

Chapter 13

From cosmopolitan romance to transnational fiction: re-reading Jean Devanny's Australian novels

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For that was how she had thought of Australia; that was how she had read of it; the land of the free. And freedom was the whole body of romance, its seed, its breath, its growth and its fulfillment.

— Jean Devanny, *Out of Such Fires* ¹

When Jean Devanny (1894–1962) left New Zealand in 1929 bound for Sydney, she considered Australia ‘merely a transit point’ and planned to travel on to England, believing it to be ‘a more favourable location for a novelist’. Devanny gradually came to accept Australia as her home, as Carole Ferrier argues, because of her ‘double commitment’ to the Communist Party of Australia and to her development as a writer.² While Ferrier’s pioneering scholarship and definitive biography offer invaluable insights into Devanny’s life and writing, I will suggest another perspective on both by exploring how her experiences in Australia transformed her into a ‘transnational’ subject. Many scholars who have surveyed Devanny’s fiction, including Ferrier, Drusilla Modjeska, Susan Sheridan and Nicole Moore, have accepted her assertion that *Sugar Heaven* (1936) marked a turning point in her career. By comparing Devanny’s fourth novel, *Riven* (1929), a romance describing modern urban life in Wellington, with *The Virtuous Courtesan*, published in New York in 1935 though banned in Australia until 1958, I will show that the process of transformation began at least two years earlier, but the suppression of this notorious novel has partially blocked our view. By recognising that Devanny was a writer who struggled to understand her own hybridity and transnational ties, we can more fully appreciate her formal innovations and daring treatment of female sexuality, marriage, reproduction, art and urban and rural culture in *The Virtuous Courtesan* and later works.

Figure 13.1: Jean Devanny, 1920s.



James Cook University Library, courtesy Jean Hurd.

Most of Devanny's novels about New Zealand seem to conform to the conventions of popular romance, but they also illustrate what I propose to call her 'cosmopolitan' strategy as a writer. In these romances, Devanny attempts to create and address an international audience of sophisticated English-language readers by frequently alluding to well-known English texts. While this strategy apparently convinced her English editors that her novels could be commercially viable, it forced her to reinscribe British imperial values, often in spite of herself. In *The Virtuous Courtesan* and the novels about Australia that followed it, in contrast, Devanny abandoned this strategy and refashioned the conventions of romance in order to represent her more complex transnational perspective on the country she began to consider her home.

Riven invites comparison with *The Virtuous Courtesan* because both novels include characters who illustrate the mobility, cultural sophistication and psychological ambivalence of the transnational subjects described, for example, by Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture*.³ By the time Devanny wrote *The Virtuous Courtesan*, she had achieved her long-deferred dream of international travel. After joining the Communist Party of Australia in 1930, she was selected by the leadership as their envoy to the first International Women's Conference of the Workers International Relief Organisations held in conjunction with the Eighth World Congress of Workers in Berlin in 1931. Having found her voice during these years as a powerful public speaker, Devanny was hailed at the conference as the representative of Australian women by well-known feminists such as Charlotte Despard and Clara Zetkin. After the congress, Devanny visited her daughter in Moscow, and travelled to Leningrad, Samarkand and other locations in the Soviet Union, where she witnessed the emergence of a revolutionary culture in which women were extended 'equal property rights', in which mothers had rights to claim their children, in which divorce was 'very easy, and where abortion was legal'.⁴ In December 1932, she made a brief visit to London, but her travels ultimately prompted her to conclude that neither Moscow nor London could be her 'home'. She wrote, for example, 'Had Russia been Paradise, I should still, I felt, want to return to my own land and my own people.'⁵ After her return to Sydney in January 1932, however, Devanny recognised that she was deeply estranged from her husband and hardly understood her own ambivalent desires. At this point in her career, then, Devanny had created a life that corresponded with the definition of the 'transnational' subject that Desley Deacon, Penny Russell and Angela Woollacott describe in the introduction to this volume, as her life was 'lived in motion...crossed oceans and borders...drew emotional energy, ideological conviction or practical understanding from eclectic, transnational experience'.⁶

Considered in this context, *The Virtuous Courtesan* marks a 'point of change' in Devanny's fiction, illustrating how she began to write more self-consciously,

not only as a communist writer who accepted the conventions of 1930s socialist realism but as a gendered, passionate and psychologically divided transnational subject. More specifically, this truly extraordinary novel tests the universalising abstractions of Marxist class analysis by particularising the local conditions of a wide range of men and women living in Sydney during the early 1930s. By juxtaposing the domestic arrangements of gay and straight, as well as bourgeois and working-class, couples in bohemian art circles of Sydney, Devanny demonstrates that her Australian characters, like the rest of us, live in what Paul Rabinow calls the 'in-between'.⁷ This novel reveals therefore not only the 'divided loyalties' that Woollacott identifies in the Australian and New Zealand women writers who recognise that 'colonial, imperial, and national identities' are less congruent than they once assumed,⁸ it represents men and women who experience themselves as the hybrid and deeply divided transnational subjects that Bhabha has described more generally.

Duckworth, the progressive, London-based press, published *Riven*, the fourth of Devanny's novels, and the book reveals several signs of her efforts to address a cosmopolitan readership. Like many ambitious writers of her generation based in New Zealand, Devanny initially sought publication in England, and, by lucky accident, Duckworth accepted *The Butcher Shop* for publication in 1925. Undeterred when Devanny's first novel was banned in New Zealand in 1926, Duckworth subsequently published her interracial romance, *Lenore Divine* (1926), and her more autobiographical *Dawn Beloved* (1929), before *Riven* appeared under its imprint in 1929.⁹

Like several of the novels that Devanny herself later dismissed as 'petty-bourgeois twaddle',¹⁰ *Riven* seems to present itself as a simple escapist imperial romance. It begins with a dreamy generalised description of 'a flowery town on the edge of a Southern Sea', though it is soon clear that Devanny is describing life in Wellington after the Great War.¹¹ To be sure, *Riven* conforms in several ways to the class-based formula fiction marketed in the 1920s to a mostly female domestic and international English-speaking audience, which Hsu-Ming Teo, John McAleer and others have characterised.¹² *Riven* also suggests, however, especially in its frank treatment of modern female sexuality and abortion, that Devanny hoped to engage a more progressive cosmopolitan audience. One sign of her success was that Duckworth was able to sell the rights to distribute *Riven* in the United States to Macaulay, a New York-based publisher that catered to the new youth market, a shift neatly encapsulated when they changed the title of this novel to *Unchastened Youth*.¹³

Riven focuses on the attractive, mature middle-class mother, Marigold Jerring, and describes her vague unease as she watches her three adult children prepare to leave their natal home. Initially, Marigold seems to be a modern advertiser's dream: she is an ideal consumer who is busy acting on the advice given by Marie

Stopes, among others, that women can enhance their sex life by increasing their consumption of luxury goods. Married to a prosperous business man, Marigold has inherited enough money of her own so that she can afford to buy elegant clothes for her daughters and subsidise her son's education at an art school in England. Initially, she has neither the language nor the inclination to recognise the emptiness of her marriage, though her children all know that their father is sexually involved with an attractive younger woman.

Unlike the apolitical heroines in most mass-market imperial romances, however, Devanny's Marigold ponders questions raised decades later by feminists such as Betty Friedan, when she wonders, for example, 'What possibilities life offered for the club women, for the lost sheep from domesticity's fold, for the middle-aged unmarried and the mothers like herself, whose young had grown up and refused any longer to be scolded and slapped and put to bed.' She even begins to contemplate 'what a force they could be' for progressive social change in the world.¹⁴ Likewise, because *Riven* ends with the dissolution of Marigold's marriage, it departs significantly from the imperial romances produced by Mills and Boon and other British presses specialising in this genre.

In contrast with more conventional imperial romances, *Riven*, like all of Devanny's New Zealand novels, highlights the dramatic and widespread changes in sexual mores in the postwar urban consumer economy of the 1920s. *Riven* shows how younger women were able to elect a new relationship with the reproductive order and with the capitalist system by reorienting themselves with the ethics of possessive individualism that propelled it. Devanny invited her readers to compare her heroine with the 'New Woman' who appeared in British novels of this period by her frequent allusions to Galsworthy's best-selling *Forsyte Saga* (1906–22). While Devanny clearly uses these references to establish a more familiar literary terrain for her English readers, they also highlight the generational differences between Marigold's more Edwardian, class-specific and myopic view of the 'woman's position under the marriage system' and her daughters' more modern emancipated views.¹⁵ Indeed, Lilith and Fay Jerring, like their aunt Justine, resemble the 'spectacular modern women' that Liz Conor has described in popular Australian and American novels and films of the 1920s rather than British models of the New Woman of the prewar era.¹⁶

Lilith, for example, is well educated, teaches in a multiracial kindergarten in Wellington and has the skills and disposition that will allow her to live a life of self-sufficient independence. With her dangerous name, Lilith 'firmly declares she will never marry' and is 'so outspokenly grave-mannered, so composedly alert, compact and direct...so unobtrusively studious and brave' that readers are advised to accept her at her word.¹⁷ By the end of the novel, Lilith announces her plans to leave New Zealand in order to study for an advanced degree in the United States. Ironically, by the time *Riven* was published, Lilith's ambiguous

asexuality was perhaps even more legible to her readers because of the spotlight cast on lesbian sexuality by Radclyffe Hall's notorious censorship trial in England in 1928 and by the successful appeal in a New York appellate court in 1929 that legalised the circulation of *The Well of Loneliness* in the United States.¹⁸

Lilith's younger sister, Fay, is a beautiful, cool, 'jazz' girl who enjoys life in the cinemas and cabarets of Wellington and takes for granted 'her mother's caresses as she took her meals—and also her constant service'.¹⁹ Her father's favourite, Fay feels no particular desire to support herself and, like Galsworthy's Irene, she plans to gamble on the marriage market rather than pursue a career like her sister's. In contrast with Irene's ostensible success, Fay's calculating efforts to use her sex appeal to engineer a marriage to the dissolute gambler Martin Slurrick fail when he abruptly leaves town.

It is the transnational character, Justine, Marigold's worldly, sophisticated sister-in-law, who perhaps most clearly reveals the originality and cosmopolitan subversiveness that, no doubt, helped *Riven* earn a place on Duckworth's list. Justine became a transnational subject when she was banished from her brother's home nearly 20 years earlier for some unmentionable sexual sin; she then moved to Australia where she developed a successful line of beauty shops. On her unexpected return to New Zealand, Justine displays herself as a 'product' of her own parlours;²⁰ she wears skilfully applied make-up, marcelled her hair and has preserved a youthful appearance that belies her age of thirty-six. In this respect, Justine resembles the 'spent and slightly soiled flapper' that, according to Liz Conor, expressed some of the ambivalence towards the youth culture of the 1920s.²¹

Most of all, *Riven* differs from imperial romances because it includes a detailed description of Fay's home abortion and dramatises what happens when modern sexually active women refuse the melodramatic role of sexual victim. Devanny's novel contrasts in this regard not only with many Australian romances but with American novels such as, for example, Theodore Dreiser's controversial *An American Tragedy*, published in 1926 in New York by Donald Friede.²² Because Dreiser suggested that his heroine had premarital sex, because he described her failed effort to obtain an abortion and dramatised her subsequent murder, his novel was banned in Boston and many other localities in the United States, where abortion was outlawed and where literature about it was suppressed under the *Comstock Law* of 1873. Since Devanny's novel unapologetically describes Fay Jerring's successful home abortion in painful detail but allows her to survive relatively unscathed, her publishers in England and in the United States risked similar suppressions. *Riven*, however, cleverly skirts at least three issues that made *An American Tragedy* so provocative: it focuses on a wealthy upper-class family in the exotic world of New Zealand, which was relatively unfamiliar to most of her readers, it avoids the melodramatic consequences of a failed abortion

that in Dreiser's novel results in Roberta Alden's murder and her lover's trial, and, perhaps most of all, it omits any reference to organised religion. Because of these strategies, *Riven* was able to pass as an escapist romance; it circulated freely in the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia, where it won a honourable mention for a literary prize.²³

Devanny's *The Virtuous Courtesan*, her ninth novel, published nearly six years later in New York by Macaulay, showed the marks of her break from the fundamentally individualist paradigm of the romances and mysteries she had been writing to supplement her income and support her family. Duckworth declined to publish *The Virtuous Courtesan*, and Macaulay marketed it in the United States to appeal to a new niche market for sexy popular fiction that it began to develop successfully in the 1930s.²⁴ With its deliberately provocative title, *The Virtuous Courtesan* included the following advertising copy in the front matter:

Jean Devanny, the Australian iconoclast, has a sharp disturbing way of stripping character to the buff without sparing or retouching the deformities. Her new novel pitilessly exposes a group of people representing all classes of life in Sydney. In a photographic drama she investigates the elemental sources of their misbehavior and the manner in which passion, greed and circumstances kick the stuffing out of all the ostensible moral values. Incidentally, the plight of unemployed men dependent on women with jobs or the means of support is a part of the theme of the story. The main theme is the cumulating dilemma of Sharon, a successful dancer and artist's model. Married to a worthless sot whom she despises and supports, but is afraid to divorce, she reluctantly is falling in love with an unemployed laborer, Jack Powell. Jack's handsome physique and dynamic qualities are a fatal jolt to Sharon's assumption that men are mere incidents in her life to satisfy a normal hunger. The jobless Apollo, however, has his own ideas and expectations concerning a woman evidently in love. And since the woman has no inclination to assume the discomfort of what passes for virtue, a dark and heavy predicament is brewing.²⁵

Readers of this novel argued that Devanny abandoned some of the conventions of romance in order to conform more closely with the social realism endorsed by the Communist Party.²⁶ While I agree that the reportage style is undoubtedly a strong influence, I will show that *The Virtuous Courtesan* not only presents a more layered, systematic and transnational view of labour practices in Sydney than is represented in her earlier fiction, it defies a straight Marxist analysis by showing how gender, sexuality and 'race' contest class identity and related notions of sexual 'freedom' and pleasure. As the title suggests, Devanny's main focus in this novel is on female spectacularisation, marriage and divorce, and

prostitution in the metropolitan world of Sydney in the aftermath of the global economic collapse in 1929.

Abortion is mentioned in *The Virtuous Courtesan*, but it is neither a central theme, as it is in *Riven*, nor a significant element in the plot, as it is in several of Devanny's other New Zealand novels. The couples included in *The Virtuous Courtesan* come not only from the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie—characters who are the main players in most of Devanny's New Zealand novels—they come from Sydney's nouveau riche, from the working classes, the unemployed and the underclass. Sharon Armand, the 'virtuous courtesan' of the title, is a transnational subject like Justine, but with a wider international experience. Like many other performers in the 1920s and 1930s, she established a successful career as a self-supporting professional dancer by performing for various international audiences in London, Paris and New York. In detailing the transnational arc of Sharon's career and describing her performances as a young dancer in London, Devanny describes how Sharon learned to exploit her physical beauty and display her nearly naked body to her mostly male audiences. In other words, Sharon became very successful in presenting herself as a 'spectacle' in the newly commodified spaces that became available for the 'spectacular modern women' in the 1920s, as Liz Conor described:

In effect this visually intensified scene provided new conditions for the feminine subject. To appear within it was to literally make a spectacle of oneself, to configure oneself as spectacle, to apprehend oneself and be apprehended as image. Some types of the Modern Woman which emerged at this time—the Screen star, Beauty Contestant, and Flapper—were manifestly, though not solely constructed around their visibility.²⁷

Moreover, in describing how Sharon self-consciously refashions herself to appeal to international audiences, Devanny invites parallels between performers and writers such as herself who sell their fiction in international markets. As a result of her exposure and mobility, Sharon met and married her relatively wealthy husband, Roy Armand, and thus gained access to a more respectable and comfortable middle-class life in Sydney, though their marriage was unhappy and she stayed with her husband ostensibly for her daughter's sake. Devanny reinforces the parallels between performers and other artists by comparing the Armands' stormy marriage with the equally volatile marriage of the forty-eight-year-old assimilated Jewish sculptor, Foyer, and his much younger, jealous, fashion-obsessed and hard-drinking wife, Inez.

Devanny departs radically from the conventions of imperial romance in this novel not only by detailing how the global economic crisis determines the working conditions of a range of 'culture workers', but by demonstrating how homosexuality and race complicate class identity. *The Virtuous Courtesan* was

unique in Australian fiction at the time because it included a gay male and a lesbian couple, reflecting, in part, Devanny's exposure to a bohemian urban culture in her Sydney neighbourhood near King's Cross as well as her efforts to organise the artists and writers associated with Sydney's Workers' Art Club in the three years before the novel's publication. Louis Ransome is the handsome, cross-dressing son of a wealthy department-store entrepreneur, who lives in a well-appointed bachelor flat with Rich Loveday, an amateur boxer with a growing reputation. To this mix of Sydney's rich and famous, Devanny adds a lesbian couple: Rosa Burnham, a wealthy divorcee and Mae-West look-alike, who lives in the 'pretentious Hollywood-like environ of Elizabeth Bay' with Faith Selsey, a beautiful professional cellist, who once reciprocated her patron's affections but now finds her partner's 'unwanted affection' to be 'detestable', though she is reluctant to resume her less-comfortable life as a self-supporting musician and teacher.²⁸ The social and psychological issues raised by these hybrid characters elude a straight class-based Marxist analysis.

Devanny compares the domestic arrangements of all these couples with the sexual arrangements contemplated by Rosa's working-class maid, Edith, and her unemployed lover, Bill, who lives as a squatter in an abandoned building with his friend Jack Powell. Jack recognises explicitly how class determines marriage practices when he tells Sharon:

I haven't been long among your set but I've found out that marriage is only a game with you. It's not a game in our world but it's on the bust, all the same. The women are keeping the men. Nearly all the youngsters are just pairing, can't settle down because there's no work. They marry, under rotten conditions, only when the girl is in trouble and they don't know how to procure an abortion.²⁹

Jack nonetheless shrugs off any obligation to share his knowledge about birth control, apart from advising his friend not to marry in haste. When Bill subsequently marries Edith, overcoming his reluctance to being supported by her hard work as a maid, Devanny makes it clear that his choice is prompted by his sexual desire rather than an unplanned pregnancy since Rosa has explained birth control to Edith and has referred her to a doctor who supplied it. By the end of the novel, Jack ironically follows Bill's example when he marries Sharon after her divorce from Roy is finalised, though he knows, as he ruefully observes, that he, too, will live 'on the surplus of a woman of another class'.³⁰

Devanny moves beyond the conventions of imperial romance in a third way in this novel by exposing the material base of Australian marriage practices through her inclusion of two prostitutes who work entirely outside the marriage and property system, showing how difficult their lives become after the passage of the *Consorting Act* in Sydney.³¹ Poppy Laughlin is a thirty-year-old prostitute who has two 'steadies': the man who fathered her son and the priest who

eventually agrees to support her so she can retire from her profession. Poppy has given shelter to Jo Fallon, who, at sixteen years of age, is able to support herself by successfully exploiting her johns' preference for young women. Jo's life becomes complicated when she meets the handsome Jack Powell after she stops him on the street and asks him to 'buy her'; after he pays for some food for her and they have sex, she promptly falls in love with him, though he doesn't even consider her as a potential marriage partner, showing that, for women such as her, romantic love and marriage are luxuries they can't afford. Poppy's example, like Sharon's, ultimately challenges the heterosexual norms of much Marxist analysis, since, as Poppy explains, for instance, heterosexual desire does not come naturally to her: 'It was the hate, mixed up with the sex. I hated every man I had even while I had him.'³²

Indeed, *The Virtuous Courtesan* draws explicit parallels between marriage and prostitution, on one hand, and marriage and the patronage system supporting the arts, on the other, showing how both are undermined by the worldwide economic crisis. Even the well-established and widely respected sculptor, Foyer, recognises that 'the cultural monopoly of the upper classes was a thing of the past',³³ though he protests, nonetheless, when he feels compelled to prostitute his talents in order to make a living. He observes, for example, 'It is the accursed showmanship, this prostitution of a man's finest instincts, the working on order at the command of the commercial riff-raff...that ruins a man.'³⁴ While Foyer wishfully proclaims that in artistic circles '[t]here are no wives',³⁵ Devanny reveals Foyer's self-deluding fantasies for what they are by describing the double binds of Australian divorce law in the 1930s when he tries to escape from his failed marriage with Inez. At the same time, Devanny demonstrates how women are disadvantaged as a group by the sexual double standards of divorce laws when Sharon tries to establish grounds for a divorce from her womanising, alcoholic husband, Roy Armand.

While Devanny explores the parallels between art production and prostitution throughout the novel, she insists at the same time that the spectacularisation of women in the 1930s narrowed the gap between female artists such as Sharon and prostitutes such as Poppy and Jo. Sharon recognises the artificial separation between the public and private sexual economy when, during a visit to Jo and Poppy, she insists, 'We're all professionals.'³⁶ Likewise, by exposing the ugly economic inequalities and personal exploitation disguised by the conventions of romance, Devanny insists that marriage and divorce laws simply cover over the naked prostitution of many legally sanctioned sexual relationships. In fact, she shows that marriages such as Foyer's and Armand's harbour the same potential for sexual exploitation and emotional or physical abuse that might be found in the informal domestic arrangements of Rosa and Faith or Louis and Rich.

Finally, *The Virtuous Courtesan* displays Devanny's transnational perspective not only on art, gender and marriage, but on homosexuality and race, when she describes how several of her characters recognise and respond to the fascist turn in politics at home and abroad in the 1930s. Early in the novel, Rosa Burnham identifies her contested class position when she remarks, 'What's this claptrap about class? I'm waiting for someone to tell me what class I belong to.'³⁷ By the end of the novel, Devanny has shown that it is not only Rosa's sexuality that complicates her class identity and national affiliation, it is her Jewish heritage, which Rosa equates with race.³⁸ Rosa signals her political awakening as a Jew in a world on the eve of the Holocaust when she announces that she plans to leave Sydney to learn more about her people. Faith, pushed into a panic by Rosa's newfound identity, privately considers her options:

Surely Rosa would never take an interest in politics... Might not this side to Rosa be outside her sphere of influence? It foreboded power, a deep well of inner consciousness which might rise up between her comforts and herself. Jews! Gentiles! Foreign words. Suddenly a gusty hate for the strange new forces pulsing and festering in the gigantic web of the world's social fabric surged up in Faith and was expelled in a gush of tears.³⁹

Afraid of 'foreign words' such as 'Jew' and 'gentile', Faith is unwilling to leave Sydney with Rosa and, as a result, she faces a return to comparative 'poverty again' as a self-supporting professional musician.⁴⁰

By the final episode of the novel, then, Rosa has recognised herself as a transnational subject and has pledged to act on this knowledge, even if it means the dissolution of her partnership with Faith. Moreover, as Louis sadly notes, there are a lot of 'migrations' in Sharon's social circle at this point.⁴¹ The recently divorced Inez is on her way from Cairo to Palestine, and Rich is soon to depart for the United States to promote his boxing career. By describing the dissolution of all of the bourgeois marriages and homosexual partnerships that she has described, Devanny provides further evidence of her effort to transform the genre conventions of romance. Moreover, the long-term prognosis for the two new marriages that mark the end of this novel is hardly promising. Edith, who is now married to Bill, is about to lose her job as Rosa's maid, and Jack Powell has begun to suspect that Sharon will soon be unfaithful to him. Although the final scenes of the novel demonstrate that Jack, too, has become a transnational subject as a result of his marriage and the capital it offers, he is far from comfortable in his cross-class marriage. As Faith tells Sharon, 'You're a funny pair. Jack grows grimmer every day and you get more contented. What's the secret?'⁴² *The Virtuous Courtesan* therefore concludes by showing that although Rosa and Jack have recognised their hybrid identity and achieved a sophisticated international perspective on their lives, their work and their freedoms, they also

experience the political and psychological ambivalence that Sharon Armand Powell embodies and exhibits as a transnational subject. Even after Devanny turns her attention next to the working-class Australians who populate her best-known novel, *Sugar Heaven*, she continues to demonstrate how the class identity of her characters is 'riven' by their gender, sexuality and ethnicity.

In conclusion, the radically different fortunes of *Riven* and *The Virtuous Courtesan* remind us that the products of the 'romance industry' do not always flow freely across national frontiers. Devanny's *Riven* remained unchallenged probably because it resembled a mass-marketed romance even though a closer reading shows that it addressed a more sophisticated and politically liberal cosmopolitan audience. Because *The Virtuous Courtesan* explicitly advocated sexual as well as political and economic liberation and critiqued the racism that was central to the escapist imperial romances that pleased and titillated their mainly white readership, it was refused publication in England and recognised as dangerous contraband as soon as it landed on Australian shores, where it was promptly banned from 1935 until 1958. Instructed by her second experience with book banning, Devanny subsequently elected to participate in an alternative to the capitalist culture economy in 1935 when she began to write *Sugar Heaven*; she contracted to publish it not with Duckworth or Macaulay but with the Sydney-based Modern Publishers, a press that produced local editions of banned communist works and other texts. Devanny's later novels about Australia therefore reveal her legacy as a writer who is vividly aware of the psychological ambiguity, material embodiment and idealist promise that expresses her embattled stance as a woman, communist, transnational subject and internationally recognised novelist.

Notes

¹ Devanny, Jean 1934, *Out of Such Fires*, Macaulay, New York, p. 29.

² Ferrier, Carole 1998, 'Fiction in transition', in Bruce Bennett and Jennifer Strauss (eds), *The Oxford Literary History of Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, p. 195. In *Jean Devanny: Romantic revolutionary* (1999, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne), Carole Ferrier documents the Devanny family's financial struggles, Jean's embattled marriage, her children's and her own increasing involvement with the Communist Party of Australia, her work for the party as speaker and organiser, her sexual liaisons with several party members, her trip to Germany and Russia in 1931, her separation from her husband and her deepening appreciation for the workers in rural Queensland. See also Store, Ron 1981, 'Devanny, Jane (Jean) (1894–1962)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography. Volume 8*, Melbourne University Press, pp. 295–6; Ferres, Kay 1994, 'Written on the body: Jean Devanny, sexuality and censorship', *Hecate*, vol. 20, no. 1, May, pp. 123–31; and Moore, Nicole 2002, 'Interrupting maternal citizenship: birth control in mid-wave women's writing', *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 17, no. 38, pp. 151–64.

³ Bhabha, Homi K. 1994, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, London and New York, p. 5. I have also benefited from studies including Walkowitz, Rebecca 2006, *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism beyond the nation*, Columbia University Press, New York; and Cheah, Pheng and Robbins, Bruce (eds) 1998, *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and feeling beyond the nation*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis—which define 'cosmopolitan' in interesting new ways. Devanny, of course, knew of Marx's critique of cosmopolitanism in *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* by the time she wrote this novel.

⁴ Ferrier, *Jean Devanny*, p. 88.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

- ⁶ I thank Desley Deacon, Penny Russell and Angela Woollacott for sharing their introduction to *Transnational Ties* with me. My essay is part of a larger study that considers how Jean Devanny, D. H. Lawrence and Radclyffe Hall re-imagined authorship and international readerships in response to government censorship.
- ⁷ Rabinow, Paul 1986, 'Representations are social facts: modernity and post-modernity in anthropology', in James Clifford and George E. Marcus (eds), *Writing Culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography*, University of California Press, Berkeley, p. 258.
- ⁸ Woollacott, Angela 2001, *To Try Her Fortunes in London: Australian women, colonialism and modernity*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 141–3.
- ⁹ For details on the banning of this novel, see the introduction and afterword by editor Heather Roberts in the 1981 edition of Devanny's *The Butcher Shop* ([1925], Oxford University Press, Auckland and Oxford).
- ¹⁰ Ferrier, *Jean Devanny*, p. 115.
- ¹¹ Devanny, Jean 1930, *Riven*, Duckworth, London.
- ¹² For discussions about the international readership for colonial romances, see Teo, Hsu-Ming 2003, 'The romance of white nations: imperialism, popular culture, and national histories', in Antoinette Burton (ed.), *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the nation*, Duke University Press, Durham, pp. 279–92. On British publishers' successful class and gender-based niche marketing of formula romances, see McAleer, Joseph 1992, *Popular Reading and Publishing in Britain, 1914–1950*, Clarendon, Oxford; and Dixon, Jay 1999, *The Romance Fiction of Mills and Boon, 1909–1990s*, UCL Press, London.
- ¹³ On the youth market in the 1920s in the United States, see Morrison, Mark 2001, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little magazines, audiences, and reception, 1905–1920*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, pp. 133–56.
- ¹⁴ Devanny, *Riven*, p. 282.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 142.
- ¹⁶ Conor, Liz 2004, *The Spectacular Modern Woman: Feminine visibility in the 1920s*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p. 7. On the 'New Woman' in British fiction, see Ardis, Ann 1990, *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and early modernism*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick.
- ¹⁷ Devanny, *Riven*, pp. 9, 12.
- ¹⁸ On Hall's trial, see, for example, Doan, Laura and Prosser, Jay (eds) 2001, *Palatable Poison: Critical perspectives on The Well of Loneliness*, Columbia University Press, New York. On the trial in the United States, see Emery, Kim 2002, *The Lesbian Index: Pragmatism and lesbian subjectivity in the twentieth-century United States*, SUNY Press, Albany.
- ¹⁹ Devanny, *Riven*, p. 65.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 131.
- ²¹ Conor, *The Spectacular Modern Woman*, p. 223.
- ²² Boyer, Paul S. 1968, *Purity in Print: The Vice-Society Movement and book censorship in America*, Scribner's, New York, pp. 192–5.
- ²³ Devanny, Jean 1986, *Point of Departure: The autobiography of Jean Devanny*, Edited by Carole Ferrier, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, pp. 94–5.
- ²⁴ Gertzman, Jay A. 1999, *Bookleggers and Smuthounds: The trade in erotica, 1920–1940*, University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia, Philadelphia, pp. 70–1.
- ²⁵ Devanny, Jean 1935, *The Virtuous Courtesan*, Macaulay, New York.
- ²⁶ Ferrier, *Jean Devanny*, p. 71; and Ferrier, Carole 1998, 'Jean Devanny and the romance of the revolution', in Carole Ferrier and Rebecca Phelan (eds), *The Point of Change: Marxism/Australia/history/theory*, University of Queensland, Brisbane, pp. 125–33. See also Nicole Moore's brilliant analysis of abortion in Australian realist fiction (2001, 'Politics of cliché: sex, class, and abortion in Australian realism', *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 47, no. 1, Spring, pp. 69–91).
- ²⁷ Conor, *The Spectacular Modern Woman*, p. 7.
- ²⁸ Devanny, *The Virtuous Courtesan*, p. 192.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 239.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 269.
- ³¹ Sheridan (*Along the Faultlines*, pp. 51–68) usefully discusses the symbolic importance of references to prostitution in other Australian women's writing of this period. See also Dixon, Robert 1998, 'Literature

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and melodrama', in Bruce Bennett and Jennifer Strauss (eds), *The Oxford Literary History of Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, pp. 66–88.

³² Devanny, *The Virtuous Courtesan*, p. 149.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 143–4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 279.