Fiji*, edited by Ian Gaskell, 93–111. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies and Pacific Writing Forum, 2001.
- Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno. 'Dialectic of Enlightenment'. In *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, edited by V. B. Leitch, 2nd ed., 1107–27. New York: Norton, 2010.
- Lingenfelter, Richard E. *Presses of the Pacific Islands 1817–1867: A History of the First Half-century of Printing in the Pacific Islands*. Los Angeles: Plantin, 1967.

- Lovett, Richard. *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795–1895*. Vol. 1. London: Henry Frowde, 1899.
- Liotard, Jean-François and Georges Van Den Abbeele. 'The Différend, the Referent, and the Proper Name'. *Diacritics* 14, no. 3 (1984): 3–14.
- Manoa, Pio. 'Under Nabukalou Bridge'. *Mana Review: A South Pacific Journal of Language and Literature* 1, no. 2 (1976): 19.
- Miller, Barbara Stoler. Introduction to *Jayadeva's Gitagovinda*, 3–66. Translated by Barbara Stoler Miller. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- Nandan, Satendra. *Voices in the River: Poems 1974–1984*. Suva: Vision International, 1985.
- O'Carroll, John. 'Deception, Loss and Modernity in Fiji'. *Double Dialogues* 8 (2007/2008). [www.doubledialogues.com/article/deception-loss-and-modernity-in-fiji/](http://www.doubledialogues.com/article/deception-loss-and-modernity-in-fiji/).
- Petaia, Ruperake. 'Kidnapped'. In *Some Modern Poetry from Western Samoa*, edited by Albert Wendt, 8–9. Suva: Mana Publications, 1974.
- Pound, Ezra. *Selected Poems*. London: Faber and Faber, 1975.
- Pule, John. *The Shark That Ate the Sun*. Auckland: Penguin, 1992.
- Santos Perez, Craig. *From Unincorporated Territory [Guma]*. Richmond, CA: Omnidawn, 2014.
- Subramani. *The Fantasy Eaters*. Washington, DC: Three Continents, 1988.
- Thomas, Nicholas. *Islanders: The Pacific in the Age of Empire*. New Haven: Yale University, 2010.
- Wendt, Albert. *Pouliuli*. 1977. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1980.
- . 'Towards a New Oceania'. *Mana Review: A South Pacific Journal of Language and Literature* 1, no. 1 (1976): 49–69.
- Williams, Raymond. *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*, edited by Tony Pinkney. London: Verso, 1989.
- Žižek, Slavoj. 'Courtly Love, or, Woman as Thing'. In *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, edited by V. B. Leitch, 2nd ed., 2402–27. New York: Norton, 2010.

### 3 ATOMIC Modern: Pacific Women's Modernities and the Writing of Nuclear Resistance

*Julia A. Boyd*<sup>1</sup>

In July 2017, Fijian scholar, writer, and activist Vanessa Griffen spoke before the United Nations conference to negotiate the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. All nine nuclear-armed states had 'conspicuously boycotted' the talks.<sup>2</sup> International headlines were tallying the nuclear-laced barbs volleying between an increasingly bellicose US President Donald Trump and North Korea and Iran, catapulting the threat of nuclear war—perhaps the ultimate expression of apocalyptic global modernity—back into daily conversation. But the treaty promised to pry control over global nuclear ethics away from the world's nuclear-armed states. If or when it comes into force, it will be the first 'legally binding instrument to prohibit' the weapons, bringing them in line with existing bans on biological and chemical weapons.<sup>3</sup> At the UN negotiations, Griffen endorsed its equally 'vital provisions for the people, land, and oceans that have borne the brunt of nuclear testing',<sup>4</sup> articles requiring participating nations to provide environmental remediation and 'gender-sensitive' health supports for nuclear victims and lands under their jurisdictions, with nuclear states singled out for particular 'responsibility'.<sup>5</sup> These

1 My sincere thanks to Maebh Long, Matthew Hayward, Cheryl Suzack, and Kate Manahan for insightful comments on this chapter. I also gratefully acknowledge the generous Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship supporting my doctoral research.

2 Rick Gladstone, 'A Treaty Is Reached to Ban Nuclear Arms. Now Comes the Hard Part', *New York Times*, 7 July 2017, [www.nytimes.com/2017/07/07/world/americas/united-nations-nuclear-weapons-prohibition-destruction-global-treaty.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/07/world/americas/united-nations-nuclear-weapons-prohibition-destruction-global-treaty.html).

3 'Background', United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards Their Total Elimination, United Nations, accessed 14 January 2019, [www.un.org/disarmament/tpnw/background.html](http://www.un.org/disarmament/tpnw/background.html); John Zarocostas, 'The UN Adopts Treaty to Ban the Use of Nuclear Weapons', *The Lancet* 390, no. 10092 (2017): 349.

4 Vanessa Griffen, *Address to the UN Conference to Ban Nuclear Weapons*, filmed July 2017 in New York, NY, Vimeo video, 3:04, posted by ICAN, 6 July 2017, <https://vimeo.com/224540494>.

5 *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*, 7 July 2017, U.N.T.C. C.N.476.2017.TREATIES-XXVI.9, at 6–7.