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The Troublesome Modern Girl: Jungfrau, National Literature, and the Vexations of Transnational Modernity

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Abstract
This article reflects upon the vibrant presence of the Modern Girl in interwar culture, so thoroughly associated with the Roaring Twenties and Dirty Thirties, in contrast to the relative absence of the figure in the scholarship of literary history and literary studies. It observes that this absence is particularly striking in orthodox historiographies of the

national literatures which were beginning to emerge in the aftermath of the Great War. Taking up the case of Australian writer Dymphna Cusack's 1936 *Jungfrau*, a novel that focuses with particular intensity on the "problem" of the Modern Girl, this essay considers various attitudes toward this figure both within the novel and around it. It does so within the context of the novel's reception history and the conscious project of building up a national literature. Through its discussion of the novel's commentary upon characterizations of the Modern Girl, and changing critical as well as public reactions to the novel over time, this essay foregrounds the troubled relationship between modern womanhood and the project of national literature within the currents of colonial and transnational modernity.

Keywords Modern Girl / flapper / Bright Young Thing / colonial modernity / national literature

While the flappers of America and the Bright Young Things of England are well-known icons of interwar modernity, they barely register in literary scholarship and in the literary histories of the interwar period.[1] Moreover, in the national literatures of Britain's former colonies, literatures that began to emerge in coordinated ways in the aftermath of the Great War and only gained institutional support as serious topics of university study much later, the Modern Girl has remained practically invisible. This is particularly the case in Australia, where literature and culture has for many years been largely constructed around paradigms of the land and masculine nationhood.[2] The metropolitan associations of these figures and their deep affiliations with feminized consumer culture appear to have intensified their marginalization from dominant literary histories of the former settler colonies. Identified more broadly as "Modern Girls," these figures are so thoroughly aligned with transnational modernity, urban life, commercialism, and Hollywood that they do not fit within longstanding scholarly approaches to interwar writing, framed by either the high modernism of the metropole or the cultural nationalism that began to take hold in England's former colonies in the aftermath of the Great War.[3] Modern Girls certainly existed in these societies, and in the print cultures and writings, of the settler colonies, but their presence appeared particularly contentious in Australia, for various reasons we consider and discuss. Through our analysis of the portraits of the various Modern Girls Australian author Dymphna Cusack lays out in her prize-nominated interwar novel *Jungfrau*, and by exploring attitudes toward these figures both within the novel and around the novel's reception history, we argue that the Modern Girl's associations with mobility, sexuality, and the urban consumer culture of working women made her a "troublesome" figure. Moreover, we note that her easy slippage across a variety of highly visual media forms such as magazines, advertising, illustrations, photography, and cinema lends the Modern Girl a transgressive character that challenges the boundaries of high literature and problematizes the securely literary status and nationalist paradigm of Australian literature. We suggest that attention to the Modern Girl and her troublesome role in literary culture may serve to open up new understandings of the figure in relation to literary traditions and cultural archives in a range of non-metropolitan contexts.

Among her various transgressions, the Modern Girl troubles the boundary between serious and commercial culture, and exposes the liminal and unstable spaces between

literature and entertainment. In interwar Australia, interlocking aspects of colonialism and modernity complicate and, arguably, further destabilize these dynamics, especially insofar as they contribute to an intensified environment of shifting and contingent cultural value. Drawing on an analysis of Cusack's portrait of three modern women in *Jungfrau* (1936), and through our discussion of the novel's reception, we investigate how the Modern Girl may have been constructed and defined through literature in anxious relation to other media forms, and in relation to various indices of literary cultural value. Relatedly, we raise questions about the ways in which the dynamics of colonial modernity may have heightened tensions around the Modern Girl. This is especially potent in literary milieux where the idea of a "national tradition" is developed in opposition to notions of colonial "cultural cringe" (Phillips n.p.), imperial heritage, or transnational modernity in ways that suggest a complex relationship between the domestic scene and Britain, Europe, or America.[4]

"It virtually goes without saying," Kay Schaffer observed in *Women and the Bush: Forces of Desire in the Australian Cultural Tradition*, an important scholarly study of the archetypal role which the figure of the bushman confronting barren land served in Australian cultural discourse, "that national identity and the Australian character are masculine constructions" (4). Since the 1980s, when Schaffer made that statement, feminist revisionist scholarship in literature and cultural studies has come a long way in recovering women's important yet overlooked social contributions to Australian society. This work has also served to reinstate a number of subsequently neglected interwar women authors whose writing had been well known and whose reputations were secure in their day. But to read even these revisionist accounts, largely shaped around second-wave feminism and literary social realism, is to assume that literary modernity in Australia was heavily freighted toward social problems and that the lighter, frothier version of femininity represented by the figure of the flapper or the Bright Young Thing did not exist in Australia at all. Recent cultural histories of interwar Australia (in the work of David Carter, Liz Conor, Jill Julius Matthews, or Hsu-Ming Teo, for instance) have shown, however, that this was not true: girls were Modern in Australia, too. As the contributors of the Modern Girl Around the World Research Group have noted in their definitive study of the cultural history of the Modern Girl in international contexts, "The Modern Girl emerged quite literally around the world" (Weinbaum et al. 1) as "a global phenomenon in the 1920s and 30s" (2) which was incarnated in "specific manifestations" (4) in vernacular contexts; these contexts include Australia. In the period in which the significant literary partnership of Vance and Nettie Palmer concentrated critical energy on the production and reception of the Great Australian Novel, the Modern Girl emerged out of a different kind of energy: preoccupied, for one, with her own contemporaneity, and positioned against tradition and pretension.[5] Retracing her emergence in Australian literature and subsequent elision from the developing national canon complicates the Palmers' project of literary cultural nationalism, and reveals the outlines of a Modern Girl constituted in Australia as a figure of contestation, shaped and received with mixed feelings of attraction, revulsion, desire, and anxiety.

"What identified Modern Girls," the Modern Girl Around the World Research Group suggests, "was their use of specific commodities and their explicit eroticism" (Weinbaum et al. 1). In contrast to the earlier figure of the New Woman who inhabited the last decade

of the nineteenth century and was preeminent until the end of the first decade of the twentieth century (1890s–1910s), the Modern Girl of the interwar period (1920s–1930s) was less concerned about the politics of suffrage or nationhood, and more absorbed by issues of personal agency. In an intensifying commercial culture marked by a rapid proliferation of lifestyle choices, new forms of subjectivity were on offer through access to pleasure in a freshly conceived public sphere, tied to the marketplace and linked with cinema, jazz, fashion, glamour, and sex. Through these avenues and other everyday commodities, young women experimented with ways in which self-styling afforded them purchase of new forms of social mobility and self-determination. Yet, as Matthews has shrewdly observed, it was "the young woman's relation to the marketplace that excited most alarm" (19). The Modern Girl radiated American-style glamour and worldly savoir faire. But her characteristically easy and "continual incorporation of local elements with those drawn from elsewhere" that Weinbaum et al. describe as forms of promiscuous identity formation defined by "*multi-directional citation*" also marked the Modern Girl as potentially inauthentic, loose, or indiscriminate (emphasis in original, 4). In the Australian scene, as Matthews has argued, these features characterized her as the most paradigmatic and contested figure of transnational modernity: "simultaneously the sign of all that was wrong with the direction that society was taking and the promise of a brave new world" (19). Positioned as the object of consumer desire and anxious apprehension, she was also portrayed as a self-determining agent of cultural, social, and geographical mobility.[6]

Given the degree to which flappers and Bright Young Things are associated with 1920s and 1930s modernity in the popular imagination, this lack of attention to the presence of the Modern Girl in literary culture is a significant lacuna. In the last decade, scholarship of the Modern Girl has been stimulated by expanded conceptions of modernity. Important studies such as Weinbaum et al.'s Modern Girl Around the World project have been accompanied by other notable scholarly investigations of the figure in non-Anglo-American contexts such as that of Jane Nicholas in Canada; Barbara Sato or Sarah Frederick in Japan; and Tse-lan D. Sang or Ping Zhu in China. Despite notable exceptions, this work has been largely focused on the figure's appearance in and construction through magazine and commodity culture. Research on the figure of the Modern Girl in literature (even in American and British literature) remains rarer, and tends to be confined to isolated studies of figures or writers whose connection with flapperdom has taken on an almost axiomatic status, such Zelda Fitzgerald (in Deborah Pike's recent study) or focused on well-known narratives where she appears, such as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925).

Her appearance in a suite of interwar Australian novels including *Prelude to Christopher* (1934) and *The Road to Coolami* (1936) by Eleanor Dark and *The Beauties and the Furies* (1936) by Christina Stead—which are often neglected today—or Jean Devanny's *The Virtuous Courtesan* (1935)—a novel which was incidentally banned in Australia and published in New York—clearly indicates that Australian novels about the Modern Girl were published in abundance. Their mixed reception and publication histories, however, signal that their place in relation to the intellectual project of Australian literature and a potentially broader program of intellectual respectability that emerged after the Second World War was as equally unstable and insecure as that of the Modern Girl in Australian

society in general. Cusack's novel shares this checkered reception history, which at least partly signals changing attitudes to the sorts of novels in which the Modern Girl featured, in Australia. We also note that the novel self-consciously presents a triptych of Modern Girl characters—the Modern Sexual Girl, the Modern Working Girl, and the Modern Mobile Girl—and provides commentaries upon their various fates and social attitudes toward them in their time. As such, we position Dymphna Cusack's novel as a useful text to explore the reputation of the Modern Girl in Australia, as it presents several models and has itself been treated variably over time.

Cusack's novel thus allows us to consider the presentation of the Modern Girl in this Australian context as a composite image or "heuristic device," a method we borrow from the Modern Girl around the World Research Group (Weinbaum et al. 2–3). This approach to identifying her figure as an aggregate of several iterations harmonizes with Conor's undertaking in *The Spectacular Modern Woman* to outline the various "scenes" in which a series of types of the Modern Girl appeared in an emerging ocularcentric culture fostered by new technologies of image reproduction. Further, it allows us to consider her appearance in Cusack's novel as only one of a number of under-examined sites of literary reproduction of the Modern Girl in interwar Australia. Cumulatively all of these sites of reproduction participated in, contributed to, and responded to broader media and cultural discourses of the figure. In *Jungfrau*, a portrait of the Modern Girl emerges out of a triptych pattern that is structured around three characters: Marc, Eve, and Thea. These generally correlate with figures of the Modern Sexual Girl, the Modern Career Girl, and the Modern Mobile Girl, respectively. Named for the mountain in Switzerland which plays a symbolic role in the narrative, a virginal summit which has recently become scalable by a tourist train and thus open to commercial traffic, the plot is set against a collage of Sydney Harbour, Sydney University, city flats, beachside weekenders, and a background of culture imported from Europe and overseas. These three types of Modern Girl are thus firmly entrenched in the environment of modernizing interwar Sydney, an Australian urban scene forged in the crucible of an increasingly transnational, cosmopolitan, and commercialized milieu. As one key site in which the Modern Girl was constructed in interwar Australian literature as a composite figure, the novel's characterizations of the Modern Girl and their relationships among one another open up for us ways to discuss broader cultural attitudes toward gender and modernity. Reviewing the book's reception history also affords some consideration of wider issues regarding her position in relation to the literary sphere and other cultural domains.

The Modern Sexual Girl

Described by one reviewer as "thoroughly modern" when the 1936 novel was reissued in 1989 ("Timeless Work" 8), the character of Marc is perhaps the most iconic and immediately recognizable Modern Girl in Dymphna Cusack's narrative. A dynamic, independent modern woman drawn to transgressive subjects and behavior, and well as to understanding forms of social and structural inequality, Marc's career as a social worker suggests both her special interest in and association with youthful deviance. Aptly, she also represents the Modern Sexual Girl in Cusack's narrative. Her real name, Mary, alludes to the biblical figure Mary Magdalene, whose reputation for wanton sexuality and desire infamously characterized her. Yet her nickname, Marc, also suggests the slightly

masculine jauntiness and independence that also mark her character. Marc lives on her own in a city flat, smokes cigarettes, drives her own car, and holds extremely progressive views on sex, which verge toward lesbianism. She intellectualizes her critique of modern sexual relations, detachedly observing that the modern woman has it worse than her forbearers, since modern men, in her view,

> *expect you to soothe and comfort, and still to have a mind of your own; bear their children and keep figures like Greta Garbo at the same time; be all intellectual while retaining a schoolgirl complexion and a movie-magazine face, and cook their dinners before we go out to look the perfect dancing partner. (50)*

Experimenting with new forms of subjectivity, Marc realizes that the attractive possibilities on offer to the Modern Girl are potential traps set with expanded social expectations and freighted with new forms of judgment. As Weinbaum et al. put it, a dilemma besets the Modern Girl, as well as the scholar who tries to understand her, about "whether Modern Girls were dupes or resistors of consumer capitalism" (22) and whether her experiments with acquiring agency through new forms of self-styling produced dynamics that were "oppressive or liberatory" (22). Marc's appearance, name, and personality are drawn from the Marchesa Casati (30–31), the infamous British socialite who scandalized society during the 1920s; yet, while Marc's attitudes appear to court scandal, and her sexual promiscuity is the subject of so-called "stories" and "rumors" (43), she persistently defends her behavior on the basis of philosophical argumentation, emphasizing the basis of her actions in ideologies of liberation. As a demonstration of her freedom with sexuality, she kisses Thea on the mouth, and Thea's response is described as physical, immediate, and emotional: she "felt a sense of warmth and comfort in her kiss" (53). This gesture attempts to draw Thea into her way of living without regard for social conventions, categories, and judgements, and to open her more hesitant friend up to new possibilities.

More than the other two principal women characters in the novel, Marc is a thoroughly embodied character, characterized not only by vitality but also by her visibility: by her fashionable "slacks" (85), her "bright, short crop" hair (41), "her painted mouth" (161), and "her absurdly long theatrical eyes" (160–61). In obvious ways, these small tokens of feminine glamour associate her with aspects of women's commodity culture that Conor has observed in the "visually intensified scene" (2) which characterized modernity, and through which women were subjected to new forms of agency as well as surveillance. Weinbaum et al. note the Modern Girl was in fact defined by these "numerous iconic visual elements," such as her "bobbed hair, painted lips, provocative clothing, elongated body, and an open, easy smile" (2). Marc manifests these visual elements, so deeply associated with the allure of the Modern Sexual Girl, but she also embodies some of the contradictory social attitudes toward them. She codes female sexual agency as replete with attraction, desire, and freedom; but she herself views with anxiety and even revulsion other women who parade their sexual charms, especially those who seem intellectually vacuous. Poppy Wetherall, a dancer whom she describes in visual terms associated with

embodiment—"silver blonde and dazzlingly pretty…silver nails, broad silver bracelets" (87)—is the object of Marc's mixed fascination and contempt. As the Modern Sexual Girl of Cusack's narrative, Marc is both an object and active arbiter of the sexual double standard of which she herself is a conscious critic.

The Modern Career Girl

The three women of Cusack's narrative are not only spectacles to be looked at and appraised; they are also constantly observing and evaluating each other with envy or judgment. Beyond the sexualized Modern Girls whom Marc derides, perhaps the most regular object of Marc's scorn is the doctor, Eve. Like Marc's real name Mary, Eve's name alludes to a biblical archetype. Cusack's use of this convention appears to emphasize the ways in which these figures operate as allegorical types, and to gesture toward each serving as a part of the pastiche that comprises her multi-faceted portrait of the Modern Girl. But the convention also illuminates the ways the Modern Girl was easily reduced to stereotype. Indeed this reduction to caricature partly accounts for the typecast images of the Modern Girl that were regularly conjured up for the very purpose of dismissal. Marc engages in such an act herself when she characterizes Eve as one of "these antiseptic women" who have "made so much of their professions" and "make a success of any job other than marriage" (50). Perhaps as a play upon the expectations which are encoded by stereotype, however, Eve subverts the characteristics associated with her biblical namesake. Rather than the figure of temptation as she is represented in the Bible, Eve represents the opposite: a sterile, intensely Catholic and zealously religious Modern Career Girl.

Eve's career as an obstetric doctor positions her, like her biblical namesake, as a potential mother figure, but her all-embracing commitment to the patriarchal institutions of medical science and religion appear to have robbed her of essentialist and characteristically nurturing female traits such as warmth, compassion, tenderness, and even desire. Even so, her friend Thea describes Eve as "lucky" (71) because she regards the rational, ordered life Eve lives as a safe harbor from the vicissitudes she experiences in her own experiment with living as a Modern Girl: "No emotional upheavals, no spiritual convulsions. Just that quick, brilliant flame that burned up everything irrelevant—making her incapable of compromise, intolerant of weakness" (71–72). Just as Marc imposes judgement on Eve, Eve also dismisses Marc, deeming her an insubstantial personality: just "tricks" (118). Further, Eve is repulsed by Marc's open embrace of carnality, and particularly offended by the fact that that Marc did not "even [wear] a brassiere" which left her "small, firm breasts lifting the cheap jumper almost indecently" (118). When the three women go away for a weekend, in which couples pair off for some light petting, Eve declares that their pairing off is "revolting" (118), and dismisses the entertainment of the evening as mere "sensual antics" (118). Eve's world is characterized entirely by facts and obligations, free of sensuality, romance, or fantasy. Observing the disorder into which Thea's life is plunged when she enters into relationship with the married, older Professor Glover, Eve declares to herself: "Well if this is love, she was glad she knew nothing about it. If it separated you from your work, your ideas, almost, it seemed, from yourself, she was content with her life as it was" (119). Her own career, as Eve views it, provides her with a buffer against passionate disorder: "Thank God, she had a profession that absorbed

all her interests and most of her energies, and sufficient balance and commonsense to control what was left over, and, above all, thank God for a moral code that was based on a rock, immovable, sane and immeasurably comforting" (124).

The Modern Mobile Girl

Eve and Marc represent opposite poles of a spectrum of possibilities open to the average Modern Girl, whereas Thea attempts to take up various positions in between. While Eve and Marc look to each other in judgment, Thea looks to them as possible models. In fact, Eve and Marc loathe each other, and the only shared interest that brings them together is their mutual regard for Thea and their contest over her affection and loyalty. Thea often feels pulled between these two women, musing, "Why must these two, who meant more to her than anyone else, why must they drag her, spent and unresisting, between their antagonism?" (24). She feels that "Eve was the steady, unceasing crash of the breakers that broke over you in a smother of cold foam, pounded you" (24–25), and that "Marc [was] the insidious dragging of the undertow, dragging you out of yourself, filling your mind with a terrifying, enchanting vision of wide seas under wild skies" (25).

As the intermediary between Marc and Eve, Thea is the main character, on the cusp of becoming a woman. Life presents her with a range of possibilities, and she oscillates between them, in an ambiguous and unstable position, a contested and troubled as well as troublesome figure. Her mobility is less real than symbolic, although from the very beginning of the novel she is associated with activity and with the sea. When Marc observes that she is looking tired, Thea responds that the season has been hard on her, and she looks forward to getting active again: "Oh I'll be alright soon as the summer comes and I can get some surfing" (53). However, "life," she muses,

> *washed over her like a great sea, and she…struggled like a swimmer who goes down with the blue of the sky…Like a poem she read once: Cover her grave with shells the sea hath scattered/ Frail as the foam by flying winds unfurled./Their shallow cups have held the sea enchaliced,/As she the drifting tides of all the world. (48)*

Thea tries to tell Eve that she has a new philosophy, that she is "going to *take* life—use it—now, instead of letting it use me" (emphasis in original; 4). She is trying to become more like Marc, an active and self-determining agent of her own life. But Eve, who is worried that Thea is too delicate to embrace such a dangerous lifestyle, cautions Thea that such a way of life is only "safe…in books" (4). "I'm sick of safety" Thea responds, "Tired of working to pattern—of running in the same narrow groove" (4).

The cost of Thea's flirtation with danger and adventure is high: an affair with a married man, an unplanned pregnancy, and being cast aside and set adrift. She is faced with two options: the decisive Marc hopes to help arrange an abortion, and finds an illegal clinic which Thea attends but finds overwhelming, and which she flees from. The religious Eve, morally opposed to abortion, hopes to arrange "a couple of months' leave and a sea-trip"

(243) by which she could deliver the child as so many women did in those days, in secret, and foster it out for adoption. Paralyzed by her inability to choose either option, Thea is represented as unable to achieve full womanhood. In the novel's conclusion, incapable of dealing with the consequences of her affair with Professor Glover, Thea makes her way into shipping channels of Sydney Harbour in Marc's rowboat at night, where she takes her own life. In death, she is described as an eternal man-child:

> *The little Della Robbia child with all the childishness stamped out of the young mouth and the eyes blank with a grief too heavy for them…But perhaps the Della Robbia child, immortalized against his ethereal background, was not made for contacts that would shatter the bright, burning blue that protected him and fling him undefended into a world of more than two and a half dimensions. Was Thea ready for such a world? (225)*

Yet the real source of Thea's problems, Professor Glover, the older male professor of English at the University of Sydney with whom she engages in this extramarital affair, emerges practically unscathed. He merely toys with Thea, grateful for her injection of youth into his life, because after their tryst he comes to be "writing very much better, as though she [Thea] had evoked some deeper responses—not only of his body but of his mind as well" (159). While his affair with Thea has allowed Glover to access emotional reserves, ironically, it is his wife who helps him package these emotions within parameters that advance his career and feather his nest of domestic security: "His new book would certainly be ready for the Christmas publication now that Alice [his wife] was back to attend to his creature comforts" (159). Glover's comfortable life of middle class intellectual respectability remains undisturbed by the revelation of Thea's pregnancy, a secret she keeps from him and takes to her watery grave. When he reads in the morning papers that Thea had "accidentally drowned" (285), he takes only a brief, quiet moment to memorialize her. When he does so, he cannot recall intimate details of her person but rather shapes her into an an unattainable object and his own image of the sublime, Jungfrau personified: he "closed his eyes and strove to recall each separate detail [of her, yet] the picture did not come. Instead, he had a sudden vision of gleaming snow on mountain-tops piercing the sky—white, proud and untouched" (286). For Glover, the Modern Girl is an idea only. He muses that the new generation "is without hope and incapable of despair" (163). Yet the reader is made aware that Thea is very capable of despair. Glover further pontificates that they are "ignorant of what [they have] lost" (163). In actuality, Glover is ignorant of what he has lost: not only a vital love but also his unborn child, and thus perhaps a different kind of future, in a new way of living.

A romantic, Thea believes that love drives out all fear: "What fear could exist when you had beyond all doubt the certainty that you were loved?" (149). She foolishly believes that when he had sex with her, Glover "had given her all he had to give" (146), and is oblivious of her role as a mere interlude for her older male lover while his wife is away. Glover is portrayed as a man who thinks of Modern Girls as loose and easy prey. He reflects: "They regarded [kisses and intimacies] lightly, these moderns" (160), and "[o]h, they were

radiant, and sure of themselves" (160). Yet the reader is made acutely aware that Thea does not regard these tokens of affection lightly, and that she is not sure of herself, either. Rather, she considers their intimacies with a deep sense of "ecstasy" (136), and when their affair ends, she feels "an overwhelming feeling of shame" (157). This leaves the reader with a sharp insight into the way Cusack outlines the sexual double standard in operation, despite the Modern Girl's insistence on sexual freedom. Ironically, it is the philosophizing Marc who delivers the line that sums up the moral of the story, a line taken out of the mouth of one of her many male suitors: "'Insecurity's a big price for women to pay for independence'" (242). The capricious freedom in which the Modern Girl indulges in her quest for new forms of agency and new ways of being is always already predetermined as unstable and precarious because it is contained within larger institutional frameworks and social conventions such as medicine, education, marriage, and capital acquisition which are structured in ways that favor men.

The Modern Girl's Reception

As Vera Mackie has observed in her excellent review article on the Modern Girl in Japan, representations of the Modern Girl often served a "pedagogical function." As a schoolteacher, Dymphna Cusack also seems to be laying out this triptych of different types of Modern Girls and their experiences to serve as a guide to the modern woman reader. However, their didactic purpose ultimately remains unclear: is the indictment of the novel laid most severely against Glover and his set, or is it designed as a warning to women about the impracticality of living as a Modern Girl in the real world? For a novel that is replete with characters who judge each other, this relative inconclusiveness is remarkable. But this ambiguous and uncertain attitude toward the Modern Girl is not Cusack's alone. Her three-faced portrait of the Modern Girl is only one part of a broader heuristic that is evident across a range of print culture in Australia, in which attitudes toward her seemed equally ambivalent. Her appearance in a suite of other Australian novels including those by Eleanor Dark, Christina Stead and Jean Devanny, as noted earlier, suggest that her place with regard to the intellectual project of Australian literature or a broader program of intellectual respectability was equally unstable and insecure.

It would appear it was not only that the relationship between the Modern Girl and sex that harmed her reputation, but also her strong affiliation with various aspects of magazine culture. These connections heightened anxiety about her status, as they linked the figure with media and consumerism, and thus to the specter of Americanization. Indeed, with her bobbed hair and signature red lipstick, and other "technologies of the self" through which she became associated with visual and glamour culture (Weinbaum et al. 22), she appeared regularly as a cover girl in many Australian magazines, such as *The Home*. (http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-383388423)A February 1932 issue (http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-383388423), for instance, shows Hera Roberts' cover sporting "the Modern Girl look" (Fig. 1) (Weinbaum et al. 8).

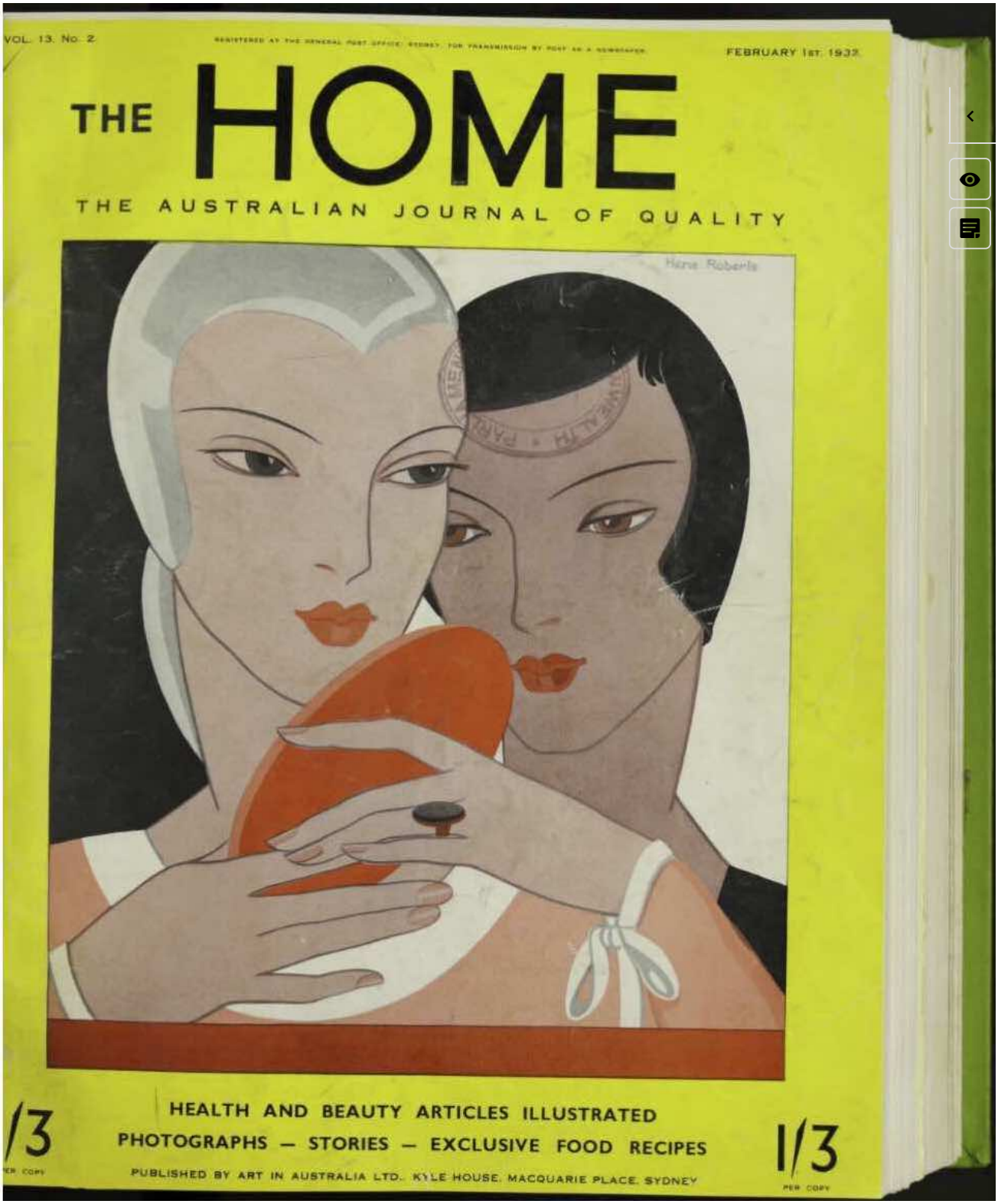

Fig. 1. The Home: An Australian Quarterly, vol. 13, no. 2, February 1932. Image courtesy of the National Library of Australia.

Her preeminence in advertisements for beauty products within these magazines, which often drew on the glamour of film and the iconography of the Hollywood siren—such as the campaign for Lux Soap in a May 1932 issue of The Home (https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-383388610/view?sectionId=nla.obj-386950810&partId=nla.obj-383638322#page/n9/mode/1up) that featured a photograph of "Joan Crawford, the popular Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer star…alluring in a close-up" (Fig. 2) (9)—cemented these associations.

Fig. 2. The Home: An Australian Quarterly, vol. 13, no. 5, May 1932. Image courtesy of the National Library of Australia.

As Hammill and Smith observe of the periodicals of early-to-mid twentieth-century Canada they have studied, magazines were instrumental in linking consumer culture with women: "Women were much more likely than men to be featured in photo spreads, interviews, and fictional portraits which situated them as shoppers, wherever they went in the world. This fits with the broader construction of women as the primary consumers in

Western societies" (156). This association between women and shopping also emerges in *Jungfrau*. Despite the way in which the Modern Girl also embraces intellectualism, throughout the novel Modern Girls are regularly associated with consumerism. At the beginning of the book, for instance, Thea "wished she had yielded to the temptation to buy that lovely Shetland wool pair [of pajamas] at D.J.'s [David Jones's department store]" (7); and at the end, she succumbs to a purchase of "little black sandals on which she…squandered nearly a week's salary…jeweled heels [that] would sparkle under the light—high, French heels that gave them a most sophisticated air" (268). As Ann Stephen has remarked, the gendered nature of consumerism in Australian magazine culture of the interwar period registered the increasing effects of Americanization, such that "[i]ncreasingly the visual style of Australian women's magazine advertisements" much as Modern Girl stylistics themselves, "became more American, sometimes brazenly copied with minor adjustments to 'Australianize' the image" (Stephen 67). Products such as Mortein (242) and Capstan cigarettes (38) frequently appear in the background of *Jungfrau*, and suggest the increasing prevalence of advertising culture and brands in everyday Australian life. Throughout the novel, the Modern Girl is also deeply associated with journalistic print culture: the view from Thea's Sydney apartment looks out on the edifice of the *Sun* office, "narrow and gleaming…[t]ier on tier of floor freighted with lights, yellow like sunlight, purple like flares of an alchemist's furnace, and, nearer the street, half globes of incredibly luminous jade" (6). Magazines themselves feature throughout *Jungfrau*. One such, *Manuscripts*, an arty title that Dymphna Cusack herself regularly contributed to, features prominently (29, 30, 31,165), suggesting the way in which these aspects of consumer culture were not always securely consumeristic, but also straddled the boundary between the marketplace and art.

Many magazines, especially of the interwar period, negotiated the borderlands between entertainment and edification. As Carter has put it, middlebrow quality magazines, such as *Manuscripts*, "reproduced high-culture values and forms—such as good writing, good music or serious talk" and opened up high culture to new markets, "but reconfigured [these values and forms] through new media and new forms of consumption" (*Always Almost* 132). Despite the pervasiveness and vibrancy of the middlebrow, which has recently been reclaimed from critical dismissal, it was routinely the target of scorn, perhaps most famously so in Virginia Woolf's un-sent letter to the editor of *The New Statesman*, which was later published in *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays*. In this, she lambasted the distasteful "mixture of geniality and sentiment" of the "betwixt and between" form (156). Like the middlebrow, the transgressive Modern Girl appeared in these ambiguous spaces, crossing between and intermingling commercial and serious culture in ways that appeared superficially attractive, but which also provoked judgement. In *Jungfrau*, Thea is able to transit between Sydney University, the classroom, and the department store, with relative ease, though with some degree of anxiety about her place. Her liminal status thus not only posed a challenge to classification, but also to her production and reception. If, as Mackie argues, the figure of the Modern Girl appeared in various ways as a model for "teaching women about which models of femininity they should emulate and which ones they should distance themselves from" (n.p.), these models were often inconsistent and contradictory. This was perhaps most especially the case within magazines, which were themselves heterogeneous objects: "multi-authored, multi-genre" assemblages (Hammill and Smith 4).

In some items of interwar Australian magazine print culture, the Modern Girl served as a role model; in particular the independent working woman operated as a model to aspire to. In various advice columns of the day penned by "A Woman Solicitor" and other authors in *The Australian Woman's Mirror*, for instance, images of the Modern Girl as dynamic, independent, and full of potential were conjured up by stories about "Miss Business Girl" (April 7, 1936; 8, 47), suggestions on "Getting That First Job: How Some Women Did It" (September 1, 1936; 8), or columns proffering investment advice (June 30, 1936; 12). In other cases, she appears as an object of scorn and contestation. In satirical pieces such as *The Home*'s "The Bright Young Things at Bridge, etc. etc." by Dudley Gordon (May 1932; 42), the Modern Girl and her set are depicted as vacuous gossips who idle away their time through inconsequential leisure pursuits, outwardly castigating the failings of the men all the while competing against each other for their affections. In magazine stories addressed to housewives and thus pitched directly into the domestic sphere, there is often a moralizing tone, as in "A Flapper Tragedy: A Short Story of a Modern Young Miss (Very Young)" in *The Australian Woman's Mirror* (February 2, 1932; 8). The Modern Girl was also a staple of numerous Australian magazine serials, such as: “Sanctuary” by Margaret Boyd, “Rain in the Face” by Myra Morris, “Doubling for Diana” by Winifred Carter, and “Life’s What You Make It” by Rosemary Rees. In some of these stories, the Modern Girl presented opportunities for escape, work, and travel; in others, her misadventures served as a cautionary tale. Her "pedagogical function" (Mackie) in each of these stories thus appeared to serve the caprice of the author, the fantasies of the reader, or the moralizing tone of the editor or publication in which she was found. Nonetheless, the function of these magazine stories, much like the "sensation" fiction David Carter has written about in other contexts ("Antipodean" 96), was to be "current," just as magazines themselves were tied to the rhythms of the contemporary marketplace. Even as the Modern Girl defied categorization, then, her firm association with fashionable trends and consumerism reinforced an assumed alignment between mass culture and feminization, an alignment assumed most influentially by Andreas Huyssen (44–63).

In *Jungfrau*, Professor Glover’s association with the Department of English at the University of Sydney and his inability to appreciate “these moderns” suggests the way in which the Modern Girl (as embodied by Thea, in particular) is positioned as a “problem” for the more classically defined sphere of literature. The Modern Girl threatens the precarious security of the emerging university set—those “English Men” Leigh Dale has outlined in her history of literary studies in Australian universities—and is ultimately inscrutable and unreadable from the standpoint of the worldview they represent. Glover continually looks to Europe and to Britain for cultural inspiration. Similarly, as Dale has explained, the literary set in Australia long gave preference to literature written in England, rather than literature written in Australia. Throughout the novel, modern media and communications devices such as gramophones, telephones, radios, and cinema appear; so do technologies of modern mobility, such as cars, trams, the bus, speedboats, the ferry, and the steamer. Cumulatively, these suggest the multiplicity of connections for the Australian Modern Girl into a vibrant modern world in which distance had contracted and new spheres of influence were within reach. While Glover's imaginary world extends to the cultural inheritance of Wordsworth, for instance, which he acknowledges “one must be very careful with” (163) these days, the women in his life dream of new and other horizons. Alice, his wife, extends her trip by three months so she can return through Java,

a prolonged adventure on which Glover blames his extramarital affair because, he rationalizes, "a man got lonely" (162). Thea associates her post-coital ecstasy with "a dream in which glowed sunrises, mysterious and strange as a Japanese print" (150). Despite these various cultural flows and new cultural influences, however, Glover and his circle continue to place Australia in a deferential, subordinate relationship to a European ideal, represented in the novel by the symbolic summit of Jungfrau as the peak of perfection. Australia's modernity, which Glover is clearly grappling with in his own writing on modern poetics, was defined, as Ken Gelder has discussed, by the ambiguous condition of "colonial modernity": the nation's ongoing imperial relations to England, which extended beyond de facto independence at Federation into a cultural form of deference that lasted "at least as far as the First World War and arguably beyond, into the 1920s" (1). As Australia began to increasingly absorb new cultural influences across the Pacific from America or Asia, these are largely considered commercial or corrupting, while Europe is evoked in contrast, as a sublime phantasm of unattainable impeccability, despite the actual incursions of commercial traffic upon the summit of Jungfrau itself.

As a case in point of the deferential attitude toward European culture that suffused Australian colonial modernity, many of the references to cosmopolitan culture in the novel are European in origin. The local scene that is outlined by the novel is indeed bookended with references to icons of European high culture: the Mona Lisa at the beginning of the novel (1), and *Hammerklavier* playing on the gramophone at the end (210). Even the Palmers and other cultural nationalists began to champion locally produced writing; in the period immediately prior to and following the publication of Cusack's novel, they regarded the project of writing "the land" as the highest function of literature (Indyck 348). The cultural nationalist project of the Palmers, David Walker argued, was "to defeat servility, to overthrow colonialism and create a more socialist community" (155). This may at least partly account for why the Palmers vaunted literature of "the soil" according to Walker (156), at the expense of literature "which dealt with their familiar urban surroundings, a subject-matter which [Vance] Palmer consistently denigrated" (Walker 151). If the city was spurned by the Palmers as an appropriate setting for a novel, literary production that was associated with commercial and magazine culture was also regarded as tainted. In the preface to her edited 1928 anthology *An Australian Story-Book* (1928), an early attempt to construct a canon of "the best Australian work" in short story writing, Nettie Palmer states that although "[s]uch work may have faults" that "they are hardly those of the slick and vapid magazine-story," whose "triviality" and "mechanical artifice" separate them from the "fundamentally simple and sincere" stories in her collection (n.p.). Similarly, Vance Palmer was critical, not only of commercial fiction, but also of the capacity of modern writing to offer anything more than a needed desacralization of outdated visions and values. In a comment made on ABC Radio on February 16, 1941 he says,

> *There will always be a spate of romances, of course—library novels, standard items of commerce—but the best writers have nothing to say for the present, no values they wish to emphasize, no image of the world to which they want to give permanent form. James Joyce died in Switzerland six weeks ago, his strange, profound and difficult vision of things still abracadabra to the majority of readers: and it is probable with him a period closed. It was fundamentally a period of criticism, of the destruction of false values; and the new values, those we could live by, have not taken shape in the minds of those [namely writers] we usually expect to formulate them. (qtd. in Indyk 351)*

Yet, as Walker contends, "many Australians were prepared to read a novel" set in the increasingly familiar locale of the Australian city during this rapidly urbanizing period (151). Moreover, many of the contemporary novels emerging from Australia were well received in the contemporary press, even if the Palmers may have associated them with "romances" or "library novels" and "standard items of commerce."

Further, despite the myth that has sprung up around *Jungfrau*, that “the popular press…found the novel shocking and in bad taste” (James v), it was also generally well received. Camden Morrisby’s ABC radio review of *Jungfrau* was overwhelmingly positive (qtd. in James xiv). In fact, all the print reviews that can be accessed via Trove’s repository of digitized historical periodicals were also laudatory. Leslie Haylen in *The Australian Women’s Weekly* hailed it as a groundbreaking work about contemporary urban life, calling it “A Fine Australian Story With a City Background and a Tale of Post-War Moderns” that bucked against persisting expectations that Australian novels had to be about rural life. Haylen grasps immediately that it is a book about the Modern Girl in an Australian context: “The problems and the reactions of the young woman in 1936,” which deals with “three young women, Thea, Eve, and Marc, all educated and modern in outlook” and who “discuss with ease and frankness subjects that would have been taboo to their mothers” (14). In 1937 *The (Adelaide) Advertiser* named Cusack as the leading figure in a group of emerging women writers who were paving the way for the future of the Australian novel. Its review praised *Jungfrau* for its “vital” portrayal of modern Australian city life “that should do much to dispel” stereotypes about Australia characterized by the myth of the bush; the novel depicts contemporary “Australians' homes, culture, manners, and way of speech” with “depth” and a “quality of sincerity” ("Future " 11). Legendarily, Cusack’s mother, to whom the author dedicated *Jungfrau*, found the novel in poor taste —“all about sex” (qtd. in James vi; qtd. in Moore 60). But contrarily, a reviewer in *The Telegraph (Brisbane)* noted that the author was a "writer of promise" and went on: "It is written with the frankness characteristic of so many writers of to-day who, like modern youth in revolt, demand that their parents (and their contemporaries, too) should face facts and not play the ostrich while life goes on round them in aspects which they disapprove, ignore and almost persuade themselves are non-existent" (“A Writer" 16).

When the novel was reissued in 1989 with an introduction by Florence James, it again received praise. One newspaper reviewer lauded it as “a novel of social significance” and

"a wonderfully good read" despite misattributing its interwar social critique to an earlier period, "the early 1900s": "With vision and honesty, it deals with the subject of female sexuality and independence," and with issues such as abortion, the review goes on to note, which are "even now, taboo in many circles, let alone *in the Victorian era*" ("Timeless Work" 8; italics ours). If, as Robert Dixon has observed, scholarly histories of modernism and modernity tend to be marked by an "occlusion of colonialism" (12), popular understandings of Australia's colonial heritage seem to occlude the nation's historical modernity. The critic's misclassification of the period in which Cusack was writing as Victorian—rather than after the last period of British history to be named for the monarch who reigned over it, i.e., the Edwardian era—speaks to the abiding influence of imperialism over Australian culture, and persisting misapprehensions about the modernity of colonial modernity. Cusack's strikingly modern work, like the Modern Girl herself, pushed the envelope of respectability, but this does not mean it was poorly received.

As Bridget Griffen-Foley has observed, even Cusack's more well known post-World War Two novel, *Come in Spinner* (1951), which she co-authored with Florence James, pushed boundaries in its representation of modern women, including "a married woman's relationship with a wealthy man while her knock-about husband was away fighting, a young servicewoman undergoing a botched abortion after having an affair with a married man, extra marital affairs, a teenage girl trapped into working in a brothel, and the beautiful but worldly protagonist Guinea, exploiting the voracious sexual appetites of American servicemen" (421). Written over a decade earlier, the 1936 novel *Jungfrau* introduced Australian readers to Cusack's inimical style, and to her commitment, as Marilla North has written in her biography of Cusack, to a lifelong project, described on the book cover, of portraying "women as we know them. Thinking, working, loving, desiring...." *Jungfrau* examined the problems and challenges for modern women with a frankness that may be surprising to some, given its interwar publication date. But Cusack's treatment of the Modern Girl in Australian fiction was not altogether as groundbreaking for its day as some contemporary reviewers made out, or as we might now imagine. Rather, her 1936 novel provides insight into broader discussions about the Modern Girl in Australian society. Further, as Cusack was said to "lead the pack" of a number of emerging women writers of her era, a focus on her relatively neglected first book opens up a rich vein for tracing other neglected narratives that focus on the Modern Girl in Australia. Such narratives challenge the notion that the Bright Young Thing or the flapper did not have an Australian equivalent, and shed light on the ways the Australian Modern Girl unsettles some conventional understandings of Australian literature. Taking out second place in the inaugural S.H. Prior Memorial Prize Competition of 1935, Cusack's novel about Modern Girls and contemporary Sydney life was overtaken in the contest by Kylie Tennant's *Tiburon*, a novel about a country town. "The ultimate decision," Cusack wrote to Florence James, "was made on the decision that *Jungfrau* was not typically Australian" (qtd. in James xiii). But nonetheless the judges still rated it so highly that they awarded it publication by *The Bulletin*, and it won significant praise in contemporary reviews.

Nicole Moore has argued that the cosmopolitan aspects of *Jungfrau* as well as its feminine subject matter have made the novel heretofore inscrutable within existing

paradigms of Australian literature (60). Tania Peitzker has also noticed that Cusack, whom she calls “The Queen of Australian Soap,” tended to write novels that straddle the boundary between literary and popular commercial fiction, which may account for some of her critical dismissal, even as significant critics such as Drusilla Modjeska have regarded her work highly, and praised *Jungfrau* as "a prototype for the feminist novel in the interwar period" (Modjeska 6). By placing *Jungfrau* within the broader scope of the print culture of its era, we issue a charge that extends beyond the singular example of Dymphna Cusack's novel to a larger set of narratives about the Modern Girl that have not received critical notice, but which met acclaim in their own day. Our contention is that it is this troublesome, liminal position Modern Girl embodied, and which has extended to the insecure place of novels that take her as their subject, that has made these texts inscrutable, and thus invisible within existing paradigms of Australian literature. In her article “Sex and the City: New Novels by Women and Middlebrow Culture at Midcentury,” Susan Sheridan makes a similar point about a range of interwar women’s writing by authors such as Marjorie Barnard, Flora Eldershaw, and Dymphna Cusack, which ”explored the experiences of women in contemporary urban and suburban life” (2). Drawing from Carter’s work on the middlebrow, she notes that this work lost out in favor of a “more professionally articulated sense of literary tradition” (Carter qtd. in Sheridan 2) that Sheridan observes “also happened to be male dominated” (2). In her promiscuous dalliances with journalistic and literary culture, American transnationalism and European cosmopolitanism, visual and print culture, consumerism and art, the figure of the Modern Girl and stories about her troubled values and paradigms of many kinds. Indeed it may be more than just the arch of her brow that has made the Australian Modern Girl troublesome for existing frameworks of Australian literature.

The rivalry that is present in the novel *Jungfrau* between the different facets of the Modern Girl and enacted as tension between the three central characters of the novel suggests multiple ways in which she was positioned in the Australian society of her own day, not only as a pedagogical model, but also as a figure of contestation, even amongst women. Her tragic fate at the altar of Sydney University, personified in Cusack's novel by Professor Glover, also suggests the figure's mixed reception by the male-dominated literary establishment, where her vitalism, modernity, and sexuality were accepted on extremely limited terms, terms that denied her legitimacy and longevity. We have argued that the Modern Girl was an especially vexatious figure to the project of national literature which defined itself in terms of a difficult relationship to its colonial and local heritage, and which preferred iconography related to the masculine conquest of land to that of the feminized, rapidly modernizing city. A cross-cultural icon who constantly threatened to make a spectacle of herself, the Modern Girl signaled the ephemerality of modern consumer culture, and openly embraced various forms of transnational and transmedial cultural hybridization, intermingling American, European, and other cultural influences as well as crossing different registers of cultural value. Revitalizing her figure in Australian print culture and literature, we argue, presents a challenge, not only to accepted ideas about Australia's colonial history and national literature, but also to broader scholarship of literary modernism and modernity. If the Modern Girl was defined by her spectacular visibility, she has become conspicuously invisible across a range of literary histories which may be productively unsettled by her rehabilitation.

Notes

[1] Literary scholarship of "flappers" tends to be dominated by discussions of F. Scott Fitzgerald, as social historian of the American Jazz Age. It is worth acknowledging a small body of emerging scholarship that is beginning to recuperate the figure of flapper from histories of American literature. See, for example, Doss, Pizer, and Simon. In the UK where the term "Bright Young Thing" was in currency, fewer studies of this figure have yet emerged. Significantly, emerging scholarship of the figure in this context has been enabled by scholarship of the middlebrow and reception studies, such as Brown's.

[2] See, for instance, the rhetoric of masculine nationalism and land in P.R. Stephensen's famous and rousing essay "The Foundations of Culture in Australia: An Essay Toward National Self-Respect" (1936) published the same year as Cusack's *Jungfrau*.

[3] We follow Jane Nicholas's convention here of using the capitalized form to differentiate the "Modern Girl" type from actual women who lived in the period of the 1920s and 30s in which this figure arose (10). We also follow Weinbaum et al. and numerous other scholars in adopting the term "Girl," not as a marker of infantilization (and despite these risks that inhere in the connotation of the word), but rather to differentiate her from the "New Woman." The nomenclature "New Woman" is generally used to refer to the figure which characterized the earlier period of the 1890s to 1910s; in contrast to the "New Woman," the term "Modern Girl" tends to refer to the first generation of young women granted the rights for which she and others fought. Furthermore, by 1936, when the novel *Jungfrau* was published, many if not most "Modern Girls" were young women rather than girls per se, though there was a certain carefree frisson with which these women associated themselves, and which may have contributed to permanence of the term "Modern Girl" even after these women grew up. On Hollywood, see, for example, Erens. For a discussion of these issues in the context of Canadian magazine print culture and literature, see Kuttainen.

[4] As Cusack's biography (by Norman Freehill with Dymphna Cusack) explains, as a young Australian Cusack was deeply influenced, in complex ways, by changing attitudes toward Europe and England in particular, in the aftermath of the Great War. These attitudes likely influenced her decision to give her first novel about young Australian womanhood a German title translating literally in English to "Young Woman," and signifying "virgin," after the famous mountain in the Swiss Alps, to which one of the characters in the novel journeys and which plays a symbolic role in the narrative. Freehill observes that "[w]ar touched [Cusack] inevitably. Her family was deeply involved in it. She says she was deeply infected with the general hatred of Germany," likely because her two uncles, young cousin, and beloved brother were killed in the war (20). However, Cusack's subsequent convent schooling, under the order of the Ursulines, who had been driven out of Germany by Bismarck in the 1870s, exposed her to positive German and cosmopolitan influences (Freehill 20). Despite and perhaps because of this cosmopolitan education under the guidance of the Ursulines, her later university education in Sydney exposed Cusack to narrow-minded colonial Anglophile attitudes and Europhilia, which she instinctively rejected. Cusack's novel may be read as kind of *bildungsroman* that follows the arc of a developing world and national consciousness at a time when many Australians were

dealing with their disappointment about Britain's treatment of their soldiers during the First World War, and a new nationalist consciousness was forming just as America was rising in its influence geopolitically to dominate commerce and the mass media. Freehill writes that Sydney University "was a colonial-minded place: no hint of anything Australian crossed its threshold. Most of the professors were English, or, what was worse, Australians who were completely Europhile and completely bogged down in the past" (Freehill 24). His biography strongly suggests that Cusack was processing these changing and mixed colonial and modernizing influences in this novel, and notes that Cusack later winced at what she considered the "affected title" of *Jungfrau* (Freehill 41).

[5] The role played by the power couple of Australian literary culture between the wars, in defining the terms of Australian literary cultural nationalism, is hard to underestimate. As Deborah Jordan points out, eminent Australian mid-century cultural critic A.A. Phillips— who coined the phrase "cultural cringe" to describe the Australian attitude of cultural inferiority to Europe that persisted well into the 1950s when Australian literature was still struggling for recognition amongst the reading public and in the academy— paid tribute to the Palmers as key promoters, media figures, and writers who advocated for Australian literature (Jordan 139). According to Jordan (139), Phillips referred to the Palmers as a formidable team, "a smoothly pulsing unit" who were united in their "intensity of a devotion to a cause" which was the building up of Australian literature (Phillips 5). In her biography of Vance Palmer, Vivian Smith describes him as "one of the most representative figures of the literary culture of his time," serving at the forefront of "the struggle between an imported tradition and attitudes and the search for a viable local tradition" in Australia (263). But as another eminent figure in the early foundation of Australian literary studies, A.D. Hope remarked, the Palmers' tastes and approach to cultural criticism was "Aristocratic," and despite the fact that both contributed actively to the press, there was a noted tone of disdain in their work for mass culture and magazine writing in particular, against which they rallied in their efforts to promote literary taste amongst Australians (Hope qtd. in Jordan 139).

[6] Many scholars (including Susan Sheridan and Lisa Featherstone) conflate the New Woman with the Modern Girl. The first mention of the New Woman was reported in the British periodical *The Woman's Herald* in August of 1893, and the expression was given to "a fictional icon to represent the political woman of the coming century" (Tusan 169). The New Woman was often regarded as promoting equality and justice, while remaining a self-sacrificing advocate of the traditional domestic realm. On the other hand, the mainstream press promoted a dangerous and contrasting version of this figure. The New Woman they warned against and ridiculed was a mannish caricature representing the opposite of socially constructed late Victorian ideals of femininity. In John Docker's view, the Australian New Woman of the late 1800s is also caricatured in the press as a mannish creature: "The era was witness to the smoking, bicycling, Rational Dress and trouser-wearing New Woman, that spectacular cultural figure admired by Miles Franklin" (25). We refer to the New Woman as equally contentious but as the more politically imbued figure of the late 1800s and early 1900s, who championed the suffrage movement, and follow Weinbaum et al. by distinguishing her from the later figure of the Modern Girl (1920s and 30s), while acknowledging that her genealogy can be traced to the New Woman's era.

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