



The Geopoetics of Modernism

Rebecca Walsh

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“Takes an exciting new approach by reading modernism alongside geographical theorists as well as periodicals such as *National Geographic*. A provocative and revealing account of American modernist poetry in light of the recent ‘spatial’ turn in literary studies.”—Andrew Thacker, coeditor of *Geographies of Modernism*

“An original book that contributes to major critical conversations in ecocriticism, space and spatiality, geopolitics, and poetry studies. Walsh tells a clear, compelling, and convincing story about geography’s role in shaping experimental poetry.”—Marsha Bryant, author of *Women’s Poetry and Popular Culture*

The Geopoetics of Modernism is the first book to illuminate the links between American modernism and the geographic discourse of the time. Rebecca Walsh explores Walt Whitman’s, Gertrude Stein’s, Langston Hughes’s, and H.D.’s engagements with contemporary geographic theories and sources—including the cosmological geography of Alexander von Humboldt and Mary Somerville, the environmental determinism of Ellen Churchill Semple, and mainstream textbooks and periodicals—which informed the formal and political dimensions of their work.

Walsh argues that the dominant geographic paradigms of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries gave license to experimental writers who were breaking with other forms of authority, enabling them to create transnational forms of belonging on the exhilarating landscape of nations, continents, and the globe. By examining modernism alongside environmental determinist geography, she maps a poetic terrain where binaries such as west versus non-west or imperial center versus colonial periphery are destabilized. *The Geopoetics of Modernism* reveals the geographic terms through which American modernist poetry interrogated prevailing ideas of orientalism, primitivism, and American exceptionalism.

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